

## SHUTENDÔJI: ONI WITH A RIGHTEOUS TONGUE

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In what is undoubtedly one of Japan's most renowned demon legends, the warrior-hero Minamoto no Raikô (? - 1021) conquers the diabolical *oni*, Shutendôji, by guile and deception.<sup>1</sup> The tale has enjoyed immense popularity in Japan, transcending class and time. According to the history and precepts of Japanese literature, Shutendôji belongs to a genre called *otogizôshi* or "Companion Stories," which are the short stories written in the Muromachi period (1333-1600) for the purpose of entertainment and moral edification.<sup>2</sup> *Otogizôshi's* anonymous authorship, brevity, and context are indicative of an oral-derived literature (Steven 1977). Many works in this genre originated in history or legend and evolved in the oral tradition before being recounted in written form. This is characteristic of a folklore process (Honko 1998). Standardised expressions and the mnemonic repetition of keywords and phrases often typify this auditory genre of literature. Syllabic patterns, for example, the use of alternating seven and five-syllable phrases, derive their origin from an oral tradition widely used in Japanese auditory genres for their rhythmic effects in climactic parts (Ichiko 1968: 406-408). Another indicator of *otogizôshi's* origin in oral tradition is the "emphasis on events and comparative lack of concern for details typical of auditory literature" (Steven 305). Thus, though we know of the tale of Shutendôji through the written text, the story's origin derives from an oral tradition.

As is invariably the case with popular stories and mytho-historic folklore, there often exists an array of textual versions, interpreted and presented differently, but drawing on the same legend to form its base. The oldest extant written form dates to the fourteenth century, but it was the 18<sup>th</sup>-century printed version of the Shutendôji demon story that reached a markedly broad audience, thanks to a bookseller by the name of Shibukawa Seiemon. He published the revised Shutendôji story in an anthology of twenty-three short stories under the title of *Otogi zôshi* (Companion Tales). The Shibukawa Seiemon version of the story is based upon the oral-derived literature of Shutendôji.

### RIGHTEOUS STATEMENT OF DEMONIC OGRE

Befitting the *otogizôshi* genre of simultaneously entertaining and providing moral edification, the "Shutendôji" story reveals how with the help of the deities, warriors faithful to the emperor can defeat even the most monstrous of villains. At the moment of the demon's mortal defeat, however, Shutendôji cries out, "*Nasakenashi to yo, kyakusou- tachi, itsuwarinashi to kikituru ni, kijin ni oudou naki mono wo,*" (How sad, you priests! You said you don't lie. There is no injustice in the words of demons). The utterance creates an abrupt shift in the narration of the tale from that of a pro-warrior perspective to that of the *oni*. This transfer arrests the flow of the story. Righteous lamentation from a demon that abducts and eats young women appears naive, if not totally incongruous with established parameters of the *otogizôshi* genre. Such a diabolic character should expect subterfuge and should be far less trusting. What is the significance of this fiendish character making such a righteous statement? By closely examining the nature of *oni* and the origins of its story, this article explores the significance of Shutendôji's moral as well as mortal declaration.

### SUMMARY OF SHUTENDÔJI STORY

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<sup>1</sup>"Shutendôji" is the most famous monster-conquer stories in this genre and have exerted more influence on later literature of demon-conquerors than any other work of *otogizôshi*. (Ichiko and Noma 1969: 78).

<sup>2</sup>The definition of *otogizôshi* as genre is still controversial among literary scholars. For the study of *otogi zôshi* in English, see Mulhern 1974; Steven 1977; Araki 1981.

Following a brief summary of the Shibukawa text of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, a sampling of four episodes will be recounted and expounded upon to enunciate Shutendôji's conflicting character dichotomy, as described in the translated text.

