

# The Goddess and the Dragon



The Goddess and the Dragon:  
A Study on Identity Strength and Psychosocial  
Resilience in Japan

By

Patrick Hein

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

---

P U B L I S H I N G

The Goddess and the Dragon:  
A Study on Identity Strength and Psychosocial Resilience in Japan,  
by Patrick Hein

This book first published 2014

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2014 by Patrick Hein

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-6521-4, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-6521-0

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Appendices.....	xi
Preface .....	xiii
Chapter One.....	1
Encounters with the Goddess: A Critical Analysis of Travel Essays of Foreign Visitors to Meiji Era Enoshima	
Chapter Two .....	15
Embracing Togetherness and Community Bonds: A Sociological Analysis of the Tenno-sai Festival in Enoshima	
Chapter Three .....	33
Expecting the Unexpected: A Case Study on Tsunami Mitigation in Fujisawa	
Chapter Four.....	63
The Legacy of Nichiren in Enoshima	
Final Thought .....	85
Appendix A.....	87
Brief Chronology of Enoshima	
Appendix B.....	89
Annual List of Events in Enoshima	



## LIST OF TABLES

- Table 3-1: Historic Tsunami damages Enoshima area
- Table 3-2: List of qualitative field interview questions
- Table 3-3: Overview hazard maps
- Table 3-4: Tsunami budget figures Fujisawa





## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 0-1: Former Katase post office
- Figure 0-2: Home on grounds of former Katase office
- Figure 0-3: Location map Enoshima
- Figure 1-1: Historic view of Enoshima
- Figure 1-2: Eight-armed Benten sculpture from Iwamoto-in
- Figure 2-1: Early Meiji map of Enoshima
- Figure 2-2: Main hall of the Koyurugi Shrine in Koshigoe
- Figure 2-3: The Yasaka Shrine on Enoshima Island
- Figure 2-4: Floats with children in festive clothes
- Figure 2-5: Map of Enoshima
- Figure 2-6: Tenno-sai festival route map
- Figure 2-7: Dipping of the palanquin into the sea
- Figure 3-1: Aerial view of Enoshima
- Figure 3-2: Backwash Tsunami in Enoshima (2011/3/12)
- Figure 3-3: New Tsunami evacuation tower Enoshima
- Figure 3-4: Official Tsunami hazard map Fujisawa
- Figure 3-5: Inofficial prefectural Tsunami map Kanagawa
- Figure 4-1: The honan festival is held at the Ryuko-ji temple
- Figure 4-2: The crossing in front of Ryuko-ji in 1954
- Figure 4-3: The same crossing in 2014
- Figure 4-4: A girl with a fireman's standard
- Figure 4-5: View of the Honren-ji temple



## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Tenno-sai festival events

Appendix B: Brief chronology of Enoshima

Appendix C: Overview annual events Enoshima



## PREFACE

In 1876 a mere 1,241 souls lived in the Enoshima fishing village (presently known as Katase-Enoshima ward), the location of the field study. It used to be a poor, rural area with a low population density, an underdeveloped infrastructure, abundant farmland and a flourishing natural environment. During the Edo period (1603-1867) Enoshima began to thrive as a place of pilgrimage to worship the local Buddhist goddess of luck called Benzaiten. Many of the famous men who set foot on the island of Enoshima or who are mentioned in this book, such as the scientist Edward S. Morse, the novelists Lafcadio Hearn, Yukio Mishima and Eiji Yoshikawa, the Buddhist religious spiritual leader Nichiren, the founder of the Tokugawa ruling dynasty Ieyasu Tokugawa or the powerful Hojo regents who controlled the emperor in Kyoto through the office of the Kamakura military government, have had a lasting effect on Japan. The construction of the first railway line in Japan-the Tokaido route, which opened in 1872 and is running from Shinbashi in Tokyo to Sakuragicho station in Yokohama-, the opening of the first sea spa resort in 1885, the construction of seaside weekend villas for the rich, artists and intellectuals and the massive influx of consumer tourists was a major turning point in the history of Enoshima. Thereafter, ambitious development projects brought about even more radical changes to the local economy and landscape. To host the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a major event in the history of Japan, Enoshima's infrastructure needed to be modernized. To meet the Olympic requirements a large scale harbour that started in May 1961 was built which was finished ahead of the games in July 1964. By 2010, the number of Enoshima residents had risen to more than 20,000. The professional farmers and fishermen who once populated the area have been gradually replaced by modern city dwellers, independent business owners and salaried office workers who commute to Tokyo.

