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Like a Fierce God: Reenvisioning the Enemy in the Legend of Empress Jingū in the Wake of the Mongol Invasions

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Abstract: The legend of Empress Jingū's conquest of the Korean peninsula is well-known for its many divine elements. However, the legend's successful conquest of a foreign enemy has also been key to its longevity. In particular, the Mongol Invasions of the late thirteenth century inspired a renaissance of the Jingū legend in the fourteenth, with the addition of several new motifs. One such motif is Jinrin, a red demon with multiple heads and immense power from the continent who threatens Japan before being slain by Jingū's husband Emperor Chūai. In this paper, I argue that the Jinrin motif plays an important role in reenvisioning Jingū's conquest as a war against evil. Though Jinrin may have antecedents in the Buddhist Canon and Japanese mythology, this "fierce god" emerges in the medieval Hachiman tradition in origin narratives and later in regional *kagura*. Jinrin serves as a visual representation of the threat of the Korean kingdoms and an opportunity for Chūai's heroism and honorable death, creating a clear juxtaposition between a depraved Korean peninsula and an ethical Japan. Thus, Jinrin provides a vibrant example of how the belief in Japan as land of the gods (*shinkoku shisō*) galvanized a reinterpretation of Japan, its world, and its history.

Keywords: Jinrin; Empress Jingū; *shinkoku*; *engi*



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1. Introduction

Empress Jingū 神功皇后 (traditional years 169–269 CE, reign 200–269) is said to have conquered the Korean peninsula at the will, and with the aid of, multiple Shinto gods (*kami* 神). Although this mission was originally entrusted to her husband, Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 (traditional years 149–200 CE, reign 192–200), his refusal to believe the gods resulted in his untimely demise, and Jingū, heavily pregnant with their son, took up the conquest in his stead. After overcoming various obstacles, including the onset of labor, Jingū and her fleet subdued the three Korean kingdoms and returned to Japan victorious, after which Jingū gave birth to the future Emperor Ōjin 応神天皇 (traditional years 200–310 CE, reign 270–310).

This legend, originally appearing in the mytho-historical chronicles *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), is well-known for its many divine elements, including possession scenes, omens fulfilled, and a multiplicity of gods. The majority of research on Empress Jingū and her legend thus far has centered on the prehistoric and ancient periods, examining the plausibility of her existence (cf. Allen 2003) and her role in the chronicles (cf. Tsukaguchi 1980; Strand 2017) on the one hand, and the utilization of her persona and legend in imperial propaganda in the Meiji, Shōwa, and early Taishō periods (cf. Trede 2008; Schmid 2022, pp. 110–35). Though early modern conceptualizations of Jingū and her conquest journey are beginning to attract scholarly attention (Tsukamoto 1996; Kuze 2017), medieval versions of the legend are relatively understudied. This is somewhat surprising given the well-known emergence of "medieval myths" (*chūsei shinwa* 中世神話), adaptations of myths and legends from ancient Japan and China with fresh interpretations, new deities, and often, as we shall see below, a distinctly ethnocentric lens (Yamamoto 1998; Itō 2011, 2018).

In fact, the Jingū narrative and its various motifs provided vital material for the origin stories (*engi* 縁起) of a multitude of shrine complexes in Western Japan; Jingū herself is connected to several major cults, most notably that of the highly syncretic deity Hachiman 八幡, who was associated with Emperor Ōjin, as well as Sumiyoshi and Awashima (Simpson 2017, 2018). However, the legend's focus on a successful conquest of a foreign enemy has also been key to its longevity, and subsequent conflicts with the Asian continent renewed interest in Jingū and her conquest. In particular, the Mongol Invasions of the late thirteenth century inspired a renaissance of the Jingū legend in the fourteenth, with the addition of several new motifs.

One such motif is Jinrin 塵輪, a red demon with multiple heads and immense power from the continent who threatens Japan before being slain by Jingū's husband Emperor Chūai 仲哀天皇 (trad. 149–200, reign 192–200). In this article, I argue that the addition of Jinrin plays an important role in reimagining Jingū's conquest as a war against evil rather than a straightforward conquest for material and territorial gain. Though the name "Jinrin" appears in a few sparse references in the Taishō Tripitaka (*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經) and has plausible antecedents in the subjugation of the Kumaso 熊襲 and the figure of Kumawashi 熊鷲 in the earliest Jingū legends, Jinrin emerges as a full-fledged figure only in the medieval Hachiman tradition in several origin narratives (*engi*) and picture scrolls (*emaki* 絵巻). I argue that Jinrin's invention provides a visual representation of the threat of the Korean kingdoms and an opportunity for the heroism and honorable death of Emperor Chūai, creating a clear juxtaposition between a depraved Korean peninsula and an ethical Japan.

Long after the fall of the Mongol Empire, the fear of foreign invasion remained very real in Japan. That the Mongol conquest of Song China and Goryeo Korea reshaped international relations in East Asia as well as the Sinocentric Sphere is well-known, but obscures two important realities. First off, communications from the Yuan dynasty to Kamakura Japan were mediated through Goryeo. In addition to its failure to convince the Japanese to submit to the Mongols, this arrangement also implicated the Korean peninsula in the attempted conquest of Japan. Secondly, while trade resumed immediately and often in spite of political discord between the political entities of East Asia, the role of piracy in this trade, and in stoking continued tensions between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago on the one hand, and Japan's sporadic participation in the Sinocentric tribute system on the other, contributed to a broader sense of the continent as a locus of threat (Kawazoe 1990). Such fears and tensions bridged the crucial points of the Mongol invasions and the Imjin War, warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of Joseon Korea in 1592 and 1597.

The complex relationship between Japan and the Asian continent goes far beyond the perceived threats of incursion by naval forces and pirates to include internal politics, epidemics, and the sea itself, all of which had a profound effect on the religious imagination. Greater attention has been paid over the last few decades to the role of the sea, maritime communities, and international trade in both the history and religion of Japan. The historian Amino Yoshihiko's reevaluation of medieval Japan as a tale of two contrasting worldviews—that of the networking seafarers and "agrarian fundamentalists"—is well known (Amino 1971, 1991). However, religious studies scholars have also paid increasing attention to the role of the sea in shaping religious discourses and practices, examining how Japan as a "thalassocracy" (Grapard 1986, pp. 23–24) or "aquapelago" (Faure 2021, p. 371) also featured a "thalassophy" or "geo-philosophy of the sea" (Rambelli 2018, p. xx).