The story is set in late tenth/early eleventh-century Japan, in the capital city, then Kyoto. *Oni* demons living in the nearby Ôe Mountains have taken to abducting young women from the capital. At first, the maidens are forced into domestic servitude, but at the whim of the *oni*, they are dismembered, their flesh devoured and their blood imbibed. The abduction of a beautiful young princess finally compels the emperor to command a famous warrior, Minamoto no Raikô, to assemble his men, conquer the demons and retrieve the abducted. Raikô is alarmed by its formidable task, for the *oni* possesses the supernatural power to transform anything and is hard to beat. So before leaving on their secret mission disguised as mountain ascetics, Raikô and his men, pray for success at three separate shrines. Their faith is rewarded, for while en route to the *oni's* lair on Mt. Ôe, Raikô and his men come upon three deities disguised as elderly men. These deities prove invaluable to Raikô's quest, bestowing upon him two extraordinary pieces of equipment needed for his confrontation with the *oni*. The first weapon of offence was a special kind of *sake*, specifically designed to intoxicate the mighty demons. The second indispensable tool given to Raikô is a hobnailed helmet, designed to protect him as he slays the drunken *oni*. Raikô and his men thank the deities for their offerings before continuing on their demon quest.

Arriving at the demon's mountaintop palace, Raikô and his men enact their little ruse, pretending to be a band of lost mountain monks en route to Kyoto. The men are promptly taken to the inter sanctum of the demon chief, Shutendôji. There, Raikô introduces himself as a descendent of the Great Mountain Priest, a revered man who pitied and fed hungry demons (the textual recount of this is presented as "Episode One" below). Shutendôji remains somewhat suspicious, so while entertaining Raikô and his men, he tests the veracity of their story by offering them a feast of human flesh and blood (see "Episode Two" below). In order to be seen as credible, Raikô and his men must consume the flesh of the very maidens they were there to save. Shutendôji's tentative acceptance of the men's story eventually gives way to celebration and soon all the *oni* in the palace partake in the special *sake*, quickly falling into drunken stupors of sleep (see "Episode Three" below). The *oni's* inebriated state allows Raikô and his men easy and quick passage to the entrance of Shutendôji's bedchamber, which they find protected by an iron gate. Unable to enter, Raikô's men seem defeated. At that moment, the three deities reappear to divinely intervene, opening the gate so Raikô can complete his mission. Once inside, Raikô and his warriors prepare to execute the *oni*. In the requital, Shutendôji cries as he is decapitated, "How sad, you priests! You said you don't lie. There is no injustice in the words of demons" (see "Episode Four" below). As Shutendôji's dismembered head hurls through the air, it tries to bite Raikô, who remains protected by the helmet given to him by the deities. Then they proceed to free the surviving maidens. Though Raikô is not able to save all the maidens, Shutendôji is successfully vanquished and peace is soon after restored.

EPISODE ONE

PICTURE 1  
(Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

[Disguised as priests, Raikô's men are greeted and escorted to a palatial veranda where they are to convene with the *oni* leader Shutendôji.] The demon's imminent arrival was ominously precipitated by a great tumult in the heavens - thunder and lightning were striking out. An odour of rotting fish seemed to carry on the wind. In the mayhem of this supernatural calamity, Shutendôji appeared. A towering form adorned in a checkered kimono with a crimson *hakama*; a human form, with pale red skin, dishevelled short hair, clenching an iron staff, was suddenly looking down on Raikô and his men. Then, a voice challenged Raikô and his men: "The Mountain I live on is no ordinary mountain - the boulders and rocks are towering and the gorges are deep with no passage. Neither birds of flight nor beasts that run on earth can approach this summit, for there is no passageway for them, let alone humans. Did you, in spite of being humans, fly here? Speak. I will listen."

Raikô responded, "This is normal in our training. Long ago, when an ascetic named En no Ozunu<sup>3</sup> pushed his way through impassable terrains, he encountered three demons that called themselves Goki, Zenki, and Akki. En no Ozunu gave them food and incantations. Since then, every year En has continuously given these demons food and compassion. We priests follow in En no Ozunu's wake, and we are from Mt. Haguro of Dewa Province.<sup>4</sup> We confined ourselves to Mt. Ômine<sup>5</sup> during the New Year (from New Year's eve to the New Year's day), and now since spring has arrived, we set out from Mt. Ômine late last night for sightseeing in Kyoto. But in *San'indô*,<sup>6</sup> we became lost and we arrived here in search of passage. It must be En's guidance that has led to our fortuitous meeting here and now. There is no other joy than this! It is said that to stay a night under the same tree and to drink from the same river is predestined from a previous life. Please give us lodging tonight. Because I carry *Sake*, we humbly offer to share it with you. We, too, would like to enjoy *sake* and revel here this night."