A common theme of the four essays in this volume is the relationship between globalization and the individual. In order to understand individuals, it is necessary to situate them within the network of social relations that informs and influences their life. Does globalization simply mean that all individuals are becoming the same? Arguments about globalization have become commonplace. Scholars define globalization as the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of different societies

around the world. The penetration of modern technology into daily lives and the worldwide movement of goods are sweeping away cultural pluralism and differences. The original meaning of the word 'culture' is cultivating the nature surrounding human beings. It derives from the Latin word, 'cultura', meaning 'to cultivate'. It is a way of life - an indigenous way of life - that includes religion, spirituality, language, moral and social norms, family values, eating habits, and so on adopted by a certain group of people of a particular society at a specific time and place. It is postulated that culture is distinctive or particular, individual and stable. However, in a globalized society some dominant cultural values supersede other values believed to be inferior or less relevant across borders. Western inspired principles, values and norms such as standardization, predictability, competitiveness, productivity, secularization, individualism and consumerism underlie and drive the current transformations on a global scale.

Cultural heritage protection and language communication are two segments that have been affected by these changes. First, the meaning of culturally important assets has been altered as a result of changing social and economic flows and because of modernity and its concomitants. In a world that is becoming increasingly homogenized, many tangible and intangible treasures that are unique and priceless cultural assets, providing a basis for national identity, scientific and historical research, have been lost forever because governments and business circles pursue a selective approach in choosing appropriate cultural heritage sites by having in mind potential revenues generated by heritage tourism, and other economic development opportunities for future generations. Local cultural heritage sites that do not qualify as tourist attractions or do not offer any prospect for economic revitalization are often destroyed. Take for example the local post office in Katase-Enoshima (Fig. 0-1 and 0-2). The sumptuous art deco building with fine wooden interior carvings became a cultural landmark of Enoshima but was suddenly demolished in 2000 because the land owner, who happened to be the branch director of the post office, decided to build his new private home there. Nobody prevented him from tearing down the historic building (figures 0-1 and 0-2).

Second, the ways in which the cultural landscape is changing can also be considered in the area of language communication. Languages preserve and transmit culture but as a matter of fact the emergence of English as a global language demonstrates the dominant influence of one single language on the way we interact with others. It is estimated that, if nothing is done, half of 7,000 languages spoken today will disappear by the end of this century. With the disappearance of unwritten and undocumented languages, humanity would lose not only a cultural wealth but also

important ancestral knowledge embedded, in particular, in indigenous languages.



Fig. 0-1 and 0-2. A cultural asset, the Enoshima-Katase post office, (above) was demolished and an urban home (below) stands there now.

As globalization progresses, all parts of the world seem to be getting closer and closer to one another. In other words, cultural differences fade and local cultural practices are disappearing. Will local cultures inevitably fall victim to the global consumer culture? Citing the growing need for standardization, homogeneity and uniformity, supporters of the globalization trend claim that a global world is more accessible, free and gives consumers more choices. People know that wherever they are in the world they can get the same product, the same taste, the same packaging and the same service. Hence, globalization gives people what they want. Above all people seem to want convenience, quantity, efficiency, availability and control. However, defining globalization as a process that is good because

it just happens the way it happens is not satisfactory because it is just an assumption, a conclusion based on limited knowledge of the facts.

Some scholars have tried to frame globalization by looking at its impact and consequences. One of the leading contemporary Japanese political scientists Takashi Inoguchi (2009) claims that it is the 'cultural nationalism' that has helped Japan to protect itself against the bad influences of globalization when he writes that:

“Japanese culture's deep traditions normally stand in the way of globalisation's penetrating processes” (p.349/350).

Furthermore, he suggests that the Japanese nation-state and the Japanese population have joined forces to defend Japanese cultural values against the excesses of (Western) globalization (p.339). Does this ethnically colored interpretation really make sense and is it realistic? If one looks for example at the negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)-in what could become the world's biggest free trade region-it has become clear that the super-protected Japanese rice farmers do not support their government's participation in the TPP and there will be no government guarantee that key agricultural products will be exempt from future abolition of tariffs. Taking a different approach, this volume reexamines the underlying assumptions of globalization arguments from a critical perspective and addresses the broader question of the meaning and purpose of globalization induced social change. The definition of globalization by the former national cultural affairs commissioner of Japan as “change without purpose” (Tamotsu, 2004, p.90) seems more appropriate to describe the conflicting relationship between individuals on one side and a globalized mass society on the other side- regardless of ethnic or citizenship affiliations. Japanese society is often thought of as much more group-oriented than that of Western society; many scholars believe that the traditional vertical Japanese *ie* family structure is largely responsible for this (Hendry, 1996) whereas others have cautioned that it is wrong to assume that group orientation is an immutable, essentialist feature of Japanese society, that has presumably existed since ancient times (Yamazaki, 1994). It may be true that most Japanese people are keenly aware that their society is primarily group-oriented, and group harmony is highly prized at the expense of the individual but that does not mean that individual personality (in Japanese called *kosei*) and agency play no role or that individuals are better off with groups as a matter of fact. Even within specific groups, each individual is unique, even though all members of the group may share distinctively similar group characteristics such as language or business etiquette. Indeed, the sociologist Emile Durkheim



