Centre for the Study of
Japanese Religions

CSJR Newsletter

January 2008
Issue 16-17
FROM THE CHAIR

Spring has arrived earlier than usual this year in London, and trees and flowers are blooming while the city celebrates the Chinese New Year.

At CSJR we have seen quite a movement of people since the beginning of the academic year. Brian Bocking has left SOAS to take up a job at the University of Cork, in Ireland. While this is an exciting opportunity for Brian, we have lost a wonderful colleague who has contributed to the activities of the Centre and to its running in an invaluable way. We have learned much from his extraordinary managerial abilities and pragmatic attitude and from his broad scholarship, and I would like to express here my thanks for the time and energy Brian devoted to CSJR, and more personally for the continuous support I have benefited from during the years I have been acting as the Centre chair. We hope that Brian will somehow remain involved with the Centre and are very glad that he has agreed to serve on our international advisory committee.

Of the other members of the Centre, John Breem has been away, spending two terms of sabbatical in Japan, while research associate Katja Triplett has moved to Marburg to take up a position there. On the other hand, Gaynor Sekimori, one of the past CSJR postdoctoral fellows, has returned to Britain from Japan, and we are delighted to have her at the Centre as a research associate and a new member of the executive. I shall take this chance to welcome two other colleagues to the management committee of the Centre, Tim Barrett of the Department of Study of Religion, and John Carpenter of the Department of Art and Archaeology. I am grateful to them as well for agreeing to serve as advisors to the chair.

Our PhD students, too, have travelled to Japan and taken part in other international activities, and you can read their reports on fieldwork and research in progress in this issue of the Newsletter.

As in previous issues, we are delighted to publish in this Newsletter research notes on ground-breaking projects from scholars working on Japanese religions in different parts of the world and from various disciplinary fields. I am also glad to announce that the volume on the Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice, with papers from an international workshop that the CSJR organized three years ago, with the help of Meri Arichi, was finally published last year.

The regular activities of the Centre have continued through this first part of the academic year. In the Fall Term seminar series we have listened to fascinating lectures on religious art, Buddhist literature, rituals and new religion psychology, while the Japanese Religions Forum has brought to the CSJR advanced postgraduate students from other European universities to discuss medieval textual practices. Seminars and Fora will continue in the Summer term, while in the Spring Term we have suspended our regular seminars to host the Numata Lectures, a series of ten lectures and seminars sponsored by the Bukkyô Dendô Kyôkai, which this year focus on Japanese Buddhism. We are very fortunate to have Iyanaga Nobumi from Tokyo guiding us through the meanders of medieval Japanese mythology –curious deities, heretical teachings, and powerful rituals.

Further international activities are planned for Spring. In March a joint postgraduate workshop sponsored by CSJR and Nagoya University will take place at SOAS, followed by a special seminar by Professor Abe Yasuro. In May a joint CSJR-JRC workshop on Ritual Portraiture will bring to SOAS Professor Abe Ryuichi from Harvard. Details are included in this Newsletter and I hope many of you who are in London or close-by will be able to attend these events.

I look forward to a fruitful 2008. Happy Year of the Rat!

Lucia Dolce
Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions
Seminars and Fora 2007-08

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

Thursdays, 5:00-6:30 pm, Room G3

11 October  Evoking and Appeasing Spirits: Portraits of Emperor Antoku and the Taira and the Illustrated Story of Emperor Antoku in Ritual Context
Naoko Gunji (SISJAC)

18 October  Sukyo Mahikari: God’s Light and Universal Principles
Sidney Chang (scientist and SM consultant)

25 October  The Yamato Katsuragi Hōzanki: Ryōbu Shintō and the Semiotic Construction of Medieval Mythological Discourse *
Tatsuma Padoan (University of Venice Ca’ Foscari)

1 November  Rituals in Dōgen’s Zen
Christian Steineck (Goethe-University Frankfurt/Main)

22 November  Representations of the Body, Sex and Eroticism in Medieval Buddhist literature
Raj Pandey (La Trobe University)

29 November  Jisha-Engi, Reizan-Engi, Shugendō-Engi: Aspects of Japanese Foundation Narratives *
Carina Roth (Université de Genève/ EPHE Paris)

6 December  Belief in print: the enshafuda tradition
Rebecca Salter (Chelsea College of Art, London)

13 December  Eisai (Yōsai) and Tendai Esoteric Buddhism: The Doctrinal System of a Ritual Practitioner*
Shinya Mano (SOAS)

17 April  The Sei Iesu Kyōkai: Rejection, Indigenization and the Formulation of Identity in a Japanese Pentecostal Community*
Aike Rots (SOAS)

1 May  Myth and History in Sacred Biography
Miyamoto Yōtarō (Kansai University)

22 May  Oracle Specialists and Shugendō: The Field of Japanese Ethnology
Anne Bouchy (EFEO/Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail)

Lectures marked by * are part of the postgraduate series: Japanese Religion Forum
Notes from a Visiting Scholar: Reflections on London

Iyanaga Nobumi

I arrived in London on 7 January 2008 after a long flight from Japan and it was a relief to find Dr Dolce waiting for me. I am already enjoying this new life in London. I am really comforted by everybody’s warm hospitality. Thanks to everyone’s help and kindness, my lectures seem to be quite successful.

Now that I become a little more accustomed to this new life, I can appreciate a little better the academic environment at SOAS. As I do not belong to any academic institution in Japan, I cannot make a precise comparison, but at least, I am surprised by the active academic life here. There are many seminars and evening lectures open to everybody; All of the ones I have attended so far I have found to be of a very high level and interesting. Also interesting are the friendly but deep discussions between colleagues that often follow.

The library is astonishingly rich. Obviously, as the books must cover all the fields of the many cultures studied here— from society, economy, law, and history to literature, philosophy and religion, the number of books on each field of a given culture may not be sufficient. For instance, for the religious history of the Japanese medieval period, which is the main focus of my current scholarly interest, important Japanese collections seem to not be there (but some are kept in the nearby British Library). But the collection of Western specialised periodicals is a source of envy to a Japanese researcher like me. It also seems that each researcher has acquired an extensive personal collection.

As for my lectures and seminars, I am glad to find several people in the audience who seem to be seriously interested in my talks. Sometimes, after a session, we have drinks in the Senior Common Room, and there more deep discussions follow on the topics dealt with in my talks. I consider my task for the lectures to be to communicate to the audience some of the recent research findings in the field of Buddhist mythology and Japanese medieval religious studies. At the same time, I would like to share with the young, and not so young, scholars who kindly listen to my talks, the joy of reading a broad range of texts, and uncovering unexpected connections or associations. Japanese medieval religions are full of these surprises, and yet, they are only beginning to be explored. It seems that mythological studies require a certain “feeling” for associations between different mythical motifs. I would be more than rewarded if I could arouse some interest in these associations among my audience. For this aim, I try to make my talks as vivid as possible. This is not easy for a poor English speaker like me.

In my seminars, the atmosphere is intimate and relaxed. I read some Buddhist texts and explain them. I was surprised to discover that some students had never been formally trained to read kanbun texts. But in a sense, I find that this is a very good thing: it is better to not be trained in a traditional and rigid method and to begin without preconceived ideas. My personal way of reading texts and working on them may not always be the best one; but I feel that I can be of some help, even with my limited knowledge and ability of communicating in English language, because students are interested in knowing about Buddhist terminology and its use in different contexts.

I have not yet had much time to speak personally with all the students, but those with whom I have had the chance to have discussions at length are all highly interesting young scholars, working on stimulating topics and quite advanced in their studies. I hope that during my stay here, I will be able to have more communication with the students and be helpful to them.

For my own interest, the truly interdisciplinary environment of SOAS, where specialists of different fields can meet and talk on a daily basis, is very stimulating. For example, an eminent specialist of Chinese Buddhist studies, Professor Barret, has attended some of my lectures and has found in my talks a topic that he had studied himself. I could learn a lot from his research.

Other than the academic life at SOAS, I have been able to visit several museums: the Islamic art at the British Museum fascinated me; I spent delightful time before some paintings by Vermeer or Rembrandt at the National Gallery. All in all, I am spending a very pleasant time, full of new learning, in London. I strongly wish that my stay here will be fruitful also for those who are always so helpful to me.
THE BUKKOYO DENDO KYOKAI VISITING PROFESSORSHIP 2007-2008

Under the Shadow of the Great Śiva
Tantric Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Medieval Culture

A series of lectures and seminars delivered by Professor Iyanaga Nobumi (Tokyo)

10 January-11 April 2008

Thursday 10 January, 6:00-7.00 pm, Brunei Gallery Theatre
Inaugural Lecture followed by a reception

LECTURE SERIES: Thursdays, 5-6:30 pm, Room G3

17 JANUARY  Buddhist Mythology I: Matara-jin, Daikoku, and other medieval deities with three heads

24 JANUARY  Buddhist Mythology II: the Horse-headed Avalokiteśvara and Horse-headed deities in East Asia

31 JANUARY  Dākinī, the wish-fulfilling jewel, and Japanese medieval ritual of enthronement unction

7 FEBRUARY  Dākinī and the heretical "Tachikawa-ryū"

14 FEBRUARY  What was, and what was not the "Tachikawa-ryū"

21 FEBRUARY  Māra of the Sixth Heaven and the medieval myth of creation

28 FEBRUARY  Annen, medieval Shinto, and Hirata Atsutane: on the beginnings of the comparative study of mythology

6 MARCH  The Pantheon of Yushima-tenjin/Shinjō-in complex

13 MARCH  Myth, rite and royalty in medieval Japan

SEMINARS: Tuesdays, 5.00-6:30 pm, Room 389

Dates: 15, 22, 29 January; 5, 12, 19, 26 February; 4 and 11 March

The seminars will examine selected passages from the Buddhist sources discussed during the lectures, including Sino-Japanese canonical texts such as the Darijing, medieval ritual anthologies such as the Kakuzenshō, and other relevant works of Buddhist literature.

THE LECTURES ARE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC.

PLEASE NOTE THAT BOTH LECTURES AND SEMINARS WILL CONTINUE DURING READING WEEK.

Students registered in one of the relevant MA Programmes at SOAS can take the lectures and seminars for credits as a half unit course. Please enquire with the Department of the Study of Religions on the requirements.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE CONVENOR:
Dr Lucia Dolce, Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions tel: 020 7898...
On March 17-18, 2008 a Postgraduate Workshop on Japanese Religions will take place at SOAS, followed by a Special Seminar held by Professor Abe Yasurô (Nagoya University). This event is jointly sponsored by Nagoya University Graduate Course in Comparative Culture and the SOAS Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions (CSJR). It will be of interest to students of Japanese religions, history and literature and to Buddhologists.

**MONDAY, MARCH 17, 13:00-19:00, RM 116**

**POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOP**

**RESEARCHING JAPANESE RELIGIONS: NEW FINDINGS FROM FIELDWORK AND ARCHIVES**

**CHAIRS:** Abe Yasurô and Lucia Dolce

**PANEL ONE 13:00-15:00**

Kobayashi Naoko (Nagoya University)
The Oza ritual of the Ontake Practitioners

Tullio Lobetti (SOAS)
Heaven among us? The Social Relevance of Asceticism in Contemporary Japan

Satomi Horiuchi (SOAS)
Expressing Emotions: Memorial Services in Japanese Christianity

**COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

**COFFEE BREAK 15:00-15:30**

**PANEL TWO 15:30-17:00**

Miyoshi Toshinori (Nagoya University)
Buddhist History as Sectarian Discourse: Historical Manuscripts from the Shinpukuji Archives

Shinya Mano (SOAS)
The Influence of Kakuban’s Doctrines on Yōsai’s thought: Visualising the Five Organs and the Role of Amitayus

**COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

**PANEL THREE 17:30-19:00**

Conan Carey (Stanford University)
The Tale of the Heike as Folklore: The Tale of Jishinbou Son’e

Kigen-san Licha (SOAS)
Secrecy and Power in Medieval Soto Zen

**COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION**

On March 17-18, 2008 a Postgraduate Workshop on Japanese Religions will take place at SOAS, followed by a Special Seminar held by Professor Abe Yasurô (Nagoya University). This event is jointly sponsored by Nagoya University Graduate Course in Comparative Culture and the SOAS Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions (CSJR). It will be of interest to students of Japanese religions, history and literature and to Buddhologists.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 10:00-12:30, RM 116**

**SPECIAL SEMINAR**

**RE-DISCOVERING MEDIEVAL JAPANESE TANTRISM: TWO NEWLY-FOUND WORKS BY MONKAN GUSHIN AND THEIR CONTEXT**

Professor Abe Yasurô (Nagoya University)

**Discussants:**

Iyanaga Nobumi (BDK Visiting Professor, SOAS)
Lucia Dolce (SOAS)

For further information on this event please contact: Dr Lucia Dolce, ld16@soas.ac.uk
Portraiture: Power & Ritual
29-30 May 2008
SOAS

The Japan Research Centre and the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions will host a lecture and workshop on the theme of Portraiture: Power and Ritual

29 May 5pm Khalili Lecture Theatre

Keynote Address
Professor Ryûichi Abe (Harvard University)

Workshop: 30 May Room 116

Speakers at the workshop will be:
Dr Crispin Branfoot (SOAS): Mughal Portraiture
Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS): Mediaeval Portraits and Rituals
Dr Naoko Gunji (SOAS/SISJAC): Portraits of the Emperor Antoku
Dr James McMullen (Oxford University): Edo Portraits of Confucius
Professor Timon Screech: Rangaku and Portraiture
Dr Jan Stuart (British Museum) (tbc): Portraiture in China

Discussant: Christine Guth (V&A Museum)

The workshop will cover the use of portraiture in Japan, from the Mediaeval to Early-Modern Periods, and investigate how and why portraits were made, of whom they were made, and how images were displayed or hidden from view. The workshop will situate Japanese portraiture in an international context, but will consider parallel patterns in China and India, during the same period.

All Welcome.

Registration not necessary
Revealing the Secret Portrait of Emperor Antoku

Naoko Gunji

This short essay introduces a wooden statue of the eight-year-old emperor Antoku (1178-1185) hidden as a sacred body (gosshintai) in the Sacred Hall at the Shinto shrine Akama Jingū in Yamaguchi Prefecture. This portrait has not been shown to the public since the Meiji period. My request to investigate the hidden statue of Antoku was politely declined by the current head priest; however, I recently discovered photographs of the statue and various records mentioning it before the Meiji era. When this material is collated with the head priest’s description of it, and a painted portrait of Antoku, which was likely depicted based upon it, we can visualize what the secret statue looks like. Furthermore, by positioning the portrait within its original contexts (historical, architectural, and ritual), I suggest that its functions were closely related to the place where it was enshrined and used.

The wooden statue of Antoku was originally enshrined in the Spirit Hall (reiḥyo) at the Buddhist temple Amidaji. Amidaji was established for Antoku and the Taira members who jumped to their deaths into the cold seas off the coast of Akama during the Battle of Dannoura in 1185. Because they drowned themselves and various disasters occurred in the years immediately after their tragic deaths, their spirits were believed to have become vengeful ghosts, unable to access the next world. In order to appease their spirits and assist them in attaining salvation of paradise, Amidaji, named after the salvific name of Amida Buddha and constructed right in front of the battle site, continued to perform various rites throughout its history.

However, Amidaji’s history came to a sudden end during the Meiji-period persecution of Buddhism. The temple was completely destroyed and was subsequently replaced by a Shinto shrine (currently called Akama Jingū). The majority of Buddhist icons and implements were vandalized or ransacked, and replaced with Shinto ceremonial ones. Fortunately, several key artworks including the portrait of Antoku escaped from the persecution and survive to this day. Nonetheless, the removal of these surviving artworks from their original architectural space has obscured the significance of the works that functioned in rituals.

Despite its significance, Antoku’s portrait has been unstudied because it became a hidden icon after the temple was converted into a Shinto shrine in the Meiji period. To this day, the wooden portrait of Antoku has been kept strictly secret. Prior to the Meiji period, however, many temple visitors recorded seeing the portrait of Antoku. Moreover, the room where the portrait was enshrined was the most sacred space, serving as the main sanctuary of the Spirit Hall. The importance of the portrait is also seen in temple inventories that list first the Spirit Hall with its portrait of Antoku. It is thus crucial to understand the nature of Antoku’s portrait not only to reveal its functions but also to explore how Amidaji’s significance shaped the functions of the portrait and was also shaped by them.