Part of this re-examination has involved recognizing and understanding the role of immigrant communities in the formation and development of Japanese religiosity, particularly families of Korean origin. Yet while the Hata were instrumental in solidifying the role and status of the emperor as both ruler and ritualist (Como 2009, pp. 1–24), and Korean networks essential to the success of Buddhist monks traveling to China (Kim 2018), the Asian continent was long perceived as both the center of culture and a source of epidemics. Although epidemics were connected to foreign disease divinities as early as

the ancient period (McMullin 1988), the notion of China and Korea as bastions of plague resurfaced prominently in the Heian and medieval periods, contributing to an interpretation of the continent as a danger to the Japanese archipelago. The sea itself was similarly seen as dangerous, a perspective deriving in part from the very real perils of storms, tsunami and shipwreck, but tinged, nonetheless, with xenophobia against the neighboring countries that (supposedly) used the sea as a vehicle for incursion and attack.

Deities were key tools in both reimagining and combating the supposed threat presented by the Asian continent. In particular, coastal deities that originated in immigrant communities were reinterpreted as protectors of the Japanese. Hachiman is a prime example of this process: a regional deity that almost certainly came from Korean origins, Hachiman became a protector of the imperial family early on due to his supposed defeat of the Hayato in the ninth century, a reputation that was only solidified following the Mongol Invasions (Repp 2002). The invention of Jinrin within the increasingly powerful and trans-regional Hachiman cult served a similar purpose: to provide a deity that represented the foe, and could be defeated by the power of gods and emperor alike. Therefore, Jinrin, a demonic deity who embodied the threat of foreign invasion and emerged during a time of increasing ethnocentrism, compounded by a view of the continent as the source of both sickness and danger, has had a notable degree of staying power, as can be seen not only in Hachiman *engi* and *emaki*, but in performing arts such as *kagura*. Furthermore, Jinrin provides a vibrant example of how the belief in Japan as land of the gods (*shinkoku shisō* 神国思想) galvanized a reinterpretation of historical and religious narratives of early Japan.

2. Jinrin's Debut in the Hachiman Cult: The *Hachiman gudōkun*

The *Hachiman gudōkun* 八幡愚童訓 or “Teachings on Hachiman for Ignorant Children” is not only potentially the oldest mention of Jinrin, but also provides a particularly rich narrative of Jinrin's attack and subjugation as a triumph of Japanese ethical leadership over a Korean menace. Here, I enumerate the various features of the Jinrin story and how it shifts the Jingū conquest into a defensive war as well as a moral battle.

Although not explicitly titled as such, the *Hachiman gudōkun* (hereafter, *Gudōkun*) participates in the shrine-temple origin story (*jisha engi* 寺社縁起) genre. Written by priests at the Iwashimizu Hachiman 石清水八幡宮寺 temple-shrine complex, the *Gudōkun* is divided into two sections: the latter or *kō* 甲 text enumerates the various and miraculous exploits of Hachiman, including Empress Jingū's conquest, during which Hachiman was thought to have resided in Jingū's womb as the future Emperor Ōjin. It is the *kō* text that contains the Jinrin motif, and as it dates from the reign of Emperor Hanazono (1310–1318), it is quite possibly the earliest extant Jinrin narrative.

Well before introducing Jinrin, the *Gudōkun* sets the stage by portraying the Korean peninsula itself as both morally deficient and threatening.¹ The *kō* text begins with the Buddhist story of origins from the *Aggañña Sutta*, charting humanity's downfall from feather-light beings who flew and spent their day in leisure to earth-bound physical bodies who toil and suffer, all through our own greed.² Similarly, the advent of kingship and multiple kingdoms is portrayed as the moral degradation of people and kings, starting with the original ethical ruler, Mahasammata, and declining through lesser kings and the ultimate breakdown of rule into smaller principalities. This story of ethical and political disintegration, drawn from the *Cakkavati-Sihanda Sutta*, culminates in the dissolution of India, the center of the Buddhist world, into multiple kingdoms as well as a more general political fracture: “many other countries were scattered around like millet grains, each ruled by a king” (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170; all translations of this text by author). Japan's position as one of these *zokusankoku* 粟散国 or “millet grain” countries, a term referring not only to their small size but their spatial and temporal distance from the heartland of Buddhism, was a source of deep anxiety in medieval Japan (cf. Sueki 1993; Itō 2018).

Yet in referencing this Indo-centric Buddhist conceptualization of the world, the *Gudōkun* points not to Japan, but to the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula as emblematic of the ethical failings the scattered millet grain countries represent: “Among those [countries

scattered like millet grains], there were Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo. Their rulers and subjects had insatiable greed and inexhaustible arrogance and selfishness” (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170). According to the *Gudōkun*, all three ancient kingdoms on the peninsula were filled with people high and low who exhibited the same moral failings—greed and arrogance—that eventually led to the fallen state of humanity.

In addition, the *Gudōkun* accuses the Korean kingdoms of repeated intent to conquer Japan, claiming “they have come several times to our court of Japan with the intention of conquering it” (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170). The *engi* claims that before the Mongol Invasions, there were twelve encounters altogether and “attentively” counts nine of them, starting with an incursion during the forty-eighth year of Emperor Kaika’s reign (trad. 109 BCE), in which 203,000 soldiers allegedly came. The text provides specific numbers for eight out of nine attacks, including those ostensibly occurring during Emperor Chūai and Empress Jingū’s respective reigns, ending with 400,000 during Emperor Kanmu’s reign (781–806 CE). As Itō Satoshi has noted, “most of the so-called invasions in this text were little more than the product of imagination”, and we have no record of them actually occurring. Yet, these fictitious attacks served an important purpose in justifying Japanese antipathy toward the Korean peninsula, and the conquest itself (Itō 2018, pp. 136–37). In the *Gudōkun*, they provide clear if inaccurate data demonstrating the supposed greed and arrogance of the Korean kingdoms and their repeated threat to the Japanese state.

Next, that threat is personified in the figure of Jinrin, a demonic being of clear malevolent intent toward the Japanese populace, and perhaps to all of humanity. The *Gudōkun* introduces Jinrin and its attack on the populace as follows:

During Emperor Chūai’s reign, the first to come from the foreign country to torment [us] was a being called Jinrin. Its shape was like a fierce god, with a red body and eight heads. It flew through the empty sky riding black clouds and arrived in Japan, killing many people. When it was shot at from afar, the arrows broke; those who came close [to it] lost their minds and perished. The human race was on the verge of being destroyed”. (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170)

Here, Jinrin is vividly described as looking like a fierce god, an *oni* 鬼 or demon, with a red body and multiple heads. It can fly, riding black clouds—another harbinger of doom, or at least a storm—and it also killed many people immediately upon arrival. More alarming still, Jinrin cannot be easily vanquished, as arrows are somehow destroyed before they can reach their target, and those who approach Jinrin directly “lose their minds” and die. Thus, Jinrin is a formidable foe, requiring a formidable opponent.

