

Chapter 3

Shinto Gods, Buddhist Deities and Ogres in Kunisaki

In ancient times, Rokugo-manzan inspired religious faith as a place where Shinto gods, Buddhist deities and ogres coexisted. Numerous Shinto and Buddhist statues, which were born of an effort to syncretize Shinto and Buddhism, have been passed down in this land, where many Tendai temples were built under the influence of Usa Jingu Shrine. The diversity of form exhibited by those statues derives from the formation of a unique

culture not found in other regions traditional culture passed down since the Asuka Period and the latest cultural influences from Nara and Kyoto areas combined to stimulate and challenge their creators. The Shujo-onie ritual, which continues to this day, is a ritual that brings together Shinto gods, Buddhist deities and ogres, serving as a living witness to the development of those traditions.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Minami-churomon Gate, Usa Jingu Shrine

Usa Jingu Shrine is the head shrine of the more than 40,000 shrines throughout Japan dedicated to the deity Hachiman. The main hall consists of three shrine buildings. From left to right, the first shrine is dedicated to Hachiman Okami, the second to Hime Okami, and the third to Jingu Kogo. The current buildings were built in the 19th century, but it has been

designated as a National Treasure because it is a representative example of the ancient *hachiman-zukuri* style (a traditional Japanese architectural style used at Hachiman shrines.).

The Minami-churomon Gate stands tall in front of the main hall. This is one of the most well-known structures in Usa Jingu

Shrine because it appears to be the main gate when visitors enter the shrine. It is actually the southern main gate on the inner bailey of the shrine, and it is typically kept closed. It is also known as the imperial envoy gate because only the Emperor, members of the Imperial family, and their messengers are allowed to pass through it.