As shown in the photograph that I found from the Ōba Collection at Kokugakuin University, the portrait of Antoku is a free-standing statue measuring approximately ninety centimeters in height. Antoku wears a formal court robe with a pair of trousers. The photographs also show some patterns (e.g., chrysanthemum, paulownia, and auspicious clouds) on the robe. Antoku’s hair is parted in the middle and bound at the sides, and has short locks without loops. Although, in the photographs, crystals are not inserted for eyeballs, we know that originally the statue had crystal eyes. For example, the travel diary of the Confucian scholar Kawakita Onzan (1794-1853) describes that the eyes of Antoku’s portrait were shining, suggesting that crystals were inserted for his eyeballs. In the photographs the wooden statue misses the arms; therefore, it does not have any attributes. But the wooden statue probably held a wooden scepter. This is confirmed by several records as well as the painted portrait of Antoku. For example, when Iio Sōgi (1421-1502), a link-versed poet, visited Amidaji in 1480, he recorded that the statue of Antoku had a wooden scepter. Except for some minor differences, the descriptions of Antoku’s statue in all available sources are extremely similar. The photographs were taken either in 1944 or in 1952, which predates the time when the head priest brought the statue to the Conservation Center for Cultural Properties in the Kyoto National Museum in order to examine and repair it in 1963. According to the current head priest, the hidden statue has crystal eyes and arms today. It is thus likely these missing parts were added at that time.

One of the photographs provides the inscription carved on the statue. From this inscription we know that Zōshun...
The paintings of Antoku’s life were installed in the room where the statues of the Taira were enshrined with the child emperor. I think that the process of these two rituals—the veneration of the portraits and the etoki—was necessary to evoke the spirits of the dead to listen to the etoki together in order to commemorate and appease their spirits.

The portraits of the deceased were the primary objects not only in the mortuary ceremonies but also in the placatory rites. According to a tenth-century document, the portrait of Sugawara no Michizane (845-903), who was thought to have become a vengeful ghost after his death in exile, was produced to be used in his pacification rites. When one of the colleagues who conspired in Michizane’s exile was suffering from a series of misfortunes, he commissioned a pacification rite and a portrait of Michizane. The monk who initiated the rite stated that daily offerings should be made in front of the portrait. Indeed, the pacification project for Emperor Antoku was modeled upon that for Michizane. Thus, Antoku’s portrait was used in the placatory ritual. This is most likely the original function of the portrait when the Spirit Hall was commissioned in 1191 by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127-1192); he was threatened by Antoku’s restless soul, which was believed to have caused the Great Earthquake and Go-Shirakawa’s grave illness at that time.

By revealing the hidden statue of Antoku and by placing it in its historical, architectural, and ritual contexts, I suggest that the functions of the portrait were closely linked to the Spirit Hall, in which commemorative and placatory rituals were performed. No artworks exist in isolation, thus, this discovery enhances our understanding of the artwork as well as various contexts associated with it.

Naoko Gunji is currently a Sainsbury Fellow at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures and is based at SOAS. She has recently completed a PhD dissertation entitled “Amidaji: Mortuary Art, Architecture, and Rites of Emperor Antoku’s Temple” at the University of Pittsburgh.
Research Notes

The World of Dangisho: Educating Monks in Medieval Japan

Watanabe Mariko

In medieval Tendai temples monks were taught many disciplines by their teachers, and they took notes. Many such records, assembled into books called dangisho 談義書, survive in temple libraries today. Dangi 談義 literally means oral lectures, like those delivered in a university classroom today. It refers to oral teachings employing allegories that helped students understand difficult concepts. There were many such temple-schools called dangijo 談義所 in medieval Japan. Buddhist learning was attained through study with various teachers and monks moved from temple to temple to find the best instructors.

Previous research on dangisho only dealt with a small amount of what these manuscripts contain. Scholars recognized that students worked with different teachers, but it was not known that they became, essentially, exchange students. My meticulous archival research and careful reading of dangi texts provide evidence of how and what monks studied, including clear indications that they traveled to enhance their studies.

My research focuses on the prominent scholar-monk Sonshun 尊舜 (1451-1514) and how he acquired his extensive learning. As a young monk Sonshun lived at Gassanji temple in Hitachi no kuni (present day Ibaraki prefecture) and was taught by a monk named Sonei. At sixteen he moved to Tsuganeji temple in Nagano, a famous school and the oldest in the Tendai sect. He lived there for a long time and became a teacher at the temple. As his fame grew, many students came to Tsuganeji to study with him, and while at Tsuganeji he wrote one of his most famous books, Tsuganeji myomoku. When he was forty-two he returned to Gassanji, where he taught and wrote another important book, Nijoshokenmon. At age fifty-one he moved to another temple in Hitachi, called Semmyōji. There he studied with Ryozen, who helped him advance his studies in esoteric Buddhism. Sonshun wrote what may be considered his best-known work, the Jurinshūyōshō, roughly ten years later. He died at the age of sixty-four.

My research analyzes Sonshun’s 109 writings, some of which have never been studied. Classifying them according to when they were written and to their subject matter, I found that he wrote many books about esoteric Buddhism and only a few about esoteric Buddhism. He also compiled many texts about the Lotus Sutra and about rongi commentaries in a question and answer format.

Sonshun cites classical Tendai texts that were famous in his time, but have since been lost and are unavailable to scholars for research. In the course of my archival investigations I discovered manuscripts of books that had been thought lost, such as the Shichihyakkajōshō, written by Tsujin –few scholars even knew of its existence.

The Jurinshūyōshō is a dangisho on the Lotus Sutra. The Lotus Sutra is a difficult scripture to understand. Its words and meanings are open to multiple interpretations, and monks had to study hard and work with prominent teachers in order to comprehend it. These teachers taught using allegories to make complex interpretations more accessible.

Previous to my research, it was thought that all dangisho for teaching the sutra were similar. Close comparison with three contemporary teaching texts written by other monks however demonstrates that there are major differences between them.

The Jurinshūyōshō frequently quotes various Tendai texts and allegories, classical poets, and other sources. Other dangisho, in contrast, do not contain nearly as many references. Comparing the Jurinshūyōshō to the Hokekyō jikidansho shows that Sonshun valued familiar allegories in teaching the Lotus Sutra.

Another characteristic of the Jurinshūyōshō is its inclusion of renga verse. Many thought renga unsuitable for teaching about the Lotus Sutra, but Sonshun often used such verses. By assembling and examining all of the examples in the Jurinshūyōshō I have concluded that Sonshun must have been in contact with renga poets. I also conducted research on how this relationship might have functioned.

In the course of my research I also discovered a manuscript of the Jurinshūyōshō at Dannōhōrin temple. This seemed an unusual occurrence, because the Dannōhōrin was not a Tendai temple. The closing pages of the manuscript contain a great deal of information about the lives of monks. By analyzing it I discovered that Tendai monks
were not supposed to lend their manuscripts to monks of other sects, but this manuscript was given to a Jōdo monk named Ihachi 以八. He had requested the manuscript many times, and was refused again and again by Tendai monks. They began, however, to admire his persistent interest and commitment to Tendai doctrine and eventually allowed him to take the manuscript. Ihachi was unusual, particularly because he lived in a period of wars when many monks gave up on their training. He wrote a letter of thanks to the Tendai monks for giving him such an opportunity and protected the book, preserving it in nearly perfect condition.

When monks went elsewhere to study, they took their books with them. Many were destroyed, but enough survive in their adopted homes that we can learn a great deal from them. I argue that monks had great freedom to choose where they studied and to choose the content of their studies.

I discovered that the Tendai temple Kanasana was where Tendai monks were taught while Nichiren monks were taught at the Kuonji in Minobu, a Nichiren sect temple. Kuonji however owns many lengthy books on Tendai doctrine. This means that members of the Nichiren sect (still a relatively new sect at the time) studied Tendai doctrine alongside Tendai students in a Tendai temple, copied books, and took them back to their own temples. That was a time of peace when Tendai temples welcomed students from other sects. Since Kuonji was a major temple of the Nichiren sect, many books accumulated there. Most Tendai temples have burnt down over the ages and many books from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries have been lost. Fortunately, however, Kuonji library has survived intact, and now possesses many important documents from that era. Since information about other sects of the time is extremely scarce, this library’s collection contains extremely valuable information about the Tendai sect and other matters. For instance, a monk named Nichii studied Tendai doctrine at Kanasan Temple. At the age of twenty-nine he joined the Nichiren sect and began training with a new teacher. He moved to Kuonji with all his books and belongings. Many of his documents have been preserved in the Minobu archive, enabling scholars correctly to identify the chronology and content of initiation at Kanasana Temple.

The two Tendai temples Kitain and Nakain in Semba were the most important temples in the Kantō region and must have held many different books in the medieval period. They burned down, however, and although they were rebuilt, they lost their medieval libraries. Books extant at Kuonji Temple, however, provide indications of the activity of monks in Semba. I was also able to understand that temples in Semba played an important role among Tendai temples in the Kantō region.

Sonshun was a prominent medieval scholar monk. Using him as a model, I have investigated how monks in the medieval times studied Tendai doctrine and helped other monks to do the same. By analyzing his doctrines and writings, especially Sondan and Jurinshūyōshō, I found that his ideas conformed to Tendai doctrine more than many scholars have believed: Sonshun was an orthodox scholar-monk.

I also researched the wider Tendai temple environment of his time to get a better sense of the context within which he lived and taught. This research demonstrated that there were close relationships between temples, crossing sectarian lines, and that students frequently relocated to other temples in search of better teachers and scholars.

Watanabe Mariko holds a PhD from Waseda University and currently teaches at Hirosaki University. Her study of lecture books and the work of Sonshun, The Formation and Development of Medieval Dangisho, is forthcoming from Hôzôkan. (mwata@cc.hirosaki-u.ac.jp)
Research Notes

From the Archives of the Museum of Religion at Marburg University: R. Otto And Zen

Katja Triplett

In the summer of 1985 the former director and curator of the Marburg University Religionskundliche Sammlung (Religious Studies Research Collection) received a friendly letter in flawless German from the Nippon Hôsô Kyôkai (NHK) announcing a visit by educational programme editor Mr. Ama Toshimaro who was at the time working on a documentary film on “Zen”. According to the letter, the purpose of the visit was to film at Marburg University as “the starting point of the spread of Zen in Europe”. When I first read this letter the other day looking through the archive of the Religionskundliche Sammlung as its new curator (since March 2007) I was truly astonished to find myself at the site of the origin of Zen in Europe - I had not known this although having graduated in the Study of Religions and Japanese Studies in Marburg. This fame is clearly linked to the work and person of the Marburg Lutheran theologian and scholar of comparative religion Rudolf Otto (1869-1937).

Recently, the circumstances and the missionary intentions of D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966) and his “Eastern Buddhists” have been analysed in some detail, and Suzuki’s construction of “Zen” and “Zen culture” demystified or at least put in historical and political perspective. Rudolf Otto who did not know East Asian languages, or much about Buddhist history, was deeply influenced by Suzuki’s writings which seem to have been a main source in his research on Zen Buddhism. He saw his own activities toward forming a Religious League of Mankind (Religiöser Menschheitsbund) akin to his friend Suzuki’s efforts in the USA and elsewhere. Still, Otto did not just copy Suzukiism, he also followed an entirely different strain of thought and had a quite particular understanding of the Zen Buddhism tradition and practice he encountered during his travels in Japan in 1912 and through personal communication and various works of art.

Both D. T. Suzuki and Rudolf Otto radically changed the way Zen Buddhism was perceived in early 20th century Germany, as a first wave of reception. The second wave of reception in the 20th century was definitely inspired by Eugen Herrigel’s (1884-1955) book Zen Archev first published in post-war Germany (1948) but based on an earlier presentation in Nazi Berlin.

Otto was actually the first German scholar to express a positive stance toward Zen and Zen practice. The more usual view of this Buddhist tradition and especially the practice of sitting meditation is found in a 1918 publication by theologian Friedrich Heiler who compared Christian prayer and Buddhist meditation. Heiler points out that an already degenerated form of Buddhism, the Mahâyâna, became further corrupted in Japan where the practice of zazen was a prime example of the “profanation of the ‘Holy’ through soulless mechanisation” (p. 50). To Otto, however, zazen appeared as an extreme case of numinous manifestation. In a short essay published in 1923 in the supplementary volume to his monumentally successful book The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational (Das Heilige 1917, engl. transl. 1923) he basically draws on two articles by Suzuki that appeared in the journal The Eastern Buddhist in 1922. Interestingly, Otto’s 1923 Zen essay came out in a fairly literal English translation in the same journal a year later in 1924, so part of the information conveyed was presented back to the readers of Suzuki’s journal. The editorial note mentions that Suzuki’s paper on Zen “comes filtered through the brains of such a scholarly author” (p. 117). However, Otto did not just process what he learned from his Japanese colleague, but used it as a backdrop for his real aim: to show how this Eastern religious tradition with its apparently dramatic antinomies and paradoxes is a nearly pure example of the non-rational, a definite indication of the divine. Especially “Zen paintings” allow the perceiver to obtain contact with the numinous. One particular image brought on the art and music loving Otto’s sensus nominis: an ink drawing of Bodhidharma. The following quote from his essay illustrates Otto’s unique approach and original style:

“The main point in Zen, however, is not a basic idea, but an experience, which shuns not only concepts but even the idea itself. Zen reveals its nature in the following instances in which its artists have drawn without words before our eyes in an incomparably impressive manner by mien, gesture, bearing, facial and bodily expression. (…) One must form here first of all a picture of Bodhidharma himself, the prodigiously heavy man who sits before a wall ten years in silence,’ in concentrate, nay, in conglobate force of inner tension like a highly charged Leyden jar, the large eyes almost pushed out of his head by the inner compression, boring their way into the problem, eyes of an exorcist who wishes to conjure up a demon, or a God to stand before him in order that he shall reveal and deliver up his secret. What he is gazing at, what he wishes to compel, who could say? But that it is something monstrous, that it is the monstrous itself, that is revealed in his features. (…) That this seated per-
son seeks a something, which matters above everything, compared with which all things are viewed with unconcern, a something in word such as only the Numinous itself has, springs directly to the mind. And whoever loses himself entirely in this picture, to him must come the light terror in the presence of the thing which is mirrored in these eyes, in this collectedness.” (1924:118)

The “monstrous” that is revealed in Bodhidharma’s features, refers to the *mysterium tremendum*, the fear that one experiences in the presence of the Holy, according to Otto. First, one feels a deep emotion of dependence towards it, then a tremendous fear by which man is ultimately fascinated. These three emotions are not to be thought of as psychological states but as reactions to a transcendent other. To Otto “religion” is a category entirely separate from everything else. The combination of the “non-rational” (i.e. the *apriori* existence of the “Holy”) and the “rational” (i.e. the phenomena such as ritual practices and moral teachings) together make up religions in the different parts of the world. Although he felt that Christianity has the potential for the best combination of the non-rational and the rational, the Numinous exists in all other religions. The fact that D. T. Suzuki presented a “Zen” religion more or less stripped of rational elements made it an ideal case for Otto’s considerations.

After the international success of the book *The Idea of the Holy* and the supplementing essay on Zen (or Zazen, which Otto used synonymously with Zen), Otto was approached to write the preface to the first ever published work on Zen Buddhism in Germany: _Zen – der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan_ (Zen: the *Living Buddhism in Japan*) was the fruit of the work of a Heidelberg University philosophy study group involving the Meiji University professor Ōhasama Shūei (Sūei), philosopher Dr. August Faust and the then young philosophy lecturer Dr. Eugen Herrigel. According to co-editor Faust, the book aims to elucidate what Europeans would call the religious content of Zen as living Buddhism in Japan. He refers to Prof. Ōhasama as a particularly qualified authority among Japanese Zenists since he was appointed as the successor of the present patriarch of the Rinzai sect. As Marburg theologian and church historian Ernst Benz (1907-1978) pointed out correctly in his paperback book on Zen Buddhism in Western perspective (1962, p. 9), Ōhasama as a lay Buddhist could not have taken the seat of a monastic but must be viewed rather as a spiritually accomplished and acknowledged lay practitioner. Faust and Ōhasama’s publication consists of a substantial introduction into the history of Zen Buddhism in China and Japan including three tables of schools, masters and lineages, followed by translations of liturgical texts and passages from the *Mumon-Kwan* and the *Hekigan-Loku* with extensive footnotes. It is not an academic work, but rather a work born out of devotion.