Nonetheless, in the *Gudōkun*, it is not Jingū but her husband Emperor Chūai who rises to the challenge of dispatching Jinrin. This is particularly notable because, as discussed earlier, in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Chūai is somewhat of a failure, having questioned the commands of the *kami* to conquer Silla instead of the Kumaso, an ethnic group located in southern Kyushu not yet under imperial command and his desired target. This either directly (*Kojiki*) or subsequently (*Nihon shoki*) leads to his death and Jingū’s assumption of both rulership and the conquest expedition. In the *Nihon shoki*, Chūai proceeds with the conquest of the Kumaso and either falls ill or, in an alternative version (of which the *Nihon shoki* provides many), dies when struck by an arrow: “The Emperor, having gone in person to smite the Kumaso, was hit by an enemy’s arrow, and slain” (*Nihon shoki*, pp. 243–44; Aston 1896, p. 222). The *Nihon shoki* portrays the attack on Kumaso as an act of folly and willful disobedience of the *kami*, for which Chūai paid with his life. Yet, this scene may have provided the inspiration behind the creation of Jinrin and the idea of Korean forces attacking Japan. Indeed, in some of the descriptions of *kagura* or sacred dance related to Jinrin, which I discuss more fully later in this article, Jinrin is considered to have incited the forces of Kumaso.³ Whether or not Jinrin is at all connected to or derived from the Kumaso episode, the Jinrin story often takes the place of the Kumaso expedition’s occurrence prior to the central conquest in medieval retellings of the Jingū legend.

In the *Gudōkun*, the episode does far more: it reimagines Chūai as an ethical Buddhist ruler willing to confront the foe head on. “Moved to pity” by the plight of his people, Chūai

determines that “I shall go myself and subjugate Jinrin with the power of the ten virtues”, referring to the ten precepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism taken by devout lay worshippers (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170). The emperor next informs Empress Jingū of his intentions, and she insists on accompanying him. The imperial couple arrives at Toyoura in Nagado with 50,000 soldiers, and Chūai instructs his two generals to strengthen the gate and inform him immediately when Jinrin appears, because “he cannot be conquered by the power of the subjects” (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 170). In the *Gudōkun*, Emperor Chūai is decisive in preparing his generals and army while placing himself squarely at the front line of defense, relying on his powers as sovereign and as a devout Buddhist to prevail.

Chūai does indeed prevail, but not without cost. His successful attack upon Jinrin is described in heroic terms as follows:

On the sixth day black clouds suddenly towered above, and Jinrin with angry eyes, bearing his bow, came forth. When Takamaru, along with Minister Takenouchi,⁴ reported this matter to the emperor, the august sovereign himself took up his royal bow and gathered arrows. When he drew and shot with skill, Jinrin’s neck was cut off; head and body became two, and [Jinrin] fell. (*Hachiman gudōkun*, pp. 170–71)

Jinrin makes a terrifying appearance, wreathed in black clouds, eyes (sixteen of them, presumably) blazing, and armed with a bow. The fear-inspiring demon is met by the emperor’s bow and superior skill, which cleaves Jinrin in half at the neck, severing the eight heads from his body. This is a triumph, but as the *Gudōkun* laments, the emperor is also mortally wounded by a stray arrow. Chūai lives long enough to entrust Empress Jingū with the twin tasks of (1) “pacifying the foreign countries” [the three Korean kingdoms] and (2) installing the child in her womb as the next ruler, to which she readily agrees. His death is met by inconsolable grief from the empress, unprecedented sadness from the people, and three days of premature darkness, as if the sun, moon and stars also grieved (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 171).

Jinrin’s defeat thus paints a very different picture of Emperor Chūai’s death and reputation than what we find in the eighth-century chronicles. The *Nihon shoki* may provide the inspiration for the stray arrow that killed Chūai in the *Gudōkun*, as well as for a conflict occurring before the conquest, but almost everything else is new. Chūai is seen no longer conquering new territory (yet), but protecting his people; no longer defying the gods, but empowered by Buddhist virtue; not hidden away in death, as he is in the *Nihon shoki*, but publicly and deeply mourned. The account of the people’s grief at his death echoes that of Prince Shōtoku, a notable sage ruler, in the *Nihon shoki* (pp. 576–577; Aston 1896, pp. 148–49). This gives further credibility to his last request to the empress: not only to ensure the continuation of his family line, but to conquer the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula. By transforming Chūai into a sage ruler, Japan is held blameless while the Korean foe is both reimagined and strengthened.

Chūai’s instructions to subdue “the foreign countries” cast the conquest in an entirely new light as an act of self-defense. In the *Gudōkun* version, there is no oracle from the *kami* until after Chūai’s death, and thus no directive to conquer the kingdom of Silla and gain its treasures. Rather, the threat of Jinrin’s arrival convinces Chūai that the country from whence Jinrin came must be subdued in order to prevent further attacks. It is only after her husband’s death that the empress, in her grief, is possessed by the sun-goddess Amaterasu, who informs her and Minister Takenouchi that “the three kingdoms of Korea have already put out 108,000 ships, and many tens of thousands of soldiers are right now about to come here. Before they arrive here, you must go quickly to the foreign country” (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 171). Amaterasu confirms the departed emperor’s suspicions, and the empress and her ministers accordingly plan to conquer the peninsula. However, in the *Gudōkun*, this is a preemptive strike, not a conquest for the sake of wealth, giving Japan the moral high ground in this attack.

The *Gudōkun* reiterates this ethical imperative throughout the text in such notable passages as when Empress Jingū is said to have conquered the Korean peninsula in order

to bring Buddhism to the three Korean kingdoms, adding a soteriological impetus to her attack (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 177). In addition, the Korean soldiers and kings, often referred to simply as the “foreign country” or “foreign foe”, are depicted as ignorant and weak, in great contrast to their brave Japanese counterparts, during the conquest itself. Though the Korean kingdoms’ forces are described as far greater than those of Japan, the king and the ministers wail in response to the empress’ declaration of intent to win the battle. The Korean army is decimated by the two tide-controlling jewels borrowed from the Dragon King Śāgara, which first empty the seabed and convince the Koreans to rush forward and attack the Japanese fleet, and then replenish the sea and drown the enemy forces. Finally, the leaders of the three kingdoms declare their own inferior status: “The kings and ministers of those countries, unable to resist, stood for an oath, saying ‘We have become the dogs of Japan...If our sentiments are treacherous, we shall receive punishment from the heavens.’” Empress Jingū drives home the point by carving “The King of Silla⁵ is the dog of Japan” into a rock with her bow, which the *Gudōkun* claims still stands as an “eternal shame” to the Korean kingdoms (*Hachiman gudōkun*, p. 176).

Jinrin seems to spring forth into the *Gudōkun* as a new character, a new foe, a new precursor and perhaps even catalyst for Jingū’s famous conquest journey. Although Jinrin’s role in the narrative as a personification of the foreign enemy is easily explained, the origin of Jinrin itself is less easy to determine. Nonetheless, both the Chinese characters for Jinrin and its placement within the Jingū legend offer clues to where the idea of Jinrin may have sprung from.