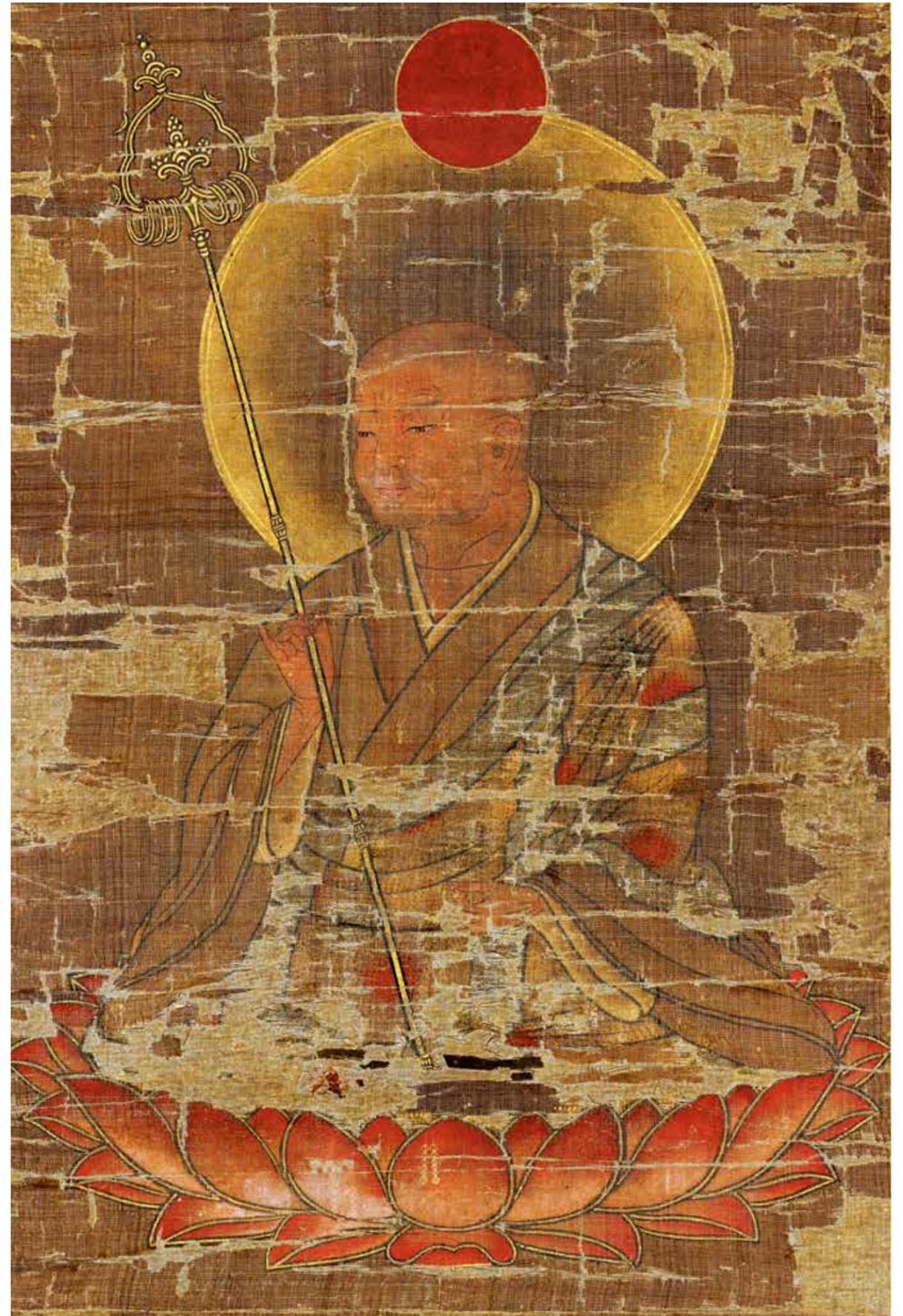
Minami-churomon Gate, Usa Jingu Shrine

Deity Hachiman in a Buddhist Priest Style

Muromachi Period
15th c.
Color on silk
H: 40.9; W: 27.3
Usa Jingu Shrine, Usa City

This image depicts Hachiman, the deity enshrined at Usa Jingu Shrine, seated on a lotus-shaped pedestal holding a priest's staff with a metal part on top in his right hand and a Buddhist rosary, used for counting recitations of sutras, in his left hand. Images such as this one are noteworthy for depicting a Shinto deity as a Buddhist priest, and some sources refer to this painting as the "Deity Hachiman in Disguise as a Monk" (literally "Portraits of Each Other"), highlighting the unusual nature of the depiction. Legend holds that it was created when the deity Hachiman and the

monk Kukai (774-835), who founded Shingon Buddhism, drew each other while the latter was sailing back from China, where he had been studying. The original has been lost, but Jingoji Temple in Kyoto, which was founded by Kukai, has a copy that dates from the Kamakura Period, and there are several subsequent copies. This image, one of the more orthodox of those remaining, is an invaluable painting that was kept at Usa Jingu Shrine out of respect for its status as the head shrine honoring the deity Hachiman.



Ichikishima Island at Hachiman Nadagu Shrine

Before Hachiman Nadagu Shrine extends the Bungo Channel, with Cape Sada in Shikoku jutting out behind Ichikishima Island, which lies about 300 meters off-shore. Legend holds that during Gyokoe rituals held in the past to replace enshrined objects, old sacred objects were sent floating from Ichikishima Island towards

Ryugu, an undersea palace.

There are still places with names like Yawatahama in Shikoku on the other side of the Bungo Channel, indicating the spread of the Hachiman faith. The nearby ocean was also an important part of religion on the Kunisaki Peninsula.