In the preface, Otto writes that the images in Zen art “show the heads and figures of the masters who found sudden realisation by practising ‘Kōan’. But more than that: we also see images of these iron-hard men with wills of steel, matured by the Zen practices of Satori, who created the Japanese warrior aristocracy (…)” (1925, p. iv, transl. KT). Unfortunately, this mistaken view of Japanese history deeply influenced the reception of Zen Buddhism because it was put forth by such a hugely famous scholar.

On his extensive travels, Otto not only visited sacred sites and spoke with representatives of different religions, but also collected numerous objects that were later exhibited in Marburg after he founded an institution in 1927 that he called *Religionskundliche Sammlung*. Over the past 80 years the collection has been embellished with new acquisitions and by generous bequeathments from scholars and friends. Not a few of the early supporters were members of the *Religiöse Menschheitsbund* and thus very close to Otto’s project such as sinologist and missionary Dr. Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) and Japan specialist and missionary Dr. Wilhelm Gundert (1880-1971). The latter gave a large number of contemporary objects from various Japanese religious traditions to Otto via the *Japanisch-Deutsches Kulturinstitut Tōkyō*.

In regard to objects from the Zen Buddhist tradition, the Marburg collection holds several items from two subsequent abbots of the Kenninji lineage of Kyoto: Takeda Mokurai (1854-1930) and Takeda Eikjū (1896-1989). Otto wrote repeatedly that he conversed with “a venerable abbot in a fine, quiet abbey in Tokyo” whom he asked the question: “What is the basic idea of Zen?” (1924, p. 118) According to an official travel report to the foundation that funded his journey and two letters, Otto spent four weeks in Tokyo and a few days in Kyoto and on Kōyasan (March 3 until May 6, 1912). We do not know for certain that the abbot he met in 1912 was Mokurai rōshi but it seems likely, Eikjū rōshi donated precious ritual implements of his master to Rudolf Otto such as a Mokurai’s book stand (*kendai*), table bell and teaching rod (*nyoi*), so we can assume that the Kenninji was among the Rinzai temples that fostered a close connection with him.

Cover of the first publication about Japanese Zen Buddhism in German (1925).
museological concepts and try them out, I hope to have an open dialogue about these different issues of representation and presentation of religions in the future.

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Bibliography


Members’ Research Related Activities

John Breen is currently on a research leave in Japan.

Lucia Dolce


From Brian Bocking:

Leaving SOAS in December 2007 after eight years in the Department of the Study of Religions and being throughout that time closely involved with the development of the CSJR gives me an opportunity to reflect on just how much has been achieved by the CSJR since it came into existence. The impressive volume and consistently high quality of the Centre’s academic activities are a testimony to the focus, energy, dedication and professionalism of many colleagues but particularly the efforts of Lucia Dolce and John Breen, two colleagues whom I hold in very high esteem. When I took up my own post at SOAS in 1999, significant funding for the activities of the Centre during its initial years had already been acquired through the pioneering efforts of John Breen and the generosity of the philanthropist Toshu Fukami, while Lucia Dolce - a great ‘catch’ for SOAS - had already started teaching BA and MA courses in Japanese religions. Students interested in the advanced study of Japanese religions were beginning to be drawn to SOAS like swans to a new-formed lake, and the programme of CSJR seminars which continues to form such a vibrant and enriching element of the Centre’s activities was already up and running. Since its inception, every aspect of the Centre’s activities has flourished and grown. Each term eminent scholars visit SOAS to share their research findings under the auspices of the CSJR, and there is now a truly impressive roster of completed and near-completed PhD students, while a procession of annual postdoctoral research fellows often exceeded our expectations by completing learned publications while at the same time organising significant and successful conferences and workshops on subjects as diverse as death, kami-buddhas associative practice, stars, sacred space and mythology. A high proportion of our MA students studying Japanese Religions have gone on to PhD level study and several students whose research has been supported by the diverse activities of the CSJR are now making a real impact in the international academic field. The name of the CSJR is respected not only in the UK and Japan but wherever in the world the study of Japanese religions is pursued.

I am especially grateful for the opportunity through the pages of the CSJR Newsletter to say a sincere ‘thank you’ to the many colleagues, friends and acquaintances who have supported the work of the CSJR and shown me both personal and professional kindnesses during my time at SOAS. They say ‘the grass is greener on the other side’ and this is of course particularly apposite in the case of a move to Ireland, the ‘Emerald Isle’, where the grass actually is greener! Nevertheless, despite the undoubted attractions and challenges of my new job, which is to set up Ireland’s first department for the study of religions, I am very conscious of who and what I am leaving at SOAS. They say ‘the grass is greener on the other side’ and this is of course particularly apposite in the case of a move to Ireland, the ‘Emerald Isle’, where the grass actually is greener! Nevertheless, despite the undoubted attractions and challenges of my new job, which is to set up Ireland’s first department for the study of religions.

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PhD Research at SOAS on Japanese Religions

Gerald Cipriani The fundamental of relation in cultural formation: from Western thought to the Kyoto School (Dr Zene and Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielsen An Ethnography of Young Soka Gakkai Members’ Support for Komeito: Religious Idealism and Political Reality in Contemporary Japan (Dr Lola Martinez, Anthropology and Sociology)

Satomi Horiuchi, Contemporary Japanese Christianity: ancestors, rites and graves (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Kigensan Licha Kirigami: secret initiation documents in medieval Sôtô Zen Buddhism (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Tullio Lobetti, Faith in the flesh: body and ascetic practices in contemporary Japanese religious context (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Benedetta Lomi, Baïô Kannon/Matou Guanyin: cult, images and rituals of the Horse-Headed One (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Shinya Mano, Eisai and the development of Zen- Esoteric Buddhism (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Yaara Morris, Cult of Benzaiten in the village of Tenkawa in the Kii peninsula—her rituals, texts, and mandalas (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Yukiko Nishimura, Worship of Avalokitesvara in Japan (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Masaaki Okada, Salvation by beauty: nature farming, sacred grounds and other environmental issues in Sekai kyoseikyo (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Fumi Ouchi, The vocal arts in medieval Japan and Tendai hongaku thought (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Anna Schegoleva, Ghosts in Japan: reconstructing terror in modernity (Dr Dolce, Study of Religions)

Terumi Toyama The replication of sacred spaces in Edo (Prof. Screech, Department of Art & Archaeology)

Carla Tronu Montane, Christianity in pre-modern Japan (Dr Breen, Dept. of Japan and Korea)

MA Japanese Religions Dissertations 2006-2007

Masaaki Okada, Ancestor Worship in Japan with a Case Study of Ancestor Worship in Japanese New Religions: Can One Define Ancestor Worship?

Kigensan Licha A Short History of Enlightenment: Historical Consciousness in Keizan’s Denkoroku

The SOAS MA Programme in Japanese Religion

The SOAS MA Programme in Japanese Religion is the first European taught graduate programme devoted to the study of Japanese religion. The degree provides an overview of Japanese religion, both past and present, and supplies the tools of analysis for further research in the field. The degree comprises four components: three taught courses and a dissertation. The programme may be completed in one calendar year (full time), or in two or three calendar years (part-time).

The programme centres around the course Religious Practice in Japan: Texts, Rituals and Believers, which presents Japanese religious phenomena in historic context and devotes attention to specific themes relevant for the understanding of the social aspect of Japanese religion and the influence of religion upon Japanese culture.

Students have the opportunity to select other courses, depending on their specific interests and previous knowledge, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of Japanese religion. Options include the study of Asian context, contemporary developments outside Japan, and methodologies for the analysis of religious phenomena.

A previous knowledge of the Japanese language is not required for entry in the programme. However, the degree offers language courses in modern Japanese. Students on the programme will benefit from seminars, discussion groups, guest lectures, and international workshops organized by the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions.

Application forms are available from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, SOAS.

For further information on the programme, please visit the SOAS web site at www.soas.ac.uk, or contact Dr Lucia Dolce, Room 334, ext. 4217, email: ld16@soas.ac.uk
MA Japanese Religions Bursary 2007-2008

Aike Rots

As the recipient of this year’s MA Japanese Religions bursary, I was asked to briefly introduce myself in this issue of the CSJR newsletter.

Last summer I graduated from Leiden University, where I received a BA degree in World Religions and one in Japanese Language and Culture. I came to SOAS in September to continue my studies in religion, and further specialise in the field of Japanese religions. Few universities offer an MA programme in Japanese religions, as SOAS does, and for me this programme constitutes a great opportunity to pursue my interest in Japanese religions, while at the same time being able to continue studying more theoretical and philosophical issues in the study of religions. So far, studying at SOAS completely meets with my expectations: the critical approach towards the discipline and the high level of the courses are challenging, and the weekly CSJR seminars are a great way to become familiar with recent developments in the field of Japanese religions.

In general, I am interested in topics such as the relationships between religious ideology and power structures, the way religious discourse serves to formulate identity, and the role of myth and ritual in society and politics. In the case of Japanese religions, my main interests include the development of new religions, popular religiosity and minority religions, and the religious dimensions of nationalism. Hence, my main focus is the position and development of different types of religion in contemporary and modern Japan. I wrote my BA dissertation on Japanese expressions of Pentecostalism, in which I looked at the process of indigenisation (including the continuous tension between incorporation and rejection of Japanese religious elements) and the corresponding formulation of social and religious identity vis-à-vis mainstream society by Japanese Pentecostal movements. This dissertation was partly based on field research I had conducted among a small Pentecostal community (the Sei Iesu Kyōkai, an independent denomination which had split off from the well-known Iesu no Mitama Kyōkai movement) while studying at Waseda University in Tokyo.

This year for the core course of my programme I have analysed the ideological aspects of different uses of the concept ‘Shinto’ in popular and scholarly discourse (e.g., the essentialist notion of Shinto as the indigenous, primordial Way of the Japanese people). In the second term, I will focus on expressions of popular religiosity in Japan such as shamanist practices, and I am planning to write my next essay on the topic of Okinawan religious practices and the role of gender in these. Later this year, combining my interest in new religious movements (i.e., relatively recently developed types of religion that challenge the mainstream socio-religious structures and paradigms) with my interest in issues such as the ideological and political dimensions of religious narrative and the formulation of identity, I hope to write my MA disserta-


tion on the topic of Japanese-Jewish common ancestry theories. In particular, I would like to study theologies and political agendas of Nakada Jūji (1870-1939, founder of the Japanese Holiness Church) and Teshima Ikuo (1910-1973, founder of the Makuya movement), and look at the way these religious leaders have combined elements from different religious traditions to create their own Japanese Christian origin myth and a corresponding nationalist-Zionist eschatology and soteriology.

In addition to the topics mentioned above, I am also interested in more abstract questions in the philosophy of religion and ethics. Therefore, I am following a general course on theory and method in the study of religions (for which I wrote an essay on Nishitani Keiji’s interpretation of Nietzschean nihilism), as well as a course on theories regarding myth and myth-making, and the political dimensions of these theories. Luckily, this term, the course on myth and myth-making coincides with the series of lectures on medieval Japanese Buddhist myths given by visiting professor Iyanagi Nobumi. Hopefully, I will be able to combine the theoretical framework provided by the general course with the things I learn about Japanese myths. Personally, I think the topic of Japanese myths (including modern and present-day mythical narratives) and their historical and socio-political significance is highly fascinating, and I would definitely like to study more of it in the future.

In sum, studying at SOAS is a great introduction to the field of Japanese religions, and I am learning many new things this year. Moreover, in addition to the academic aspect of the programme, studying in a wonderful city like London with all its museums, theatres et cetera, at a university like SOAS with its many motivated students and active student societies, is a great personal experience. For all these reasons, I am very grateful that I have received the bursary, and thus the opportunity to do this MA programme. I hope that it will turn out to be the first step towards a PhD in this field, even though I have not yet made up my mind as to where I want to do this, and in what particular direction I will specialise. Hopefully, this year will help me make the right decision regarding the orientation of my future academic career.
Sôtô Kirigami: Secrecy, Power and Ritual in Medieval Sôtô Zen Buddhism

Kigensan Licha

My interest in, and decision to devote my PhD thesis to, the kirigami arose from a number of criss-crossing threads of interests and involvements both academic and personal. My first encounter with the secret transmissions of Sôtô Zen occurred in the course of my own Zen training under the tutelage of Taisan Deutsch, Oshô, and, on the far too few occasions I had the honour and pleasure of meeting him, the late Otagawa Kobun Rôshi. Both encouraged me to explore the tradition off the beaten track and to involve myself in what Deutsch Oshô once referred to as Sôtô’s ritual “tantric heritage,” as well as in post-Dôgen doctrinal notions such as the goi or the use of kôan, which are quite sadly neglected in the contemporary school because of their allegedly mixed parentage. Academically, this involvement translated into an early interest in Keizan Jôkin Zenji and his relationship to the combined practice of esoteric Buddhism and Zen (jap. zenmitsu kenshû) propagated in the early Kamakura period. This interest I was able to indulge both during a 2 year stay at Tôkyô University under the supervision of Prof. Sueki Fumihiko and later under the guidance of Dr. Lucia Dolce while studying for my M.A. Japanese Religions at SOAS. In this context I was introduced to the groundbreaking work of the late Ishikawa Rikizan. In his Zenshû sôden shiryô no kenkyû (Tokyo: Hôzôkan, 2001), devoted mostly to the kirigami, I found all the strange rites and abstruse doctrines I could ever possibly wish for, and certainly more than I would have dared dream of. My personal involvements and academic interests thus coinciding, I decided to make the kirigami the topic of my PhD thesis.

As is well known, the kirigami, together with the monsan (secret kôan manuals) form the innermost part of the school’s medieval ritual and scriptural economy: they are handed down secretly within the symbolic heart of the institution’s power structure, the abbot’s room, only to be revealed to his chosen successors who were expected to copy them out in their own hand and, sometimes, blood. In content they mostly deal with technicalities of ritual performance, such as the correct procedures of transmission and precept ordination or the secret meanings of ritual objects, for example the monastic robe (jap. okesa) –although later kirigami do instruct on doctrinal subtleties, e.g. the above mentioned goi or kôan. It is in this sense that they might be considered ritual texts par excellence, for not only do they prescribe ritual activity but are themselves part of it in being handled and transmitted ritually.

This brief sketch brings me to what I consider the kirigami’s characteristic features. I imagine them as emerging from/positioned within a triangle of forces, with secrecy, lineage and ritual at its points, representing their hermeneutical, political and performative/ritual aspects, respectively. I would like to devote a few words to each of these, beginning with secrecy. The kind of secrecy purveyed by the kirigami poses two distinct, yet related problems. The first one it shares with language in general: The relationship between signifier and signified, linguistics teaches, is radically arbitrary. In other words, there is no necessity in identifying, say, the kesa with a mandala, or a certain ritual procedure with a specific result, as in the case of undergoing a correctly performed precept ordination being equivalent to entering the family of the Buddhas and Patriarchs, with all the soteriological consequences this entails. The kesa could very well mean rice-paddies, and salvation very well be brought about by standing on one’s head for five years instead of having it sprinkled with water. Thus, in investigating the secrets conveyed by the kirigami, the first question has to be as to how they construct convincing secrets, or, to put it differently, which hermeneutical and rhetorical means do they employ to overcome, or pretend to transcend, the arbitrariness which threatens to tear the system of secret meanings asunder? I propose that they do so by employing a device termed “indexical icon” in modern rhetorics. This is a sign that seeks, through the exploitation of resemblances within the semiotic system itself, to create the illusion of a causal relationship between sign and signified as displayed by natural indexes, such as fire and smoke.