3. The “Original” Jinrin? Possible Antecedents in the Buddhist Canon and Japanese Myth

Jinrin seems to appear in the *Hachiman gudōkun*, and, thus, the body of literature concerning Jingū, from nowhere. Nonetheless, Jinrin may not be a complete invention by the priests of the Iwashimizu Hachiman complex. Instead, this vibrant and deadly monster may have antecedents in two of the most important bodies of literature in premodern Japan: the Buddhist Canon and Japanese mythology, both of which the priests at the syncretic Iwashimizu complex would have been familiar with.

Before discussing these plausible antecedents, the Chinese characters of the name Jinrin merit consideration. In most *engi*, Jinrin is represented using these two characters: 塵輪. The first 塵 has the Japanese reading (*kunyomi*) of *gomi*, trash, or *chiri*, dust, but is pronounced here by its *go-on* or Buddhist pronunciation of *jin*. In Buddhist usages of this character, both alone and in several compounds, it often refers to objects or, more broadly, the material world. Given that the original meaning of the character was dust or dirt, the character is also used to represent concepts of pollution and defilement (Nakamura 1981, pp. 799–800). Indeed, even its use to refer to objects is hardly benign from a Buddhist viewpoint, as the material world is a source of attachment and distraction from the pursuit of enlightenment.

In contrast, the second character 輪, pronounced *rin*, is rather more ambiguous. On the one hand, the character’s core meaning is the wheel, a potent symbol of the Dharma or teachings of Buddhism and the progressive acceptance of their merit, as in *hōrin* 法輪. The same character also appears in the titles of *cakravartin*, wheel-turning kings (*rinnō* 輪王) that ruled the world justly and benevolently at the beginning of the world. On the other hand, Buddhist usages of the character also include references to *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirth, and illusion, one of the core impediments to enlightenment (Nakamura 1981, pp. 1430–31). Thus, Jinrin could be considered as “defiling the Dharma” or “defilement and illusion”, making Jinrin the antithesis of the divine and enlightened beings portrayed in origin stories, especially the various deities appearing in the Jingū legend as represented in the Hachiman cult. Similar interpretations may also extend to the alternate rendering 塵倫, in which the second character means “ethics” and, thus, Jinrin could be interpreted as “defiling morality”. Finally, 人倫 is occasionally seen, and as this normally means “human relations”, does not seem to fit the demonic being in question. This usage is likely not a humanization

of Jinrin, but rather a simple misuse of characters with the same pronunciation. These two alternate character combinations are seen more frequently in the *kagura* traditions that include Jinrin as a subject.

The primary character combination for Jinrin 塵輪 appears in the Taishō Canon four times, three of which seem to bear out the associations with Jinrin seen above.⁶ In a dialogue within the Treatise of the Great Commentary on the Abhidharma (Skt. *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-sāstra*, Jp. *abidatsuma daibibasharon* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論) discussing the elements, the wind of defilement and delusion (Jinrin) is described as being comprised of earth, water, fire and wind.⁷ Similarly, the Compassionate Water Repentance Sutra (*Jihi suisenbō* 慈悲水懺法) suggests the existence of six wheels of defilement (*zen rokujin ron* 染六塵輪) that turn in an endless and inescapable cycle of time.⁸ This is within the context a description of the seven kinds of minds that require skillful means, including the shameful, fearful, hateful, and vengeful, as well as their various torments. Finally, the Precious Mirror of the Lushan Lotus Tradition (Ch. *Lushan lianzong baojian*, Jp. *Rozan renshū hōkan* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑), a late 13th century text by the Yuan monk Pudu 普度,⁹ contains another instance of “Jinrin” in relation to transmigration. “People of the world who bear animosity awaken to the defiled wheel turning [through the] three realms of rebirth, four kinds of rebirth, and six destinies; good and evil karmic destinies receive retribution, [becoming] the attractive and the ugly”.¹⁰ It is possible that one or more of these lines inspired the invention of a new demonic character in the Jingū legend, or at least its name.

Although it would not be surprising if priests at the Iwashimizu Hachiman complex, then affiliated with the Shingon Buddhist sect, would draw from the Buddhist canon, it is equally possible that the inspiration for this demonic enemy came from native Japanese sources. In the *Nihon shoki*, Empress Jingū eliminates the troublemaker Hashiro Kumawashi 羽白熊鷲, a figure whose supernatural powers and disposition are both reminiscent of Jinrin’s, before embarking on her conquest journey. “There was in the village of Notorita a man named Hashiro Kuma-washi. He was a fellow of powerful frame, and had wings on his body, so that he could fly, and with them soar aloft. Therefore he would not obey the Imperial commands, but habitually plundered the people” (*Nihon shoki*, pp. 420–21; Aston 1896, p. 226). Kumawashi or “bear-eagle” is able to fly and cause havoc among the people, though not in as terrifying a manner as Jinrin. Like Emperor Chūai in the *Gudōkun*, Empress Jingū decides to vanquish this homegrown threat herself. “She arrived at the Moor of Sosoki, where she took up arms and smote Hashiro Kuma-washi, and destroyed him. Then she addressed her courtiers, saying:—‘My mind is at peace now that we have taken Kuma-washi.’ Therefore the name of that place was called Yasu [peace]” (*Nihon shoki*, pp. 420–21; Aston 1896, p. 226). Jingū’s statement of mental clarity following Kumawashi’s death may simply refer to the relief of getting rid of this particular adversary, but this motif could also be the seed of Jinrin’s ability to disturb minds in medieval versions of the story.¹¹

However, it is more likely that Jinrin serves as a general stand-in for the Kumaso, the southern cultural group initially targeted by Emperor Chūai before the gods directed the ruling couple toward the Korean kingdoms. Chūai’s insistence on conquering the rebellious Kumaso rather than following the gods’ orders was considered both a remarkable act of disobedience and impiety as well as the reason for his early demise; accordingly, rehabilitating Chūai required a different and more honorable reason for his death. As discussed earlier, Jinrin not only provides this reason, but an ethical justification for the entire conquest.

That Jinrin was seen as an alternate for the Kumaso can be seen in early Edo period versions of the Jingū narrative from northern Kyushu that retain the Kumaso, but note the presence of the Jinrin motif elsewhere. For instance, in the *Daibugū engi* 大分宮縁起 (1691), after the gods advise Chūai to “throw out the Kumaso and attack Silla”, the emperor refuses to change his target, and dies soon after at Kashii. Immediately after noting Chūai’s death, the text records in the smaller characters often employed for notes and asides that “in other legends, a strong enemy called Jinrin came from the three Korean kingdoms at this time, planning to invade Japan. [The emperor] shot and killed [Jinrin] on the beach at

Toyoura, and was hit by a stray arrow and died" (*Daibugū engi*, 154). Similarly, the *Umi Hachimangū engi* 宇美八幡宮縁起 (1688) describes Chūai's ambitions to attack the Kumaso, the god's instructions to attack "the land of treasure to the west" instead, and Chūai's death, before noting in small characters that "in various texts, an enemy called Jinrin [here, 座輪] came from Silla. The emperor went to Nagato and felled [Jinrin], but was hit by an arrow from another traitor (異賊). He returned to Kashii and died" (382). In both texts, the Jinrin motif is mentioned in an aside as a clear alternative to Chūai's obsession—and occasionally, battle with—the Kumaso.