Female deity, Hachiman Nadagu Shrine



Deity Hachiman in a Buddhist priest style, Hachiman Nadagu Shrine



Hachiman



Jingu Kogo



Hime Okami

Important cultural property
Seated Three Hachiman Deities

Heian Period
10th–11th c.
Wood with polychromy
Hachiman H: 53.5
Jingu Kogo H: 55.2
Hime Okami H: 49.0
Hachiman Nadagu Shrine, Kitsuki City

In ancient times, new objects of worship and sacred treasures were created every six years for Usa Jingu Shrine, and the old ones were transferred to Hachiman Nadagu Shrine. Legend holds that the statues of these three deities, namely, deity Hachiman, Hime Okami, and Jingu Kogo, were old objects of worship transferred from Usa Jingu Shrine. The statue of deity Hachiman has a shaved head and is clothed in monk's robes, which is just one way in which representations of the Buddha are used despite these being Shinto gods. The visible chisel marks purposefully left on the

surface of the statue are thought to be a representation of the authority of the gods. Meanwhile, the statues of Hime Okami, an ancient local god of Usa, and Jingu Kogo, the mother of deity Hachiman, have hairstyles typical of ancient court women. Both statues have their legs pulled in close to their bodies, which is a feature typical of Shinto god sculptures in the 12th century. The Hachiman statue and the Jingu Kogo statue share many stylistic similarities, so they are believed to have been created at the same time, but the style of the Hime Okami statue is slightly different.



Important cultural property
Standing Amitabha

Heian Period
12th c.
Wood with polychromy
Statue - H: 198.0
Bungotakada City

This statue was formerly enshrined in a cavern on the northern side of Tennenji Temple. With a height of 198 cm, it is the tallest of the wooden statues of Rokugo-manzan aside from the statues of Makiodo Temple. The entire statue was carved from a single block of Japanese nutmeg tree. The head features large spiral-shaped curls of hair and a round face, and the thick upper eyelids are meant to emphasize the eyes. The lines from the cheeks to the chin are bold and frame the mouth squarely. From the front, the shoulders are sloped and the body is wide, but from the side, the statue is surprisingly thin. The neatly flowing folds of the robe are carved shallowly, which is a style typically seen in statues from the 11th and 12th centuries. The visual effect evoked from the alternating wide and tapering folds is a style that was popular a generation before this statue was carved, making this an exquisite statue that combines old and new styles.





Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Seated Bhaiṣajyaguru

Heian Period

11th c.

Wood with polychromy

Statue - H: 155.0

Mudoji Temple, Bungotakada City

This statue was formerly enshrined in a cavern on the premises of a nearby shrine. With a height of 155 cm, it is one of the largest sitting statues of Rokugo-manzan. The head and body were carved from a single block of camphor tree. The head features large spiral-shaped curls of hair, and the carving of the eyes and nose is

deep and distinct. Meanwhile, the lines from the cheeks to the chin and the from chest to the abdomen are full-bodied. The folds of the robe are carved shallowly and look almost like flowing water. The statue also features alternating wide and tapering folds, a remnant of the style that was popular in the 9th and 10th centuries. The

artisan maintained the early Heian Period tradition of carving from a single block of wood, so this statue can be seen as a piece from the transitional period between the early Heian Period and the gentler style of the late Heian Period.



Tangible cultural property designated by Hiji Town

Seated Bhaiṣajyaguru with Standing Suryaprabha and Candraprabha

Heian Period

12th c.

Wood with lacquer, gold leaf, polychromy

Bhaiṣajyaguru statue - H: 82.4

Suryaprabha statue - H: 100.8

Candraprabha statue - H: 99.1

Ganjojuji Temple, Hiji Town

This seated statue of Bhaiṣajyaguru is holding its right hand with the palm out, a gesture meaning “fear not,” while the left hand, which rests on its knee is holding a medicine jar. To the left stands the statue of Suryaprabha, who is holding a sun disc, and to the right is the statue of Candraprabha, who is holding a moon disc. All the statues were made from cypress using a technique called joined-block construction, and their entire bodies except for their heads are covered in gold leaf. The round faces have gentle expressions, and the shallow folds of the robe along with the lack of undulating musculature are typical of the graceful wooden statues of the late Heian Period (12th century).