The second problem arises when contemplating the concrete secrets transmitted by the kirigami. Although the texts themselves preach the importance of secrecy ad nauseam, in fact their contents seem to vary little from lineage to lineage, and some monsan even explicitly mention the daigo (alternative answers to kôan) of lineages other than the one they were associated with. The ritual secrets of the kirigami were but ritually secret. I would thus like to propose that the kirigami’s meaning is to be found less in the secrets they teach, important and fascinating as they may be, and rather in their concrete functioning in the political and ritual economy of medieval Sôtô. In other words, I consider the practices of the text to be of primary importance and concrete ritual performance, rather than any implied systematic “world-view,” to be fundamental.

The ritual/performative and political aspects of kirigami are closely related. Both partake in the construction of a lineage hierarchy. It is correct ritual practice which produces and sustains lineages in the form of line and monastic precept ordination and dharma transmission. Put flippantly, a certain way of consecrating and spraying water (jap. shasui) might have been the medieval Zen monk’s equivalent of a gang handshake, affirming one’s affiliation and demarcating this to be our ‘hood.

It is the extent to which one is allowed in, namely the extent to which a practitioner is allowed to access and partake in the secrets sustaining the lineage, which determines his standing in it. Whereas a lay practitioner might be allowed to see and even possess a kechimyaku (“blood-line”, a Zen family chart, recording the gener-
tions of patriarchs back to the Buddha), marking him as the lineage’s spiritual property yet keeping him at its periphery, the master who conferred it has been initiated into the secret meanings of the circle appearing at the left hand side. The secret and its ritual performance thus became a way to mark territory and structure it internally. In medieval Sôtô, the insider, the true Zen man, was no longer Rinzai’s "man without name and rank" but the one who had a very definitive place: Inside the room and in the know, guarding and guarded by secrets.

And yet it would be too easy to dismiss the kirigami as simple means to establish and maintain power. The very forces of control engender counter-currents and eddies. For the flipside of the ritually engendered oppressively regime of lineages sustained by the kirigami is that they simultaneously offer the practitioner a unique spiritual identity and religious world into which he can, in Paul Ricoeur’s words, project his utmost possibilities. In being initiated into and performing the secrets of his lineage, he performs, in a sense, his own identity and the world he inhabits. And this in turn restores a degree of control and the possibility of creativity for, as we have learned from Gadamer, no text nor world is ever fully disclosed, it always remains open to new horizons. It is thus by fully inhabiting the structures of power engendered by the medieval tradition that the practitioner is handed the tools with which to, if not overcome, then at least manipulate them. The system is as duplicitous as mishima’s ideal Zen monk in "The temple of the Golden Pavilion". It binds by secrecy just as it liberates by offering the symbolic resources to embody one’s world and identity.

This, in brief, is the framework within which I would like to approach the kirigami. As untrustworthy purveyors of believable secrets, as minions of political and ritual domination, and yet, paradoxically, as faithful guides to a form of emancipation to be gained within the very webs of power they themselves have spun. Here it only remains for me to thank the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions, and especially Dr. Lucia Dolce, who has graciously agreed to act as my supervisor, for supporting me in my research both financially through the CSJR Research Bursary and academically by sending me off to go play on the “wilder shores” of Zen.

Research Report

Annen and Yōsai

Shinya Mano

In order to explore the image of Yōsai, it seems appropriate to compare Annen (841-889-?) 安然, the de facto establisher of Tendai Esoteric Buddhism, and his doctrines with Yōjōbō Yōsai 柔上房 栄西 (1145-1215 aka Myōan Eisai 明庵 栄西) and his thought.¹ This is not only because Annen was the most dominant figure in medieval esoteric Buddhist society,² but also because Yōsai’s works attest to his reverence for Annen. The characteristic example for this is given in the preface of the Reflection on the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism (Kyōjigi kanmon 教時義勘文), which is one of Yōsai’s earliest works and an interpretation of Annen’s epoch making writing, Shingonshū kyōjī 真言宗教時義.³ In the preface of the Reflection on the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism, Yōsai claims that Annen is a great esoteric master, whose achievements are like those of a great Bodhisattva who has attained the eighth stage (hachitsujiyaku 八地垂跡). However, does such conspicuous admiration have immediate repercussions on Yōsai’s views?

It is in this respect that I would like to examine two of Yōsai’s works. The first is the writing that I have mentioned above, the Reflection on the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism, written in 1177; the second is his best known work, the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen (Kōzen gokoku ron 兴禅護國論), written in 1198. As a matter of fact, those two works quote Annen’s works and the quotations serve to reveal Yōsai’s doctrinal paradigm. Particularly, the significance of citations from Annen’s work is distinctively seen in the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen.

Many scholars have pointed out that the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen was a crucial work in the context of Kamakura Buddhism. The actual importance of this work has been surveyed from various perspectives and scholars have reached different conclusions. I consider here the opinion that Yōsai’s motivation for writing this work was to provide a counterargument against the establishment, precisely against Mt Hiei, headquarters of the Tendai school. From the perspective of Yōsai’s strategy, to cite from Annen’s work was of pivotal importance.

The work referred to by Yōsai was the Discussion of

¹ In the last academic year (2006-2007), I had a great opportunity to attend the seminars led by Professor Ōkubo Ryōshun of Waseda University, Tokyo. Since these seminaries were closely related to my field they were, for me, laboratory work. I have been very inspired by the extraordinary knowledge of Professor Ōkubo and his students to whom I would like to express my warmest gratitude in the first place. I also would like to thank Professors Abe Yasurō of Nagoya University and Sueki Fumihiko of Tokyo University, who allowed me to join the chōsa at Shinpukuji. During this chōsa, I had the precious experience of witnessing the actual moment at which some fascicles of Yōsai’s unknown work were discovered.

² Ōkubo Ryōshun (2004) p.293

³ NDZ. Tendaishū mikkōsho shōsho III. p.401a and b
Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism (Kyōji jō 敦時教) in which Annen discussed nine Japanese Buddhist schools. The nine Japanese Buddhist schools are classified hierarchically from higher to lower, Esoteric (Shingon 真言), Zen (Busshin 仏心), Hokke 法華, Kegon 華嚴, Muso 観相, Sanron, Hossō 華厳, Bini 傘尼 (Ritsu), Jōitsu 成実 and Gusha 侖舍. This fact is fundamental for Yōsai, because it provides evidence that the Zen school already existed in the time of Annen at least. In referring to it, then, Yōsai would have gained an advantage point in the controversy over the placement of Zen Buddhism vis-à-vis the doctrinal system of Mt Hiei. In this sense, the power and authority obtained by citing Annen’s work, resulted in discouraging Mt Hiei from accusing Yōsai and Zen Buddhism.

Interestingly, although Yōsai’s citation of Annen’s work served to elevate the textual value of the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen, Annen’s doctrines had less influence on Yōsai’s earlier esoteric Buddhist writing, the Reflection of the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism. In this work, Yōsai applauded Annen in the preface of the work, but, on the other hand, some of Yōsai’s interpretations differed from those of Annen. This is, in fact, one of the most mystifying aspects of Yōsai’s thought, and in these concluding remarks, I shall present some suggestions for understanding this contradiction.

Since the Reflection of the Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism is one of the works in which Yōsai attempted to interpret Annen, it is of the greatest importance to underline the doctrinal differences between the two. As the main discussion of the Reflection of the Meaning of Teachings and Times is about the preacher of esoteric canonical scriptures (kyōshugi 教主義), this work is subtitled the Oral Transmission of the Preacher of Esotericism (Shingon kyōshuketsu 真言教主決). In the above, Yōsai cites passages from Annen’s Meaning of Teachings and Times in Esoteric Buddhism, containing the debates over the preacher of esoteric canonical scriptures. Yōsai himself is indeed aware of their different opinions and gives precedence to his own interpretation over Annen’s, something which is natural, since Yōsai might have attempted to follow faithfully the teachings that he inherited from his actual master.

This may mean that Annen’s thought did not constitute a dominant part in Yōsai’s earlier esoteric Buddhism, though Annen’s words served to elevate the value of the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen. So on what kind of model was Yōsai’s esoteric Buddhist thought constructed? In my opinion, there are two hypotheses, which could explain the most pivotal parts of Yōsai’s thought, and thus, they are the subjects of my current research. The two hypotheses are, firstly, that one main influence came from other esoteric schools, particularly Kakuban’s 華厳 (1095-1143), and secondly, that another influence derived from the combinatory esoteric initiation (gōyōkanjō 合行灌頂). These two different environments can be regarded as the warp and weft of Yōsai’s thought. As for the influence of Kakuban’s doctrine on Yōsai’s thought, it is well known that Kakuban’s new doctrinal achievement, which produced his best known work, the Secret Interpretation of the Five Wheels and Nine Syllables (Gorin kujimyō himitsushaku 五輪九字秘密樋) had a massive impact on late Heian esoteric Buddhism. It is impossible to assert whether or not Yōsai perused the Secret Interpretation of the Five Wheels and Nine Syllables, but it is very likely that Yōsai encountered this work at least once because some of the contents of Yōsai’s writings resemble Kakuban’s doctrines and practices. One example is Yōsai’s view of Amitayus and the visualising of the five organs (gōzōkan 五臓観) which is included in his General Principle of Enlightenment (Shutten taikō 出纏大綱), written in 1175, and in his famous work on Having Tea in Order to Recover (Kiccha yōkū 喫茶養生記), written in 1214. It should be emphasised the fact that the first work is one of two earliest works of Yōsai, and the second one is the very last work, written after the Protection of the Country by the Revival of Zen. Therefore, one can recognise that Kakuban’s doctrines had been highly influential in Yōsai’s thought throughout his entire career. As for the combinatory esoteric initiation, little is known of its origins, in the mid Heian period, and its development awaits to be properly studied. In my opinion, Yōsai may have endeavoured to justify the combinatory esoteric initiation doctrinally, by focussing on the preacher of esoteric canonical scriptures, which is the primary subject of debate in his Revised Version of the Oral Transmission of the Preacher of Esotericism (Kaihen kyōshu ketsu 改変五輪九字教主懐) written in 1095 and the revised version written in 1143.

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4 T.75 no.2395A p.355a and b p.362a and b in T.80 no.2543 pp.5c-6a
5 Among modern academic works, Funaoka Makoto’s authoritative survey, Nihon zenshū seiriitsu (1987), analyses the transformation of the discourse of “Zen school” from Nara period.

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6 Yōsai’s characteristic opinion over the preacher of esoteric canonical scriptures is focused on the sharma-kaya of wisdom (chishoshin 智法身 and yasunobhanga-kaya (jijyushin) 自受用身. Whereas Yōsai claims a clear distinction between the two, the distinction is obscure in Annen and conventional Taimitsu interpretation.

7 His actual master may have been either Kenkei (??) 喜慶 or Kikō (??) 喜好.

8 The combinatory esoteric initiation is known as a characteristic Taimitsu ritual. It has been surveyed by Misaki Ryōshū (1978) in Gamma kenshi.

9 This work was paved by both Tōmitsu and Taimitsu.

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Research Report

Kiyomizudera and Kiyomizudō

Terumi Toyama

Kiyomizudera is one of the most popular religious sites in Kyoto both for those who consider themselves religious and those who do not. However, it is not widely recognized that there is in fact a temple called Kiyomizu Kannon (Kiyomizudō) in Tokyo. As we may expect from its name, this is a temple built in imitation of the original Kiyomizudera. It was built during the early seventeenth century by the Tokugawa Shogunate, and it demonstrated the political intentions of the Shogunate. Since Kiyomizudō is an imitation of Kiyomizudera, it is possible to find both similarities and differences between them.

Kiyomizudera

Kiyomizudera is an important temple which has been regarded as one of the landmarks of Kyoto. It is one of the Hossō sect temples and its honzon (the main worship object) is Kannon. Kannon is believed to appear when a believer calls to the deity for a helping hand. Therefore, Kannon belief appeals to many, and it is especially prominent among ordinary people. Although there are several temples where Kannon is honzon, the existence of a sacred image of Kannon (hibutsu) is one of the important factors contributing to the uniqueness of Kiyomizudera. In addition to this, it has been said that the architectural style of Kiyomizudera is another aspect of its uniqueness. Japanese temples devoted to Kannon share a common architectural feature, that is, kakezukuri style (in English ‘overhang architectural’ style). Kakezukuri is the style in which the building rests against the rock and cliff, and a part of its floor is supported by a long column. The use of this style for temples devoted to Kannon has to do with belief in the paradise of Kannon, or fudaraku. Since Kannon is believed to be living on Mt. Potakala in the southern ocean, temples enshrining Kannon are more likely to be built on a mountainside that resembles Mt. Fudaraku. Kiyomizudera faces south, which is believed to be where the ocean exists. It means that the stage of Kiyomizudera was regarded as the departure point to fudaraku, where Kiyomizudera’s (and that of other temples) honzon lives.
Kiyomizudera has been destroyed by fire either entirely or partly nine times. It is said, however, that each time the honzon—a statue of Senju Kannon, the thousand-armed Avalokitesvara, was never significantly damaged. Moreover, although the scale of the temple complex is massive, reconstruction took place each time it burnt down. The final (ninth) destruction by fire to which I refer here occurred on the 10th day of the ninth month of 1629. At this time, most of the complex, including the hondō, was burnt down. With the assistance of the third shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, reconstruction began from the second month of 1631 and was completed in the eleventh month 1633. The existing hondō as we know it today was constructed at this time.

Kiyomizudō

Kiyomizudō was established by Abbot Tenkai in 1631 inside the precincts of the Kan’ei-ji, the official temple of the Tokugawa Shogunate. More precisely, the establishment of Kan’ei-ji was authorized by the second shogun, Hidetada. Successive shoguns were laid to rest in Kan’ei-ji, and from this we can understand the importance of Kan’ei-ji for the Shogunate. Kiyomizudō was originally located at Mt. Suribachi. Because of the fire in 1698, the building was moved to its current location, on the west side of the mountain. There are two points that suggest Kiyomizudō is a direct imitation of Kiyomizudera. First, Kannon is the honzon of Kiyomizudō. The honzon in the temple today is the thousand-armed Kannon that was originally the honzon of Kiyomizudera in Kyoto. It is conjectured that this honzon was sent by Kiyomizu-dera. In other words, the central object of worship of Kiyomizudō was transferred to the new temple in Edo, while the exterior forms of the buildings, destroyed by the fire, were rebuilt in Kyoto. Secondly, upon examining the architectural style of Kiyomizudō, we note the same architectural style, namely kakezukuri, in spite of the difference in scale with Kiyomizudera. Although today’s Kiyomizudō is not oriented towards the southern direction, before it was moved to the current location Kiyomizudō faced towards the southern direction. Although there is no evidence that suggests the existence of fudaraku belief in Kiyomizudō, since its architectural style is obviously kakezukuri, it is possible that the fudaraku belief was considered during its establishment.

In addition to religious and architectural similarities, we may note that the construction of Kiyomizudō began at almost the same time as the reconstruction of Kiyomizudera. In fact, it was begun even before the construction of the Konpon Chūdō, which is one of the main halls of Kan’ei-ji. While the construction of Kiyomizudō finished in 1631, the construction of the Kan’ei-ji temple complex was finished only in 1638. This seems to suggest that the Shogunate aimed to re-create one of Kyoto’s sacred spaces inside the Kan’ei-ji complex around the same time of Kiyomizu’s reconstruction project in Kyoto.

My project aims to research this type of replication of Kyoto’s sacred spaces in Tokyo.

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Research Report

An Ethnography of Young Soka Gakkai Members' Support for Komeito: Religious Idealism and Political Reality in Contemporary Japan

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielsen


My research explores the political engagement of young members of the lay Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai (Value-creation Society) in Japan. As members of Soka Gakkai these young people canvass for the political party Komeito (Clean Government Party), a party that was originally established by their religious organisation in the 1960s and has for the last eight years been part of the ruling coalition government. Many of the interlocutors were Soka University students living in Hachioji where I myself spent most of the year, while others were young Soka Gakkai members living in Kita-ku in North-west Tokyo canvassing for Ota Akihiro (the current head of Komeito). I found that these young people display a particularly politically active sense of citizenship.