EPISODE TWO

PICTURE 2  
(Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

Hearing Raikô's explanations, Shutendôji judged the priests to be of no immediate threat, and so invited them to his inner-sanctum to learn more of their journey and their intentions. Once there, the suspicious demon further tested Raikô's sincerity by offering him some of the demon's *sake*, "You brought *sake*... we, too, want to offer *sake* to you, priests!" Shutendôji gestured the *oni* to bring forth the sake. The demons readily obeyed, hurrying off to obtain the maiden's blood to put into the *sake* container, placing it in front of Shutendôji, alongside his cup. Shutendôji then passed the chalice to Raikô and poured him some of the demon's blood *sake*. Raikô drank his entire portion with apparent zeal and upon seeing this, Shutendôji commanded: "Pass it on to the next." The demon then poured *sake* for Tsuna. Tsuna received the cup and likewise, drank it all. Shutendôji inquired of his servants, "Are there not condiments?" In response, the demons immediately brought forth human arms and legs that appeared to have been recently

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<sup>3</sup> En no Ozunu was born in Mt. Katsuragi in present-day Nara prefecture. During the reign of Emperor Mommu (697-707) he was exiled to Izu, present-day Shizuoka prefecture, for the crime of misguiding the public with magic. He was later considered to be the father of mountaineering asceticism.

<sup>4</sup> Mt. Haguro of Dewa province, present-day Yamagata prefecture, is renown as a center for mountain asceticism.

<sup>5</sup> A main training field of mountaineering asceticism.

<sup>6</sup> The area of present-day Kyoto, Hyôgo prefecture, Tottori prefecture, and Shimane prefecture, all face the Japan Sea.

severed. The dismembered body parts were carefully put in front of Shutendôji. "Prepare them for the priests!" he ordered one of his subjects, but before the demon could comply, Raikô interrupted and volunteered, "I shall do it!" He then unsheathed his small sword, cutting the human flesh into five-inch pieces, once again, consuming them with apparent gusto. Looking on, Tsuna quickly followed suit, declaring, "I'm so obliged for your consideration that I may share some, too," and after similarly cutting the flesh into five-inch long pieces, he joined in the feast. Looking at them, Shutendôji asked finally, "What kind of mountains do you live among? It is strange to eat this kind of rare *sake* and condiments." Raikô replied, "Your suspicion is reasonable. According to our discipline, we do not reject anything if it is given in compassion – even if we do not desire it in heart. While I was eating this kind of *sake* and condiments, something came to mind. To defeat or be defeated is but a dream. I am not, yet I am and there are no two tastes in eating. We all attain Buddhahood. Thanks be to Buddha," and Raikô prayed. It is said that the world of demons is without deception. In veneration of Raikô's words, Shutendôji worshipped him, opening his heart to him, saying, "It's sad that we offered something disagreeable to you. It is not necessary for the rest of you to eat them."