Monju Hall (the inner sanctum), Monjusenji Temple

Manjusri Seated on a Lion

Bronze, wood
Statue - H: 20.0
Monjusenji Temple, Kunisaki City

Monjusenji Temple is located halfway up the eastern side of Mt. Monju (616 m), the second highest peak on the Kunisaki Peninsula. Most of the temples of Rokugo-manzan were built to revere the legendary monk Ninmon, but Monjusenji Temple is the only one said to be dedicated to the mystic En no Gyoja. The Manjusri (Bodhisattva of Wisdom) figurine in the Monju Hall, the inner sanctum of the temple, is ordinarily kept hidden from view. The door to the small shrine in which the statue is enshrined is only opened once

every 12 years. According to legend, this statue was brought back by En no Gyoja from Mt. Godai, a sacred site in China associated with Manjusri. The figurine sits in the lotus position on the back of lion and wears a crown on its head. It holds a sword in its right hand and a sutra scroll in its left hand. The cast copper figurine was originally the Buddha statue from a *kakebotoke* (a hanging round plaque featuring figures of Shinto and Buddhist deities). The nimbus and lion were added in the Edo Period.



Seated Onidaishi

Edo Period
17th–18th c.
Wood with polychromy
Statue - H: 20.3
Monjusenji Temple, Kunisaki City

Onidaishi paintings and statues were representations of actual high priests of the Tendai Sect from the mid-Heian Period in the form of ogres. They were said to ward off illness and misfortune. The only statues of Onidaishi in the Kunisaki Peninsula exist at Monjusenji Temple. Aside from the horns, the entire body, including the arms and legs, was carved from a single piece of cypress, and the whole statue was painted black. The statue features two long horns protruding from the head, long

eyebrows atop wide-open eyes and a wide-open mouth. The neck and shoulders are significantly hunched over, the breasts are droopy, and the spine and ribs are visible from the back. The figure is clothed in a loincloth and is in the kneeling position, with both hands resting on its knees. The way the sculptor evokes an old body is particularly masterful. Furthermore, there are no ears and no neck, and the arms hang from the head, making for an odd-shaped statue.



Tangible cultural property designated by Hiji Town

Fragments of Standing Zao-Gongen

Heian Period
12th c.