While the shift from a cultural group in southern Kyushu to a monster from the Korean peninsula may initially seem quite a stretch, Jinrin serves as a catalyst for Jingū's conquest of the Korean kingdoms in much the same way that Emperor Chūai's interest in defeating the Kumaso sets off the events leading to the conquest in the early chronicles. Regardless of Jinrin's precise provenance, which we may never know, some sort of preliminary enemy appears in the vast majority of Jingū legends, whether it is Kumawashi, Jinrin, or a supernatural bull, as we shall soon see. However, what makes Jinrin unique is its blatantly demonic portrayal and its identification with the Korean kingdoms.

4. The Demon, or the Bull? Selective Adoption and Reinterpretation of the Jinrin Motif

The Jinrin motif, with its implication of impending threat from the Korean peninsula, is replicated in some Muromachi period Hachiman *engi*, but not all. In this section, I analyze where and why Jinrin appears in only some Hachiman *engi* as well as the appearance of yet another pre-conquest motif: a raging bull demon (*ushioni* 牛鬼) from the sea.

For instance, Egawa Hachiman Shrine 江川八幡 in Kii Province (present-day Wakayama) produced a relatively short *engi* dated to Eikyō 3 (1432), most of which is dedicated to the Jingū legend. While much of its content resembles that of the *Gudōkun*, subtle differences in the description and account of Jinrin point to the success of this reinterpretation. The *Egawa Hachiman engi* 江川八幡縁起 begins with the founding of Japan and the imperial household according to the Japanese chronicles, not the Pāli Canon, but swiftly moves to discussion of the conflict with Silla. Here, Jinrin is *not* the first threat, but is preceded by an invading army: "In the second year of the emperor [Chūai]'s reign, in the tenth year of the sexagenary cycle, hundreds of thousands of soldiers came from the kingdom of Silla to attack Japan" (*Egawa Hachiman engi*, p. 123). The emperor swiftly dispatches fifty thousand soldiers to meet this army at Nagato, and it is then that Jinrin appears.

At this time, a mysterious being called Jinrin from the enemy country suddenly was there. Red in color with eight heads, its shape was like a fierce god. Riding black clouds, it came to Japan, and the number of people it took and killed is unknown. (*Egawa Hachiman engi*, p. 123)

This description has many of the same elements as the *Gudōkun*: Jinrin as a mysterious being, like a fierce god, black clouds, red body, and eight heads. Yet there is no description of arrows breaking and minds rattled in Jinrin's presence. Rather, it is the scale of death that galvanizes the emperor to mount a rapid and personal response, citing his ability to defeat the monster with the ten virtues as well as the necessity of shooting quickly. As in the *Gudōkun*, Chūai's arrow cleaves Jinrin in two, vanquishing the demonic foe, but the emperor himself is struck with a stray arrow and dies, after instructing Jingū to take up the defense of Japan on behalf of their unborn son and heir, the future emperor (*Egawa Hachiman engi*, p. 123).

The similarity in both motifs and wording suggests a direct borrowing from the *Gudōkun*, with some truncation, given the brevity of the *Egawa Hachiman engi*. However, one key difference is the amplification of the Korean threat. A massive army from Silla is already mobilized before Jinrin appears, and no oracle from the gods is needed to reiterate the danger of invasion and the obligation to counteract it.

In a similar vein, the *Hachimangū engi*, dated to Eikyō 5 (1433) and considered to be the gift of shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori 足利義教 (1394–1441, r. 1428–1441) according to its

respective colophons, features the idea of a Korean threat in both military force and the figure of Jinrin. Here, the army comes first: “Several (tens of) thousands of warriors from Silla came to attack, planning to strike at Japan” (*Hachimangū engi*, p. 104). In response to this, Emperor Chūai leads “more than 50,000 government soldiers” to Toyoura to “defend against the villains of the foreign country”. This is when Jinrin, “a strange person” or even “a strange thing” (*fushigi no mono*, written in *kana*), appears, with red coloring, eight heads, black clouds, and the killing of untold people, all very similar in language and depiction to the *Gudōkun*. Likewise, Emperor Chūai proclaims the inability of the people to defend themselves, touts his strength derived from the ten virtues, and guards the gate. When Jinrin arrives on the sixth day, Chūai decapitates his foe with a single arrow—a notable feat given Jinrin’s eight heads—but is himself hit by a stray arrow and abjures Jingū to take his place “as general”, attack the foreign foe, and place their unborn child on the throne (*Hachimangū engi*, pp. 105–6). Though the episode is somewhat abbreviated, as with the *Egawa Hachiman engi*, the details and language in this *Hachimangū engi* suggest deliberate and direct borrowing from the *Gudōkun* in portraying both Jinrin and a sense of incoming threat from the Korean peninsula.

In contrast, in the Muromachi period *Hachiman gūji junpaiki* 八幡宮寺巡拝記, later called the *Hachimangū junpaiki*, it is Jingū’s intention to conquer Silla and Goguryeo, and though she receives assistance from many of the gods mentioned in the *Gudōkun* in doing so, there is no Jinrin or suggestion of an attack from the peninsula (*Hachimangū junpaiki*, pp. 25–29). In her study of the fourteenth century *Shikaumi jinja engi*, Haruko Wakabayashi notes the absence of the Jinrin motif in the two hanging scrolls, while many medieval *engi* either feature Jinrin or foreign troops from Silla as the cause of Chūai’s death and a precursor to Jingū’s conquest journey (Wakabayashi 2009, p. 115). Indeed, the *Daibugū engi* and *Umi Hachimangū engi*, the two texts that referenced Jinrin as an “alternate version” in textual asides, both come from shrines in Chikuzen Province (now Fukuoka Prefecture), showing that while the Jinrin motif was known, it was not adopted in northern Kyushu.

We see a similar discrepancy in the seven scrolls featured in the Hachiman Digital Handscroll Project, a 2015 endeavor spearheaded by art historian Melanie Trede in order to create an interactive web module with high-quality digitizations of several Hachiman picture scrolls. Of the seven *emaki* included in the project, only one features Jinrin: the *Jingū kōgō engi-e*, currently held at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and thus labeled the “Berlin version” by the project (and hereafter in this article). The “Berlin version” features two handscrolls produced between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, but copied from the *Konda Hachiman engi* 誉田八幡縁起, originally donated to Konda Hachiman Shrine in what is now Osaka prefecture by Ashikaga Yoshinori in 1433 (Eikyō 5), at the same time as the *Hachimangū engi*. Yoshinori presented scrolls to Iwashimizu Hachimangū and Usa Hachimangū on the very same day, demonstrating his desire to secure the goodwill of Hachiman.