Concepts of Japanese citizenship have tended to emphasize dominant ideologies and cultural norms that represent the Japanese as homogenous social groups who largely maintain prevailing relations of power in the modern Japanese nation-state. Moreover, more recent studies about young people have tended to conclude that they are either so socialised that they cannot but reproduce an overly controlling adult world, or have such an awful experience of growing up that they end up isolated or wanting to drop out of the system all together (e.g. Mathews and White 2004).

Compared to the seemingly wider social reality of many depoliticized and politically non-participating youth in Japan, this thesis focuses on why and how some young people get involved and committed to the formal political process. Perhaps, more importantly, it looks at where the individual finds actual opportunities to get involved with organised politics that attempt to address issues of wider public interest. Contrary to much popular and academic perception about the role of religion in Japanese society, and in particular of new religious movements, I found that it is these young people’s religious philosophy that motivates them to become politically active, and which, furthermore enables them to debate confidently about and with a commitment to issues of wider public interest. In this thesis, I therefore pose the overall question as to what it is the example of young Komeito supporters teaches us about Japanese society and about the role religion can play in politics.

By moving on from common assumptions made about new religious groups’ involvement in politics, this thesis attempts to look at these young Japanese’s political activities from the concept of civil society, a concept that spans ideas about associational life, objectives of the common good, and participation in the public sphere. The general assumption in Japan that new religions are problematic, undemocratic anachronisms in modern societies, or even dangerous in their assumed attempts to control their followers, tend to prohibit an informed discussion about the actual basis for such presumptions. Furthermore, I found that analysing this group’s political activities in terms of civil society broadens our understanding of what democracy and citizenship can mean in different contexts.

A theme emerges about how religious philosophy and practice affect people’s sense of agency and how people respond to structural power. The ethnographic chapters explore the nature of young Soka Gakkai members support for Komeito including the various dilemmas they face as young people who are committed to political participation and to supporting a political party. I explore what this means for deeper issues about the role of the individual within bigger political power structures and how commitment to a personal ethics changes understandings of citizenship and politics itself.

I suggest that we need to consider new modes of political representation and move towards new ways of thinking about the modern dictum of separation between religion and politics. To be clear, I am not arguing, as the interlocutors do not, for a reconsideration of religious doctrine or institutions to become part of what must remain a secular public sphere. Instead, the data in this thesis tell me to reconsider the effect of religion on socialisation, on a sense of citizenship and on the way political behaviour is understood. If we regard secularisation to mean the ability to debate issues about a shared public and social life without implicating religious doctrines, I found these young people to be an example of how religion can be a potential ethical force in politics without necessarily having a religious presence. Moreover, based on the findings of my fieldwork I postulate that young people in Japan have a better understanding of politics and greater commitment to issues of wider public interests than studies of Japan have led us to believe so far.

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Research Report

Kami in Fabula: A Tentative Analysis of a Mediaeval Mythological Text

Tatsuma Padoan

My research deals with a rather puzzling and remarkable text, produced during the early stages of what is usually referred to as Ryōbu Shintō discourse, a term anachronistically used to define different Esoteric Buddhist interpretations of Ise-related kami cults, which began to spread in central Japan from the mid-twelfth century onwards. This work, Yamato katsuragi hōzanki (hereafter Hōzanki), was probably produced during the second half of the thirteenth century (but scholars disagree on this point), and represented the textual crossroad of different religious discourses and practices.

Very little is known about the specific social and historical background against which this text was written, except that it was probably a Shugendō community of ascetics residing in the Katsuragi mountain area, and that they probably had some connection with the Watarai family priests of the Outer Shrine of Ise. Nevertheless, the Hōzanki gained an increasing popularity among shrine lineages and Esoteric Buddhist circles, and nowadays we can still count as many as thirty-two manuscripts and scrolls scattered all over Japan, from Kansai to Kantō area.

A study of the different roads marked by this text, and of the different modifications and extrapolations it underwent, could throw light on the distinctive uses which characterized its diffusion, and on the reasons of its proliferation in pre-modern times. However, my current purpose is not intended to start from a sociological history of textual receptions, in order to arrive to the comprehension of the text itself. On the contrary, the aim of my project is to analyse the semiotic articulation of the Hōzanki, and its functioning and efficacy, in order to subsequently better understand the social practices which surrounded it.

The Hōzanki was the foundation myth of both Katsuragi Hitokotonushi Shrine (Moriwaki district of Gose city, today’s Nara Prefecture) and Kongōsan Katsuragi Shrine (Takama district, Gose city). The two were part of the same sacred area, in association with the Iwōgun Shrine and the Ichijōsan Tenpōrin Temple (said to be founded by En no Gyōja). Therefore, the text shares similar characteristics with certain jisha engi (etiological narratives of temples and shrines) historically and geographically connected to it, such as the Shōzan engi.

1. The appellation Ryōbu Shintō (lit. “Combinatory Shintō of the two mandala-s”) was first coined by Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511) in order to define a group of Esoteric Buddhist doctrines which associated the two main mandala-s of Shingon (Taizō and Kongokai mandara) with the Inner and the Outer Shrine of Ise (Naikū and Gekū). However, this theory probably arose only in the mid-thirteenth century (about one century after the birth of what we currently define as Ryōbu Shintō), and was not explicitly shared by all the Ryōbu Shintō texts.

2. I refer to the extensive French bibliography of Algirdas J. Greimas for the methodological approach.

3. This devo was relocated in Japan on the Sixth Heaven of the Realm of Desire, together with the Paramnimita vaśavartin (Jap. Takejizaiten).

4. Jōjū is the Buddhist concept of incorruptibility of nirvāṇa, and jihi refers to the dispensation of Bliss and elimination of spiritual sorrows by buddhas and bodhisattvas.
is said in several passages to save humankind by means of a sort of “astrogonic” power: by creating suns, moons, stars and celestial bodies, he illuminates the entire country, “bringing myriads of sentient beings to the enlightenment (dosui).”

We may question whether it is still possible to define as “mythology” such a complex and heterogeneous combination of narratives, gods, and philosophical concepts, originated in so different cultural milieus as India, China and Japan. In order to deal with this problem, we should perhaps consider what a myth is, and how it affects people, their needs and their aspirations. Because myth is “a type of speech chosen by history”, it is a language, and it is also a system of communication. The mythical concept is a condensation of different discourses, delimiting its meaning on the base of the communicative function carried out toward particular typologies of addresses.

If we consider the myth as a discourse provided with a distinctive communicative function, we can maybe rely on some critical levels of analysis in order to judge whether we can still consider our text as part of a kind of “mediaeval Japanese mythology.”

Actoralization

In first place, the actors involved in the discursive syntax of a myth are usually located on the plane of the extra or infra-human, because of the qualities they display or they are supposed to have (which concern the semantic aspects). We can find this feature in the Hōzanki, where the roles of actor are also played by sacred and ritual objects as the Single-pronged vajra (dokko), the Three Sacred Regalia, the Heavenly Halberd (ama no nuboko), the Formless Precious Mirror, the Heart Pillar of Ise (shin no mihashira), and others.

These implements perform actions, make transformations, and provoke reactions. For example, the Heavenly Halberd (which is said to be the same as the Single-pronged vajra), transforming itself, manifests “Heaven, Earth, human beings and population, East, West, South and North, Sun, Moon, Stars and Planets, mountains, rivers, plants and trees”. And the way the actorial elements (including the deities) manifest themselves, the cosmos and human beings, resembles more a meditative process of esoteric visualisation (as it occurs for example in the mikkyō practice of siddham), than an out-and-out creation or generation.

Temporalization

In second place, the time of a mythical discourse, is usually detached from human time (i.e. the time that is ordinarily conceived and experienced by the members of a social community), except for particular categories of myths connected, for explicative reasons, to the institutional or social practices: this is the case, for example, of foundation myths.

Indeed, time in the Hōzanki (as well as of many other narratives dealing with Japanese mediaeval mythology), could be defined as mytho-historical, since it flows directly into what was considered to be the early history of the sacred area: the legends surrounding En no Gyōja and Hitokotonushi no mikoto.

In the Hōzanki, the narratives concerning this kami and the famous ascetic master were substantially modified. Instead of being enslaved and bound in a spell cast by En no Gyōja, as in the Heian period (794-1185) versions, Hitokotonushi no mikoto (considered here a manifestation of Kujaku Myōō and Hikō Yasha) actively assists the alleged founder of Shugendō in performing ascetic and purification activities, practicing virtues and leading sentient beings to salvation.

Most importantly, in the annex of the text (which consists of an extensive quotation from the Kongōsan engi – second part, Kongōsan naige ryōin engi), it is stated that En no Gyōja had written an account of the origin of the Kutsuragi sacred area in ten volumes, called Katsuragi no engi (a title which recalls one of the sections of the Shōzan engi). Later he gave the text to Hitokotonushi, leaving for China in the first year of Taihō era (701). The god preserved the engi until the year 705, when he transmitted it directly to the kannushi of Hitokotonushi Shrine.

Nevertheless, if we turn back our attention to the main part of the Hōzanki and analyse the underlying semiotic models of author and reader inscribed in it, we find that there is also an explicit author (narrator) mentioned by the text, whose role could help us to reconstruct who was the intended audience of the social communication of the myth. The narrator is Gyōki Bosatsu (668-749), who is also installed in the text as an actor endowed with a specific functional role (narrative actant) in the economy of the myth. He is described as having authored the Hōzanki itself in the 739, as an effect of an imperial decree.

Apart from the operation of legitimisation, based on textual crisscrossing and manipulations which would require more space to be explained, the narrative schema characterizing Gyōki as a narrative actant is quite inter-

esting. He is installed in the discursive context as an ordinary character in the third person (a particular strategy of identity construction called utterative engagement or shifting in). He receives an imperial order (manipulation), he visits the Katsuragi sacred area to collect information (competence), he writes the text (performance) and, most importantly, he finally goes to the Ise Shrines to receive the mandokoro in, or official seal (sanction): manipulation → competence → performance → sanction.

The last stage of the process puts in evidence the role of Gyōki in thirteenth century Japan. It was in fact in this period that the legend of Gyōki as emissary of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749) to Ise began to spread. This legend had set the general belief that was Gyōki the first person who identified the imperial sun-goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami with the cosmic Buddha Dainichi Nyorai, core identification of all the Ryōbu Shintō discourse.7

The Ise imperial sanction described by the Hōzanki could be understood as a narrative metaphor for an increasing interest in the pilgrimage to Ise, shared among Buddhist monks of the thirteenth century. This kind of relationship between the yamabushi of Katsuragi and the Ise Shrines, could have been one of the key factors in the formation of the Hōzanki.8

These, and many other temporal co-ordinates inscribed in the discursive fabric of Hōzanki, testify the strong anchorage to the social practice of the category of time in foundation myths.

Spatialization

This relationship of “external intralinguistic reference” (external endophora) between narrative time and social history, is provided by the foundation myth also with respect to the category of space. In the latter case, the mythical space is anchored to places socially defined by a specific culture, and this could be also indicated as a feature of mythological texts in general.

Again we can find a correspondence between the discursive organisation of myth and the Hōzanki. The places mentioned by the text (Ise Inner and Outer Shrine, the Japanese islands, Katsuragi, Mount Kongō, Hitokotono-nushi Shrine) receive a kind of legitimisation by means of symbolic construction.

This construction takes place, from the very first moment, by means of the installation in the text of a subject considered as a producer of space, who evokes the world around him through its expressive qualities. In the case of the Hōzanki, this subject is further projected and materialised by the diverse actors partaking of the cosmogony: Heaven and Earth (tenchi, which has a “will to become” or jōi), the Spirit of Water (suiki), the Winds of the Ten

6 First mention is probably in another Ryōbu Shintō text, the Ryōgū gyōmon jinshaku (mid-thirteenth century).
7 Another traditional legend attributes this association to Kōbō Daishi (774–835).
8 This is evidenced by some Hōzanki quotations of important Watarai Shintō works, as well as by the fact that the Hōzanki was well known by the priests of the Outer Shrine of Ise at least from the 1299, as reported in the Korokajitsuden, written by Watarai Yakutada (1236-1305).

Directions (jippō no kaze), the Great Water (ōmizu) and, most importantly, the kami Jōjū Jihi Shinnō with its polymorphic body. It is this main body which constructs space and organizes the discursive reality of the text, an immense body with “a thousand heads and two thousand hands and feet”, a body which transforms itself in the Indian god Visnu, a body which protrudes from its navel a golden Lotus with a thousand petals emitting the light of a thousand suns.9

So, space undergoes metamorphoses in strict relationship with movements and transformations of the body itself. It becomes dynamic, made increasingly complex by focusing on different actors (the kami Ame no Minakunushi no Mikoto, Izanami and Izanagi, Ōhirume Muchi/ Amaterasu, Ninigi, Toyofutsu no Mitama and Ōkunitama, Hitokotonushi, the single-pronged vajra, etc.). Each has a particular description and expands narrative configurations, in which the identity of the actor is multiplied in a web of identifications and becomes a process.

At the same time, space produced by the narrativization of the subjects gives to them more concreteness, in a sort of mutual discursive reference. It is in this sense that Izanagi and Izanami, after having produced the Sun kami and the Moon kami and having illuminated the Four Continents around Mount Sumeru, settle in Central India in order to bring salvation to sentient beings and finally move to Mount Kongō. Here they become part of the sacred site, legitimising with their sacred presence the social space of the ascetic practitioners.

As long as the bodies of kami and buddhas acquire a social value, articulating the semantic universe of the Katsuragi yamabushi, space configures itself as a semiotic device which reflects a certain order of knowledge. Space acts as a cognitive metaphor, and its organisation is related to the form of knowledge and the structure of power of a certain socio-cultural community.

It is worth noting that, along with the exaltation of Mount Kongō, the text also defines the sacrality of Ise Shrines in a clear way. The two religious centres do not enter in conflict, on the contrary, their relationship seems to be closer to the other pole characterizing the axe of human communication, that of the contract.

In the example of Gyōki Bosatsu mentioned above,
the Imperial Court and the Ise Shrines were respectively perceived as the place of manipulation (where the imperial decree was issued, affecting the actions of the subject in a persuasive way), and the place of social sanction (where the importance of the Hōzanki was acknowledged and interpreted). If these two places belong to a cognitive frame of narrative, on the contrary, Katsuragi and its cultic centre are described in a pragmatic dimension as the place of action, and this is one of the ways in which the authors of the text could have perceived their relationship with Ise.

It is also worth remarking that a very important role in the Hōzanki is played by the brightness, which actively contributes to construct the space. Indeed, references to it are made all over the text, and this recurrence unifies the discourse, structuring it in a more coherent way (a role that in semiotics is called figurative isotopy). Furthermore, the dynamics of light introduce a new dimension in the discursive fabric, a dimension of a distinctive soteriological character. The case of Jōjū Jihi Shinno and that of Izanami and Izanagi mentioned above are just a few of the many examples of “astrogonic” activity, which generates a salvific light directed to all sentient beings (and brings them to Buddhist enlightenment). The light of planets and stars could be therefore considered as an operator of transformations, which constructs a particular meaning effect that we could define as “sacred”.

After having explored the actors, time and the space of myth, we should now consider how the communicative function of a mythological discourse could affect the practice of the social reality.

Enunciation

Myth is a mechanism for reconstructing and transforming the order of things and social reality. There is a common tendency in myth to play with the categories of the cultural community from which it originated, to change the perspectives, to break the rules and reorganise them according to new schemas.

Frequently, myth combines elements from different orders of reality (human, vegetal, animal, mineral, etc.), and tries to push together different sets of objects-texts and different discursive registers. This is not a characteristic unique to myth (even the scientific discourse frequently uses it) but the process of metaphorization (which entails a rhetorical one) is one of its major tools for interacting with the social environment.

As we have seen, the Hōzanki makes use of these processes for generating new combinatory narratives, but for what is this arrangement created? Does it have a particular communicative function? And how can a text, of any type or expressive substance (written, oral, visual, somatic), affect its audience?