Wood

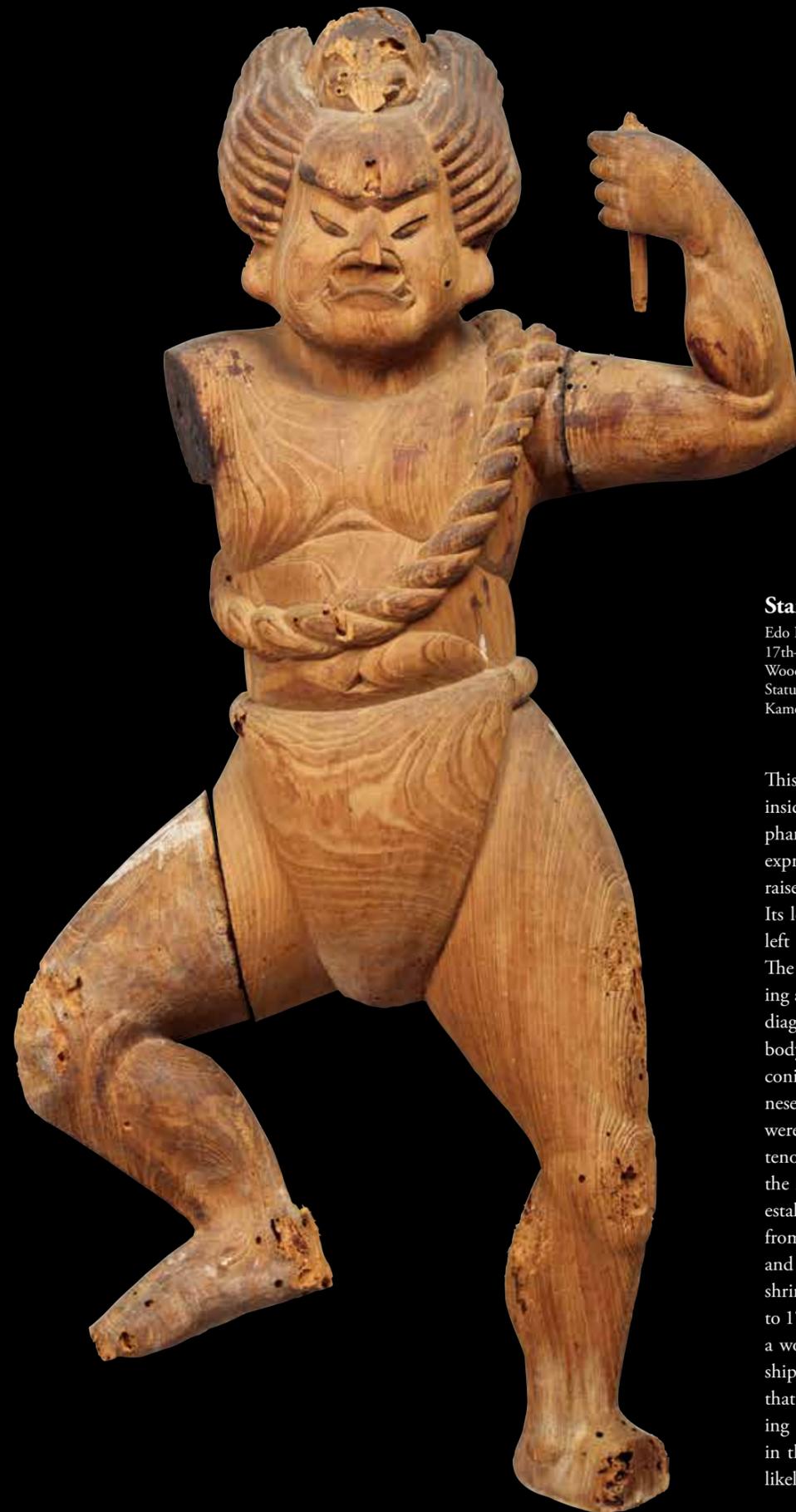
Fragments - H: 71.5

Fragments - H: 77.5

Hokeji District, Hiji Town

Both statues have eroded considerably and are missing parts above the shoulders, both arms, and parts below the knees or ankles. The upper bodies are naked, wearing only a diagonal sash, and the lower bodies are clothed in skirts tied with a waist cord. The statues are barefoot and stand on their right feet with their left feet raised in the air. Statues of Zao-Gongen typically have their right feet raised in the air, but the statues from Hokeji Temple both have their left feet raised. The flesh was painted red and the garments black, and some of

the pigment remains. The gentle musculature and constriction of the waist have been intricately rendered. The statues also feature classical carving techniques, like the alternating wide and tapering folds in the skirts, so scholars believe these were carved by traditional Buddhist sculptors in or around Kyoto between the late 11th and early 12th centuries. There are only three statues of Zao-Gongen in the Kunisaki Peninsula: these two at Hokeji Temple and the one at Kamemine Shrine.



Standing Zao-Gongen

Edo Period
17th–18th c.

Wood

Statue - H: 45.5

Kamemine Shrine, Hiji Town

This statue is enshrined in a small shrine inside Kamemine Shrine. It wears an elephant's head on its head, and its facial expression, with hair standing upright, eyes raised, and fangs exposed, is one of anger. Its left hand is raised, and it stands on its left foot while keeping the right leg bent. The statue wears only a loincloth, revealing a muscular frame, and a rope is draped diagonally over the left shoulder. The head, body, and left leg were carved from a single coniferous tree that appears to be a Japanese nutmeg, and the arms and right leg were attached afterward. Because no foot tenon was ever attached to the bottom of the left foot, it is likely there was no pedestal to begin with. The statue was made from unfinished wood, so the eyebrows and eyes were painted on with ink. The shrine has a donation plaque dating back to 1708 that reads "Zao-Gongen" as well as a wooden plaque indicating that the worship hall was rebuilt in 1718, so we know that Kamemine Shrine was already operating as a shrine dedicated to Zao-Gongen in the early 18th century. This statue was likely carved around the same time.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Bodhisattva Mask

Heian Period

12th c.