### Episode Three

PICTURE 3  
(Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

"My face is red because I'm drunk. Don't think of me as a demon. To me, as you I, your appearance, looks frightening at a glance, but once one gets used to it, a mountain priest is quite cute." Singing, dancing and drinking, he grew increasingly more at ease with Raikô and his men. Because the *Sake* was of divine expedient, its poison coursed through Shutendôji's body to saturation, clouding his mind and further disheveling his appearance. Overcome in drunkenness, Shutendôji commanded his demonic minions, "Attention all demons present, drink a cup of this most rare *Sake* before our guests and entertain them. Dance!" The demons dotingly complied with the wishes of their master, and as they were about to rise to dance, Raikô, cunningly offered to refill their cups with more of the *special sake*, "First, let me pour some *Sake* for you," and he disseminated the poisoned *Sake* to all the demons around him. The *Sake's* poison infused the bodies of the demons quickly, rendering them all disoriented. Amidst this drunken delirium, the demon named Ishikumadôji rose to sing out, "From the capital what kind of people lost their way to become condiments of *sake*. How interesting," for a couple of times. Ishikumadôji's song is understood to suggest that the demons should make condiments out of the mountain priests for *sake*. Almost reactively, Raikô stood to serve up more of the intoxicating *Sake* making certain Shutendôji received the first cup. As if in response to Ishikumadoji's song, Tsuna is compelled to rise to dance, singing: "After a passage of time, spring came to the demon's cavern. Wind invites the flowers to fall. How interesting," for a couple of times. This song was foreshadowing how the priests would cut down the demons like the strewn petals of a flower cut down by a storm. But the demons did not catch on to the song's hidden message. Rejoicing in drink and entertainment, the demons continued sinking deeper into their drunken stupors.

### EPISODE FOUR

PICTURE 4  
(Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

The warriors came upon a large room encased in an iron gate, the door, also iron, was bolted shut. It appeared very difficult to gain entry by human power. Peering through

a crevice, the men could see lights held high in the four corners with iron bars and up-side-down halberds against the wall. Inside, Shutendôji lay looking quite different from what the warriors had seen earlier. Shutendôji was now over six-meters tall. Two horns were now protruding through the spiked red bristles on his scalp, his beard had become wildly shaggy and his eyebrows were overgrown. His limbs had become heavy and thick, like those of a bear. Shutendôji lay sprawled out, his arms and legs spread in all directions. [Unable to enter the demon's bedchamber, the warriors' cause seemed entirely hopeless.] At that moment, the three deities reappeared to help the warriors once more. "You came here well. Now you can rest assured. We have chained the demon's limbs to pillars so that he will not move. Raikô, you cut off his head! The rest of you position yourselves to dismember him, it should not be difficult!" Upon dispensing these final instructions, the deities pushed open the iron-gate, then once again vanished into thin air. The warriors were moved to tears, knowing that the three deities had appeared to help them. As instructed, Raikô positioned himself at Shutendôji's side, smoothly unsheathing his Chisui in preparation for the final act. After praying three times, "Hail the Deities of the three shrines, please give me your helping hands," Raikô stood ready to slaughter Shutendôji with his *Chisui*, when the drunken demon opened his eyes widely, crying out, "How sad, you priests! You said you don't lie. There is no injustice in the words of demons." The bound Shutendôji tried in vain to escape from his chains. Then, as if tapping a colossal inner reservoir of strength, Shutendôji let out a final reverberating roar causing both heaven and earth to rumble in an unrelenting, thunderous quake.

With a single blow from the warrior's sword, Shutendôji's decapitated head hurls through the air. The demon's life force takes a few seconds to extinguish and Shutendôji's flying cranium lunges at Raikô, trying to bite him, in a final effort to kill or maim him. Were it not for the hobnailed-helmet provided him by the deities, Raikô would have surely perished.

#### THE ONI

The popular Japanese *oni* immediately conjures up images of a hideous supernatural creature emerging from hell's abyss to terrify the wicked mortals. The appearance of *oni* often reflects the demon's terrifying demeanour and appearance. As the illustrations have shown, the *oni* are customarily portrayed with one or more horns protruding from their scalps. They sometimes have a third eye in the center of the forehead, and a varying skin color, most commonly black, red, blue, or yellow. Frequently, the *oni* are depicted with their wide mouths stretching from ear to ear in evil grimace. Invariably, the *oni* are scantily clad, wearing a loincloth of tiger skin and carrying a mace<sup>7</sup> (Anesaki: 282; Komatsu 1999: 3). While they may bear a curious resemblance to imps and devils of medieval Christian superstition, Japanese *oni*, according to Anesaki, "belong to a purely Buddhist mythology" (1928: 283). Indeed, from as early as the sixth century, *oni* have appeared as hellish creatures, but they are hardly the sole evil in the Buddhist cosmic universe. According to Komatsu Kazuhiko, *oni* was the term used in *Onmyôdô* (the Way of Yin and Yang) to describe evil spirits that harm humans. In early *Onmyôdô* doctrine, the word "*oni*", referred specifically to invisible evil spirits that caused human infirmity (Komatsu 1999: 3). In both Buddhism and *Onmyôdô*, *oni* indicates negative entity.

