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KANNO, Ryoma. An Analysis of the Iconography and Production Background of the Aizen Myōō (Rāgarāja) Sculpture at Tokyo National Museum

Previous scholarship has revealed that the sculpture of Aizen Myōō housed at Tokyo National Museum once belonged to Uchiyama Eikyū-ji Temple which was located in Tenri City, Nara Prefecture. It has also determined the original later-13th century form of the sculpture and its accompanying *zushi* (miniature shrine with double doors), and that this Aizen Myōō image was created by Unga. However, discussion about the sculpture's relationship with the *zushi* is lacking. The inside of the *zushi* doors depict various buddhas of the Aizen Mandala, as well as Kongō Yashya Myōō (Vajrayakṣa) and Gōzanze Myōō (Trailokyavijaya). The top of the *zushi* carries an inscription of *Yuga Yugi Kyō*, which is the fundamental sutra of Aizen Myōō. In addition, the *zushi* is composed of mandalas centered upon Aizen Myōō, such as the Enmaten (Lord of Hell) Mandala on the posterior wall and the Butsugen Butsumo shuji (Mother of the Buddha Mantra) on the canopy. In order to understand the intention behind the production of this statue, comprehensive analysis that includes these mandalas is required.

In order to do so, this paper used iconographic analysis and confirms that this icon was associated with the Shingon Ono-ryū school founded by Shōbō (832-909), founder of Daigo-ji Temple. A notable iconographic feature of this Aizen Myōō is the placement of the third hand on the left, called the kanote, upon the left chest. According to the iconographical compendium *Asabashō*, the Aizen Myōō image used in the *chōbukuhō* rite (method of exorcism) conducted by Seison (1012-74), an Ono-ryū school priest, also has its left fist on the left chest. From this description, it can be surmised that this work was venerated in the *chōbukuhō* as well. In addition, examples of works that depict both Aizen Myōō and Butsugen Butsumo have been discovered on the 14th century *Daijingū Mishōtai Zushi* (Miniature Shrine with Engraved Mirror) in the collection of Saidai-ji Temple. Payment records indicate that Daijingū Mishōtai Zushi was created when the Saidai-ji priest Eison (1201-90) made a pilgrimage to Ise at the time of the Mongol Invasion. This suggests a relationship between Aizen Myōō and Eison, who went into the priesthood and conducted ascetic practices at Daigo-ji Temple.

The sculpture's relationship with the *sekkanke* (line of regents and advisers) becomes important when considering that this Aizen Myōō sculpture was passed down through the generations to Uchiyama Eikyū-ji Temple. Uchiyama Eikyū-ji Temple is a Shingon temple, but it is a branch temple of Kōfukuji Daijōin Temple which had a strong connection with the *sekkanke*. For example, Konoe Iezane (1179-1243) secluded himself there at the time of the 1221 Jōkyū Rebellion. Furthermore, we can surmise that "Takatsukasa," mentioned as the author of the Aizen Myōō inscription in *Uchiyama no ki*, referred to Takatsukasa Kanehira (1228-94). Previous research has suggested that this work was produced between 1275 and 1282, a span that coincides with the period in which Kanehira was a chief advisor to the emperor. Japan was facing the threat of the Mongol Invasion at this time, and it was ascertained that on the aforementioned pilgrimage to Ise, Eison had the support of Kanehira, who was becoming one of his devout followers.

Because this work was a lost item from the collection of Uchiyama Eikyū-ji Temple, and because it communicates the specific modality of medieval Aizen Myōō belief, it is valuable to discussions on the history of sculpture, as well as the history of art and of crafts and research into religious rituals. This paper attempts to suggest the historical significance of the Aizen Myōō from the viewpoint of sculptural history and iconography.

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