(1933) once observed that rapid social change can result in a loss of shared values and a sense of purpose in society that affects everyone. As a society becomes more complex, individuals play more specialized roles and their identity may be reduced to functional tasks and responsibilities. What has basically happened in modern mass societies is that everything is increasingly split up, separated, so that each person is alone. Durkheim's recurring question is: How do societies manage to hold together in times of radical social change and technological advances? In 'The Division of Labor in Society', Durkheim concludes that preindustrial societies are held together by strong traditions and by members' shared moral beliefs and values. Local communities are able to provide people with a sense of belonging because every member is engaged in social interaction characterized by face-to-face, intimate, primary group relationships. Everyone is engaged in similar work and little specialization is found. What matters most is that people are not bound together by practical considerations or their functional roles as is the case in large cities where conversations usually start (and end) with questions about the job or the professional qualifications one holds. They are rather bound together in individually rooted, long-term trust relationships of dependability and reliance on the other. This responds to the idea of 'whole person' approach embracing the whole of life. The present volume tries to refocus the discussion on individuals that struggle to preserve their social identity and maintain independent judgment and autonomy. The present study fills the gap in the current body of research by reevaluating the socially integrative functions and symbolic meanings of local festivals, religious rituals and community enhancing activities.

Few studies have been conducted on the capacity for change and adaptation of local Japanese communities subject to intense economic development and technological advances. The aim of this book is to show how local inhabitants are struggling to give purpose to their individual lifestyles in a globalizing world of constant change without purpose. The topics presented in the volume focus on community life in the Katase-Enoshima ward, a popular coastal tourist spot belonging to the city of Fujisawa and located in the south of Kanagawa prefecture, which is right next to the capital of Tokyo (Figure 0-3).

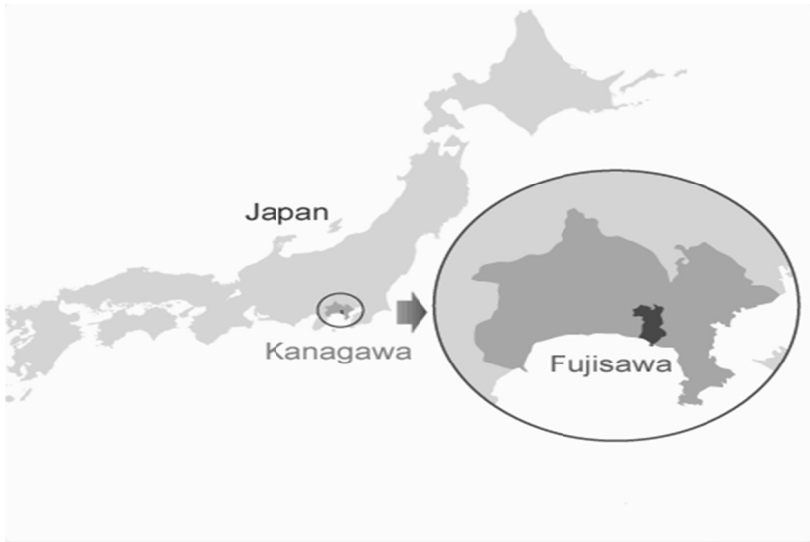


Fig. 0-3 Enoshima belongs to Fujisawa city located in Kanagawa prefecture

Enoshima has been selected as field research location for the following reasons: first, the author himself has been living in the area for a long time; second, the festivals and beliefs of Enoshima reflect the importance of fisheries traditions and livelihoods in a culture often described as dominantly rice farmer nation, and third, the area located next to the world's largest urban agglomeration area of Tokyo and Yokohama with a total population of more than thirty million people has undergone dramatic changes over the last one hundred years from a small, insignificant fishing village to a mass tourism destination. It is precisely the change from the 'cultured traveller' destination to mass tourism destination that has affected Enoshima most. There is hardly a day of the year left which has not been filled with a public event to attract tourists (see Appendix C for an overview of annual tourist events). According to the Enoshima Tourist Association, the number of visitors peaked at thirteen million in 1995, but has since been steadily on the decline with the number falling to roughly eight million in recent years. Mass tourism, one of the fastest-growing industries in the second half of the twenty first century has not only become one of the principal beneficiaries, but also one of the major vehicles of globalization: the tourism industry has generated income and employment for the local residents. However, this can be a double-edged sword with negative sides as well. The question is who benefits from mass

tourism and who bears the cost? The Enoshima field study will show the risks associated with a mass tourism oriented development policy; especially with regard to local autonomy, socio-economic equality and environmental sustainability.