In ancient Japanese literature, a number of different written characters were employed to express *oni*. Among them, the character used now is , which in Chinese means invisible soul/ spirit of the dead, both ancestral and evil. According to *Wamyô ruijushô* (ca. 930s), the first Japanese language dictionary, *oni* is explained as "hiding behind things, not

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<sup>7</sup>Regarding the horn(s) and tiger skin, there is a folk belief that an image of *oni*, with ox's horn(s) and tiger- skin loincloth, was created from a word play of *ushitora* a direction of northeast according to the twelve horary signs. *Ushi* (ox) represents the direction 30 degrees East from due North (North North East); *tora* (tiger) is the direction 30 degrees northward from due east. The direction of northeast, *ushitora*, was considered an ominous direction called *kimon* - *oni*'s gate. Hence, ox's horn and tiger-skin were used to depict *oni*. Baba: 46- 47; Toriyama: 80)

wishing to appear... It is a soul/spirit of the dead." Takahashi writes that the concept of *oni* in *Wamyô ruijushô* is apparently based upon the Chinese concept (Takahashi: 41). This character also represented *mono*,<sup>8</sup> as demonstrated in *Man'yôshû* (Ten Thousand Leaves, ca. 8th century). Origuchi Shinobu explains that the *oni* were something to be feared and that *mono* was the abstract manifestation of this entity possessing no particular shape or form (Origuchi 1965, 3). Until the end of the Heian period, the symbol was read both as *mono* and *oni* (Baba: 43).

During the Heian period (794-1185), *mononoke* (evil spirits) – sharing the same *mono* were influential. Though *mononoke* is often written as , the original meaning is (Tsuchihashi 1990: 96), or that which employs . Takahashi Masaaki writes that *mono*, as in , was a spiritual perception that negatively affects humans, as in was shapeless energy, integral to the essence of the human body. A story in *Nihon ryôiki* (Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition, ca. 823) recounts the tale of a mysterious messenger from the netherworld, documented as . When 's was attached to the human character, that human either fell violently ill or died (Takahashi 1992: 4).<sup>9</sup>

As the use of a written character, became popular, the omnipresence of the invisible *oni* gradually entrenched itself into popular consciousness. Reflective of this, entertainers and artisans of the day often represented *oni* in paintings and in the performing arts. As the image and character of *oni* spread in popular use and recognition, the *aratama* (malign spiritual entities) of humans, animals, and various phenomena, which previously had not been represented visually, came to be recognized as *oni* and were likewise depicted with *oni* features. Similarly, the label was applied to a broader array of phenomenological occurrences including natural disasters,<sup>10</sup> and the supernatural possession of ordinary household objects thought to have been brought on by age. Even "people who had different customs or lived beyond the reach of the emperor's control" (Komatsu 1999: 3) were considered to be *oni* variants. In "Yama no jinsei" (Life in the Mountain) Yanagita Kunio writes of babies born with teeth - different from ordinary babies. These babies were widely believed to be *onigo* (*oni's* child) and were badly abused, particularly prior to the Edo period. Yanagita cites various documents including *Tsurezure Nagusamigusa*, which records "...a deplorable custom in Japan where a baby born with teeth is called *oni's* child and is killed." Jôjin (1108 - ?), a Buddhist monk, chronicled in *Higashiyama ôrai* (Letters from Higashiyama) that "a maid gave birth to a baby with teeth. Her neighbours all advised her to bury the baby in the mountain, rationalizing that the baby had to have been *oni*. The maid came to me for consultation and I [Jôjin] suggested that the baby be sent to a temple to become a monk" (Yanagita 1968, 111- 112). Similarly, Satake affirms the bleak destiny of a child thought to be of *oni* lineage - he or she was destined to be killed, abandoned in the mountain, or sent to a temple (Satake 1992, 44).