In this “Berlin version” of the *Konda Hachiman engi*, Jinrin is pictured in two vibrant images. The first depicts Jinrin as a series of heads: a larger head circled by four smaller heads, all red in color and resembling the iconography of an *oni*. The heads are covered in black fur, and there is no body, but rather a swarm of clouds surrounding Jinrin, who exhales a powerful wind into the sky. It is up in those equally black clouds that we find his body in the act of firing an arrow, red arms clad in green armguards, and wearing a white cloth (*Konda Hachiman engi*). These two images, coupled with previous views of retreating soldiers, tell much of the story: Jinrin’s multiple heads, *oni*-like appearance, and devastating skill with bow and arrow, as well as black clouds. Depicting Jinrin in two parts suggests his demise when Emperor Chūai cleft the demon in two, but here, without any supporting text, it could also suggest that this is yet one more of Jinrin’s powers: the ability to separate his heads from his body and have both function independently. We know that the first passage of this scroll is missing, which likely describes the Jinrin episode thus illustrated (*Konda Hachiman engi*). Given that Yoshinori commissioned and gifts both scrolls,

the narrative most likely mirrors that of the *Hachimangū engi* closely. Even without a textual narrative, the images alone communicate much of Jinrin's symbolic importance.

Nevertheless, in all seven of the Hachiman Digital Handscroll Project scrolls, Jinrin is not the only opponent materializing before the conquest. We see the inclusion of another attacking force in Japan: a bull who attempts to destroy the empress' ship and is foiled by the deity Sumiyoshi. In the "Berlin version", this occurs after the Jinrin image and the appearance of an old man, later identified as Sumiyoshi, among her already mustering troops, and is illustrative of the general motif:

When the empress reached the harbor of Bingo, a bull [that] measured over ten *jō* (thirty meters) in length appeared on the open sea and was about to damage the ship on which she travelled. At that moment, the old man came and grabbed the bull by its two horns, throwing it back into the sea. As soon as it hit the water, it turned into an island, which is still extant today. Therefore, this place is called Ushimado and is written with the characters for Ushimarobashi (turning the bull over). From that moment, the empress felt assured, 'This old man really is not an ordinary person,' and she kept him close to her and consulted him on all matters". (*Konda Hachiman engi*)

This "new" motif accomplishes several things: the overcoming of a threat to the imperial ruler and line, providing an explanation of the name for a particular island, confirming the empress' suspicions regarding the sudden appearance of an old man, and establishing Sumiyoshi's place as her commander. More notably, it also appears in every scroll in the Hachiman Digital Handscroll Project, starting with the 1389 *Hachiman Daibosatsu go-engi* ("San Francisco version") to the 1672 *Hakozaki Hachimangū engi*. The bull does not feature in the *Gudōkun*, but appears increasingly in Hachiman *emaki*, eliminating Chūai and Jinrin as precursors to the conquest journey.

While this motif may seem irrelevant to our examination of Jinrin, the two are most likely related. Mizukami Isao argues that the bull was a reimagination of Jinrin for both temporal and geographical reasons. Mizukami identifies a direct correlation between the two in the writings of no less a figure than the Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), who wrote in *Honchō jinja kō* (On the Shrines of Our Court), a compilation of shrine stories not unlike the later *fudoki* we see from Kaibara Ekken and others. When relating the story of Empress Jingū and the attack of the giant bull, Razan noted that "this bull was likely a transformation of the demon Jinrin" (as quoted in Mizukami 2005, p. 25). Razan saw the bull as an alternate form of Jinrin, and Mizukami suggests that it is the demon bull (*ushioni*) that features in Jingū legends on both sides of the Setō Inland Sea. As military threats from the continent diminished with time, and as the legend moved east toward the Setō Inland Sea—particularly Shikoku and Kansai, areas less directly affected by the continent—the bull appeared in place of Jinrin (Mizukami 2005, pp. 24–25).

This interpretation is borne out by the *emaki* discussed earlier, in which the bull serves a similar function to Jinrin in presenting a threat to the empress, but ultimately succeeds in convincing her of Sumiyoshi's prowess, *kami* nature, and reliability as an advisor rather than the presence of foreign threat. However, like the *ushioni* for provinces bordering the Setō Inland Sea, Jinrin too became a regional enemy in the Chūgoku region at the southwestern end of Honshū.

5. Demon from an Undisclosed "Other" Country: Jinrin in Regional Kagura

The legacy of Jinrin can be found not only in Hachiman origin stories and illustrated scrolls, but in key traditions of *kagura* in the Chūgoku region of Japan. *Kagura*, often translated as sacred dance, literally means "entertainment for the gods". As such, *kagura* is not only a performance of music and dance, but a ritual act undertaken to please the *kami* and pacify their potentially malevolent tendencies. Many *kagura* draw themes from key Japanese myths and legends such as Ame-no-Uzume's dance to coax Amaterasu from the rock cave, which is often cited as the origin of *kagura* (Averbuch 1998). However, *kagura* takes on a variety of forms, as can be seen in its many subcategories, with diverse

practices and geographical origins. Furthermore, *kagura* has a complex relationship with other folk performing arts such as *dengaku* (field performances) and *fūryū* (group dances) (Suzuki 2021). Jinrin appears in *kagura* traditions concentrated in the prefectures of Shimane, Yamaguchi, and Hiroshima, all in the Chūgoku region and near the Sea of Japan.

One of the most vibrant and well-documented of these is Iwami *kagura*, situated in western Shimane prefecture. In the aptly-titled piece *Jinrin*, Emperor Chūai and his retainer Takamaro fight a doubled Jinrin, represented by both a red-masked and a white-masked demon, and all wear intricate, vibrant costumes. The plot largely follows that of the *engi* we have seen: Chūai determines that he must go himself to defeat these demons and bades Takamaro to keep watch. Once the demons appear, the emperor and his retainer kill them with bow and arrow, and dance in celebration of their success (Iwami 2013). Iwami *kagura*, including the *Jinrin* piece, is thought to have spread to what is now Hiroshima Prefecture in the late Edo Period. According to the (NPO Hiroshima Kagura Art Laboratory (Hiroshima Kagura Geijutsu Kenkyūjo 広島神楽芸術研究所) 2022), 12 performances of Hiroshima *kagura*'s "Jinrin" by 9 different *kagura* troupes have been recorded since 1993, the most recent in May 2022.¹² Similarly, in Izumo *kagura*, the piece *Sankan* or "Three Koreans" features three demons representing Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo respectively. They are held off by Empress Jingū's chief minister, Lord Takenouchi, clad in a white demon mask, while the empress herself waits in the wings, armed with a bow and arrow (Lancashire 2017).