Enunciation is a discursive act realised by an enunciator. It is inscribed in all the texts and is the specific device used by languages to construct simulacra of identity and action, which in turn provoke and suggest social behaviours. It consists in the projection inside discourse, of the communicative actors, who can affirm their identity only by means of languages (e.g. the pronoun “I”). The efficacy of texts is simply the way social communication works, in symbiosis with the practices of reading and use (which in turn partake of the general notion of textuality). Myths are not detached from these complex dynamics of communication, circulation and transformation, because they are texts themselves, in the midst of a field of interdiscursive translations.

In particular, the category of foundation myths, can sometimes manifest a narrative schema which crosses over the frame of the text. In this way it manipulates its given audience and assigns to it a specific social competence. Namely, the mythic actors can, in particular cases, sanction the performance of the social actors, approving social behaviours or legitimising beliefs and customs. On the other hand, the subjects performing the social practice are justified by the myth, to the extent of their participation in (or control of) the complex dynamics of persuasion (the game of make-believe, or epistemic acts).

Looking at the Yamato katsuragi hōzanki we could argue that, by exalting the role of the Mount Kongō cultic centre and linking it, in different ways, to primieval and universal deities (e.g. Jōjū Jihi Shinno, Izanami and Izanagi, the kami of Ise), a community of mountain practitioners maybe wanted to construct its own identity and to promote its activities. Accordingly, the communicative function of the foundation myth, could well have legitimised a wealth of cultic and social practices, whose web of “textual” relationships, if properly analysed, could suddenly evoke us the world of the Hōzanki, just as the lupus in fabula.

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Fieldwork Report

On the Steps of Batō Kannon: Fieldwork Notes

Benedetta Lomi

From October 2007, thanks to a small grant from The Central Research Fund of the University of London, and additional funding from SOAS, I was able to spend three months in Japan to gather material for my current PhD project, focusing on the worship of Batō Kannon. This fieldwork will be the basis of a longer research experience that will begin in March 2008, and is made possible by an 11-month fellowship from the Japan Foundation for the Promotion of Science. During my stay in Japan, I have benefited from the supervision of Professor Suzuki Masataka of Keio University, who will also serve as my academic supervisor for my next fieldwork. Professor Suzuki was extremely helpful in the first months of my research in Japan, not only because he welcomed me to his classes and to the college facilities even though I was not officially enrolled yet, but also for the amount of information he helped me collect, which has been crucial in formulating a more complete fieldwork plan.

During the first month I spent some time in Kyoto and Nara to research, in particular, the Batō Kannon enshrined in Daian-ji 大安寺 in Nara. The Daian-ji temple is one of the oldest temples in Nara, according to the Daian-ji engi 大安寺縁起, founded by Prince Shotoku, under the name of Kumagori Shōja 熊凝精舎. The temple premises were originally much bigger than the present compound, and walking between the houses to the current location, it is still possible to see the extension of the former precincts. Its size reflected the status of the temple, which is enumerated among the Seven Great Temples of Nara, and was an active centre of the Sanron school.

During the Nara and early Heian period, Daian-ji also served as an important government-run workshop for images, and it still holds in its collection rare statues realized in the Daianji-yōshiki, literally "in the Daian-ji style." These statues represent five different forms of Kannon: Shō Kannon, Juichimen Kannon, Yōryū Kannon, Fuku-kenjaku and of course Batō, and four guardian Kings. The honzon of the temple is Senju Kannon, and each Kannon is shown for a period of thirty days during the year in the temple main hall, otherwise they are stored in the temple treasure house. A different treatment is reserved for the statue of Batō, which is enshrined in a separate hall (Fig. 1), located behind the main one. The importance of this statue is attributed to different factors. This is the oldest extant example of Batō Kannon in Japan, dating to the 8th century, and it was presumably made following the instruction of priest Dōji (道慈). Dōji Risshi received Esoteric training in China under Zenmui, and upon his return in 718, was put in charge of the reconstruction of Daikananji after its relocation to Nara. It is from the Chinese temple Ximingsi (or Saimyōji) 西明寺 in Chang'an, where Dōji studied and received Shingon training, that the iconography of this statue was originally imported to Japan. So far, I have not found any record of the existence of a Chinese image of Batō Kannon in China that confirmed the origins of this iconography, so that it could also be argued that Dōji relied on a scriptural description of the deity.

The Batō Kannon statue (Fig. 2) is carved out of a single piece of wood. It measures 1,735 cm and has one head and six arms, holding different implements, such as a hatchet and a lotus flower. The iconography of this image is quite peculiar: Batō Kannon is usually represented as having a small horse’s head placed on top of his head, making this one of its primary iconographical features that distinguishes him from other deities, but in this case there is none. The only trait, which is common to the usual Batō iconography, is the angry face, with the top teeth biting the lower lip, which is a feature common to representations of other Myōō. I believe this is one of the most intriguing aspects of the Daian-ji image: if we look at the images of Batō in the canonical sources, especially at the description given of this deity in the Dharāni
sūtra, there is always a mention of the presence of the horse’s head. However, there are numerous instances of Hayagrīva in the Indian Buddhist Pantheon where this aspect is not represented, or Chinese examples where the horse’s head is hidden behind the halo, or very roughly sketched. Is it possible that the initial iconography of the deity did not include the horse’s head, and that this is a later development of the deity closely connected to its function of horse and animal protection? I believe the emergence of a more definite horse head clearly marks a passage from a more general function of this figure and his secondary aspect, to more defined and well-rounded functions of this deity.

Besides being interesting for its iconographical features, the Daian-ji statue is also one of the various images of Batō still worshipped, and an object of ritual practice. Every year in March, when the statue of the deity is unveiled and displayed to the public, a goma offering is carried out in front of it. (Fig. 3). It is not clear yet when this ritual was first performed, but according to the information given to me at the temple, this image was at the centre of strong religious worship during the Tokugawa period. Tokugawa Mitsu'asa, father of the shogun Yoshimune, had deep faith in the power of this deity, so that he even commissioned an amulet to protect from calamities and disasters and distributed it to his court. During my further research in Tokyo, I was able to find another connection between Batō Kannon and the horse of a Tokugawa family member, an aspect I intend to further investigate upon my return to Japan.

The goma of Daian-ji is a usual Shingon goma, where the statue of Batō Kannon is used as a honzon, aimed at protecting the practitioner from accidents or calamities, and to ward off evil. The ritual is called ni no uma hôyô 二の午法要, literally the Memorial Service of the Second Horse Day, which is usually at the end of February. Even if the goma per se is not specific to Batō Kannon, the calendar of this ritual is important if we consider the relevance of the worship of this deity as the protector of animals, and in particular, of horses. This is not the only instance of horse-related festivals that take place on this date, an aspect of the contemporary worship that needs to be further investigated.

According to the information found in the canonical sources on Bató Kannon, Bató is initially worshipped in Japan to prevent calamities and to protect the practitioner from illnesses and hindrances, but when analysing further textual evidence, we also find that since at least the Heian period and onward that this deity was worshipped to protect and cure horses, to the extent that this function of Bató is surely not a later popularization of the esoteric deity, but rather one parallel aspect that develops parallel, and often together, with the others.

Thanks to the helpful suggestion of Professor Suzuki, and some further bibliographical indications by Mr. Kitamura Minao, to whom I am deeply grateful for the time and interest he has put into my work, I was able to start enquiring on the more contemporary aspects of Bató Kannon devotion in Japan. In recent years, horses are no longer a means of transportation nor are they indispensable for agriculture or war; their use is limited to races, and this has translated in a change in the worship related to the deity Bató Kannon. On the one hand, the animal-protecting feature has remained prevalent, and therefore Bató is enshrined and employed in memorial services for animals, as in the case of Ekōin 回向院 temple in Tokyo. On the other hand, this deity is often worshipped by the owners of racing horses, who are also the primary commissioners of rituals in Daian-ji. All these aspects will be the subject of further fieldwork research, the outcome of which will hopefully be a better understanding of this complex deity.

During my stay in Japan, I had the opportunity to present the current research on the Bató Kannon of Daian-ji at a postgraduate workshop organized by SOAS and Kokugakuin University on Historical Developments of Japanese Religions (日本宗教文化の歴史的展開), held at Kokugakuin. (See report in this issue of the Newsletter.) My paper, entitled “The Bató Kannon of Daian-ji - Research Notes on the Transmission and Transformation of the Horse-Headed Deity” (大安寺の馬頭観音——馬頭觀音の変容についての研究ノート), focused on my fieldwork experience, and was a great opportunity to present to fellow research students and to Japanese scholars the most recent outcomes of my research.

In concluding, I would like to express my thanks to Dr Kase Naoya and to Dr John Breen, for inviting me to Kokugakuin, and for their help during the workshop. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my friends and fellow researchers Fumi Ouchi, without whom my Kokugakuin presentation would have not been possible, and Andrea Castiglioni, for having been a good tour guide to the university halls and Mount Hiei.

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Publications


Michael Como, Columbia University

In *The Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice*, editor Lucia Dolce and her fellow contributors make the case that astrology and astral worship were not simply the technical pursuits a few specialists at court, but were rather pressing concerns of noble and commoner alike throughout the pre-modern period. The work, comprising an introduction and seven chapters on a variety of topics in Japanese religious history, is a collaborative effort of some of today’s leading European and Japanese scholars. The quality of research, as well as the large number of illustrations of astrological iconography, texts, and mandalas, is quite high. As this volume is virtually the first in English to even venture near the topic of astrology and religious practice in the Japanese islands, it should be of interest to students of virtually any period of Japanese religion.

Within the book two themes, one explicit, one implicit, tend to predominate. The first, which is explicitly alluded to in the title, insists that astrological systems must be seen primarily as central elements in pre-modern Japanese religious practice. Forgoing analysis of intricate systems of competing astral schema, the focus of virtually every chapter in the volume remains squarely upon the issue of how astral movements, deities and divination were interpreted and then manipulated by monks, yin-yang masters and lay people throughout the pre-modern age. In keeping with this orientation, a second thread running through the pages of this book appears to be the unspoken belief that Japanese astrology may best be approached with a strong focus upon the rites, icons and material culture that were engendered within an imaginary in which astral phenomena exerted a continuous influence upon the affairs of individuals and the state.

The grounds for this approach are set forth admirably by Lucia Dolce in her introduction, which explores a number of astral Buddhas and deities that claimed widespread followings at court and among the populace during the Heian period and beyond. Dolce notes that during the medieval period such astral Buddhas as Kokūzō, Myōken, and Nyōrin Kannon were among the most prominent objects of worship both at elite monastic centers and in popular festivals of the capital. Crucially, however, Dolce also shows that the horizon of reception for these and other Buddhist figures was profoundly influenced by such astral deities as the Pole Star, the Big Dipper, the Great General of the Directions and Taishan Fukun. Dolce notes that during the medieval period such astral Buddhas as Kokūzō, Myōken, and Nyōrin Kannon were among the most prominent objects of worship both at elite monastic centers and in popular festivals of the capital. Crucially, however, Dolce also shows that the horizon of reception for these and other Buddhist figures was profoundly influenced by such astral deities as the Pole Star, the Big Dipper, the Great General of the Directions and Taishan Fukun. Dolce also provides a comprehensive bibliography of monographs and edited volumes in Japanese and western languages on astrological practices in Japan which, in its brevity, speaks volumes about the degree of neglect this field has suffered.

Hayashi Makoto, in an article entitled “The Tokugawa Shoguns and Ommyōdo,” then provides a general history of the policies of rulers towards astrological phenomena. In spite of the rather narrow focus implied by this title, this chapter provides an invaluable sketch of the astrological activities of the Bureau of Yin and Yang of the Ritsuryō state, the introduction of numerous Buddhist texts with strong astrological components, and the prominence of astral motifs within Chinese literary texts that were studied by poets and intellectuals throughout the pre-modern period.

Hayashi’s work is in turn complemented by that of John Breen, who contributes a highly provocative article suggesting that understanding the role of calendars and almanacs within Tokugawa society might prove to be an effective way of relating intellectual developments within the period with issues of religious practice. Offering a close reading of one such illustrated almanac, he argues that calendars represented not simply a way of organizing time and practice but, more importantly, served as a point of departure for understanding individual religious needs within the flow and flux of spatial and temporal movements of astral deities. Breen illustrates the degree to which astral phenomena served as the groundwork upon which other ritual and intellectual systems were built.

Mark Teeuwen, in an article entitled “The Imperial Shrines of Ise: an Ancient Star Cult?” examines the contention of Yoshino Hiroko that the Ise cult itself was conceived and developed in the seventh century as a product in Chinese astrology. Yoshino’s work is common of much recent work on the formation of the Ritsuryō state in that it relies heavily upon impressionistic associations between texts and phenomena in the Japanese islands and the Chinese classics. In exposing the flaws in this approach, Teeuwen thus highlights the dangers inherent in reading complex phenomena in the Japanese islands as
simple extensions of Chinese textual traditions.

As if in answer to Yoshino’s reductionist tendencies, Lilla Russell-Smith’s article on stars and planets in Chinese and Central Asian art provides a genealogy of astral representation dating back to the ninth century. By focusing upon representations of astral deities within amulets, mandalas and cave iconography, Russell-Smith provides a nuanced view of the variety of media through which astral conceptions and cults developed and were eventually transmitted to the Japanese islands.

The focus upon religious practice is then highlighted to an even greater degree by Matsumoto Ikuyo, who introduces two recently discovered liturgical manuscripts related to the worship of stars during Japan’s medieval period. In one of the richest chapters of the volume, Matsumoto translates two liturgies that are given in the manual, one involving propitiation of the devotee’s “birth star,” the other outlining divinatory practices involving the Nine Luminaries. These texts, which Matsumoto notes are but two of a large number of astrologically oriented manuscripts that have recently come to light across Japan, hold out the exciting promise of multiple insights into not only the development of medieval astrological thought, but also the formation of Medieval Shinto.

Tsuda Tetsuei’s article on images of the stars in esoteric Buddhist art in turn provides a periodization of iconographic representations of astral deities. Tsuda argues that by the late 10th century, iconographic representations of astral figures had become standardized in the Japanese islands as authoritative astrological manuals and representative modes from the continent were absorbed into the mainstream of Buddhist practice of the period. By the 11th century, these had in turn been digested and transformed by indigenous models and put to use in the service of emerging combinatory systems of Buddhhas and kami associated with different sectarian and lineal traditions. When read together with Matsumoto’s medieval liturgical texts, a picture thus begins to emerge that suggests significant ferment in both the worship and representation of astral deities within a number of contexts.

Rounding out the volume are chapters by Meri Arichi and Gaynor Sekimori that examine specific appropriations of such cosmological considerations for the construction of more localized cultic identities. Arichi’s article on the use of images of the seven stars in the development of the Hie Shrine during the medieval period provides a concrete illustration of just how such ferment had far-reaching institutional consequences for the development of the Sannō cult on Mount Hiei. As Arichi makes clear, the seven stars not only served as a template for grouping and ordering relations between the numerous shrines on the mountain, they also allowed for the development of new ritual forms in which Buddhist scriptures and deities associated with the Pole Star were put into use for the development of medieval Shinto. Gaynor Sekimori, in a chapter entitled “Star Rituals and Nikko Shugendō,” brings the work full circle as she details the role of many of the same astral Buddhas and deities first discussed by Dolce for mountain practitioners at Nikkō during the Tokugawa period and in contemporary Japan.

Given these considerable strengths, it is highly likely that this volume will constitute an important point of departure for future work in what may one day become a major sub-field in the study of Japanese religion. Indeed, the number of areas for future research is vast. Among the most immediate challenges for the birth of such a field will be the daunting task of organizing and classifying the rather large number of Buddhist, omnyōdō and medieval Shintō sources that take astrological considerations as a principle topic of concern. Future research will also have to take up in earnest such issues as the relationship between often technical discourses related to the movement of planets and the formation of popular cultic movements centering upon astral Buddhas and deities. This in turn will almost certainly involve a discussion of both the means by which ritual and astrological systems were transmitted from China to the Japanese islands as well as the means by which such knowledge diffused both at court and among the populace.