The thematic issues are presented in four different essays. The first essay 'Encounters with the Goddess: A Critical Analysis of Travel Essays of Foreign Visitors to Meiji Era Enoshima' analyzes the impressions and perceptions of early foreign travelers to Enoshima; the second essay 'Embracing Togetherness and Community Bonds: A Sociological Analysis of the Tenno-sai Festival in Enoshima' discusses the role of festivals as a means of social stability, well-being and strengthening of community bonds in times of radical social change; the third essay 'Expecting the unexpected: a case study on tsunami mitigation in Fujisawa' discusses tsunami mitigation policies implemented in Enoshima after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake; and the fourth essay 'The legacy of Nichiren in Enoshima' explores the religious zeal of the followers of the marginal Buddhist *Nichiren-Shu* sect.

By taking a specific geographic entry point for inquiry- a local fisheries community-, the study will be situated around a series of recurring issues and problems. These include but are not limited to the following questions related to the existence of individuals in the context of globalizing transformations: In what ways and to what extent has the rational, scientific, social Darwinist worldview of the 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced and distorted foreign descriptions of Enoshima? How have individuals-in this case local fishermen-coped with mass consumerism and the commercialization of everyday life in Enoshima? Has globalization brought about more secularization-defined as the decline of religious beliefs and practices-in Enoshima? Or have religion and spirituality conversely contributed to strengthening the anti-globalizing, self-centered sentiment of individuals? And finally: what lessons have individuals learned from the Great East Japan earthquake tsunami disaster with regard to preparing for and demonstrating independent, self-responsible self-evacuation behaviors?

The significance of the present study is twofold. First it is hoped that the findings will contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of social change in local communities exposed to globalization and mass tourism. Second, it is expected that the information obtained through the field studies will offer new avenues into the research of local autonomy and individual self-determination in the absence of global governance and globally shared social norms.

## References

- Durkheim, Emile. (1933). *The division of labour in society*. New York: Free Press.
- Hendry, Joy. (1996). *Understanding Japanese society* (second edition). New York: Routledge.
- Inoguchi, Takashi. (2009) Globalisation and cultural nationalism. In: Sugimoto, Yoshio (Ed) *The Cambridge companion to modern Japanese culture* (pp. 336-351). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tamotsu, Aoki. (2004) Globalization, cultural diversity and Japanese culture: for the development of a multicultural world. In: *Proceedings of the International Symposium. Cultural Diversity and Globalization. The Arab-Japanese Experience and Cross-Regional Dialogue* (pp. 89-94). Paris: Unesco. Retrieved May 1, 2014, from [unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001393/139318e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001393/139318e.pdf)
- Yamazaki, Masakazu. (1994) *Individualism and the Japanese*. Tokyo: Japan Echo.

## CHAPTER ONE

# ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GODDESS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TRAVEL ESSAYS OF FOREIGN VISITORS TO MEIJI ERA ENOSHIMA

Enoshima is an important pilgrimage site dedicated to the Benzaiten goddess. This essay describes how two early Meiji foreign travelers—the American zoologist Edward S. Morse and the Irish writer Lafcadio Hearn—have presented and interpreted what they saw in Enoshima. Both men try to convey a frank and accurate picture of their observations but ultimately fail to fully capture and grasp the deeper social and historical context of Enoshima's significance and its importance for religious leaders and worldly rulers of the time. The reasons for this are twofold: their intellectual representations of Enoshima are influenced and shaped by their translators on one hand and by their strong exposure to the dominant 19th century ideology of social Darwinism on the other hand.

### **Introduction**

When individuals invent new communities, societies, and nations—both now and in the past—they create gods, rituals, and miracles to support them. Even what seem to be some of the most timeless and sacred sites in the world have been shaped, reshaped, and reinterpreted to find new relevance and meaning in a world of incessant change. A major challenge for anyone interested in Japan today is to understand where ancient religious worship, pilgrimage and the gods fit in the structures of modern contemporary Japan. Many stories, tales, plays and novels have traced the power of sacred places and benevolent gods (Hardacre, 2002; Thal, 2005). While some stories focus upon the miraculous and divine power of religion and the gods, other narratives seem to underscore the more profane and tangible nature of such beliefs. Such appears to be the case in the travel accounts of early Meiji foreign visitors to the tiny sacred

island of Enoshima, a popular pilgrimage destination of the Edo period located fifty kilometers south of Tokyo in the vicinity of Kamakura (Figure 1-1). After three hundred years of self-imposed isolation under the Tokugawa Shogunate Japan reopened its doors to the world only reluctantly. When Yokohama port was opened in 1859 Japan was still in a state of turmoil with the new Meiji rulers struggling to put an end to the fierce resistance of Satsuma Samurai. Foreigners who came to Japan were more or less confined within the foreign settlement of Yokohama. There was no free movement within Japan and permission was required to leave the settlement.