Wood with polychromy

L: 27.0

Fukiji Temple, Bungotakada City

This Bodhisattva mask has gentle facial features, including downcast eyes, a small nose, and inflected lips, that are exactly the same as the features on Buddha statues from the late Heian Period (12th century). The flesh of the cheeks and chin look young. The mask was likely carved by an elite Buddhist sculptor who worked in Kyoto. Unfortunately, the left one-third of the mask is missing, and the wood underneath has been considerably worn down. Considering that Fukiji Temple is home to the oldest Amida-do Hall in Kyushu, one possible reason this Bodhisattva mask was kept there is that, in the 12th century, the temple was one of the places where a masked ritual was held to recreate Amitabha and the Bodhisattvas descending on a cloud to welcome devotees to the Pure Land upon their death.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Tsuinamen Masks (male and female masks)

Heian Period

1147

Wood with polychromy

Male mask - L: 21.7

Female mask - L: 20.5

Fukiji Temple, Bungotakada City

These Tsuinamen masks were passed down over the generations in a pair, with a menacing male mask and a gentle-looking female mask. They are thought to have been used in the Shujo-e, a Buddhist New Year's festival. The corners of the eyes on the male mask arch upwards, and the eyebrows undulate in an S shape. This combined with the half-open mouth make for an angry expression. Several holes for inserting hair remain on the head, but none of the hair remains. The female mask has crescent-shaped eyes, and the corners

of the mouth are turned up in a smile, leaving the bottom row of teeth visible and creating dimples in the cheeks. The insides of both masks appear to have the same inscription in black ink which indicates they were made in 1147. Because they were carved from camphor, which is prevalent in Kyushu, these masks are thought to have been made in the Kunisaki Peninsula, but the expressiveness and deft carving technique are both worthy of a high level of merit, making them some of the most invaluable ancient masks of Kyushu.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Jindomen Mask

Heian Period
1162
Wood with polychromy
L: 48.5
Hachiman Nadagu Shrine, Kitsuki City

Measuring 49 cm in height by 43 cm in width, this large mask associated with Hachiman Nadagu Shrine was not worn by people, but rather, it was probably attached to the end of a spear or staff. The hair is divided into left and right parts, the eyes are wide open, and the nostrils are flared. The corners of the mouth are raised upward revealing the upper teeth and upward-pointing fangs. The entire mask

was carved from a single block of paulownia tree. In ancient times, processions of the gods and sacred treasures were performed at Hachiman Nadagu Shrine. This massive mask may have been placed at the front of such kinds of processions to ward off evil. The back of the mask is inscribed with the year 1162, making this one of the most invaluable ancient masks of Kyushu.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Standing Tathagata

Heian Period
11th c.
Wood with polychromy
Statue - H: 98.5
Mantokuji Temple, Kunisaki City

The actual name of this statue is unknown because both forearms and hands are missing. The entire statue including the base was carved from a single block of Japanese nutmeg tree, and no portions were hollowed out. The face is young and the chest is strong and sinewy. The robe on the lower half of the body features diagonal folds carved in a groove-like fashion. The head appears pointy, which is a prevalent feature in Tathagata statues created around Mt. Hiei in the 10th and 11th centuries. Meanwhile, the large spiral-shaped curls of hair is a feature commonly seen among Heian Period single-block wooden statues in the Kunisaki Peninsula. The conceptual groove-like folds and the way the robe wraps around the left breast are features often seen in statues on the eastern side of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Although it can be assumed that there was a group of Buddhist sculptors active in this area, one is left to wonder if they were a progressive group that quickly adopted the styles popular in the sacred sites of the Tendai sect.