In these *kagura* performances, the demons are vanquished and the imperial family victorious, but the narrative itself is communicated largely through visual display and movement rather than the limited, largely sung and chanted dialogue. Indeed, the vibrant masks worn by those performing as Jinrin make it abundantly clear that this is a dangerous demon who must be defeated. Furthermore, these particular *kagura* are generally performed for entertainment rather than as part of a religious rite. Though these regional *kagura* traditions draw heavily from both mythology and folklore—Iwami *kagura*, in particular, is known for employing the former—they are geared toward the entertainment of humans rather than gods, and, therefore, are divorced from any larger mythic narrative. Accordingly, the defeat of Jinrin is the substance of these *kagura*, without any greater reference to the Jingū legend or the Hachiman cult. Nevertheless, the similarity of the *Jinrin* story arch to other *kagura* pieces in which a supernatural foe is vanquished—the god Susanoo's defeat of the Yamata no Orochi springs to mind—suggests that the popularity of such *kagura* supports the continued performance and popularity of this particular piece.

Notwithstanding its entertainment value, *Jinrin kagura* reflect and perpetuate a fear of and animosity toward the Korean peninsula. While we cannot say exactly when these forms of *kagura* emerged, documentary evidence suggests the presence of *kagura* at key shrines in Shimane from the 1600s onward. This suggests that not only the Mongol Invasions and their aftermath, but that the Imjin War may also have influenced the development of these plays. Terence Lancashire points to Hideyoshi's invasion as well the banning of Christianity, a foreign religion, and the closed-country (*sakoku* 鎖国) policy of the Edo period as fostering a "government-sanctioned xenophobia" (Lancashire 2017, p. 328). In a similar vein, Tsukamoto Akira demonstrates how early modern depictions of Korean people generally portrayed them as dogs or beasts, often making direct reference to the Jingū legend (Tsukamoto 1996). As Shimane prefecture, where all three traditions of *kagura* mentioned here originate, borders the Sea of Japan and is geographically close to the Korean peninsula, such xenophobic performances may have seemed particularly relevant and, thus, were well received.

Kagura pieces stemming from the Jingū legend are far from the only *kagura* in which foreign demons are battled and thrust away from Japan's shores; in the case of Iwami *kagura*, seven of the twenty pieces performed today feature the expulsion of malicious foreign forces, although the enemy is not always Korean or demonic. Nor are these forms of *kagura* limited to the Chūgoku area alone; similar pieces can be found across Japan (Lancashire 2017, pp. 328–29). Although their popularity has waned considerably since World War II, many of these pieces have been performed at key moments of national pride, such as

the 1300 anniversary of the writing of the *Kojiki* in 2012; during increased tension with Korea over territorial disputes, as, for example, the contested island of Takeshima, known in Korean as Dokdo; or simply as part of a revival of nationalist sentiment (Lancashire 2017, p. 321). Indeed, of the 12 performances of “Jinrin” in Hiroshima noted above, three of them took place in 2006, after a particularly tense exchange of political gestures between Japan and South Korea regarding Takeshima/Dokdo.

The existence and continued performance of *kagura* depicting Jinrin demonstrates that this demonic representation of the Korean kingdoms has had a lasting legacy. While medieval *engi* and *emaki* are not familiar nor accessible to most of us today (with the exception of the Hachiman Digital Handscroll project), performances of *kagura* remain prime tourist attractions as well as valued features at local festivals.¹³ Whether Jinrin and other demons are explicitly identified with the Korean peninsula, or whether they are vaguely described as attacking from a “different country”, these *kagura* clearly display the foreign as demonic and dangerous, and is invariably pacified by Japanese historical—and imperial—figures.

6. Conclusions

Initially developed in the wake of the Mongol Invasions, the Jinrin motif radically changed the Jingū legend into a story of valiant defense rather than mere territorial conquest, and of Japanese moral and military supremacy over the Korean peninsula. Although the figure of Jinrin may have been drawn from descriptions of defilement within natural forces in the Buddhist Canon or *Nihon shoki* elements, such as the flying foe Kumawashi and the conquest of Kumaso, there can be no question that Jinrin’s inclusion in the Jingū legend, appearing in the *Hachiman gudōkun* a few decades after the Mongol Invasions, reflects a broader shift in medieval Japanese attitudes towards the Korean peninsula and the Asian continent. Rather than early medieval laments about Japan’s spatial and temporal distance from the Buddha’s birthplace, lifetime, and teachings, late medieval *engi* portray Japan as the land of the gods (*shinkoku* 神国), protected not only by *kami* and buddhas, but by the moral leadership of the imperial family. Although emperors were no longer the primary political actors in Japan, their long history and divine ancestors—represented here by Emperor Chūai, Empress Jingū, and their son Emperor Ōjin, the deity Hachiman—provided ample proof that Japan had enjoyed special protection from diverse deities for at least a thousand years.

The emergence of Jinrin in Hachiman narratives cannot be understood without reference to the complex and multifaceted discourse of *shinkoku*. The term first appears in the *Nihon shoki* in the context of the Jingū legend, when the king of Silla expresses his wonder and dismay at the invasion forces from a “land of the *kami* (*shinkoku*) called Nippon” (*Nihon shoki*, pp. 428–29; Aston 1896, p. 230). Yet the term achieved relative prominence before and after the Mongol Invasions. Several leading scholars have discussed how the *shinkoku* discourse was (1) a Buddhist construct, predicated on Buddhist notions of time, history, and the subjugation and eventual conversion of demons and non-Buddhists alike and (2) utilized not only or even primarily in the context of international relations, but rather as a conceptual tool in conflicts and power struggles between institutional entities, including major religious complexes and the court (Kuroda 1996; Rambelli 2003; Satō 2013). Accordingly, as Fabio Rambelli has shown, the rhetoric of divine protection from moral enemies was employed in such diverse areas as land disputes, accusations of heresy, conflict resolution, religious marketing, and the justification of the ruling system itself (Rambelli 2003, pp. 45–49).

However, *shinkoku* discourse played a key role in how political and religious actors—who were often one and the same in the context of medieval Japan—understood international relations and Japan’s place in the world, particularly during times of tension with the Asian continent. In her work on the *Shikaumi jinja engi*, Haruko Wakabayashi argues that Jingū’s successful conquest of the peninsula in the third century and the triumphant defense of Japan against the Mongol Invasions in the thirteenth were not only linked within

the origin story genre as analogous events, but that Jingū's conquest became "a standard metaphor for foreign battles in general" (Wakabayashi 2009, p. 128). The discourse of *shinkoku* made such comparisons both possible and fruitful, providing precedents for divine intervention on Japan's behalf as proof of its continuity. In this context, the inclusion of Jinrin as a foreign demon threatening Japan contributed greatly to the drawing of a parallel between the two foreign battles—Jingū's conquest and the Mongol Invasions—by making them defensive actions on the part of Japan, both of which were ultimately successful because of Japan's ethical superiority and special status as land of the gods.