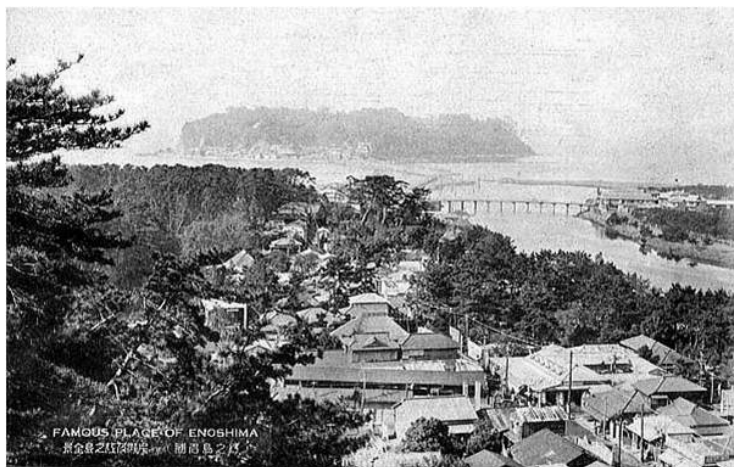


Fig. 1-1 View of Enoshima in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In his memoirs Sir Ernest Satow, the Meiji British veteran diplomat, mentioned that anyone who dared to venture outside the treaty border limits needed a “bold adventurous spirit” (p. 23). Thus, at the end of the 19th century Enoshima remained for most foreigners an unknown, far distant territory. Besides, Japan was at that time by no means a safe place. Only in 1864 two British officers had been killed in Kamakura near Enoshima by two local Samurai with swords probably either because the officers did not know that they were supposed to clear the street when Samurai passed or because they failed to descend from their horsebacks and walk in order to show reverence to the kami. It was only in 1878 that the last disgruntled Samurai were defeated by governmental troops in the south of Japan. From this point onwards, foreign visitors felt more secure

in Japan and started moving freely around including visits to Enoshima. So, for example, the French industrialist Emile Guimet (1878), the sailor M. Cook (1891) or the missionary Joseph Thomas (1897). Detailed accounts of their visits were published overseas and rendered thereby accessible for the first time to a larger western audience. Their observations were both intimate and informative, combining personal insight and scientific knowledge of their destination to provide the reader with an engaging, educational account of their travels. In this paper I will examine the travel essays of two well-known and highly respected early Meiji foreign visitors to Enoshima—the American zoologist Edward S. Morse and the Irish novelist Lafcadio Hearn—and focus in particular on their encounters with the local population and their folk beliefs.

At the center of those folk beliefs is the worship of a goddess called Benteen or Benzaiten, whose miraculous powers have been described in the local folk tale, *Enoshima engi* (English: Tale of Origin). The rich and fascinating legend tells how people from all walks of life gave shape to the gods, shrines, and rituals so often attributed to ancient, indigenous Japan. The authors chose this tale because it shows the impact and importance of Buddhist thinking elevated to a quasi-state religion under the reign of the Tokugawa rulers. How did the first foreigners interpret the unknown and unfamiliar cults and religious beliefs of Enoshima? Before going into more details it is warranted to put the visits in their proper contexts. At the time in question most foreigners did not master the Japanese language and were dependent on Japanese acquaintances who acted as translators or assistants. It can be presumed that their views were most likely influenced by what their Japanese companions told them. Take for example Lafcadio Hearn. While he was travelling around Yokohama and visiting temples and shrines by rickshaw, he met an intellectual Buddhist priest, Akira Manabe, who could speak English (Rosenstone, p.33). With his guide, Lafcadio Hearn visited Kamakura and Enoshima. Likewise, Edward S. Morse was surrounded by his Japanese research assistants who—among other things—translated for him. Moreover, these foreign visitors were under the influence of the intellectual mood of the time dominated by social Darwinism on one hand and proselytizing Christian missionary thinking on the other hand. The American zoologist Edward Morse, for example, a professor at Tokyo University, introduced Darwin to Japanese audiences in the 1870s (Cross). In this paper I will demonstrate that some of the foreign visitors were deeply moved by the legend whereas others were rather indifferent. Whereas the former use a lively language of admiration to idealize and stress the significance of popular worship in Enoshima, the latter use a language of secular, scientific progress to distance themselves

from what they deem to be superstitious or irrelevant phenomena. The paper will conclude that early Meiji foreign travel essays of Enoshima try to convey a frank and accurate English language account of observations but fail to fully capture and grasp the deeper social and historical context of Enoshima's significance and its importance for religious leaders and political rulers of the time.

