Centre for the Study of

Japanese Religions

日本宗教研究 センタ-

CSJR Newsletter

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From the Centre Chair

Warm greetings from a grey and cold London, and welcome to a new issue of the CSJR Newsletter.

In 2005 we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Centre activities and of our Newsletter, and several events have reminded us of how much the Centre has expanded its activities since its inception. I should perhaps mention two highlights: in June the international symposium on foundation myths brought to London an impressive array of scholars of pre-modern Japan to bring to light new research on the construction of Japanese mythology from different disciplines; in December, an extraordinary concert of Buddhist chanting and *gagaku* music closed the calendar year, attended by an audience of more than 800 people. Similarly remarkable has been the involvement of our students, as the articles in this double issue demonstrate.

Given the nature of the many events that have enriched us during the past year, we have dedicated the theme of this Newsletter to religious performance. As illustrated by the cover, rituals, music, dance, ascetic training, and more, are discussed in this issue, through the reports on the Centre activities and the fieldwork notes we have received from Japan. The issue is also enriched by some 19th century photographs of Japanese sacred places in stereoscopic relief, which our Centre Assistant Janet Foster has provided, together with the glasses with which to enjoy them.

While we bid farewell to our previous post-doctoral fellow, Katja Triplett, knowing that she will continue to be in London and take part in the Centre's activities, I have to announce that unfortunately the Centre will not be able to award a post-doctoral fellowship and a studentship for the next academic year. We hope in the coming years to raise enough funds to resume these grants, which have brought fine researchers to the Centre. In the meantime I would like to express our uttermost gratitude to our sponsor for continuing to support the weekly activities of the Centre, and this newsletter. His considerate support, which enables us to hold seminars with major scholars in the field, benefits enormously our students and more broadly the study of Japanese religion in Europe.

Last term our seminars addressed themes as different as classic concepts of hell, Buddhism in Hokkaido, rainmaking rituals and medieval religious cartography, while in the Japanese Religions Forum our postgraduate students discussed religion and politics, the contemporary realities of Shinto and Buddhist priesthood, sacred vocal arts and medieval *kami* worship. The CSJR lecture series and forum continues on Thursday evenings with another promising list of speakers addressing topics in Japanese religion from different disciplinary approaches. We will also host a small international workshop, dedicated to contemporary philosophies of the body, and organized by Ornella Corazza, a PhD candidate in the department of Study of Religions. All our gatherings are open to the public and we hope to see many of you in the audience.

I look forward to an exciting 2006. Happy Year of the Dog!
Lucia Dolce

Front cover: *Bugaku-hôe*. A performance of Buddhist chanting (shômyô) and court dance and music (*gagaku/bugaku*). As part of the liturgy the head-priests also perform esoteric rituals with the use of mantras and *mudras* in front of small altars set on stage (cover). The ceremony is also called *mandala-hôe* as the two major mandalas of esoteric Buddhism are placed on the stage during the entire performance (left). The two mandalas are sacred diagrams that embody the reality of esoteric Buddhism. The womb mandala (*taizôkai*) represents compassion, and the diamond mandala (*kongôkai*) knowledge; they are used together to signify non-duality. The chanting is performed by monks seated on the left, which is associated with the eastern direction and the sun, is Tendai *shômyô*, and monks on the right, which is associated with the western direction and the moon, chant Shingon *shômyô*. The *bugaku* dancers perform two different pieces, one called *ryô-ô*, in praise of the *taizôkai* mandala, and the other called *nasori*, in praise of the *kongôkai* mandala. (Photo by Lucia Dolce)

Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions Seminars and Postgraduate Fora 2006

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
Thornhaugh Street Russell Square, WC1H 0XG
5:00-6:30 pm Room G3

12 January
Zenga: Japanese Zen Painting and Calligraphy
Stephen Addiss (University of Richmond)

26 January
Writing on Japanese Religion Today
Richard Bowring (University of Cambridge)

9 February
The Stanza of the Bell in the Wind: Zen and *Nenbutsu* in the Early Kamakura Period
Frédéric Girard (Ecole Française d' Extrême-Orient)

23 February
The Daruma School and Japanese Zen
Vincent Breugem (Leiden University) ***Postgraduate Forum***

2 March
The Japanese Pantheon on Paper Charms
Josef Kyburz (Collège de France)

9 March
The Religious Significance of Settlement Enclosures in the Yayoi Period
Jane Oksbjerg (SOAS) ***Postgraduate Forum***

16 March
Pure Land Buddhism in Europe
Louella Matsunaga (SOAS)

23 March
Batô Kannon: Practising a Ritual Image
Benedetta Lomi (SOAS) ***Postgraduate Forum***

27 April
Daoism in the Meiji Period
Kazumi Taguchi (SOAS) ***Postgraduate Forum***

ALL WELCOME
For further information please contact the convenor Dr Lucia Dolce (ld16@soas.ac.uk)

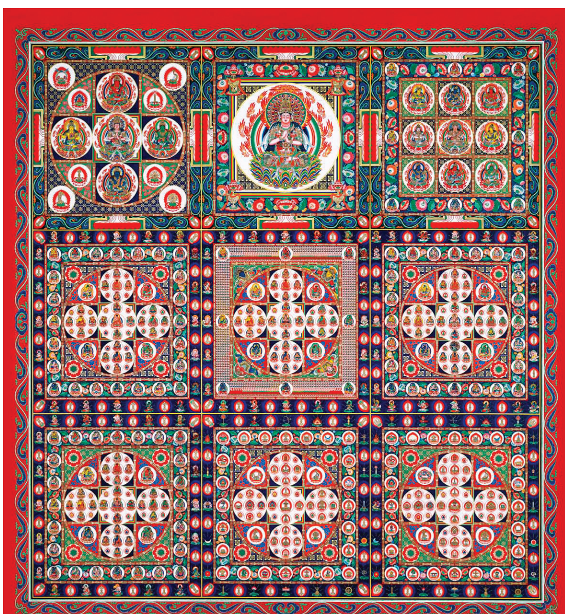
The Performers

The *shômyô* chanters belong to two schools of Japanese Buddhism, which have preserved different styles ofl liturgical chanting.

The Tendai monks are from the Hôgi Onritsu Research Institute of Hiei-zan Enryaku-ji, the headquarters of the Tendai school. The institute was established in 1948 to preserve the *shômyô* tradition and conduct research on the liturgies of the Tendai school. Taki Donin, the chief authority on Tendai *shômyô* at that time, played a central role as an advisor, while Nakayama Genyû and Honda Genshô acted as instructors. Currently under the leadership of Tsukuma Sonno, its 20 members have performed *shômyô* in Japan and abroad, and have also experimented with writing *shômyô* using Western scores.

The Shingon group, Chisan Shômyô Kenkyû-kai, was founded in 2004. Its parent organization, the *Shômyô* Association of the Kanzô-in Temple in Tokyo, has been active since 1990, researching prosody and the history of the Shingon style of *shômyô* as transmitted in the Chisan lineage. The organization holds regular workshops and Buddhist ceremonies several times a year. It has also worked with non-Buddhist and ethnic musicians, and has performed in Japan and abroad.

The *gagaku* music is played by the Tokyo Gakuso ensemble. Established in 1973, its core members are from the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency, but it also includes outstanding players from other unofficial groups. Its forerunner, the Shigenkai, was formed in the late 1950s by musicians of the Imperial Agency as a means to promote public appreciation of their ancient art through activities outside their official duties at the Imperial Palace. With the aim of popularizing *gagaku*, the group is active worldwide, and has produced about a dozen CDs.



kongôkai mandala

taizôkai mandala

Centre Activities

Bugaku-hôe: A Buddhist Liturgy

Fumi Ouchi

The *Bugaku-Hôe* concert, held under the auspices of the CSJR at Logan Hall on 4 December 2005, was a unique opportunity to experience *shômyô* and *bugaku* in a theatre. Both represent a precious Japanese cultural tradition, but, even in Japan, it is indeed rare to see it performed in such a setting.

Gagaku originated as court music played during religious rituals and official ceremonies of the Imperial House, and was also played by aristocrats for enjoyment. The orthodox tradition was passed down through generations in families that were employed by the court. Since *gagaku* also became the ritual music of Shinto, the instrumental form can be heard today at Shinto shrines or at weddings. Yet, the public is seldom invited to a performance given by professional players, most of whom are the descendants of generations of court musicians. This is especially so in the case of *bugaku*, the court dance which is accompanied by instrumental music to create a large-scale *gagaku* performance.

Shômyô, the most sophisticated Buddhist vocal art in Japan, has been also transmitted within a closed society, that of Buddhist priests. For most Japanese people, *shômyô* is an unfamiliar melody that might be heard at funeral ceremonies. It is not, however, a relic. Recently, musicians, scholars and those who have become aware of Japanese traditional performing arts, are eager to attend performances of *gagaku* or *shômyô*, but the opportunities are very limited. It is both fortunate and ironic that such a rare opportunity arose in London, rather than in Japan. The performance was not, however, entirely traditional.

In ancient and medieval times, *gagaku*, *bugaku*, and *shômyô* were often played together as an embellishment to court ceremonies. Buddhist priests from various groups attended these events. Later *gagaku* and *shômyô* were transmitted to different communities and the *shômyô* tradition was divided into several sects, which then began to develop separately. In addition, most monks held the conviction that *shômyô* should only be performed for the purpose of religious training or for Buddhist rituals. Consequently, *shômyô* remained within the realm of particular sects of Buddhist priests.

Then, in modern Japan, Professor Kido Toshiro, Director of the Tokyo International Theatre, was inspired to produce a *shômyô* performance for the stage. He planned a series of *shômyô* concerts throughout the 1980s. Thanks to this bold project, the name '*shômyô*' became more widely known, and its value and potential as a performing art came to be appreciated by many.

Professor Kido also directed this European concert tour. The *Bugaku-hôe* performance in the style of a concert was his concept. In this sense, the *Bugaku-hôe* concert at SOAS did not conform to a traditional style, and may be regarded as an 'invented tradition'. However, it was not simply 'invented tradition', but rather a kind of restoration of the vital performance as it originally was. Recent studies on ancient and medieval Buddhist ceremonies and Buddhist vocal arts suggest that in former times there was a more positive attitude to the sensory nature of performing arts in religious activities. In those days, people did not seem to make a strict distinction between religious and artistic activities. In this sense, the *Bugaku-hôe* concert was an attempt to develop the rich potentiality that *shômyô* and *gagaku* had originally.