Important intangible folk cultural property

Shujo-onie Ritual at Iwatoji Temple

Temples in the Rokugo-manzan region perform a traditional ritual known as the Shujo-onie to welcome the New Year. Tradition holds that the rite originated at the beginning of the 8th century. It is likely that a Buddhist ritual for marking the New Year known as Shujo-e was combined with Oni-e, a Buddhist ritual unique to the area near the Kunisaki Peninsula. Many temples in the Rokugo-manzan region held Shujo-onie rituals during the Edo Period,

but the number declined starting during the Meiji Period. Today, only three—Tennenji Temple (Bungotakada City) along with Iwatoji Temple and Jobutsuji Temple (both Kunisaki City)—continue the tradition.

Despite the fact that the Shujo-onie ritual is performed by temples, local residents play key roles. This fact highlights the deep connection between temples and local res-

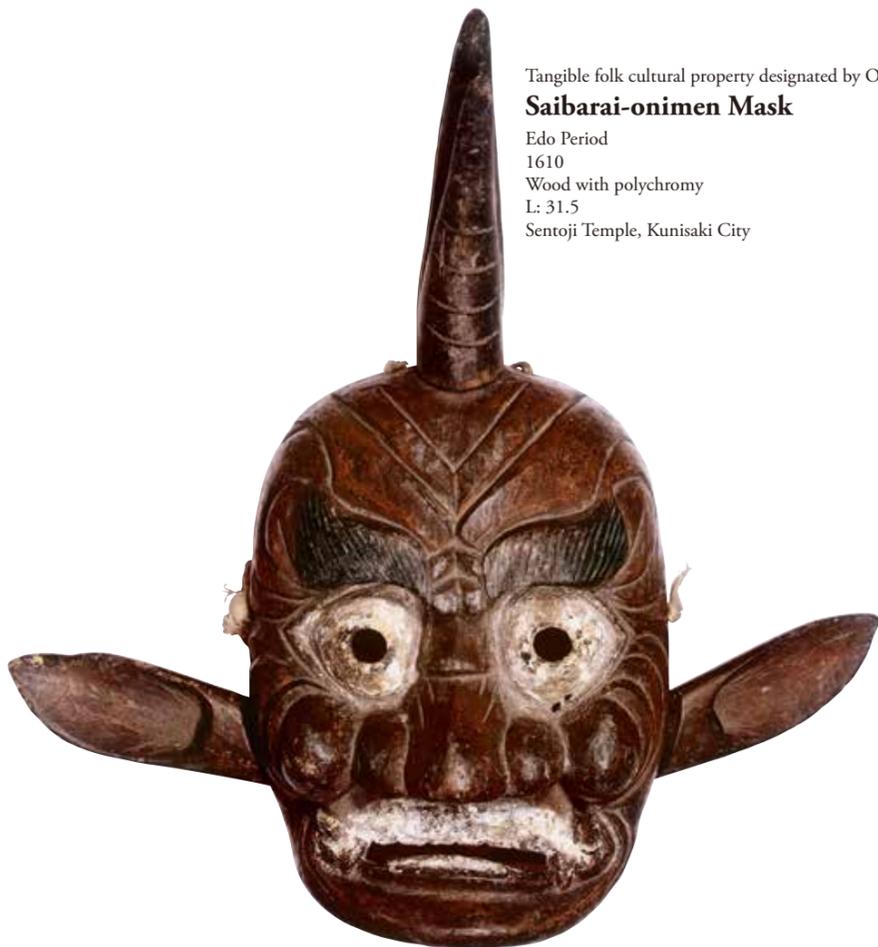
idents. Although ogres are typically seen as a wicked presence that must be driven out, in the Kunisaki region they are seen as sacred entities that bring happiness while preventing disaster. The ritual summons these ogres to protect the assembled people and the village's households from disaster by affording them the divine protection of the Buddha. In this way, spring comes to the mountainous and isolated Kunisaki region.



Tangible folk cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Saibarai-onimen Mask

Edo Period
1610
Wood with polychromy
L: 31.5
Sentoji Temple, Kunisaki City



Two types of ogres make an appearance during the Shujo-onie ritual: Suzu-oni and Ara-oni. Tradition holds that Ara-oni is the incarnation of a high priest or Buddha, and that he drives out wickedness and misfortune while summoning forth happiness. At the Shujo-onie ritual held by Sentoji Temple, two Ara-oni ogres appear. One is known as Saibarai-oni and the other as Ara-oni.

The end of the Saibarai-oni mask's horn is forked in two, while the Ara-oni mask has a single horn. The mask, ears, and horn are made of different pieces of material, with the ears attached by means of hemp string and the horn by means of a bamboo nail. The masks are decorated in red, black, and white, and it is known that the red pigment is made from vermillion and red lead. On the back side of both masks are black ink inscriptions noting the year of fabrication and the artist. They are the oldest masks that are known to have been used in the Shujo-onie ritual.

Tangible folk cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Ara-onimen Mask

Edo Period
1610
Wood with polychromy
L: 29.4
Sentoji Temple, Kunisaki City



Tangible folk cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

Suzu-onimen Masks (male and female masks)

Edo Period
1618
Wood with polychromy
L: 19.7
Futagoji Temple, Kunisaki City

There are two Suzu-oni ogres, one male and the other female. They represent the spirits of the dead, and their faces express the mercy of the Buddha. After a scripture is read and a ritual purification performed by Buddhist priests, the Suzu-oni ogres appear clothed in vivid costumes. They perform a dance while holding a Shinto implement known as a *nusa* and bell and summon Ara-oni.

The mask on the left depicts the male Suzu-

oni, and the mask on the right depicts the female Suzu-oni. Both are oval in shape, and each has a long nose and happy expression. The male mask is made of Japanese nutmeg. Black ink inscriptions on the back of each mask note the year of fabrication, artist, and year of repair.

Futagoji Temple came under the protection of the Matsudaira family of the Kitsuki domain and flourished as the administrator of the Rokugo-manzan region.



Intangible folk cultural property that needs measures such as documentation

Kebesu Festival at Iwakurasha Shrine

Every year on October 14, a mysterious fire festival is held at Kushikusha Shrine (Iwakurasha shrine) in the Kushiku neighborhood of Kunimimachi, Kunisaki City. Known as the Kebesu Festival, the origins of this strange festival are unclear, but the rules for the purification of mind and body have been followed since ancient times.

When the festival begins, the person assuming the role of Kebesu puts on a costume and mask. Next, the priest traces the

character for “win” on his back and slaps him, and with this, his body is taken over by the deity Kebesu. Kebesu rushes toward a fire that is protected by the *tobagumi* (8 groups of men take turns every year to play a fire guarding role), and they repeatedly stop him with sticks and push him back. On the ninth try, Kebesu breaks through and leaps into the fire. Upon doing this, the men guarding the fire start swinging bundles of burning vines, and sparks fly out into the crowd of shrine parishioners.

The festival reaches its climax as the shrine parishioners shriek and cheer while trying to run away from the flames.



Intangible folk cultural property that needs measures such as documentation

Himeshima Bon Odori Dance

Located off the northeast coast of the Kunisaki Peninsula, the island of Himeshima is home to a unique form of Bon Odori that is danced in the evenings every year from August 15 to 17. The Himeshima Bon Odori dance is said to have evolved from the Nembutsu Odori dance that was popular in the Kamakura Period, and the hamlets throughout the island each dance a variety of dances to the beat of *taiko* drums.

The Himeshima Bon Odori dance consists of traditional dances passed down over the ages as well as newer creative dances. One of most well-known traditional dances of the Himeshima Bon Odori dance is the fox dance. Nowadays, the children of the island perform the fox dance. They paint their faces white and red and play the part of cute but cunning foxes. Some of the dances are wild and powerful, others are elegant and beautiful, and still others are humorous and entertaining. Every dance



is charming in its own way. The sheer variety of the dances is one of the reasons the Himeshima Bon Odori dance attracts many spectators.