## **The advent of Buddhism**

Academics rarely cite images from the historical periods when the Enoshima area consisted of dispersed fishing villages. Compared to today's urban density of white collar dwellings, 19th century Enoshima was mainly composed of a small village population of fishermen, artisans and petty shopkeepers. It is noteworthy to mention that fishermen were very poor and had a social status which was far below other groups such as farmers, merchants or craftsmen. Communal life embraced various forms of archaic cults. In pre-modern times fishermen venerated dragon-gods associated with rainfall and the prosperity of fisheries and safety at sea. At a time when they were plagued by diseases, natural calamities and famines or food penuries they turned to the local native gods to seek relief and redress. Offerings were made to appease what were thought to be 'angry' gods. Even though they were angry they did not morally condemn human beings for their shortcomings and failures. The findings of the renowned German ethnographer and folklorist Nelly Naumann, who has translated and interpreted Japanese ancient myths, indicate that *kami* had nothing to do with morality at the beginning. Folk beliefs rooted in the pre-agrarian culture of fisheries, hunting and gatherers thought that "natural disasters were sent from the Gods, who thereby tried to get attention, ask for sacrifices, establishment of shrines and veneration by specific people. Will their wishes be fulfilled then they will be helpful in the future" (Naumann, p.187). In this interpretation human beings are at the mercy of natural powers they can at the end neither understand nor control.

It was Buddhism that changed this what it thought to be archaic thinking radically. From the sixth century onwards newly introduced foreign Hindu gods and goddesses displaced the local native gods- in the case of Enoshima the evil dragon was tamed by a benevolent Hindu goddess named Benten or Benzaiten. In this new dual worldview good behavior was distinguished from bad behavior. Good behavior led to the paradise, bad behavior to the hell. Benzaiten and Buddhism promised salvation and rebirth to those who followed the way of Buddha and of the worldly rulers. This way was essentially made of suffering (Jaspers, 1967).



The over evaluation of life's negative elements brought Buddhism closer to the ruling class. Buddhist monks were praying for the military victory of the rulers and were seeking their patronage in return for their services. As Mumford has pointed out the Buddhist doctrine was close upon rulers because "since man only learns by suffering, conquerors and tyrants who promote suffering are divine instruments of man's salvation" (p.74).

## **The Enoshima Engi**

As Sarah Thal has laid out in her ground-breaking study 'Rearranging the Landscapes of the Gods' (2005), it has been a common practice in the past for rulers in Japan to commission tales of origin and Noh plays written by religious leaders. Those tales were supposed to strengthen the bonds between the rulers and the ruled. What seems more important though in the context of this paper is that according to Thal the identities of the deities changed over time (2005). The governments changed and so changed the meanings associated with the gods and conveyed to the people. Different social groups competed in defining the gods they worshipped. While the Buddhist monks, wealthy merchants and innkeepers lobbied for patronage among the powerful, the fishermen and lower classes adapted divine identities to the needs of the masses.

Enoshima's fortune as a site of pilgrimage was formed by the presence of a deity called Benzaiten or Benten (Figure 1-2). Enoshima's history began when the Buddhist monk Kokei wrote a tale in Chinese letters about the creation of Enoshima in 1047 AD-without ever having visited the island by himself. Kokei (977-1049) was a priest of the dominant *Tendai* sect in the middle days of the Heian period.

In this tale he describes how Enoshima became a divine place thanks to the benevolence of the Hindu goddess Benzaiten. The 'Enoshima Engi', which Monk Kokei completed two years before his death, presented the goddess both as a protector of the state and as a savior of the people. According to the tale, Enoshima villagers were haunted for a thousand years by a destructive five-headed dragon that had its lair in a nearby swamp. The people even offered a human sacrifice to the dragon-god, but the offering was in vain. Aware of their suffering, the goddess Benzaiten caused the island of Enoshima to rise from the sea in 552 AD to serve as her abode. The dragon fell in love with the goddess and asked her to be his consort. Benzaiten, widely known for her persuasive eloquence, rejected the proposal and made the ill-minded dragon understand that he had done a terrible wrong in plaguing the villagers. Rejected, the dragon devotedly faced south toward the island of Enoshima where Benzaiten lived and

turned into a hill which is known even today as *Tatsunokuchi* or Dragon's Mouth.



Fig 1-2 The eight-armed deity Benten, believed to be the oldest existing religious artifact, from the Iwamoto-in.

The identity of the goddess has been subject to change over the course of history. Early images pictured Benzaiten as goddess of war. She was associated with Yoritomo Minamoto (1147-1199), the founder of the Kamakura Shogunate, who sought her divine assistance to defeat his enemy, the Fujiwara clan. Hence, he invited the goddess to the *Shingon* sect Buddhist temple Yoganji. Yoritomo's prayer was answered. With his victory over the Fujiwara Clan in 1189, the goddess gained reputation for her ability to fulfill the wishes of worshipers. Nevertheless Enoshima remained for a long time a closed sacred location where only representatives of the noble upper classes were allowed to visit. In 1600, Ieyasu Tokugawa (1542-1616), the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, visited Enoshima and made it the official prayer hall for the Tokugawa family. The third shogun Iemitsu conferred the *shuin* (red seal) status on Enoshima in 1648. That states that the red seal granted a special status to religious associations in the Edo period. In the case of Enoshima the red seal had been bestowed on the Iwamoto-in, which controlled the temple complex in Enoshima. The red seal not only acknowledged the right to income from religious activities but also elevated religious representatives to higher social status positions similar to minor territorial lords. She concludes that "through these systems of privileges, confirmations and grants, Tokugawa Iemitsu strengthened the network of loyalties and responsibilities that tied both daimyo and prestigious religious institutions