As for those "beyond the reach of emperor's control," Baba Akiko states that the *oni* were a representation of those suppressed people and/or those who were not a part of the Fujiwara Regency (from the 10<sup>th</sup> century through the 11<sup>th</sup> century) (Baba, 141). The Fujiwara Regency reached its peak with Fujiwara Michinaga (966 - 1027), and Baba observed that *oni* were more rampant during Emperor Ichijô's reign (980-1011), the zenith of the Fujiwara Regency, than at any other time in Japan's history (Baba, 150). Finally and most importantly, Emperor Ichijô's reign is the period setting for Shutendôji.

*Oni* as the disenfranchised, i.e., "other-ness", may be the key to understanding Shutendôji's enigmatic cry where he seems to bewail the priests lack of honour, while extolling the higher held values of the demons. Rosemary Jackson, asserts: "the fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: That, which has been silenced, made invisible,

<sup>8</sup>Tsuchihashi Yutaka surmises that it was probably because the meaning of the character, , is close to the concept of *mono* (Tsuchihashi 95). The first appearance of this character in Japanese record is in *Izumo no kuni fudoki* (Topography of Izumo Province, 733). But it is not certain this character was pronounced as *oni*. Rendition of as *oni* probably started around 600 A.D. (Baba: 31).

<sup>9</sup> This concept regards *mono* as an epidemic deity, a prevalence of epidemic as a result of *oni's* work. Takahashi asserts that *oni* must be considered as epidemic deity (Takahashi 1992: 4).

<sup>10</sup>Kondô Yoshihiro asserts that foundation of *oni* was people's awe toward natural fury such as thunder and lightning, storm, earthquake.

covered over and made 'absent' (Jackson 1981: 4). In this light, Shutendôji's exclamation can be seen as the voice of the disenfranchised as well as the omnipotent, both of which are preordained for elimination by the powerful.

#### ORIGINS OF THE SHUTENDÔJI STORY

Though widely perceived as a supernatural being with extraordinary powers, another popular theory on the origins of the Shutendôji story has it that Shutendôji and his fellow *oni* were nothing more than a gang of bandits who lived in Mt. Ôe.<sup>11</sup> The Kamakura military government's edict, issued in 1239, was designed to suppress the "villainous robbers" living in Mt. Ôe, and is cited in support of this view.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714) asserts, "Shutendôji was originally a robber who donned the appearance of a demon to scare people so that he could steal their wealth and abduct women."<sup>13</sup>

Takahashi Masaaki presents another alternate view on *oni* origins. He asserts that the prototype of Shutendôji was originally a deity of smallpox (Takahashi 1992: vi). Most interestingly, Takahashi explains that in and after the Heian period (794- 1185) a ceremony of *onmyôdô* called *shikai no matsuri* (ritual at the four demarcations) was held every time an epidemic of smallpox broke out in Kyoto. The ritual was designed to prevent the epidemic deity from entering Kyoto and was held at four locations simultaneously in the suburbs of the capital. A series of magical activities designed to appease these epidemic deities, hoped to turn the invisible, shapeless spirits into fully formed corporeal beings with a sense of reality, i.e., *oni* of Mt. Ôe (Takahashi 1992: 1-53). At this time, quarantine as a public health measure was widely in use to arrest the spread of disease. Not surprisingly, stigma was attached to those facing quarantine, and only compounded the forced detainment and isolation of those affected (Lederberg 1992: 22). The diseased were effectively disenfranchised, much as the *oni* were in later mytho-historical treatments.