Although this volume may mark only the beginning stages of such an enterprise, its contributors have done an admirable job of pointing the way forward along a path that promises to yield fresh insights into a host of questions ranging from the dynamics of medieval institutional and cultic combinatory systems to the formation of cosmologies of kingship. Scholars of Japanese religion will be referring to it for years to come.

Reference

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Information on Japanese Religions


Gaynor Sekimori

The differentiation of kami and Buddhist deities and practices (shinbutsu bunri) in the late nineteenth century represents a monumental shift in Japanese religion. It also has implications for the wider study of religion, since it provides material for a comparative analysis within the broader historical field. The study of this topic has not received the attention I believe it deserves, either in Japan or abroad, despite the fact that scholars of Japanese religion are well aware of its significance. Whereas Japanese scholars still hesitate to take on the subject, out of, as far as I can tell, concern for modern Shinto and Buddhist relationships, there is growing interest among people in general about the traditional matrix of Japanese religiosity, which can best be described in through the shorthand concept of shinbutsu shūgō (kami-buddha amalgamation/combination). Lucia Dolce has in fact begun a very interesting study on this theme (see below). Any discussion of shinbutsu shūgō easily leads on to its corollary, shinbutsu bunri, yet there is surprisingly little recognition in Japan of the lasting effects of that policy. When its reality is acknowledged, surprise and incredulity seem to be the main reactions. For example, when NHK broadcast a series called Buttsuzō (Buddhist statues) last year, the programme that elicited the greatest audience response concerned the fate of Buddhist statues in Kagoshima (formerly Satsuma) as a result of domain buddha-kami separation orders. Kitamura Minao, the director of the programme, believes that this was the first time the themes of shinbutsu bunri and haibutsu kishaku (deliberate destruction of Buddhist things) in itself has ever been addressed directly by the national broadcaster.

I came across the contemporary ramifications of shinbutsu bunri early on in my study of Haguro Shugendō, and went on to make it my main theme in my doctoral dissertation (2000). I had for a number of years wanted to organize a conference or seminar that examined the issues directly, not simply as a footnote to some broader topic, but it was not until a chance meeting with Dominick Scarangello, a doctoral candidate at the University of Virginia, whose study into the Akiha cult (Shizuoka) had also brought him into direct contact with early Meiji religious legislation and its effect particularly on Shugendō and other mountain cults, that I began to consider it in specific terms. Subsequently we put forward a proposal for a panel on the topic to the Japanese Religions Group at the annual AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference, and subsequently presented it at San Diego in November 2007.

We wanted to provide a forum to take a new look at the shinbutsu bunri phenomenon, stressing hitherto underused viewpoints, angles and methodologies for discussing it. We identified three reasons why this was an appropriate route to take: 1) The increasing wealth of local data that has become available in the last thirty years presents us with the opportunity to use new directions to explore the material; 2) We need to study the aftermath to understand what shinbutsu bunri really meant, so to look at the process rather than the event, we must follow it though the 1880s and beyond; and 3) While there is a widespread perception that the Buddhists were victims and the supporters of shrine Shinto were "victimizers," a more nuanced view is needed. Five papers were presented, which admirably demonstrated a breadth of approach and a willingness to engage the topic from non-conventional themes.

The paper presented by Takami Inoue (Otani University, Kyoto) was entitled Shinbutsu Bunri as a Radical Disembedding of Local Religions: The Case of Ono Village in the Northern Ina Valley. In it, he used the concept of "disembedding mechanism" to discuss the way local religious traditions were radically transformed by shinbutsu bunri. His analysis, while paying attention to local contexts and socioeconomic variables, attempted to demonstrate that the shinbutsu bunri phenomenon was an extreme example of early Meiji policy to construct a modern, centralized nation-state. Inoue used the research of local historians and his own fieldwork to present a more complex and concrete view of shinbutsu bunri as a radical disembedding of local religions, concluding that "it was the political power of the early Meiji government, and not the zeal of local Hirata nativists, that drove the irreversible 'cultural revolution,' which was the first most important step toward creating State Shinto." His insistence that shinbutsu bunri needs to be understood within specific social and historical conditions led him to centre his study on the life and career of Kurasawa Yoshiyuki (1832-1922), head of one of the most powerful families in Ono village, and from 1862 a member of the Hirata nativist school. Inoue traced the course of the destruction of local roadside Buddhist statues in the village to show that local authority could contain initial forays into iconoclasm by individual Nativists (eg young followers of Kurasawa) who bore a grudge against Buddhism, but that villagers could not withstand later, state-ordered destruction of Buddhist icons, whatever local sympathies were. The transformation of the village religious landscape is therefore a feature, Inoue contends, of the political power...
of the early Meiji government: Nativists’ efforts to create a purely Shinto community could not be carried out without official sanction, which implies that the government took advantage of nativist ideology to activate the “disembedding mechanism” of modernization.

Heather Blair (Harvard University) discussed the issue from an art historian’s viewpoint in *Junking the Treasures of the Mountain King, or How Kinpusen’s God Came to the National Museum*. She took as her subject the fate of a large incised copper plaque (*mishōtai*) featuring Zao Gongen from Kinpusenji (dated 1001) that is now in the keeping of the Tokyo National Museum. How did it leave the mountain where it originated, pass through the hands of a scrap-metal dealer, join the possessions of a Tokyo Zen temple, and finally enter the modern art-historical canon as a national treasure? In terms of the material religious culture of Kinpusen, *shinbutsu bunri* began a process of objectification through which what had been icons became commodities, and ultimately impacted on modern and contemporary constructions of art and categorizations of religious practice. The removal of icons from the Yoshino-Kinpusen area was carried out both by government officials (as symbols of Buddhism to be eliminated, as saleable objects, and as collectibles) and by local leaders, who sold them to raise funds to rebuild shrines. *Mishōtai* were susceptible because they were not main icons, because they were metal (and therefore salable), and because they were comparatively small (and therefore portable). The Zaō plaque ended up in the hands of a dealer in scrap metals called Kuritani Genjiro in Tokyo, who possibly acquired it in a shipment of materials from Kansai. It was donated to a temple called Sojiji (Nishi Arai Daishi) after his death around 1905 and *discovered* in 1932 by a newspaper reporter, by which time it was easily assimilated into the category of “art.” Blair concluded by making a plea for a broader museological discourse. Big exhibitions help to fix cultural memory without official sanction, which implies that the government took advantage of nativist ideology to activate the “disembedding mechanism” of modernization.

I then presented a report entitled *Legends of the Fall: The Iconoclasm of Sacred Space*, a reworking of the preliminary study I gave at SOAS in January 2007. The study of *shinbutsu bunri* has hitherto largely been made in terms of either institutional and doctrinal change or as an aspect of the persecution of Buddhism. Seeking to pursue a more nuanced analysis, I analysed topographical changes to the shrine-temple complex at Hagurosan using contemporary maps, travel records, and shrine and temple guides and other documents. I became interested in this theme because of discrepancies between the received record, the “mythology”, of what happened at Hagurosan, and contrary evidence that I found in the contemporary pictorial and descriptive material. It is widely held locally that the changes in the religious landscape that are very evident to anyone who buys the widely available 1830 pictorial map of Hagurosan that much has disappeared in the course of nearly 180 years, and most people automatically assign the changes to the early years of the 1870s when the mountain was forcibly converted into an imperial shrine. In order to interrogate this understanding I set myself a number of questions to answer. Was this topographical destruction (or reconfiguration) deliberate? If deliberate, how did the reconfigured space reveal the new ideological meaning? In what sense did change occur? What was destroyed? What remained? To what extent does the reconfiguration of the landscape agree with the modern “mythology” surrounding the events that led to the changes? In other words, was *shinbutsu bunri* the direct instigator of change, or were other factors at work? Since not only "Shinto" space was redefined, but "Buddhist" space (not the subject of redefinition) as well, some other agency seemed to be at work. Archival research proved conclusively that major topographical change did not occur in the 1870s, but in the mid 1880s and then around 1912. The major factor in the change was the breakdown of the traditional building management system (due to the social changes engendered by *shinbutsu bunri*) and the financial burdens
imposed on too few people to maintain the fabric of buildings exposed to the severe northern winters. This study urges scholars to look carefully at the categories of shinbutsu bunri and haibutsu kishaku when describing the mid-nineteenth-century religious changes.

The fourth paper, Shinbutsu Bunri and Its Aftermath: Transforming, Redefining, and Recapturing the Bodies of the Deities, was given by Dominick Scarangello. Shinbutsu bunri, he contended, was an influential process in the development of modern Japanese society: its deconstruction of customs and institutions altered much of the religious milieu, and many contemporary ostensibly traditional religious practices have roots in its aftermath. Coming to terms with it requires new perspectives on the rise of post-differentiation religious traditions. One way of thinking about shinbutsu bunri is to envision it as a process of transforming the bodies of the gods. This paper examines the aftermath of shinbutsu bunri at Mt. Akiha, a sacred mountain in Shizuoka prefecture, where disembodiment, re-embodiment, and other ways of transforming deity bodies were important modes of shinbutsu bunri and the formulation of post-differentiation traditions. Shinbutsu bunri caused the Akiha cult to splinter into a Shinto Shrine and two major Buddhist temples (Akiha Jinja, Shuyoji and Kasuisai), and this resulted in a bitter contestation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which manifested itself in controversies over the location of the Edo period sacred icons of the Akiha cult. Tracing the history of deity bodies highlights a pattern that underlies both processes, recasting the relationship between shinbutsu bunri and modern religious traditions.

The final presentation was by Lucia Dolce (SOAS), and entitled Did Shinbutsu Bunri Irremediably Change Japanese Religion? Perspectives on the Creation of Contemporary Forms of Associative Practices. Field evidence shows that, notwithstanding the progressive separation of shrine and temple practices carried out during last century, large institutions such as Hiyoshi Taisha and Iwashimizu Hachimangū have restored and maintain several associative practices. For example, Hiyoshi Taisha performs an annual ritual called the Sannō raihai in which Buddhist monks perform debates on the Lotus Sutra for the Sannō kami, with the attendance of the shrine priests, and Iwashimizu Hachimangū still holds a famous hōjōe (the Buddhist ceremony for the release of animals) during its major festival. Other institutions, such as Kasuga Taisha, are reinstating segments of their original Buddhist rituals, while Tōdaiji is considering the reintroduction of liturgical sections involving the nearby Hachimangū during the mizutori rituals. These practices do not seem to be perceived in contrast with the identity of the shrines and are in fact promoted by the highest clerical ranks of the individual institutions. More surprisingly, in recent years attempts have been made to create new associations between shrines and temples that were not linked in the past in a significant way. This is the case of Iwashimizu and Kiyomizudera, and Yoshida Shrine and Nanzenji in Kyoto. The existence of clear water in the precincts of both Kiyomizu and Iwashimizu, and of a cultic tradition around that water, seems to have been the combinatorial factor in the case of the former two institutions, an element which is not only used rhetorically for the construction of a new combinatorial discourse, but which is also employed ritually during ceremonies performed together by priests of Iwashimizu and monks of Kiyomizu. On the other hand, legends related to Yoshida Kanetomo, the founder of Yoshida shrine, have been reformulated to legitimize the association between this shrine and Nanzenji. Dolce points out the need to consider the implications of these contemporary forms of shinbutsu shūgō. Are they grounded on an associative logic that reiterates pre-modern patterns or has a new discourse on the meaning and function of combinatorial practices been created? To what extent do these developments question the long-term impact of shinbutsu bunri on Japanese religion and the "sustainability" of distinctly separated environment for Buddhist and Shinto practices?

The session concluded with comments from the discussant, Barbara Ambros of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and with a number of interesting questions from the audience. I hope that the papers will be published and serve in their turn to stimulate discussion of this very important topic.

Gaynor Sekimori (SOAS) was holder of the 2000-1 CSJR Postdoctoral Fellowship, and associate professor at the Institute of Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo 2001-2007, where she was also the managing editor of the International Journal of Asian Studies. She is now a research associate at SOAS.
Information on Japanese Religions

26-29 April 2007

Benedetta Lomi

In April 2007, the Centre for Japanese Religion of Columbia University, New York, sponsored a three-day symposium on Medieval Shinto, which brought together scholars from Japanese, American and European institutions, and also welcomed research students focusing on Medieval Japanese religion. First in a series of hopefully three symposia, organized by Professor Bernard Faure and Dr Max Moermann, last spring’s event was a huge success, not only in its attempt to reach new understanding of what constitutes “Medieval Shinto”, what is its boundaries, and perspectives for future studies, but also in bringing to the table a variety of approaches and subjects.

The inaugural lecture, held on April 26, by Allan Grapard (University of California, Santa Barbara), raised some pivotal questions on the methodological issues in the study of Medieval Shinto and of medieval Japanese religion, urging the audience and the speakers to carefully ponder the (im)possibility of drawing a line on what is “medieval” about Shinto. Professor Grapard once again stressed the importance of focussing on the economical, ritual and social dimensions of cultic sites, and their relation with a variety of institutions, defining a fascinating paradigm where honji-suijiaku is to be understood as a social practice, a power relationship between a symbolic and an economic dimension.

On these notes, the first day of the conference started with a series of papers that explored but also tried to overcome the binary pattern often implied by the shinbutsu-shingō theory. The paper by Itō Satoshi (Waseda University), on the Medieval Cult of Gyōki and Ise Shrine, considered, through the study of Gyōki as an avatar of Amaterasu, the possible relationships between different institutions: Ise, Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji. Lucia Dolce (SOAS), followed with a reconsideration, or reconfiguration, of notions of duality in medieval esotericism, presenting a case study of ‘unorthodox’ Buddhist iconographies that are found in a number of Shinto materials, such as the combination of Fudo and Aizen Myōo. Bernard Faure (Columbia University) continued with a case study of Amaterasu and Susano in a Buddhist perspective.

The afternoon panel was equally exciting, featuring a talk by Anna Andreeva (Cambridge University), who presented her recent research on esoteric kami worship in Miwa, Abe Yasurō, considering Shinto as écriture, furthered the idea, already embedded in the previous papers, that it is not possible nor fruitful to consider Shinto as an autonomous object, but that we should instead place its study within the complex context of all Japanese religious texts. The concluding paper, by Bernard Scheid (Austrian Academy of Sciences) focussed on the concepts of kami worship and medieval Shinto through the lenses of Jan Assmann’s theory of “Cultural Memory”.

The second day’s morning session began with three very different but equally stimulating papers; the first, delivered by Kadoya Atsushi (Waseda) on Taoist motifs found in Shinto iconology, addressed issues of syncretism through an interesting series of images. Then, Brian Ruppert (University of Illinois) focused on the representation of court rites of “royal progresses” or gyōko miyuki, their relationship with the religious institutions and they way in which these rituals conferred religious status. Finally, Ryuichi Abé (Harvard University) presented interesting research on the shrine attached to the Abhiseka Halls at Eikyū-ji, at Uchiyama.

The following panel consisted of a paper by Sueki Fujihiko (Tokyo University) on “Kami, hotoke and Tennō in Medieval Shinto Theory,” followed by Jackie Stone, who focused on the reconsideration of pollution and death taboos in light of honji-suijiaku theory. The day was concluded by William Bodiford (University of California, Los Angeles) who discussed Matarajin as a paradigm for looking at the different relationships between kami and Buddhas, religion and government, doctrine and popular belief –themes already addressed by Professor Grapard and other speakers in the course of the conference.

The third and final day of the symposium began with a fascinating talk by Iyanaga Nobumi, who suggested considering Medieval Shinto as a form of “Japanese Hinduism.” Toward the end of the conference, the topic of discussion shifted to issues of terminology and definition: Mark Teeuwen (University of Oslo) followed with a paper on the problematic employment of the terms Jindō and Shinto, while Fabio Rambelli (Sapporo University) provided an ideal conclusive framework to the diverse approaches and topics covered during the previous days, stressing that Medieval Shinto crystallizes a general tendency of Medieval Japanese Religion to move to the periphery and outside of the Buddhist system, expanding and revitalizing it.