However, just as responses to the Mongol Invasions and the use of *shinkoku* discourse were not uniform, the Jinrin motif was not universally adopted. While the motif appears in some *engi* and *emaki* based directly off the *Hachiman gudōkun* or inspired by it in the century immediately following the attempted Mongol Invasions, many *engi* and *emaki* instead feature the *ushioni*, a demonic bull emerging from the sea to menace Jingū's fleet on its way to the Korean peninsula. As origin stories relating to Hachiman spread and were produced in locations increasingly distant from the seas bordering the Asian continent, and as memories of battles with foreign forces began to fade, the *ushioni* replaced Jinrin as a threat. Though not associated with the Korean peninsula or as clearly demonic as Jinrin, the *ushioni* was still a sea-borne threat vanquished by a *kami* (Sumiyoshi) with approval from an imperial ruler (Jingū). Furthermore, the *ushioni* represents a threat contained and repurposed, as the demon bull becomes a new island and thus a new Japanese territory.

The reclaiming of territory, whether literal land or figurative prowess in literary or religious fields, for Japan was frequently facilitated through the use of narrative. The Noh play *Hakurakuten*, in which the Chinese poet Bo Juyi is beaten by the *kami* Sumiyoshi in a poetry contest, not only asserts the dominance of Japanese poetry over Chinese, but may have even been commissioned by shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimochi 足利義持 (1386–1428) after his decision to end diplomatic relations with China and after military action between Joseon Korea and Tsushima following disputes over Japanese pirates and their incursions on the peninsula, both occurring in 1419 (Klein 2013, pp. 420–24). Similarly, in her monograph on Shinra Myōjin, the "god of Silla", Sujung Kim shows how this clearly foreign *kami* was reinterpreted in the medieval period as a deity who traveled to and then conquered Silla rather than originating in Silla, as well as a deity who both caused and cured pestilence, akin to (and occasionally identified with) the native *kami* Susanoo (Kim 2020, pp. 93–99). Regarding Susanoo, David Weiss argues that, due to the *kami*'s liminal role within Japanese mythology as troublemaker, exile and hero, he was reimagined as a foreign deity who originally came from the Asian continent as early as the medieval period. Furthermore, after Japan annexed Korea in 1910, the mythology of Susanoo and Amaterasu was employed as a metaphor for the "sibling" relationship of the two countries; just as Susanoo's initial defiance of his sister's rule gave way to acceptance, so too would Korea's existence as a separate state give way to submission to Japan's benevolent governance (Weiss 2022). All of these cases demonstrate the vital role that narrative plays in shaping worldview and in the (re)claiming of coveted territory.

In a similar vein, we can observe the success of Jinrin's essential purpose in the narrative—reframing the conquest as an act of self-defense rather than territorial gain—even in versions of the legend that mention neither Jinrin nor the *ushioni*. For instance, in the *Hachiman Usagū gotakusenshū* (compiled in 1313), Jingū speaks of "subduing the western border", suggesting that the Korean peninsula was an extension of Japan and, thus, rightfully hers (*Hachiman Usagū gotakusenshū*, p. 17). This latter point may suggest the notion of attacking and conquering Silla for security purposes, an interpretation not far from the preemptive strike we see in the *Gudōkun* and other *engi*.

Even so, Jinrin did not disappear. Stories, illustrations, and reenactments of Jinrin's attack on Japan and defeat by Chūai, Jingū, and the *kami* continue to be seen in the Chūgoku region of Japan, albeit as a form of entertainment. We know that Jingū legend was reinterpreted and revitalized at the time of Hideyoshi's invasion,¹⁴ and then again during the modern period, as Imperial Japan annexed the Korean peninsula and encouraged

xenophobia and ultranationalism on a large scale (Trede 2008; Schmid 2022). It is no surprise that the Jinrin motif was similarly resurrected and remains a part of regional cultural memory today. Thus, the addition of Jinrin and the reinvention of the Jingū legend is a vibrant example of the uses to which early history and legend can be put by later generations.

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Notes

- ¹ For a fuller discussion of the Buddhist elements in the *Gudōkun*’s Jingū legend, including the Buddhist creation story, see Simpson 2017.
- ² The *Aggañña Sutta* is part of the Digha Nikaya or “Long discourses”, a compilation within the Pali Canon. For an English translation, see (Walshe 1987, pp. 407–15).
- ³ This motif seems to be most common in reference to Iwami *kagura*, which may be because the “demon stone” (*oniishi* 鬼石) held at Iwami Shrine, is thought to be where Jinrin’s head(s) were buried as well as where the Kumaso were defeated.
- ⁴ One of Chūai’s generals and his chief minister, respectively; Minister Takenouchi plays a particularly important role in the subsequent Jingū legend.
- ⁵ Though the *Gudōkun* clearly states that all three kingdoms of Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo were conquered, this specific reference to Silla in the rock-carving scene may refer back to the *Nihon shoki*, in which the gods specifically instruct Emperor Chūai to conquer Silla.
- ⁶ The final reference is within the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* and is an incidental combination, describing how a potter uses mud and shapes an object on a wheel. 譬如陶師依於泥聚微塵輪繩 (T. 671, 529b18–529c18).
- ⁷ 塵輪風等地水火風幾處所攝 (T. 1545, 689b03–689b08).
- ⁸ 染六塵輪轉生死永無出期 (T. 1910, 969a18–970c10).
- ⁹ For more on Pudu’s work, see (Ter Haar 2021, pp. 71–75, 97–98).
- ¹⁰ 世人背覺合塵輪迴三界四生六道善惡業緣受報好醜 (T. 1973, 336a19–336c03).
- ¹¹ Though less likely, there may also be an antecedent in the eight-headed serpent slain by Susano-o at Izumo. One description includes red eyes (*Nihon shoki*, pp. 92–99; Aston 1896, pp. 52–58).
- ¹² See list at <https://www.npo-kagura.jp/animation-retrieve.html> (accessed 17 July 2022).
- ¹³ For instance, Iwami *kagura*, including a short clip of the piece *Jinrin*, was featured in the episode “Dancing with the Deities & A Buddhist Retreat” in the NHK World show *J-Trip Plan* on 20 May 2019. (See Gordenker 2019)
- ¹⁴ Indeed, there is some evidence that Hideyoshi commissioned revivals of the Jingū legend, both in the form of Noh plays, *kagura*, and new versions of the legend.

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Abbreviations

- NST *Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系. Edited by Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎 et al. 67 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.
- SNKBZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文學全集. 88 vols. Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1994–2002.
- ST *Shintō taikai* 神道大系. Edited by Shintō taikai hensankai 神道大系編纂会. 120 vols. Tokyo: Shintō taikai hensankai, 1977–1994.
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭 et al. 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932.

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