to shogunal authority” (Thal, p.61). As these transformations occurred social tensions inevitably rose. The local fishermen, for example, felt disadvantaged and were at odds with the Iwamoto clan over the unequal distribution of income and benefits from pilgrimage (Nenzi, p.306). In the mid-Edo Period (1603-1868), the complex was finally opened to the public. In 1871 when the new Meiji leaders defined Shinto as a set of officially sanctioned practice—not even claiming it to be a religion—the kami became part of the state (Breen et al., 2000). Consequently, the Buddhist Yoganji temple in Enoshima was removed, the Buddhist priests converted to Shintoism and the goddess Benten was transferred to the Enoshima shrine where it was enshrined. She had finally become, essentially, a native Shinto deity of wealth, luck and good fortune. In 1885 the first seaside resort opened near Enoshima. With the arrival of summer vacationers and the establishment of resort villas, Enoshima became an exclusive health and relaxation resort for liberal professions, artists and the wealthy. It was then that two national railways- the Tokaido line and the Yokosuka line- enabled visitors to reach Enoshima within two and a half hours from Shinbashi station in Tokyo. Intensive urbanization and infrastructure works during the 1950s and 1960s further changed Enoshima’s social and natural landscape. These developments have shaped the -what Nenzi calls-“consumer tourist” of today. It embodies the ideal of the modern traveler, who in contrast to the “cultured traveler” fails to “recover the idea behind rather than to delve into the present substance of the site” (Nenzi, p.291). In other words a consumer tourist wants to physically experience a location and satisfy a want or need for buying souvenirs and eating local specialties. By contrast a cultured traveler is defined as a person who can interact with a scenery or engage with a landscape in poetic or contemplative terms from a far distance. The short story *Enoshima monogatari* (Tale of Enoshima) by Eiji Yoshikawa offers a fine example of marvelously written literary prose and composition. In the next section I will explore how foreign travelers interpreted what they saw in Enoshima and what meaning they attached to unfamiliar events and stories from the past.

### **The rational observer: Edward S. Morse**

Upon invitation by the Meiji government and in search of new specimens for his studies the US zoologist Morse (1838-1925) prepared for a journey to Japan, where he eventually arrived in June 1877 and stayed much longer than planned, almost three years. Among the early visitors he stayed the longest in Enoshima, almost one month from July 17

to August 18, 1877. He was a firm believer in Social Darwinist evolutionary thinking, a scientific and evidence-based research approach of social stratification among individuals based on inherited biological differences (Cross, 1996). Hence his education and beliefs have been clearly reflected in his writings. Morse (1917) refers to his local hosts as “savages” (p.239) or “Buddhist pagans” (p.234) and ignores the main *raison d’être* of Enoshima as a religious center of worship. Even though the goddess Benzaiten had drawn pilgrims from all over the nation for several hundred years Morse never records her name, and never bothers to inquire into the legends that have made the island a place of worship. He is a man who only believes in what he sees. Thus he describes the physical attributes of a cave and a shrine but refrains from mentioning Benzaiten, who is the tutelary deity of the cave. Scientific observation leaves no room for metaphysical speculation. Things that have no determinable basis of fact or that cannot be explained in scientific terms are dismissed by Morse. Twice he sails to Benzaiten’s sacred cave on the island, but viewing its shrine and the dragon carvings on the wall interest him far less than collecting insects for his zoological laboratory established in Enoshima. The following excerpt about his visit to the cave tells more about the worldview of Morse than about the place itself. His biggest pleasures come from the discovery of several insects. Morse only occasionally describes or discloses his most inner feelings. Usually he favors a more factual narrative style focused on details. His tone does not suggest that he admires and reveres what he feels in the cave of Enoshima:

“The cave seemed to be an immense fissure in the rock, which had been rounded out by the waves in former times when the land must have been submerged; now the waves reach only to the entrance. The rocks were light in colour, so the dark entrance of the cave stood out strongly by contrast. About one hundred and fifty feet within was a Shinto shrine covered with gilt, which reflected the few light rays which came from the entrance, making a striking effect in the dark cave. The shrine was nearly ten feet high and as wide, carved in the most elaborate way. It was an odd place to find a shrine, this dark, damp cave, and yet in Japan, wherever you find a striking feature in the landscape, such as this place, the top of a mountain, the verge of a precipice or deep ravine, there you will find these religious and devoted people erect their churches or shrines. There was room on one side of this shrine to pass and penetrate farther into the dark recesses, and here we were provided with lights, and we plodded ahead a few hundred feet until we had to stoop to get along. It was absolutely dark except for what little light our candles afforded. At the extreme end of the cave was a board partition mouldy and rotten with age. A wooden grating was in the partition, and looking through it we saw a polished circular metal mirror

about twelve inches in diameter, and this represented a Shinto shrine. Going back toward the entrance we came to an arm of the cave, and following that up we came to another grating through which we saw another Shinto shrine and mirror. The passage was hardly wide enough for two to walk abreast, and along the walls were symbolic figures—coiled dragons wrought in the stone and other emblems of mythology. I could not help reflecting on the devotion and piety of the early devotees who have left their marvellous rock carvings and prodigious temples in Java, India, and China. I scanned the walls closely for evidence of twilight insects, but it was not dark enough to find typical cave animals. To my delight I found two little spiders, two very small sow bugs, and, better than all, two cave crickets”. (p.165)

Only once does he make time to visit the famous hilltop shrines and temples and here his journal entrance discloses his utter disbelief in religious superstitious beliefs that seem to contradict scientific evidence and empirical observation. When a priest shows him an old relic and tries to ‘sell’ his story to him Morse feels that he has been made a fool. He describes his disbelief in the following excerpt:

“The priest brought (out) a large piece of a hard substance which he said was wood turned into stone. An examination of it showed it to be a fragment of a lower jaw of a sperm whale and this I told him. The look he gave me was to the effect that I was a poor fool to doubt him; and as he went on explaining the various relics his rapidity of speech, due to the fact that he had uttered the same sentences a thousand times in explaining to others, caused Matsumura [Morse’s assistant, author note] some difficulty in translating (...) So the Buddhist priests are like the religious devotees of the rest of the world, attempting to combat facts by written authority”. (p.246)

The above anecdote conveys the thinking of Morse in a rather amusing way. It should be added that the artefact in question is still preserved on the shrine grounds as of today. Ironically the shrine seems to have adopted the explanation given by Morse and thus the former “piece of wood turned into stone” is now presented and exhibited as a “whale bone” national treasure that protects the region.

### **The sentimental observer: Lafcadio Hearn**

Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) arrived in Japan in 1890 and stayed there until his death in 1904. In 1894 he wrote a picturesque travelogue *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, in which he explained vividly what he saw—or perhaps better did not see—at Enoshima. Because Hearn was not

able to speak or read Japanese his knowledge of the soul of Japan came mainly from people surrounding him and therefore his judgments and feelings were strongly influenced by them. As in all of Hearn's books, a note of regret is persistently sounded: regret for the loss of the customs and practices of 'Old Japan', the Japan which Hearn felt was being undermined by the processes of modernization during the Meiji period (Askew, 2009). It is perhaps as a result of Hearn's sympathy and understanding for this old Japan, that his work is still so widely admired today.

In his description of Enoshima (Hearn, 2009) the reader notices the growing disenchantment and disappointment of the author. Arriving from Kamakura, he is at first delighted by what he sees. He describes Enoshima as the "ever-open Portal of the Sea-City, the City of the Dragon-goddess" (p.69). Hearn is a great storyteller and he uses figurative language to catch the reader's interest. But soon he becomes aware that the imagined Enoshima does not correspond to the reality he discovers. For example, when he ascends the stairs towards the first shrine dedicated to Benzaiten he finds that "there is nothing in the shrine of interest, only Shinto emblems" (p.72) and after moving on to the second shrine he laments "But there is no Benten! Benten has been hidden away by Shinto hands. The second shrine is void as the first" (p.73). When reaching finally the third and last chief shrine Hearn repeats again what he wrote earlier: "we can look in the temple of Benten, and see that Benten is not there" (p.74). His expression "Vanity and vexation of spirit" (p.73), a phrase used by Solomon and taken from the Bible, means that there was nothing in it all but an empty puff of air that could only fill a bubble for a moment. His deception becomes obvious when he writes: "But I fear exceedingly that in all this place we shall find nothing save stones and serpents!" (p.74). In order to understand Hearn's disappointment and frustration we have to set it in the proper context of 19th century Japan. In the years immediately following the Meiji Restoration of 1868 Shinto-long subordinated under Buddhism- was officially separated from it. A hierarchical system of shrines was newly established nationwide resulting in struggles with rival shrines. Buddhist buildings and symbols were torn down, sold off or redefined (Kawano, 2005). The Meiji restoration definitely changed the religious and ideological setting of Benten worship. There can be no doubt however that it is Hearn himself who seems to have lost his belief in the power of religion. He writes repeatedly about money donations to Benten to seek protection or as a thank you gift for having been granted specific favors but fails to describe the importance of praying, bowing, clapping hands and other ritual actions. For example, when walking from one shrine