The concluding remarks were left to Bernard Faure, who congratulated the audience for giving a concrete context to the preliminary remarks of Professor Grapard, and for bringing together their research interests to create a more concrete framework to the study of Japanese Religion.

The conference was extremely successful in placing
the study of Medieval Shinto within the broader field of Japanese Medieval Religion, demonstrating the importance of considering the interactions and coexistence of a diversity factors. The conclusions also called for redefinition of paradigms in which Japanese medieval religion is studied, in light of the new scholarship on the matter.

I would like to thank the Centre for Japanese Religions of Columbia University and Professors Bernard Faure and Max Moermann, for organizing the event and for extending the invitation to a number of research students, including myself, who were able to benefit from such a stimulating series of papers and to actively participate in the discussion. The intense three-day symposium really encouraged communication between the audience and the presenters and triggered thought-provoking discussions, which were not confined to their “canonical” arena, the institutional halls of the University, but often continued in front of a meal, generously offered by Columbia University, or in front of a glass of French wine at Professor Faure’s house, doing justice to the original understanding of the word symposium, sympotein, literally, “drinking together.”

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Information on Japanese Religions

Kokugakuin University Workshop of Young Scholars and Graduate Students

Historical Development of Japanese Religion and Culture Workshop Report

Tullio Lobetti

On the 30th of November 2007, the Centre for Promotion of Excellence in Research and Education (CPERE) at Kokugakuin University hosted a one-day workshop of young scholars and graduate students on the theme ‘Historical Development of Japanese Religion and Culture.’ The workshop was co-ordinated by Dr Kase Naoya of CPERE, and was conceived as a first step in the establishment of an agreement for academic exchanges between Kokugakuin University and SOAS. For this reason four graduate students from SOAS were invited to present their research.

The workshop papers were arranged chronologically, with a first series of contributions covering themes from the medieval to the early modern periods in the morning session, and a second series focused on modern and contemporary topics in the afternoon. The purpose of this arrangement was to allow the participants to individuate themes, trends and tendencies in the development of Japanese religious thought, and to discuss them comparatively in the closing plenary session.

The first paper, ‘The Daianji Batō Kannon: Research Notes on the Transformation of Batō Kannon’ was delivered by Benedetta Lomi (SOAS), who first examined the characteristics of the horse-headed deity Hayagrīva (Batō Kannon) and then offered an in-depth analysis of the statue preserved at the Daianji and the rituals connected to it. In the following paper, about ‘Purification Rituals in Temple-shrine Institutions of the Nantō area and the Nakatomi Harae’, Daitō Takaaki (Kokugakuin University) explained the transmission and employment of the ‘Nakatomi Harae’ purification ritual in medieval Shinto and its connection with the Kasuga lineage of shrine priests.

The session about early-modern Japan started with a paper by Carla Tronu Montane (SOAS) about the ‘Transformation of Sacred Space in Nagasaki Between 1569 and 1639.’ Here the speaker elucidated the employment and re-employment of sacred spaces and the different
strategies in the building and design of churches enacted by Christian missionaries between the 16th and 17th centuries in Japan.

The following two papers dealt with literary themes. Iseki Daisuke (Tokyo University) explored 'The Unfathomable in the Ugetsu Monogatari' and the strong feeling of supernatural that permeates Ueda Akinari’s work, concluding that this kind of literary style may be considered a historical religious manifestation in itself. Alan Cummins (SOAS) opened the modern session with his paper 'Kabuki, Identity and the Shōkonsha: about Kawatake Mokuami’ in which he investigated the possible religious implication of Mokuami’s Kabuki play ‘Shimachidoritsuki no Shiranami’, part of which is set in the Shōkonsha, the early name of the Yasukuni Jinja.

In the second paper on modern Japan, Nakamura Akira (Kokugakuin University) spoke about the ‘Shinto Theory of Okuni Takamasa and its Local Developments’, first offering us a critical review of previous scholarship regarding this famous kokugakusha, and then explaining in detail his actual influence in the Kobe-Osaka and Shikoku areas.

The contemporary section started with Tullio Lobetti (SOAS) giving a paper about ‘The Life of Shugenja in Contemporary Japan’, in which he presented the results of his participant observation in the training of a group of Shugendō practitioners at Haguro Mountain (Dewa Sanzan).

The last paper of the session, and of the workshop, was given by Kobayashi Mizuho (Kokugakuin University), on ‘The Present Situation and Themes in Contemporary Shinto.' The speaker focused on the contemporary difficulties of ageing Shinto priests in finding successors willing to take up the management of Shinto shrines, and how this may affect contemporary Shinto development.

The papers were then followed by a general discussion and some keynote remarks by Dr John Breen. Although the papers were arranged in chronologically ordained groups in order to allow an easier historical analysis, from the discussion it emerged how difficult it can be to make generalisations on Japanese religion or Shinto tradition by a mere historical point of view, and that is then important to take in account also the different conceptual instruments offered by the various disciplines involved in the analysis of the 'religious' phenomenon.

The workshop was a very successful and rewarding event. The interaction among the participants was rich, and a remarkable amount of data and knowledge was exchanged during the day. The nature of the event, focused on the academic exchange between different institutions, surely helped to strengthen the ties between Japanese and Western religion scholars. The workshop also allowed some of the participants to have their first active experience in a Japanese academic venue. The fact that the event was held completely in Japanese particularly helped younger participants in enhancing their confidence when presenting papers in that language. Moreover, the welcoming atmosphere set up by the workshop organisers and by the other Japanese participants, allowed all of us to relax and do our best in expressing our thoughts to a Japanese audience. Finally the continuous support of the event organisers in everything related to our stay in Japan, from train tickets to meals and accommodation, rendered our stay in Tokyo a very pleasurable experience. Kokugakuin University very kindly covered the travel and accommodation expenses for the participants coming from abroad, and we would like to thank the University once again and Dr Kase Naoya for their financial and academic support, and for making this wonderful event possible. It is our hope that such events will continue in the future for the reciprocal benefit of both Western and Japanese academic institutions.

Tullio Lobetti, holder of the 2004 CSJR Research Studentship is a PhD candidate at SOAS. His research is on Faith in the flesh: body and ascetic practices in contemporary Japanese religious context. (tullio_lobetti@yahoo.it)
The Panel on *Ritual Practices in Japan* will be held on 29 September 2008.

**Chairs:**
Katja Triplett and Lucia Dolce

**Speakers:**
Paul S. Atkins (Washington)
Lucia Dolce (SOAS)
Eike Grossmann (Tōkyō)
Benedetta Lomi (SOAS)
Fumi Ouchi (Miyagi Gakuin)
Katja Triplett (Marburg)

For further information see the conference webpage:
http://www.rituals-2008.com
New Feature Series: Japanese Deities

Daigensui Myōō

Clemente Beghi

Daigensui/Taigensui 大元帥/太元帥 is a deity of Indian origins, identified with 阿誹羅叉 印度川 (Sk. Yābha, Jp. Yabusa) or 夜叉 (Sk. Yāsha), an ogre (Sk. yakṣa, Jp. yasha). He is traditionally considered a general of demons (Jp. kijin daišo 鬼神大将), but it is only in Shubhakarasimha’s Ritual Manual of the Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Marleshāl Āṭavika Great Commander (Jp. Atabaka-gensui-taishō-jōhutsudaranikōyō-shugyō-giki 夜叉薄俱元帥大將上佛陀羅尼經), that the term ‘marshal’ (yuanshuai 元帥) of the highest Chinese military title, is attributed to him. In this text we read that he rules not simply over all possible Indian demons but also over many Sinitic ones, confirming the idea that his ‘upgrading’ took place in China. The Japanese Shingon tradition then includes him in that class of gods called ‘wisdom kings’ (Jp. myōō 明王), characterized by a terrifying appearance and whose main aim is to protect the Buddhist Law and those who follow it.¹

The first person who brought to the archetype texts regarding the deity was Kikai, but it is his disciple Jōgyō 紹業 (d.865) who introduced the ritual and the iconography to Japan, after having been initiated in China by Amoghavajra’s disciple Wencan 文璨. In 840 he was given permission by Emperor Nimmyō 仁明天皇 (810–850, r.833–850) to establish a centre for the cult of Daigensui at Hōrinji. Although Jōgyō did import some icons, as can be seen from his catalogue of imported items, the Jōgyō-wajō-shōrai-mokuroku 常栁請來目録, we know that they needed to be replaced already during the monk’s lifetime. We can divide the typologies into two main groups, those that follow the textual descriptions (4 varieties) and those that do not (4 varieties) (Duquenne 1983: 635–41).

In the first category we have:

1. Daigensui with four faces, the central one benevolent, surrounded by three irate ones, and with eight arms, holding a cakra, a noose and a spear on the left, a vajra, a stick and a sword on the right, and the lowest two hands port some icons, as can be found, among the variety of images, although only relatively few specimens are left, mostly from the Kamakura period: some paintings at Daigoji 醍醐寺 and at Yoshimunedera 菩提峰寺 in Kyōto, the sculpture at Akishinodera 秋篠寺 (Jōgyō’s home temple) in Nara and the iconographical sketches present at Tōji 東寺 and Daigoji. Although Jōgyō did import some icons, it can be found, among the various, in the iconographical sketches of the Zuzōshi 増詠寺 (TZ. III, Zzs. viii, pl.96), of the Besson Zakki 別尊雑記 (TZ. III, Bszk. xxxix, pl.231) the Kakuzenshō 觀薬抄 (TZ.V, Kkzs. xc, pl.334) and as a painting at Daigoji 醍醐寺. This image is often at the centre of a mandala (daigensui mandara 大元帥曼荼羅), surrounded by acolytes, the four Celestial Kings (shitenno 四天王) and other deities (TZ. v, 3114) [Fig.1].

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¹ This article is the first of a series dealing with Buddhist deities, mainly of the esoteric pantheon. It is not intended as an innovative piece of academic endeavor but rather as a brief introduction to the topic.

² In the Tendai tradition he is assimilated to Shōmen Kongō

³ In 1313 the temple burned down and Ryōga 良雅 established a new centre at the nearby Rishōin 理修院, a branch temple of Daigoji.
2. Daigensui with one irate face and four arms, one holding a cakra, one a vajra, one doing the ‘Great Enraged’ mudrā (dainu-in 大怒印) and one resting on the hip (TZ. III 3007 Bszk.xxxix pl. 230; TZ. V 3022 Kkzs. xc 331 pl.325, and a painting at Daigoji [Fig. 2]). It is invoked against illnesses and can be also found in a mandala surrounded by other yakṣas, the Celestial Kings, some other Indian deities and the twelve zodiac animals (TZ. IV 3018 p. 275).

3. Daigensui with three irate faces of three different colors and two hands, one on the hip and one in the ‘threatening’ mudrā (kikoku-in 期剋印), in a rain of lotus petals, accompanied by genies who hold his garments. There are no visual examples.

4. Daigensui in the benevolent shape of Bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha (Kokūzō Bosatsu 虚空藏菩薩), with a white body and doing the ‘no fear’ mudrā (semui-in 施無畏印) (TZ. III, Bszk. xxxix 508 pl. 232).)

In the second category we have:

1. Daigensui in the so-called ‘Kōbō Daishi’s style’, with one face and four arms, without attributes. Although the name, this typology is more likely to be connected with Jōgyō and the images he brought back, as looking from the iconographical sketches it is clear that the image has been taken from a statue (TZ. V, Kkzs. xc pl. 326).

2. Daigensui with one irate face and six arms, one hand with the ‘menacing’ mudrā, one holding a four-pronged vajra, one an axe, one a stick and one a three-pronged vajra. The only example we have is the statue at Akishinodera [Fig. 4]

3. Daigensui of the Ogurusu tradition, with six faces, a frowning central one surrounded by calm and irate ones, and eight arms, with two hands in the ‘offering’ mudrā, the others holding a wheel, a trident, a stick, a vajra, a sword and a noose. He is surrounded by flames and two yakṣas hold his feet (TZ. III, Zzs. viii pl. 97, Bszk. xxxix 505 pl. 229 [Fig. 5]). There is a statue of the 16th century at Rakanji 羅漢寺 in Iwami 岩見, Shimane Prefecture.

4. Daigensui with eighteen faces and thirty six arms, holding all sorts of implements (TZ. VI 3115, the oldest extant Japanese image of the deity, also one of the paintings at Daigoji [Fig. 6]). It is thought that it was introduced in 847 by Eun 慧運 after his journey to China and this is the type still used in Japan for the daigensui-hō. We can find similar images in the famous Song era caves in Yunnan and there is also a painting from the same time in the Sainan’in 西南院 at Köyasan 高野山, imported at the end of the Kamakura period.
Given the iconographical variety of Dagensui images, and considering the status of the ritual devoted to this deity, which continued almost uninterruptedly until the Meiji period and was then revived during the war years, we can conclude that the cult of Daigen must have been very popular in Japan. To understand in detail the real size of the phenomenon, more studies on this under-researched subject are still necessary.

Clemente Beghi is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge.

References:


“Daigensui” in Mikkyō daijiten.


SOAS Joins European Consortium for Asian Field Studies

On Monday 3 September 2007, representatives of forty leading institutions in Asian studies from the European Union and Asia met at the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Paris, to sign an agreement founding the European Consortium for Asian Field Studies (ECAF). Dr Lucia Dolce represented SOAS at the signing ceremony, which was followed by a reception hosted by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres under the auspices of its Permanent Secretary, Professor Jean Leclant.

The principal objective of the Consortium is to increase the capacity of European institutions to conduct Asian field studies through the sharing of resources and the development of joint research programmes. Professor Michael Fulford, Vice President of the British Academy, described ECAF as a cooperation of prime importance between European and Asian research institutions.

The thirty European founding members include academies, universities, foundations, museums, and research institutes in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Ten Asian or non-European Union partners joined the consortium as associate members. The consortium also counts several European Union organisations, such as the Asia-Europe Foundation based in Singapore or the European Science Foundation, Strasbourg, with observer status.

The consortium aims to provide field access and research facilities for its members’ academic and technical staff, as well as fellowship holders and students, and to encourage the development of joint interdisciplinary research programmes in the humanities and social sciences. It also plans to share documentary resources from the EFEO centres in Asia, and to pool funding to acquire and create new digital archives. The Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) has opened its network of seventeen centres in twelve Asian countries to the Consortium. The optimization of this network through the sharing of facilities and costs, provides a means for maintaining and developing an essential resource within an extended Euro-Asian context. Disciplinary fields covered in the EFEO centres range from archaeology, anthropology, and linguistics, to sociology and religious studies. The Consortium is committed to the provision of training opportunities for graduate students by offering them an institutional and infrastructural framework for their field research, documentary resources and, depending on the location and research subject, methodological seminars, access to laboratory facilities and academic supervision for research projects.

Beyond the sharing and maintenance of existing facilities, the development of their potential as European centres can be envisaged case by case, in accordance with the particular needs and means of interested Members. To date, the French and Italian centres in Kyoto are operated in a European framework, in association with Kyoto University. The future creation of a European campus in Pondicherry and transformation of the EFEO offices in Beijing into a European centre for the study of Chinese will be among the initial projects to be studied by the Consortium.

In Japan the EFEO has two very active centres. The Kyoto Center is well known to scholars of East Asian Religions for its research in the field of Buddhist Studies. It has been responsible for the Hôbôgirin, the monumental encyclopedia of Buddhism based on Chinese and Japanese sources that was started in 1926 by Sylvain Lévy and Paul Demiéville, and it edits the Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie, a leading bilingual periodical (with articles in French and English) in the field of East Asian religious studies. The Center houses a large library specializing in Asian religions (Buddhism, Taoism), enriched in 1984 by the personal collection of Étienne Lamotte, and in 1991 by that of Anna Seidel. Together with the Italian Scuola di Studi sull’Asia Orientale, the Center organizes the Kyoto Lectures, a monthly lecture series in English presenting leading contributions to sino-japanese studies.

The EFEO Center in Tokyo, established in 1994, is housed within the Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library), the Asian studies library of Japan attached to the National Diet Library.

The next meeting of ECAF members will be held in London in February 2008, hosted by British Academy. For further information on the Consortium, please visit: www.efeo.fr/ECAF/index.html

The ECAF signatories: