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Japan is not the only country where this situation prevails. In other countries of Asia, too, local deities have come into contact with the gods, buddhas, and bodhisattvas that originated in India and elsewhere. Each country has its own special circumstances, just as does Japan.

The "special circumstances" in Japan may be described as a religious culture centering on kami and Shinto. When the buddhas and bodhisattvas came to Japan, the deities that they encountered were largely formless and not institutionalized; it was only later that they gradually assumed form (as with images) and institutions (like the Jingikan). This is clear from how they appear in the eighth century historical records, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The *Kojiki* makes no reference at all to the Buddha or Buddhism. The *Nihon shoki*, on