Another intriguing theory as to the origin of Shutendôji put forth by several modern day scholars is that the *oni* stories were actually based on the unconventional lifestyles of a group of metal and/or mine workers living in the Ôe Mountains. These metal workers were travelers who were purportedly well versed in magic and medicinal practices. It is because these men led such different lifestyles than the masses, that they were feared and ultimately regarded as heathens by many of the local townsfolk.

There exists ample literary and historical proof that people living in the mountains were often referred to as the descendents of *oni*. So often because the customs and manners of these mountain dwellers were different from those of the people living on the flatlands, (Miyamoto 1969: 10, Wakao 1981: 46), they were prone to a stereotypical branding. Again, as Yanagita Kunio and many a social scientist cross-culturally have come to observe, it is human nature to apply social stigma to those displaying difference or anomaly.

In an altogether other theory, Amano Fumio asserts that Shutendôji was originally a local deity from Mt. Hiei whom Priest Dengyô<sup>14</sup> first encountered when Dengyô entered Mt. Hiei to establish the Tendai sect of Buddhism. Therefore, in some of the textual variations of the Shutendôji story, Priest Dengyô is credited with expelling Shutendôji from Mt. Hiei. Amano surmises that the local deity of Mt. Hiei was indeed an *oni*, because Mt. Hiei faces away from the direction of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto called *kimon* where *oni* are said to reside (Amano 1979).<sup>15</sup> The Tendai Buddhists were strongly linked to Imperial authority and as such, were widely viewed as protectorates of the nation. As a

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<sup>11</sup>See Satake, 1992, Baba, 1988.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Satake, 53.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Takahashi, 48. Ekiken also remarks that the story of Shutendôji resembles fiction of Tang Dynasty entitled *Hakuenden* (Story of White Monkey). For the relation between *Shutendôji* and *Hakuenden*, see Kuroda Akira's article.

<sup>14</sup>Saichô (d. 822). The founder of Tendai sect of Buddhism.

<sup>15</sup>That Shutendôji was expelled by Dengyô is narrated in detail in the picture scroll, Ôeyama Ekotoba, and Noh's Ôeyama (Amano 1979: 19).

consequence, the local deity forced to leave Mt. Hiei is disenfranchised from imperial authority, thus representing "other-ness."<sup>16</sup>

Another "other-ness" view of the Shutendôji story involves the tale of a Caucasian man who drifted to the shore of Tanba Province, in what is present-day Kyoto. He apparently hailed from Mt. Ôe and drank red wine (Takahashi, ii), a veritable parallel to the demon Shutendôji's compunction for *blood sake*. In fact, what is most inferred through all these varying interpretations, is humankind's compunction to exaggerate, twist and distort reality based on commonly held beliefs. Though theories regarding the origin of Shutendôji do indeed vary, all seem to expound on the theme of socio-cultural disenfranchisement, often depicting a group of "different" people who had to be suppressed in some way in order to preserve established societal, cultural and religious norms. In this light, Shutendôji represents "the outside" or "other-ness" of an "us against them" cultural mentality. Many of the groups initially described were not evil, simply different from ordinary common folk, in appearance and/or lifestyle.

Interestingly, Komatsu Kazuhiko interprets Shutendôji from the perspective of a medieval *ôken setsuwa* (narrative prose concerning sovereign authority). In medieval *ôken setsuwa*, the "central" sovereign authority appropriates "outside" power through a symbolic jewel. In the case of Shutendôji, the symbolic jewel is actually his head, through which the power returned to the "central" authority (Komatsu 1997: 9-16).<sup>17</sup> With this perspective in mind, the narrative shift in viewpoint could be taken as an expression of sympathy for the "other-ness" and/or those who were to be vanquished by the powerful masses. At the same time, it also indicates a momentary expression of poetic empathy for those who were deceived by heroic warriors, deities, and other authority figures. In Shibukawa Seiemon's version of the Shutendôji tale for instance, it is only with the supernatural assistance of the deities, that the warrior-hero Raikô beguiles and defeats the *oni* demons. More pertinent to the above line of reasoning, it is the demonic *oni* who have trusted and opened their palace to the deceptive hero. Although Shutendôji remains skeptical of Raikô's true nature, the warrior-disguised-mountain priest ultimately deceives the demon with his cunning tongue. That Shutendôji even apologizes to Raikô for having suspected him of misrepresentation, speaks to the level of sublime deception being orchestrated against these demonic "outsiders". Shutendôji's trusting and thus, weakened position foreshadows the end of his reign and the success of the "forces of good".

Consequently, the Shutendôji story frames moral dilemmas from the perspectives of the central government and the disenfranchised. Shutendôji's exclamation is the voice of the disenfranchised as well as the fantastic, both it seems, are preordained for elimination by the wills of the majority, who are often influenced by the ruling elite. This is a timeless condition, offering some insight into the popularity and longevity of the Shutendôji story itself.

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<sup>16</sup>Not all the Buddhist sects rejected local deities. Sôdô sect of Zen Buddhism, for example, gave ordination to local deities to provide religious justification for villagers to support new Zen temples (Bodiford 1993: 174).

<sup>17</sup>Komatsu notices that Raikô's group disguised themselves as mountain priests, who as mountaineering ascetics live in a human world, and therefore, belong to "inside." Yet at the same time, mountaineering ascetics were socially and spatially located in peripheral, and sometimes, they deviated from "inside" to "outside." From the point of view of *oni*, mountaineering ascetics belonged to the "outside." Yet, there were some who broke away from "inside" and became *oni*. Spatially as they based in the mountains, some strayed into *oni*'s territories in the deep mountain. In other words, mountaineering ascetics were boundary beings who could go back and forth between two worlds of humans and *oni* (Komatsu: 20-21).

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#### RESUMO

Numa das mais famosas lendas de seres demoníacos, o herói guerreiro Minamoto no Raiko (? - 1021) derrota o diabólico *oni*, Shuten dôji, por manha e engano. Remontada ao Japão medieval, a história sugere que, com a ajuda das divindades os guerreiros podem derrotar até os mais monstruosos vilões. Misto de entretenimento e edificação moral /religiosa, "Shuten dôji" pertence ao gênero *otogi zôshi*. Adequadamente ao gênero, no momento da derrota mortal do demônio, Shuten dôji exclama, "Que tristeza, sacerdotes! Dizeis que não mentis: *Não há injustiça nas palavras dos demônios*". Trata-se dum lamento justificado; vindo de um demônio que rapta e come raparigas, parece incongruente e mesmo cândido que um personagem tão diabólico não espere subterfúgios para o derrotar. Ao mesmo tempo a exclamação cria uma súbita mudança de simpatias — de pró-guerreiros para pró-*oni* — na narração da lenda. Esta transferência detém o fluir da história. Em última análise, põe-se, em termos de um dilema, o problema "até que ponto se pode ser corrupto na demanda de um alvo virtuoso?" Ao examinar o *oni*, o meu artigo explora o significado da razão de Shuten dôji.

#### ABSTRACT

In one of Japan's most famous demon legends, the warrior hero Minamoto no Raiko (? - 1021) conquers the diabolic *oni*, Shuten dôji, by guile and deception. Dated to Japan's Medieval period, the story suggests that with the help of deities warriors can defeat even the most monstrous villains. Entertainment mixed with moral/ religious edification, "Shuten dôji" belongs to *otogi zôshi* genre. Befitting the genre, at the moment of the demon's mortal defeat, Shuten dôji cries, "How sad, you priests! You said you don't lie. *There is no injustice in the words of demons*." Righteous lamentation from a demon that abducts and eats young women appears so incongruous if not naïve – for such a diabolic character not to expect subterfuge. At the same time, the utterance creates an abrupt shift in the narration of the legend from a pro-warrior perspective to that of the *oni*. The transfer arrests the flow of the story. Quintessentially, what transpires frames a dilemma; "how corrupt can one become in the pursuit of a virtuous goal?" By examining the *oni*, my paper explores the significance of Shuten dôji's righteousness.