Professor Kido's approach has provoked some controversy. Some scholars of Japanese traditional music have criticized Professor Kido's work, claiming that it is not in keeping with tradition. As a Buddhist priestess myself, I can imagine that some Buddhist priests would feel uncomfortable when asked to recite sutras and perform rituals on stage. To be honest, I felt like running away when I saw

the priests performing the exoteric Buddhist rituals on stage, whilst facing the audience. Essentially, these rituals should be performed as a secret communication with Buddhas or deities. My discomfort notwithstanding, I highly appreciated Professor Kido's work and this project at SOAS. I thought that his works were aimed at drawing out the potentiality of traditional arts, and in this context, *shômyô* may be regarded as a performing art, and not a religious ritual.

It could be argued that this stance might compromise the spiritual value of *shômyô*, but on the other hand, this concert made some Buddhist monks aware of the new value of their heritage. Some of them even organized study groups for *shômyô*. Those who attended the lecture-workshop held at SOAS on the day before the performance must have noticed the confidence of the priests who demonstrated the polished art of their great tradition.

The performance surely captivated the audience. It was an exciting event in which one of the precious Japanese traditions displayed its infinite potentiality. I believe that this project provided a great opportunity to consider how to work with traditional resources; what type of contribution could be made by scholars in order to preserve or develop its potentiality; and what should be done to honor those who succeed their tradition. I felt that some of these significant questions were answered by the applause of the audience.

I would like to close my report with a comment by the leader of the Shingon group of this project, Reverend Ryûkô Ogasawara: 'This concert tour was not actually easy for us. However, when we met the sophisticated audience in London and got their warm applause, I felt the hard experience turn into great happiness and satisfaction. I learned how important it is to meet the world.'

Fumi Ouchi *(a senior shugen priestess at Hagurosan) is an ethnomusicologist and an associate professor at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University in Sendai. A PhD candidate at SOAS, her research is on the vocal arts in medieval Japan and Tendai hongaku thought (See her fieldwork report in this issue). Ms Ouchi flew in from Tokyo for four days, especially to attend the performance.*

Report: *Shômyô* Workshop and *Bugaku-Hôe* Performance

Akane Tsuji-Nakanishi

On Saturday the 3rd of December 2005, a workshop on *shômyô* (melodic chanting used to recite Buddhist scriptures) was held in the SOAS senior common room. The workshop was given in advance of *Bugaku-Hôe*, a performance which was staged at Logan Hall on the next day. Professor Toshiro Kido (Kyôto University of Art and Design) gave a lecture in collaboration with Buddhist priests who provided a live demonstration. The lecture was introduced by Associate Professor Fumi Ouchi (Miyagi Gakuin Women's University) and translated by Dr David Hughes (SOAS), who also chaired the workshop.

Professor Kido began by presenting historical aspects of *shômyô*. Having originated in ancient India, *shômyô* reached Japan via China, where it was developed into a unique Japanese style. Daisojô Tsukuma, the leader of Tendai group, provided a demonstration, singing both in Sanskrit and Chinese. Then in turn, to illustrate the Japanese style, the two schools chanted in medieval Japanese. This also served to provide a comparison between Tendai and Shingon styles. Shingon *shômyô* sounded rather active with lots of jumps between the wider intervals, and Tendai *shômyô* sounded rather legato, having smooth melodic lines. The explanation given for the difference was that Tendai was affiliated with the court, while Shingon appealed more to the general populace. He explained and demonstrated *shômyô* theory and notation, and then led the audience in a chanting of the basic ornamentation.

Lucia Dolce

Lucia Dolce

It was, in a sense, a strange experience to see priests as performers. Can you imagine archbishops celebrating the liturgy on stage and being applauded? I had a chance to talk to some of the priests after the workshop and found that even though theirs is a religious vocation, they also really loved performing. One of the priests told me that he practiced two hours everyday while driving his car to work. Surely he has given enormous blessings to his fellow motorists! He seemed to be able to keep a good internal balance between chanting for sacred rituals and for performances.

The concert was held the following day, on Sunday, at Logan Hall. The *gagaku* musicians of the Tokyo Gakuso Ensemble and its dancers accompanied the choruses of the two schools. They were marvelous players, and the chanters' voices deeply touched the hearts of the audience. But what really thrilled me was the very last part of the concert, when all the priests said prayers simultaneously while *gagaku* was still sounding. It was as though their performance was circulating back into their own sacred hearts.

In Japan, if you are living near a Japanese Buddhist community, you may sometimes have occasions to hear *shômyô* chanting, but a Japanese layperson like myself does not usually have an opportunity to learn what it really means. Normally

Lucia Dolce

Lucia Dolce

at a Buddhist ritual all one can see are the priests' backs and hear the resonance of prayers. The *shômyô* workshop and concert given at SOAS offered a rare opportunity to see the priests' faces during the ritual, and to listen to chanting of two schools, Shingon and Tendai Buddhism. It also afforded an opportunity to compare them, and based on the clear explanation given at the workshop, to understand the difference between them. Professor Kido, who produced and established this special group of performers, surely put much effort into this and we, who filled the Logan Hall on that Sunday, were indeed fortunate. Appreciation is also due to Drs David Hughes and Lucia Dolce for their efforts in having organized this opportunity in London. It was truly a remarkable opportunity to learn about this important aspect of Japanese religion, whilst at the same time being a deeply inspiring cultural experience.

Dr Akane Tsuji-Nakanishi *is an associate professor at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University in Sendai. A composer and pianist, in 1999 she earned her doctorate in composition at King's College, London, under Sir Harrison Birtwistle. She is currently in London as a research fellow with a grant from the Japanese government.*

Creative Tradition 2005 PiezoGraph Exhibition at the SOAS Brunei Gallery

Janet Leigh Foster

Modernity met antiquity during the PiezoGraph Exhibition, held at the SOAS Brunei Gallery from 3-5 December. Part of the Creative Tradition 2005 event, it took place in conjunction with the *Bugaku-Hôe* workshop and performance. The exhibition showcased a range of digitally re-mastered images representing several genres of traditional Japanese art, from *nihonga* and *ukiyô-e* to Esoteric Buddhist mandalas.

The digitally reproduced versions of mandalas painted by Eisuke Somekawa, did justice to the fifteen years the artist dedicated to creating the originals. The reproductions were so pristine and colorful they evoked a question as to whether a replica of a sacred painting imbued with spirit might still contain a spark of divinity. The images were, in fact, so vibrant that they stood as forms of artistic expression unto themselves. The presentation was also unique; although the mandalas appeared to be mounted on cloth, the borders were actually printed onto the same sheet of paper to create a perfect illusion of textured fabric. The incredulous were invited to touch the works. This not only introduced a unique sensory aspect to the exhibition, but also highlighted the durability of the reproductions, which underscored the practicality of PiezoGraph reproductions to scholars who otherwise might hesitate to handle fragile, antique works.

At the Brunei Lecture Theatre, Epson PiezoGraph technology was explained in a presentation by Noritake Uchibori, Manager and Creative Director of the Epson PiezoGraph Laboratory. The range of textures such as cloth and brush strokes; and colour tones, including white, are achieved with a scanner and ink-jet based technique. The colour is applied by means of a unique ink jet system, which sprays the paper, rather than by application of force. This enables reproduction of textured media, such as cloth and *washi* (rice paper). Piezograph technicians work in collaboration with artists, transforming the work into a digital format and then facilitating colour enrichment, and the possibilities of retouching the print with paint, or introducing new media through the scanning process. In this respect, the PiezoGraph process goes beyond duplication to suggest a new genre of artistic expression.

***Janet Leigh Foster**, Assistant to the CSJR, is a graduate of the MA Japanese Religions course at SOAS. She is a freelance photojournalist and fine arts photographer.* (www.janetfoster.co.uk)

(Above) A digitally re-mastered print of the Myôken (Polar Star Deity) Mandala from the Sôjiji Temple in Yokohama. The original painting is by Eisuke Somekawa. (Below) A detail, from the Myôken Mandala above, which depicts the dog, the animal of the Asian Zodiac for 2006.

Backstage: The Power of *En* and Creative Tradition 2005 at SOAS

Jun Abe

On 4th December an event called Creative Tradition 2005, took place at SOAS. Hosted by the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions (CSJR), Creative Tradition 2005 was an expression of medieval Japanese religious art brought to a modern setting. Comprised of a concert of ritual Japanese temple music (*bugaku-hôe*) held at Logan Hall, and an exhibition of digitally re-mastered Buddhist mandalas at the Brunei Gallery, the event was part of the 2005 EU-Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges programme, sponsored by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese Government and Japan Airlines. It did indeed embody an exchange of knowledge about religion, music and culture, not only with regard to the interaction between the Japanese performers and artists with an audience in the United Kingdom, but also by the way in which it came to be staged at SOAS: it was the result of a collaboration between the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions and Taishô University in Tokyo.

I was not able to travel to London for Creative Traditions 2005, but I can easily imagine that people coming to this event must have enjoyed the harmony and unity of religions, cultures, and something old and new which engaged the five senses. My vantage point was actually from 'back stage', watching the whole process until the event was carried out. This story cannot be told without talking about Taishô University, SOAS, and *en* (fateful bond).

In 2002 I finished a two-year MA course at Taishô University, Tokyo, which is famous for Buddhist studies in Japan. When I started studying at SOAS, I found many similarities between the two institutions, especially in relation to Asian religious studies. I thought that it would be very good if both institutions might be able to cooperate in order to develop an academic exchange and, after finishing my MA at SOAS, I contacted various people to discuss this possibility. My role as liaison was challenging because I needed to find first a key person in Buddhist studies from each institution, but I had not studied Buddhism at either institution. However, this is exactly the power of *en*, which beckons another *en*: Several professors at Taishô University knew the chair of the CSJR and through the Centre a wider relation with SOAS could be established. During the IAHR held in Tokyo in spring 2005 various meetings took place between SOAS and Taishô representatives, and eventually an MOU was signed between the two institutions. This agreement fostered research collaboration through reciprocal visits and other projects. We also discussed the possibility of collaborating on a larger project. Astonishingly, the opportunity arrived sooner than any of us might have imagined. During a visit to the Mandala Museum owned by the vice-president of Taishô University, Prof Komine, the CSJR Chair admired some digital reproductions of contemporary Buddhist paintings in the museum collection and learned that they would be taken on a European tour in the autumn, together with a *shômyô* concert. The organizer of Creative Tradition 2005 was very pleased at the possibility of including London in the European tour. Help from SOAS became indispensable in order to finalize the project. This led to SOAS becoming the London host during the tour of Creative Tradition 2005.

That this wonderful event was ultimately staged at SOAS is indicative of a much wider scale of international cooperation. It speaks of the human interrelatedness encapsulated in the concept of *en*, which resulted in a sharing of knowledge about religions and culture. My experience has given credence to the expression, 'Where there is a will there is a way.' Furthermore it underscores the benefits of international cooperation across cultures.

My personal view is that we should strive to make a difference with each encounter in our lives, one that can be called *en*. We should make enhance and expand it not only for ourselves, but for others too. Hence, I aim to continue my role as intercultural liaison and endeavour to expand the *en*-s that have enriched my life.

***Jun Abe** is a student in the M.Phil in Philosophy course at Taishô University, and a SOAS alumna.*

Lucia Dolce

Centre Activities

Foundation Myths in Japan
CSJR Symposium
9-10 June 2005

Lone Takeuchi

The chair of the CSJR, Dr Lucia Dolce, opened the symposium by thanking the Japan Foundation, the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, and the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, whose generous support had made possible this international interdisciplinary forum for a fifth time.

The "seed text" of the symposium was the 17th c. short narrative *Tsubosaka engi emaki/Sayohime* studied by the symposium's coordinator Dr Katja Triplett, the CSJR postdoctoral fellow for 2004-5. Dr Triplett began proceedings by sketching the vast textual landscape of Medieval Japanese imagination focussing on Sayohime: myths/*shinwa*, and the two Japanese narrative types linking a tradition (or elements of it) to the past, *engi* (on the origin of a temple or shrine) and *honjimono* (on the origin of a deity), all considered in every communicative aspect.

The opening session, chaired by Professor Brian Bocking (SOAS), focused on *Foundation myths in esoteric Buddhism*. In the first paper, The return of the native: the myth of Japan's foundation and its esoteric Buddhist reinterpretation, Professor Bernard Faure (Stanford University) traced recurrent features of the Buddhist rewriting of mythical hand overs of land (*kuniyuzuri*) pertaining to the foundation of the Hiei-zan multiplex and to the state mythology (Maô ceding Japan to Amaterasu): (i) aspects of the bargain, such as resistance on the part of the landlord deities (*jinushi*) or usurpation on the part of the requesting deity, etc., and (ii) the landlord deities' claim to ancient rights to the locality, a claim that contrasted to the historical understanding of these deities, for example Shirahige, originally associated with immigrants from

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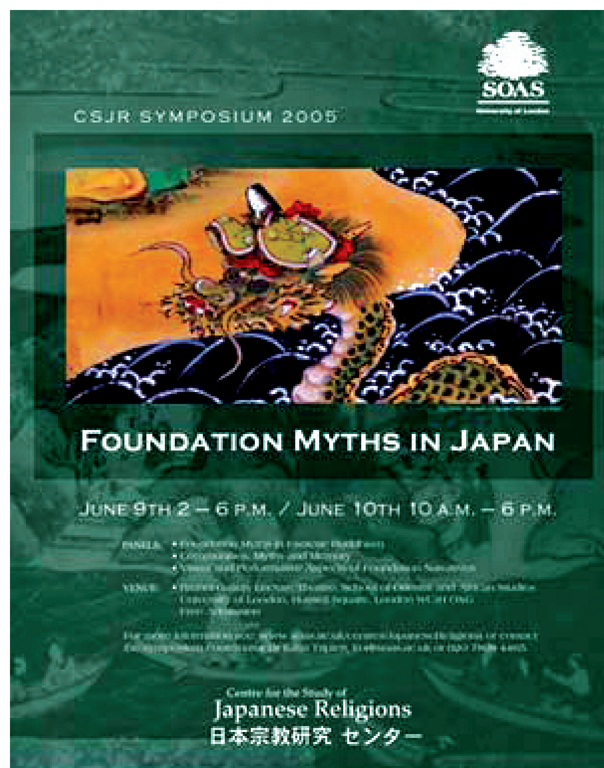

the Korean Peninsula, or Maô from the Buddhist tradition.

Professor Abe Yasurô (Nagoya University) presented an array of textual evidence to provide an *Outline of Medieval Buddhist myths: from Maô and Amaterasu to Mononobe no Moriya and Shôtoku Taishi*. The identification of Amaterasu with the Great Buddha of Tôdaiji originated with monks of that temple (rather than with the Ise Shrine) in the Insei Period (12th c.). This was developed and propagated during fund raising to rebuild the Great Buddha Hall. The identification was communicated by Amaterasu appearing in the dream of a monk. Professor Abe also presented versions of the myth of the origins of Japan as the land of Dainichi, all involving an element of cunning or trickery in dealing with Maô on the part of the negotiator (Dainichi in *Kôya monogatari*, Amaterasu in *Shasekishû*, and Izanagi in *Daijingû sankeiki*).

In his paper, *The imagery of destruction in foundation myths of Japanese Buddhism*, Professor Fabio Rambelli (Sapporo University) argued that the history of Buddhism in Japan is a history of destruction and violence, and that violence and destruction have constituted a recurrent semantic framework in the metahistorical discourse underlying many foundation myths of Japanese Buddhism. The metahistorical interpretations of the conflict between Shôtoku Taishi and Mononobe no Moriya were surveyed, including the view of the struggle

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as evidence of the prevalence of Buddha over Mara (Maô) (Good over Evil); Moriya metahistorized as *jissha*; and the view of both Shôtoku Taishi and Moriya as bodhisattvas (*Honganji engi*), a logical reversal whereby the antithesis becomes the ultimate equivalence, and the anti-Buddhist destruction, self-sacrifice. The notion of history as degenerating simplified the cosmic struggle, and Professor Rambelli identified three visions of history within this discourse: move to the pure land where a final state of stasis is obtained; total destruction (*mappô*); and finally, the return to the origin before the dichotomy between Buddha and Mara, which was the soteriological point of new *chûsei* discourse (*hongaku* or *shintô*).

Dr Angus Lockyer (SOAS) chaired the morning session on the second day, *Communities, myths and memories*. In her paper, Foundation accounts and the continuity of community: the case of the imperial nunneries, Chûgûji and Hokkeji, Professor Barbara Ruch (Columbia University) singled out these two convents because they uniquely among *monzeki amadera* had been able to survive difficult times such as the shintoization during the Meiji period. She considered that their appealing foundation stories (e.g. empress Kômyô washing the leper, etc.) and reformation accounts, and the continued respect and inspirations of the founding empresses and nuns, had been crucial to their survival. Professor Ruch stressed the importance of studying the primary sources written by the nuns themselves and also of interviewing nuns in the present day. In this connection, she noted that one-sided reliance on the tradition of Saidaiji, which credits Eizon (1201-90) with a decisive role in Hokkeji's history, is bound to produce a very different historical account from one that takes the nuns' own tradition into account.

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Associate Professor Hayashi Kumiko (Tachibana University) demonstrated in *Old puppet plays about Zenkôji temple and its secret Buddhas* how it is possible by means of the rich Edo period sources not only to chart revisions to the mythical material of a temple, such as the printed texts of *jôruri* plays of the Genroku and Hôei eras based on *Zenkôji engi*, but also to show how such a revision directly reflects a contemporary occasion, namely

Glen Ratcliffe

the interest and religious sentiments engendered by *kaichô*, the revelation of the secret Buddha statues and icons (*hibutsu*) and accompanying ceremonies, which took place for fund-raising purposes both in Zenkôji, Edo and other cities.

Dr Triplett's paper, *Tsubosaka testimonials: origin tales of Minami Hokkeji's Kannon for the Blind*, addressed the question of how considerations of memory management might have prompted *Tsubosaka engi*, which was apparently once important to the cult of Minami Hokkeji near Nara, to be backgrounded by the puppet play *Tsubosaka reigenki* during the Meiji Period. The dramatic climax of the *engi* is a miracle brought about by the recitation of the Lotus Sutra. It was suggested that other elements of the narrative in its various versions, such as Kannon, and the curing of blindness, while central to Minami Hokkeji's tradition, had a more peripheral function in the narrative, and that this might have contributed to Sayohime's story having been de-emphasized in the temple's cult.

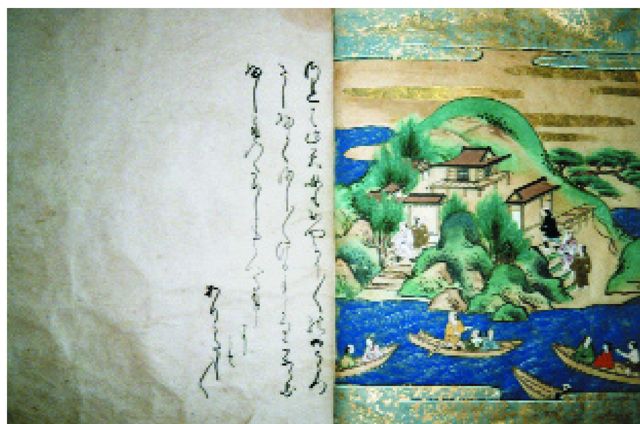
The afternoon session, chaired by Dr John Breen (SOAS), dealt with *Visual and performative aspects of foundation narratives*. Professor Tokuda Kazuo (Gakushuin Women's University) introduced two examples of development of *honjimono* gleaned from scrutiny of textual and pictorial materials. In the oldest version of *Kumano no honji*. (*Minami-Aizu-bon* with a colophon from 1540), Zenzaiô's

999 jealous empresses (the "villains" of this narrative) are included among the *honji*, as they too, reborn as snakes (*akamushi*), appear in Kumano and are in the end worshipped in their own shrines. In an example of how setsuwa narratives fertilized the imagination creating *honjimono*, Professor Tokuda traced the development of Hitokotonushi's *honji* as Fudô and of Fudô's *kami* counterpart in Kasuga shrine mandala, a female figure hiding her face behind a fan, in a plentiful line of texts beginning with the *setsuwa* about En no gyôja and Hitokotonushi (*Shoku-Nihongi* etc.).

Glen Ratcliffe

In *The life and afterlives of Hachiman paintings (1433 CE)*, Professor Melanie Trede (University of Heidelberg) used the scrolls of Hachiman *engi* donated to three Hachiman shrines by Ashikaga Yoshinori to show how a myth and in particular, its recreation as a superlative work of art was continuously transformed on three levels, namely visual appearance, political meaning and aesthetic reception. The circulation of the scrolls kept the myth alive while also inducing changes in its interpretation. Four steps were noted: (1) the myth and its manifestation in the scrolls as an object of devotion (15th-17th c.); (2) the scrolls as model for professional painters (17th-19th c.); (3) popular commodification in printed guides for travellers, etc.; (4) art historical evaluation, the scrolls being designated as a national treasure in 1910 and as important cultural property in 1950. Professor Trede's discussion was inspired by the theoretical framework of Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*.

The last paper dealt with *Imperial myths and Shingon Buddhism: sokui kanjô and enthronement rites for the tennô*. Dr Matsumoto Ikuyo (Ritsumeikan University) introduced some *sokui-hô* 'accession ritual protocols', documents describing imagined enthronement rituals produced and transmitted by *jike* (temple families or factions). It was suggested that the ritual and its interpretation in *Tôji gosokui-hô* (14th c., transmitted in Kanchi-in, Tôji) could be understood as a Shingon restructuring of the pre-Buddhist trinity legitimizing and upholding imperial power. In this revised structure, Kûkai took the



Pilgrims visiting Sayohime-Benzaiten on the island of Chikubushima at Lake Biwa (Nara *ehon*, ca 17th c., courtesy of the Kyoto University School of Letters Library).

place of Amanokoyane-no-mikoto (the Fujiwara ancestral deity) among Amaterasu and the emperor. Other similar texts transmitted by other Shingon lineages assigned a cosmological kingship on the emperor, interpreting the central *mudra* (*shikai ryôshô-in*) as a sign denoting the emperor as ruler of the continents surrounding Mount Sumeru.

Given the wealth of texts and approaches, one would not have liked to be without the discussants, Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS), Professor Richard Bowring (Cambridge) and Dr John Carpenter (SOAS), to sort out the many strands of ideas presented in each session. The many observations on similarities in memory management in various traditions made this a defining theme of the discussion of papers. The final discussion, however, focused on specifics of interpretation of *sokui-hô*, and the part of Hachiman *engi* dealing with Jingû's military expedition to the Korean Peninsula. The symposium was concluded by the wish that the encyclopedic and the more formal approaches - between which a stimulating tension was felt at times in the discussion - might be joined in a narratology of *engi*: a comprehensive charting of the changes of meaning that constituted their transmission.

***Dr Lone Takeuchi** is an independent researcher, working on a study of nasake and its action in some mid-Heian monogatari.*

Glen Ratcliffe

2005年CSJRシンポジウム

彬子女王

ロンドンにさわやかな初夏の風が吹いた6月8、9日、SOASにおいて2日間に渡って開催されたCSJRのシンポジウムに参加させて頂きました。今回のテーマは'Foundation Myths in Japan'「日本における創世の神話」と言うことで、世界各国から、異なったフィールドで活躍なさる多くの研究者の方々が集まられました。

1日目はシンポジウムの主催者の一人でCSJRのポストドクトラルフェローのカティア・トリプレットさんによる、このシンポジウムの意図を説明するイントロダクションから始まりました。古事記、日本書紀に始まる日本における神話から、本地物、縁起にまつわる解説があり、とてもスムーズな流れで1回目のセッションへと入っていくことが出来ました。

この日のセッションは、ベルナルド・フォーレ先生（スタンフォード大学）が日本の創世神話と仏教奥義の再解釈、阿部泰郎先生（名古屋大学）が中世仏教神話の輪郭、ファビオ・ランベッリ先生（札幌大学）が日本の仏教縁起における破壊像と言うタイトルで、それぞれ発表をなさいました。お三方とも中世の仏教神話、本地垂迹、社寺縁起などを中心に据えた仏教の奥義がテーマで、かなり難解な質問も飛び出し、白熱した議論が繰り広げられました。日本文化の形成過程にある仏教、そして神道の尊さを感じ、仏教の真髄の深さを実感しました。日本人の精神の根底に流れているのは、このような「尊さ」なのかもしれません。

2日目の午前中は、バーバラ・ルーシュ先生（コロンビア大学）が尼門跡について、林久美子先生（京都橘大学）が善光寺とその秘仏を題材にした古浄瑠璃について、カティア・トリプレットさん（SOAS）が壷坂寺の社寺縁起についてとヴァラエティに富んだ発表となりました。一見少々異なるテーマのようでありながら、みなどこかで深く通じる所があり、どの発表も今まで見えていなかったところが明らかになるような、とても興味深いものでした。社寺縁起と言うと、なんだか固いイメージがあったのですが、とても人間味のあるものがあることがわかり、また社寺を訪ねる新たな楽しみが出来ました。

最後のセッションは、視覚的なアプローチから、徳田和夫先生（学習院女子大学）の中世本地物と絵巻における表現について、メラニー・トレーデ先生（ハイデルベルグ大学）の八幡絵の中の現世と来世、松本郁代さん（立命館大学）の中世日本における天皇の即位灌頂についてと言う3つの考察からの発表でした。ヴィジュアル資料を駆使されていることもあり、それぞれの世界にいつの間にか引き込まれるようでした。絵巻や絵画に描かれる隠された意味などが次々と明らかになり、その役割を紐解くかのように興味深い内容が展開され、最後のディスカッションも含めて、あっという間に時間が過ぎてしまいました。

すべての発表が相当に凝縮された内容で、20分という時間に制限してしまうには本当にもったいないお話しで、先生方の講義をまた改めてうかがう機会があればと切に思いました。宗教学とはかけ離れた所にいた私にとっては、9つの発表すべてが新しい情報と観点で、この2日間で本当に多くのことを学ばせて頂きました。その中で特に私の印象に残ったのは松本さんの発表でした。即位儀礼として天皇が結ぶ印がテーマで、かなり専門的な内容だったのにも関わらず、簡潔にまとめられ、よく噛み砕いて説明をして下さいました。その結果、パネリストからも客席からもたくさんの質問が寄せられ、細部にまで渡る議論が長時間続けられました。それだけ充実し、みなの興味を引く内容だったということなのでしょう。

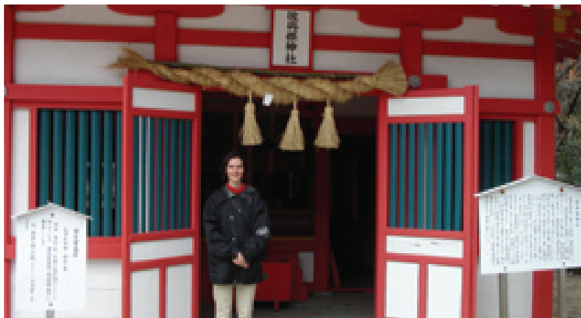
井の中の蛙大海を知らずと言いますが、日本にいた時には全く気付かなかったことに、海外に出て、気付かされたり、外国の先生方の違った視点からの指摘やアプローチにはっとさせられることもしばしばあります。日本には国家宗教がなく、神道、仏教、キリスト教・・・と様々な宗教が同居しています。その日本の創世の神話を、様々な国籍の人と共に外から眺めてみることで、新たな側面が見えることを身をもって実感した2日間だったような気がします。

彬子女王
オックスフォード大学東洋学科文学修士課程
(日本美術専攻）

Glen Ratcliffe

Glen Ratcliffe

From Past Fellows



A Postdoctoral Year at SOAS

Katja Triplett

Writing this report seems to me almost like composing an *engi*, or account of origins, of various research interests and activities that evolved over the past academic year. Whether these evolved according to some unseen and inescapable matrix of seeds planted in former lifetimes as it is assumed in *engi*, or whether they arose from undirected coincidences of whatever took my fancy, the events of the past year were exceedingly fulfilling and I am grateful to many individuals, both colleagues and other fellows whom I met along the way.

My year began at a fast pace with a CSJR seminar on *Human sacrifice in Japanese legends*. This was the topic of my doctoral dissertation (2002), which was published last year. I presented my analysis of the topic, focussing on the motifs of ritual human sacrifice and self-sacrifice, as well as discussing the academic discourse on the historicity of a cult of human sacrifice found in Japan. Both motifs are found, intricately linked, in *Sayohime*, a *Lotus Sutra* miracle tale that I treated in some detail in my presentation. In late medieval and early modern Japan, this tale served as an origin tale (*honjimono*) of the main objects of worship of the temples Tsubosakasan Minami Hokkeji near Nara and the sanctuary on the island of Chikubushima in Lake Biwa. What struck me was the waxing and waning of *honjimono* and their motifs; this made me curious as to whether there might be patterns in the narrative strategies for creating origin accounts of religious institutions.

My presentation at SOAS was on the heels of my having delivered a paper, on *The discourse on wa (harmony) in contemporary Japanese religions and society*, at an international conference in Indonesia from 27 September to 3 October 2004. The conference addressed problems and practices of 'religious harmony' and educational concepts. My paper touched on the subjects of 'syncretism' and 'pluralism', topics that have interested me for some time. Several conference participants from Banda Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia were tragically affected by the tsunami catastrophe of 26 December 2004. Some lost members of their families, and the buildings of the university, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, in Banda Aceh, including the library, were totally destroyed in the flood. A help network of colleagues from other parts of Indonesia, as well as the University of Hannover, Germany and others was organised using the network established by the conference. The efforts sought especially to assist in the rebuilding of the library, which formerly held over 100,000 volumes with a focus on the study of Islam and the social sciences. The relief effort gave credence to the philosophy of the conference, namely that knowledge gained in the context of institutions of higher learning should benefit all of humanity, and support peace efforts.

Action, reaction and the responsibility of researchers in the study of religions were also the main themes of the quinquennial 19th World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) held in Tokyo, 24-30 March 2005. The official motto of the conference was "Religion: Conflict and Peace". Needless to say, several members of the CSJR, and also the majority of colleagues from the SOAS Department of the Study of Religions were present at this exciting conference, which was attended by close to 1,600 participants form 53 countries. The Congress was a major event with about 350 presentations given during five days. In my own paper, I presented results of my research on civil religion in Asia. During the Conference I was able to enjoy the kind hospitality of the members of Ômotokyô at their Tokyo headquarters. This arrangement was thanks to contacts provided by a former CSJR Fellow, John LoBreglio (UC Santa Barbara). Ômotokyô (or Oomoto) is well known for its interreligious activities, and representatives of this religion convened and chaired an enormously interesting panel at the Conference on the "Exchange between Islam and Oomoto".

After the conference I took part as a guide in a ten-day research excursion to significant religious centres and research institutions in Tokyo, the Kansai area and Shikoku. The aim of the tour was to provide an overview of Japanese religion to specialists in the study of religions who are experts in areas and fields other than Japan. The excursion was the result of several years of careful planning and coordination by Professor Michael Pye (Marburg University/ Otani University), who was also the principal guide. The participants, a group of around twelve, returned to their various home countries with impressions of some famous sites and also of rarely seen places such as the worship hall in the main gate to the Higashi Honganji in Kyôto.

After the tour, I visited a Buddhist pilgrimage

Tsubo ganbyô fûji kigan, "petition for stamping out diseases of the eye", say banners in gallery leading to the petition reception desk at Tsubosakadera, near Nara, visit April 2005

site near Nara, the aforementioned Tsubosakasan Minami Hokkeji, in order to do some preliminary fieldwork connected to my project on narrative strategies of temple and shrine foundation legends (*engi*).

Foundation accounts, or myths, have been my main focus of research this past year. Therefore, I was very happy that the Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions to dedicated the 2005 CSJR Symposium to the subject of *Foundation Myths in Japan*. The planning and organising of the CSJR Symposium was a very rewarding experience. It provided a platform for international academic exchange, and enabled me to work with specialists in the field more closely than if only through their published work. The contributors came from different parts of the world, and I feel very honoured that senior researchers such as Professor Barbara Ruch and Professor Tokuda Kazuo, whose work on *otogizôshi* deeply inspired me as a student in the 1980s, flew halfway around the world to London in order to present their research and discuss foundation myths.

One of my most cherished memories is the way we communicated during the symposium. In varying shades of colourful English and Japanese we discussed issues of mythmaking, religious politics and narrativity, especially of the medieval period. Since then I have been working to untangle the different threads of the discussions with the aim of creating an edited volume.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Centre Chair, Dr Lucia Dolce, and Dr John Breen and Prof Brian Bocking for their encouragement and cooperation. The Centre Assistant, Janet Foster, did a tremendous job in all areas of conference organisation, and students Tullio Lobetti and Miriam Chusid were also a great source of support.

Whereas the conference was a time of heightened activity during my postdoctoral year, I also had regular teaching assignments in four courses connected with the study of Japanese religions. I hope I was able to make a small contribution to the students' path of learning about Japan and the study of religions. I did enjoy teaching at SOAS, although the larger courses with over 50 students were stressful for me in that I could not learn the students' names or their backgrounds, and this prohibited me from interacting with them more purposefully. This was quite different in the more intimate MA course, and the smaller BA groups. But overall, I feel that I reaped great benefit from the students' stimulating questions and thought-provoking discussions.

Another expectation of the CSJR postdoctoral fellow, in addition to research, publication, teaching and organising an international symposium, is to take part in Centre activities. In the academic year 2004/05 these were numerous indeed and included seminars, fora, and a special film screening about the Akinomine Practice.

My year ended with yet another conference, a kind of grand finale: the 15th conference of the International Association for Buddhist Studies (IABS), held from 29 August to 3rd September at SOAS, The British Museum and the British Library. I presented a paper on the worship of the Kannon at Tsubosakadera, a deity petitioned in rituals for the prevention and healing of sight-related disease. This is a subject on which I would like to do some more research in the future.

Perhaps what I valued most from my postdoctoral year at SOAS was the feeling of being part of a team made up of the colleagues from the CSJR and the various sister centres such as the Japan Research Centre, the Sainsbury Institute for Japanese Arts and Cultures, the Centre for Religion and Gender Studies and the Centre for Buddhist Studies. I was deeply impressed by the high level of academic exchange, also involving other non-SOAS institutions, at workshops and numerous other occasions, both formal and informal, where I could observe and take part in the generous sharing of expertise and knowledge.

This year I shall remain at the CSJR as a Research Associate, devoting my time to the completion of publications resulting from research during my postdoctoral year, as well as assisting in some matters of the Centre. One of these projects is an edition of the CSJR symposium papers. I am also going to teach on *Contemporary Japanese religion and society* at Basel University this coming summer.

Research Notes

Prayers for Rain at the Shinsen-en in Medieval Kyôto: Concerning the Walls and Gates Protecting Sacred Space

Ikuyo Matsumoto

Today the Shinsen-en, at the eastern border of Nijô Castle in Kyôto, resembles a humble park distinguished by a small shrine (*hokura*) that floats in the centre of a small pond. But the Shinsen-en was once the site of a very large pond where various important events, including the Shôukyô-hô (rainmaking ritual), were held. Analyses of the ritual and of diagrams of the site, found in the collections of the Fuji Eikan Bunko collection at the Art Research Center at Ritsumeikan University and the Nara National Museum, suggest that the former walls and gates of the Shinsen-en were an important religious aspect of the location.

The Shinsen-en was constructed southeast of the greater palace grounds (*daidairi*), at the time of the founding of the Heian capital, Heiankyô, in the thirteenth year of the Enryaku era, 794. It was there that the priest Shinga first performed the Shôukyô-hô in the seventeenth year of the Jôgan era, 875. By the late 9th century, the Shinsen-en was regularly used as a site for prayers for rain, and after the mid 10th century it came to be recognized as a site invested with sacred power (*reijô*) for rain rituals. The Shôukyô-hô was conducted frequently from the end of the 10th century through the first half of the 12th century. It was an esoteric Buddhist ritual for which the Shinsen-en became a special site. The ritual was based on the *Daiunrin-shôukyô*, a sutra that was imported from China. According to this scripture, the conditions required that the site for conducting this ritual be a good location for protecting the nation, and contain a spring and a pond suitable as a residence for a dragon that would bring about rainfall.

In considering the grounds for why the Shinsen-en was recognized as a sacred site in medieval Kyôto, I would like to focus on the significance of the *shiheki*, the four walls that enclosed it. From the 9th century, the Shinsen-en was considered to be unsullied ground, surrounded by walls on the east, west, north and south. These served to prevent any impure elements from entering. The *shiheki* were the walls that separated the Shinsen-en from the outside world, but each contained a gate that signified a link between the Shinsen-en and the outer world. There were several such conventions associated with this site and it is in light of these that I would like to interpret the *Shinsen-en Shôukyô-hô sashizu*, a Kamakura period diagram of the ritual, found in the Fujii Eikan Bunko collection at the Art Research Center at Ritsumeikan University.

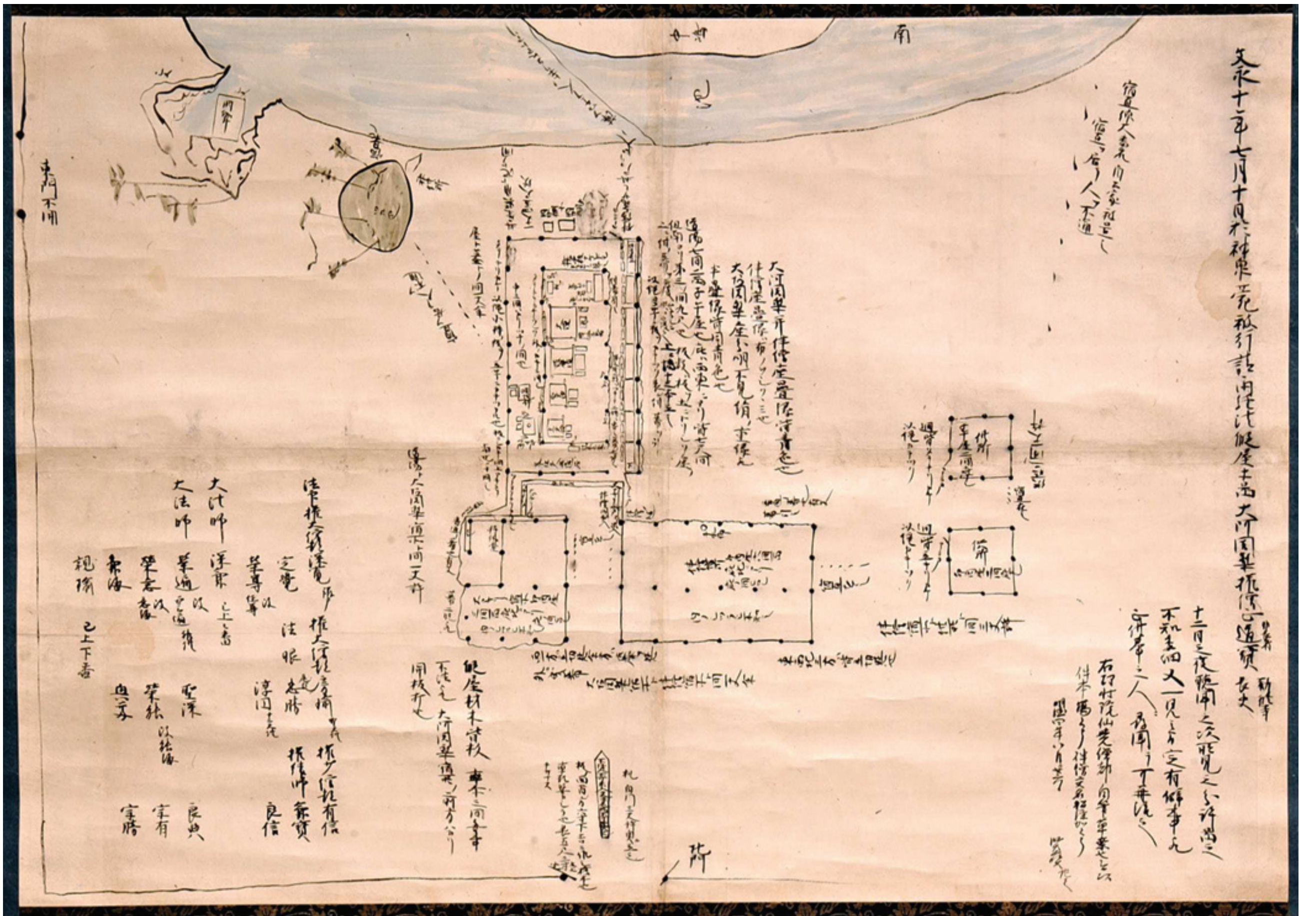
Before proceeding, based on Shingon Buddhist texts such as the *Kakuzenshô*, I would like to provide a brief explanation of how the Shôukyô-hô was conducted.

The first step was to prepare the area (*dôjô*) where the esoteric ritual proper would be performed. A blue cloth was stretched around to delineate the *dôjô*. Then the altars created within this space, the great altar (*daidan*), the altar for the *goma* fire ritual, and the altars for the deities Jûniten and Shôten, were decorated. In addition to the *dôjô*, there were other buildings constructed within the walls. There was a *kuryôsho*, where offerings were placed, a *jinkusho*, where prayers were offered to the indigenous gods, and temporary quarters for the priests who would conduct the ritual. The Five Treasures, Five Incenses, Five Medicinal Items and Five Grains, as well as oil, rice, tiles and blue banners, were prepared in advance for the ritual.

On the first day of the ritual, specialists in preparing iconographic images (*eshi*) produced two mandalas, a *dai-mandara* and a *shiki-mandara*. Next, the Dai-Ajari (the great *acarya* or esoteric practitioner), who was the chief officiant (*dôshi*) at the rite; the attendant priests (*bansô*), who assisted the *dôshi*; the sextons (shôji), who readied the ritual implements and purified the *dôjô;* and the guards, who were to usher away all those not involved in the rite, took their assigned places.

The rite was conducted over a period of seven days. A yin-yang master (*onmyôji*) performed the Five-Dragon Rite a certain number of days after the Shôukyô-hô began. The Five-Dragon Rite was a rainmaking ritual to petition the blue, red, yellow, white and black dragons, which were water-gods. It was generally performed on the fifth day, but this varied according to the religious faction. A yin-yang master from the government Yin-yang Office (Onmyôryô) performed the rite. It is thought that the *onmyôji* performed it because the Onmyôryô was the government office charged with divining astronomical events, the timing of events, and the weather.

Now I would like to move on to explaining the significance of the walls and gates. While the ritual was being conducted, the Shinsen-en became a *kekkai-chi*, a sacred space cut off from



Shinsen-en Shôukyô-hô sashizu (illustrated diagram of the rainmaking ritual) (Fujii Eikan Bunko Collection, Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University, Kyôto)

the secular world. The gates of the Shinsen-en were closed to prevent entrance to anyone who might interfere with the ritual. Only priests who had been selected for pure conduct were allowed to enter the Shinsen-en. They had to purify both mind and body, and wear special, pure robes. All of the various items used in the *dôjô* were blue, and red objects were forbidden.

However, an entry from the *Gyokuyô*, the diary of the aristocrat, Kujô Kanezane, for the 14th day of the 5th month of the second year of the Kenkyû era (1191) describes the Shinsen-en with no walls or gates. The area had been left to ruin, and what remained was a scene of rampant chaos and defilement. The Shinsen-en had been devastated, and even if cleaned, there were no walls or gates, which could be closed. In particular, the eastern gate that was always supposed to be firmly shut; the outer hedge had been lost, and there was no trace of doors of the gate.

The destruction of the walls and gates raises questions about their significance. The Kamakura period source the *Kakuzenshô* records that 'defiled persons and red objects' were not to be brought into the Shinsen-en; people should enter through the northern gate, and the altars at which the rituals were conducted should be brought in and out through the western gate. The same source records that it had already been established that the eastern gate was to be open and the western gate closed. Moreover, it notes that when the high priest Sôzu Gengô (914-995) conducted the ritual at Enmei-in, lightening struck and burned down the western gate. Thereafter the northern gate of the Shinsen-en was to be left open, and the eastern one closed. Since there were no walls or gates, it is clear that the Shinsen-en had been left to ruin.

The above can be summarized as follows: Firstly, we see that the four walls formed the boundary of the sacred space (*kekkai*) for conducting the Shôukyô-hô. Secondly, the prohibitions against the entry of 'defiled persons and red objects', in order to preserve the purity of the ground, were sustained by the four walls that surrounded the Shinsen-en. Thirdly, the prescription to close the northern and western gates and to leave the eastern and southern gates open intensified the awareness of the boundary with the outside (other).

Next, I would like to elucidate each of the four

gates in the walls enclosing the Shinsen-en. In regard to the western gate, the Kamakura period illustrated diagram of the Shinsen-en, from the collection of the Nara National Museum, records that the western gate was supposed to have been the entrance, but that 'in recent times' the northern gate had been left open. Concerning the eastern gate, the Nara National Museum diagram notes that it was made of Japanese cypress (*hinoki*), and thatched with *hinoki* bark, and usually closed. Likewise, the diagram of the *dôjô* for the Shôukyô-hô, from the Fujii Eikan Bunko collection, records that the gate was always closed.

Concerning the northern gate, the Nara National Museum diagram records that Buddhist priests and those associated with them, whether intimates or distant relations, were not to use this entrance because it would interfere with their spiritual development. The same source records that in regard to the northern gate, the attendant priests and others involved with conducting the ritual were to use this entrance exclusively. It was to be left open day and night, but from the first day after the ritual began, it was to be closed. A note explains that if the gate were to be left open, the atmosphere would become *yin*. The significance of *yin* in this context seems to be that the efficacy of the ritual would be marred. It is also clear that a sign was erected stating the prohibitions against the entrance of impure or defiled persons and red objects. These sources thus offer evidence that the northern gate served as the entrance to the Shinsen-en in the Kamakura period.

The evidence thus far suggests that in medieval Japan, the four walls and gates of the Shinsen-en formed an enclosure that was an important religious aspect of the space in which the esoteric Buddhist rainmaking ritual, the Shôukyô-hô, was conducted.

***Dr Ikuyo Matsumoto** is a Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) at the Art Research Center, Ritsumeikan University (Kyôto). Concurrently a Visiting Scholar at the Sainsbury Institute at SOAS, Dr Matsumoto spoke on this topic in March 2005 for the CSJR seminar series. Her book, **Chûsei ôken to sokui kanjô (Imperial Authority and Accession Initiation (Abhiseka) Rituals in Medieval Japan: Historical Evidence from Buddhist Texts)** has just been published in Tokyo by Shinwasha (2005).*

The BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI VISITING PROFESSORSHIP in BUDDHIST STUDIES 2006

Lectures and Seminars
Professor Masahiro Shimoda
(University of Tokyo)
18 JANUARY to 17 MARCH
School of Oriental and African Studies

Inaugural Lecture followed by a reception
Wednesday, 18 January, 5.30-7.00 pm,
Khalili Lecture Theatre:

Revival of the Buddha in narratives: conflict between philology and historical science

Lecture Series: *Reconsidering the Methodology of Buddhist Studies in Japan: Understandings of the Formation Process of Buddhist Scriptures in India*
3.00- 4.30 pm, Room G2 College Building

20 Jan: Enlightenment and salvation: a review of typology of Indian Buddhism
27 Jan: The Lotus sutra and the episode of the god Brahma's entreaty to the Buddha to teach
3 Feb: Reconsidering 'bodhisattva' in the light of recently developed studies
10 Feb: Mahayanasutra as auto-commentary: as evidenced in the Mahaparinirvanasutra
17 Feb: Liberating ourselves from modernity: Buddhist studies and Zeitgeist in Japan
24 Feb: The Taisho tripitaka: Japanese scholars' contribution to modern Buddhist studies
3 Mar: Some reflections on oral transmission in Buddhist scriptures
10 Mar: Topics essential to the study of Mahayana Buddhism
17: Mar: The formation process of Buddhist scriptures in ancient India

Seminars: *Reading the Mahayana Mahaparinirvanasutra and its related texts*
Fridays, 5.00- 6.30pm, Room G3 Main Building
Dates: 20, 27 January, 3, 10,17, 24 Feburary; 3, 10, 17 March

Overview of Seminars:
The Mahayana Mahaparinirvanasutra, which has been proved to consist of three layers of compilation and contains various citations from other Buddhist texts, is an ideal model for the study of Mahayana sutras, especially in elucidating the formation process of a sutra. This seminar will deal with selected discourses of the sutra, mainly using Tibetan and Chinese versions, together with related materials in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan and Chinese.

FORTHCOMING:

CSJR Workshop 2006
Rethinking embodiment: a Japanese contemporary perspective
A workshop in commemoration of Professor Yasuo Yuasa (1925-2005)

5 -6 June
Venue: SOAS, University of London

In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in issues related to the human body. This workshop represents a first attempt to discuss the topic from a Japanese perspective, focusing on the thought of a major figure in the field, Yasuo Yuasa (1925-2005).

The Japanese way of perceiving the human body is radically different from that upheld in Western cultures, where a sharp distinction between body and mind largely prevails. The concept is well summarized in Descartes' famous dictum 'cogito ergo sum' (I think therefore I am). On the contrary, in a Japanese context, the mind and the body are intertwined through the process of self-cultivation to form a oneness. Working with these assumptions, Yuasa suggested that the body is also something 'knowable'. More specifically, he proposed a distinction between the 'bright cogito' and the 'dark cogito' (later conceptually refined as 'bodily scheme'). While the former can be related to Descartes' cogito, the latter is buried beneath the former but can become knowable, revealing its brilliance, through the meditative process.

In this way Yuasa indicated the direction for a new research approach called 'subjective science'. This is a science that focuses on the inner cosmos of human subjects. Its scope has various implications for a growing number of disciplines that attempt to understand the nature of subjective experience, where the human body is central. Yuasa compared and opposed his concept of 'subjective science' with that of 'objective science' and argued that we cannot appreciate the meaning of truth in toto unless we delve into the inner cosmos buried in ourselves. This process, he suggested, will also enable us to experience an enlarged sense of identity between the macrocosmos (physical universe) and the microcosmos (human nature).

Prof Yuasa passed away in November 2005. The workshop, which was planned before his death, will bring together the contribution of scholars from different disciplines to discuss his innovative theories of the human body and address other contemporary Japanese perspectives of embodiment, such as those of Hiroshi Motoyama, Shigenori Nagatomo, Hiroshi Ichikawa, and Nishida Kitaro. The workshop will also serve as a commemorative event for Yuasa on the day of his birthday.

Invited participants include: Prof. Shigenori Nagatomo, (Temple University), Prof Hiroshi Motoyama, (President of the Motoyama for Life Physics, Tokyo), Dr James Robinson, (University of Lampeter), Dr Matteo Cestari, (University of Turin), Dr Peter Fenwick (President, International Association for Near-Death Studies), Professor Donna Dickenson (Birkbeck), and Dr Cosimo Zene (SOAS).

Professor Yasuo Yuasa (1925-2005)

For information and registration, please contact the workshop coordinator, Ornella Corazza (PhD candidate, Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS) e-mail: 109131@soas.ac.uk

Members' Research Related Activities

Brian Bocking presented a paper on 'Mysticism revisited in the light of "Experience"'.IAHR, Tokyo, 24 March-30 March 2005; chaired the panel on "Underlying Religiosity in East Asia" IAHR, Tokyo, 25 March 2005; was a discussant for Isomae Jun'ichi's panel "Buddhism in West/ West in Buddhism" IAHR, Tokyo, 25th of March 2005; was elected to the Executive Committee of the IAHR as Publications Officer for 2005-10; chaired the panel on "Foundation Myths in Esoteric Buddhism" at the CSJR International Symposium "Foundation Myths in Japan," London, June 9-10; published 'Shinto' was published in the new Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Gale Macmillan 2005).

John Breen gave a talk on 'Tokugawa calendars and how to read them', SISJAC Norwich, 20 January 2005; spoke on 'The problem of Yasukuni', Eton Japan society, Eton 7 March 2005; presented a paper on 'Shinto no kingendai ni okeru jidaikubun' (Problems of periodisation in the modern history of Shinto' at Panel 'Shinto no jidai kubun o kangaeru' (Rethinking periodisaton in Shinto studies), IAHR conference, Tokyo, 25 March 2005; gave a talk on 'Kingendai no Shinto' (Prewar and post war Shinto), Shinto zemi, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 27 March 2005; spoke on 'The Emperor and politics in early Meiji Japan', JRC Emperor workshop, SOAS, 29 April 2005; chaired the panel on "Visual and Perfomative Aspects of Foundation Narratives" at the CSJR International Symposium "Foundation Myths in Japan," London, June 9 2005; gave the keynote lecture on 'Komei seiken to kakuritsu to tenkai' (The Komei administration: establishment and development'), Chuo shigakkai 50th anniversary conference, Chuo university, Tokyo, 2 July 2005; spoke on 'Komei seiken ron; 1863-66' (On the Komei administration: 1863-66), Sakamoto zemi, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 4 July 2005; gave a talk on 'Yasukuni shiron' (On Yasukuni), Matsuo zemi, Chuo University, Tokyo, 6 July 2005; November 12 'Yasukuni: senso kioku no soshitsu' (Yasukuni and the loss of historical memory), ISF Shinto seminar, Tokyo; spoke on 'Yasukuni: and the loss of historical memory' at the Daiwa seminar 'The Yasukuni Shrine: Religion, Politics and the Legacy of War', Daiwa house, London, 16 November 2005; published 'Juyondai shogun Iemochi no joraku' ('The Kyoto progress of the 14th shogun Iemochi') in Meiji ishinshi gakkai ed., Meiji ishin to bunka, Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2005; 'Yasukuni shrine: ritual and memory', Japan Focus, 293 (2005)

Lucia Dolce presented a paper on "Localizing Buddhism In the Japanese Cultic Context - A Ritual Approach" in the panel 'Buddhism in West/West in Buddhism', IAHR , Tokyo, 24 March - 30 March 2005; gave a lecture on "Ritual in Japanese religion" in the occasion of the kagura performance at Bath International Music festival, May 22, 2005; gave a lecture on "Esoteric turns: ritual appropriations and the creation of new Buddhist icons in medieval Japan" at the Sainsbury Institute, Norwich, June 16, 2005; was a discussant at the CSJR International Symposium "Foundation Myths in Japan," London, June 9-10; chaired the session "Buddhism in Japan" at the 14th IABS conference, London, 29 August-3 Sept 2005; gave a lecture on "Reconstructing the end of the dharma in medieval Japan" at the Institute of Oriental Philosophy European Centre, Taplow, October 22, 2005; participated in the panel "Life, Sex, and Death: Araki and Japanese Culture" at Barbican Art Gallery, December 7, 2005; gave a paper on "Icons, scriptures, and their ritual use: reflections on nineteenth-century European understandings of Japanese Buddhism" at the Centre européen d'études japonaises d'Alsace, Strasbourg and Colmar, 8-10 Dec 2005; Publications: The Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice, guest editor, special issue of Culture and Cosmos. A Journal of the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy, Vol. 9 no 2, Autumn/Winter 2005. (forthcoming); "Reconsidering the Taxonomy of the 'Esoteric': Taimitsu Hermeneutical and Ritual Practices," in Mark Teeuwen and Bernard Scheid, eds., The Culture of Secrecy in Pre-modern Japan, London: RoutledgeCurzon (forthcoming).

Katja Triplett presented a paper on "Body, ash and spirit. Images in memorial cults of founders of new religions in Japan", Interdisciplinary Seminar of the Study of Religions on the Material and Aesthetic Dimension of Religions, Mansfield College and Oriel, Oxford University, 2 August 2005; presented a paper on "Freedom of Religion in Vietnam: Persistent Policy and Vivid Reality?" IAHR, Tokyo, 28 March 2005; presented a paper on "Tsubosaka testimonials: Origin tales of Minami Hokkeji's Kannon for the Blind" at the CSJR International Symposium "Foundation Myths in Japan," London, 10 June 2005; presented a paper on "The worship of 'Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara of the Blind' in Japan" at the 14th IABS conference, London, 30 August 2005; Publications: „Das Pluralismodell ‚Religionsfreiheit' und die religiöse Vielfalt Japans." In Religionen nebeneinander. Modelle religöser Vielfalt in Ost- und Südostasien, ed. by Edith Franke und Michael Pye. Münster: Lit-Verlag 2005, 103-120; „Tenrikyô." In Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. by Hans Dieter Betz. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.

Postgraduate

PhD Research at SOAS on Japanese Religions

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

Yoshiko Imaizumi, *The Meiji Jingu (Dr Breen, Department of Japan and Korea)*

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

Benedetta Lomi, *Batô 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 Lucia Dolce, Study of Religions)*

Anne Mette Fisker-Nielsen, *Religious idealism and political reality in civil society: young Sokka/Gakkai members' support for Komeito (Dr Martinez, Department of Anthropology)*

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

Carla Tronu Montane, *A sociology of the Christian mission to Japan (Dr Breen, Department of Japan and Korea)*

MA Japanese Religions Dissertations 2004-2005

Izumi Beppu *Yasukuni Shrine and its influence on the nation before and after the end of World War 2*

Roger Farrow *Life from the dead: The secret life of icons and the functionality of relics*

Katsuji Iwahashi *The shrine reduction policy: The policy and protest in Wakayama prefecture*

Zuzana Kubovakova *Zen monks and warriors in medieval Japan: realities behind the warriors' adherence to Zen Buddhism*

Shinya Mano *Yôsai and Yôjô lineage: Yôjôbô Yôsai (Acarya) or Myôan Eisai (Zen master)*

MA Japanese Religions

The SOAS MA Programme in Japanese Religion is the first European taught graduate programme devoted to the study of Japanese religions. The degree is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the various traditions of Japanese religion, past and present, at the same time supplying tools of analysis for further research in the field. It is intended either as an end qualification in itself or to prepare students for more advanced graduate work. The programme consists of three components: one compulsory core course, two optional courses (or the equivalent of two units), and a dissertation. It may be completed in one calendar year (full time), or in two or three calendar years (part-time).

The programme centres around the core course Religious Practice in Japan: Texts, Rituals and Believers, which presents the religious phenomena in Japan in their historical context and addresses specific themes relevant to the understanding of the social aspects of Japanese religion and the influence of religion upon Japanese culture. Issues that have been taken up include the relation between religion and the state; the role of women in Japanese religion; the meaning of rituals; the geography of sacred space; and the dynamics of ascetic experiences.

Students have the opportunity to select other courses, depending on their specific interests and previous knowledge, in order to gain a more comprehensive grasp of the Japanese religious phenomena. Options include the religious history of China and other aspects of the Asian context of Japanese religion; contemporary developments in Japanese religion; introductions to textual studies; Buddhist art; and methodologies for the analysis of religious phenomena.

Please note three courses recently created for the programme: East Asian Buddhist Thought, a thematic course which every year explores one major form of Japanese Buddhism; Japanese New Religions, which evaluates theories and typologies relating to the development of new religions in Japan and abroad; Individual Research Project in Japanese Religions, which enables students to undertake a guided in-depth study of a specific topic.

A prior knowledge of the Japanese language is not required. However, students with a sufficient knowledge of the Japanese language and an interest in approaching primary sources will be able to take the unit Readings in Japanese Religions. In addition, the programme offers language courses in modern Japanese. Students in the programme will also 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, and downloadable from the SOAS website. For further information see the SOAS webpage (http://www.soas.ac.uk/Religions/MAdegrees.htm) or contact the Director of Studies, Dr Lucia Dolce, room 334, ext 4217, email: ld16@soas.ac.uk.

Exhibition Review

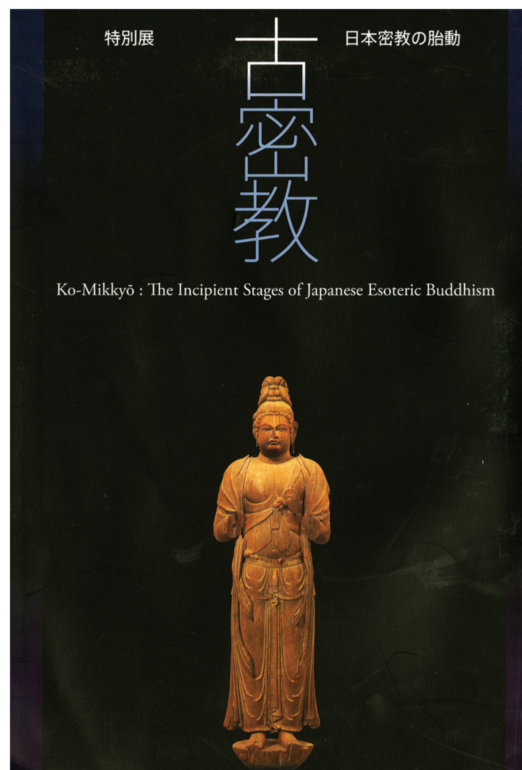
'Ko-Mikkyô : The Incipient Stages of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism'

Yukiko Nishimura,
holder of the 2001 CSJR Research Studentship

A special exhibition on *Ko-Mikkyō* (Ancient Esoteric Buddhism) was held at the Nara National Museum from 26 July to 4 September 2005. According to the exhibition catalogue, it celebrated the 1200th anniversary of Saichô's return from China, and of Kûkai's tantric initiation, but more emphasis was put on Kûkai as he is known as the monk who introduced esoteric Buddhism from Tang China in the early Heian period. Obviously one of the aims of this exhibition was to cast a spotlight on the esoteric Buddhism of the Nara period in the sense that this was functional in giving birth to Kûkai's esoteric Buddhism. Although the English subtitle of the exhibition 'The Incipient Stages of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism' does not mention Kûkai, the Japanese subtitle clearly states "Kûkai started from here." Furthermore, each part of the exhibition was constructed to lead to the final section, 'Komikkyô kara Kûkai he' (From Ancient Esoteric Buddhism to Kûkai), where artifacts representative of the Shingon Buddhism of the Heian period, especially those related to Kûkai such as his *Go-shōrai-mokuroku* (Catalogue of Imported Item by Kûkai), *Shōryō-shū* (Chinese writings by Kûkai), and the twofold mandalas, were exhibited.

The first six sections of the exhibition comprised Chinese images (Part 1) and materials from the Nara period (Part 2-6), some of which were exhibited for the first time, or at least grouped together for the first time emphasizing their esoteric nature. As the exhibition foreword stated, 'there had never been an exhibition which focuses on the esoteric Buddhism in the Nara period'. The first section, titled 'the Transmission of Ancient Esoteric Buddhism,' exhibited six Chinese images of Jūichimen Kannon (Eleven-headed Kannon), most of which were imported to Japan and have been preserved in Japanese temples, shrines or museums. It included a statue, now in Tokyo National Museum, which was originally at Tanzan shrine, Tō-no-mine, Nara (cat. no.4). A study by Matsuda Seiichirô has suggested that this image was imported to Japan as early as the mid-seventh century: the iconography of the image shows a mixture of elements drawn from old and new translations of the scripture devoted to this type of Kannon (*Jūichimen Kannon kyō*); furthermore, a son of the founder of the shrine where the image was kept (Jō-e) was connected to the translation of the new version, having studied in the capital city of Tang China (Matsuda 1988: 38ff.)

There is sufficient evidence that the worship of the Eleven-headed Kannon in Japan developed around



the late seventh century at the latest. The second section of the exhibition, entitled 'Transformed Kannon – the Forms of Salvation' (Henge Kannon –Sukui no katachi-) included nine images of multi-headed and other Transformed Kannon such as Batō and Fukūkenjaku, some of which are usually not open to the public or are accessible only during special periods of the year. It started with the earliest extant Japanese image of the Eleven-headed Kannon (cat.no.7), a statue from the late Hakuhō period, which was excavated from Nachi mountain, one of the most venerated centres of mountain worship in Japan. This part also included two texts: (i) *Tō dai-wajō tō-sei den* (*The Life of the Great Monk of Tang* (=Ganjin)) (cat. no.21) and (ii) *Saidai-ji shizai ruki chō* (*The History and Properties of the Saidaiji Temple*) (cat. no.22). Although the editions that were exhibited were copies of later periods (thirteenth and fourteenth century, respectively), both documents are considered to be important evidence of the significance of Henge Kannon worship in the Nara period. Hayami Tasuku employed this Saidaiji record to conclude that "the most evident characteristic of the worship of Kannon in the Nara period is of esoteric nature."(Hayami 1970: 43 & 65; Hayami 2000: 78.)

The third part of the exhibition, titled 'The Lord of *Dharani*,' focused on Kokuzō bosatsu, the Bodhisattva of limitless wisdom and benefits (Skt: Akasagarbha). The ritual centering on this deity, *Kokuzō gumonji hō*, was widely practiced in the Nara period by Buddhist monks, especially those who pursued ascetic practices in the mountains, including Kûkai. The ritual consisted of chanting the *dharani* of this *bodhisattava*, by which the practitioner could understand the meaning of

The earliest extant Japanese image of the Eleven-headed Kannon (cat.no.7), a statue from the late Hakuhō period.

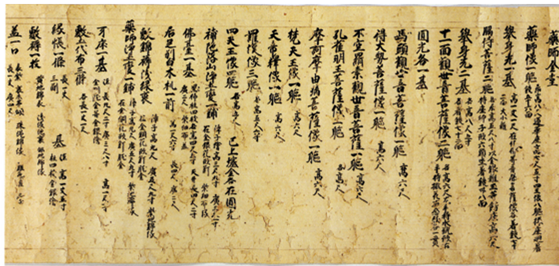
difficult sutras instantly and remember them for a long time. The earliest extant image of Kokuzō bosatsu, from the Nara period, and now kept at Gakuan-ji, Nara (cat.no.24) was exhibited together with other later images and related sutras.

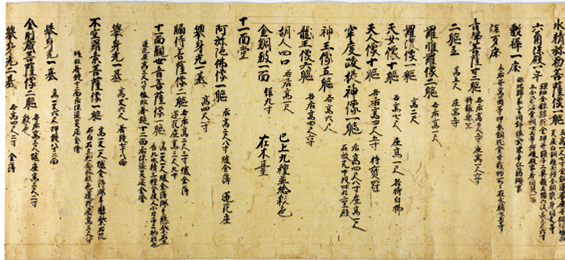
The fourth section of the exhibition, 'Sutras of Ancient Esoteric Buddhism,' mostly consisted of eight Buddhist texts, one copied in the Asuka period and the others from the Nara period, each of which is quite rarely exhibited publicly. They were texts relating to *dharani*, such as *Kongōjō darani kyō* and *Bucchō sonshō darani kyō*, and texts relating to the Transformed Kannon, such as *Senju sengen darani kyō* and *Fukū kenjaku jinpen shingon kyō*. According to the catalogue description, "the Buddhist texts of Ancient Esoteric Buddhism are those translated in China before Subhakarasinha, Vajirabodhi, Yi-xing, and Amoghavajira, while the sutras translated in the eighth century by these monks represented a systematized type of esotericism. The texts of ancient esotericism advocate the worship of deities such as Jūichimen Kannon and Senju Kannon, and expound the means by which to obtain benefits from these deities, whether *dharani* or meditation or devotions." (*Ko-mikkyô*: 51.) The monumental work by Ishida Mosaku on Buddhist texts copied in the Nara period clearly shows that *Dainichi-kyō*, *Kongō-chō-kyō* and *Soshitsuji-kara-kyō*, which are regarded the most important texts in the esoteric Buddhism after Kûkai, existed and started being copied in the Nara period. (Ishida 1930: 146ff.) However the exhibition follows the conventional view on this matter, though it does not employ the traditional term *zō-mitsu* (miscellaneous esoteric Buddhism), which has been used as the opposite of *jun-mitsu* (pure esoteric Buddhism), allegedly imported and founded by Kûkai. The curators state that, "although there already existed many Buddhist texts of pure esoteric Buddhism in the Nara period, the rituals in practices were still those of Ancient Esoteric Buddhism."

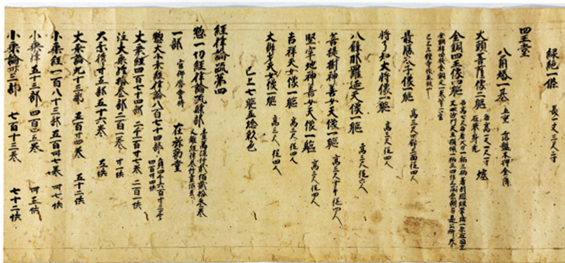
The fifth section of the exhibition focused on one of these rituals called *keka*. It included the images of Buddhist deities who were the central object of worship in *keka* rituals, such as Amida (Skt: Amitabha), Yakushi (Skt: Bhaisajyaguru) and Kisshō-ten (Skt: Sri-mahadevi), their related Buddhist texts and other ritual instruments. The scriptural items exhibited included two fascicles of *Konkōmyō-saishō-ō-kyō*, each designated as a National Treasure. This sutra was the basic text of the *keka* devoted to Kisshō-ten, but was itself worshipped and copied on many occasions during the Nara period.

Finally, the sixth section, titled 'Practitioners of the Mountains' (*Yama no shugyō-sha*), exhibited ritual instruments and some images of legendary practitioners, such as En no odunu (or En no gyōja), who has been venerated as the founder of Shugendō (mountain asceticism), and Taichō, who is considered to be the founder of the worship of Mt. Hakusan. These materials were included in the exhibition on the grounds that "in the Nara period monks and nuns… were required to obtain the powers to cure illness by chanting mantras. These magical powers could be attained through ascetic practices conducted in deep mountains….Legends tell that….the *gumonji-hō* was earnestly performed in Yoshino …..These ascetic practitioners were usually also invited to *keka* rituals."(*Kô-mikkyô*: 89.) In short, it is obvious that the curators assume that *dharani* and mantras, and certain rituals such as *keka* and *gumonji-hō* can tell something about 'Ancient Esoteric Buddhism.'

As the catalogue foreword states, this exhibition is significant in that it is the first and thorough exhibition that focuses on certain aspects of the Nara period, which the curators have called 'Ancient Esoteric Buddhism'. It also exhibited a numbers of artifacts that are usually inaccessible to the public. But I think that the exhibition is even more significant in that it coins a new term, 'Ancient Esoteric Buddhism,' to replace the more common word *zômitsu* (miscellaneous esoteric Buddhism). The latter started being used by scholar-monks of Shingon Buddhism who tried to emphasize the achievements of the founder of their school, Kûkai, and later it was widely accepted in spite of its negative connotations: *zômitsu* has been seen as "contrary to the other Buddhist schools of the Nara period, which







Saidai-ji shizai ruki chō (*The History and Properties of the Saidaiji Temple*) (cat. no.22)

were involved in philosophical speculations" (Horiike 1960: 71); "different from intellectual Buddhist schools since it consisted of occult arts aimed only at seeking worldly desires" (Katsumata 1977: 183); and "lacking of philosophical thoughts and consistent ideals" (Wada 1970: 74). The exhibition catalogue still takes the bipolar views of 'pure' versus 'miscellaneous'/'ancient' and puts higher value on 'pure' esoteric Buddhism, but I think that an attempt has been made to free the Buddhism of the Nara period from the negative value attached to the word 'zō-mitsu' and to review what can be called 'esoteric Buddhism' in the Nara period.

There is a more problematic question, which was never asked in the exhibition, and indeed has hardly been asked by scholars in the field. We cannot find a concept or word corresponding to 'esoteric Buddhism' in the documents from the Nara period. However, this exhibition and also previous studies have assumed that there is something, which can be universally called 'esoteric Buddhism', or which maintains certain 'esoteric' elements throughout history. Whenever any of these elements is found in the expressions of Nara Buddhism, these are labeled 'esoteric'. As briefly mentioned above, Hayami Tasuku concluded that the worship of Kannon in the Nara period was 'esoteric' mainly on the basis that certain Buddhist texts relating to transformed Kannon (which he called 'esoteric' texts) existed and were copied in the Nara period, and a number of images of transformed Kannon (which he called 'esoteric' Kannon) were recorded to have been created during the Nara period. Ishida Mosaku, too, calls certain Buddhist texts 'esoteric' without supplying any explanation as to why he assumes these texts to be 'esoteric.' This exhibition clearly shows what is widely and usually acknowledged today as the mark of 'esoteric' Buddhism: the transformed Kannon, *dharani* (magical spells), and *keka* rituals. Images, rituals, scriptures and practitioners in the Nara period were chosen as evidence of 'esoteric Buddhism' (ancient or miscellaneous, whatever) since they have one of these markers.

Ironically, the attempt to define 'esoteric Buddhism' by modern apologists leads to a totally different conclusion. Matsunaga Yukei, for instance, takes the position that there is a universal 'esoteric Buddhism' and concludes that "when taking into account not only the Esoteric Buddhism of Kûkai but also Esoteric Buddhism in its wider sense, it is possible to define its characteristics under the following five headings: 1) mysticism, 2) synthetism, 2) symbolism, 4) soteriology and 5) realism." (Matsunaga 1990: 26.) Matsunaga denies that specific elements work as markers of esoteric Buddhism and writes that Esoteric Buddhism consists of a combination of all five these elements. It should be noted that, interestingly, Matsunaga even thinks that Kûkai's definition (which Matsunaga clearly identifies in one of Kûkai's writings, *Ben-kenmitsu-nikyō-ron*) is insufficient for dealing with Indian, or even Chinese Esoteric Buddhism; and that "even within Japan there is also the esoteric branch of the Tendai school to which it is not possible to apply this same yard stick."(Ibid: 25.) As he himself admits, his attempt at drawing a definition of *mikkyô* cannot be said to be fully successful as "these five characteristics are all to be found in Mahayana Buddhism, too" (Ibid: 40).

Based on the detailed analysis of the whole body of writings of Kûkai, Abe Ryūichi has recently concluded that even "in Kûkai's construction (which, though not the only one, set the standard for subsequent constructions in the history of the Shingon and Tendai Schools), the distinction between the two categories (esoteric and exoteric) is far more fluid than has been assumed by existing modern studies. The esoteric and exoteric are relative to each other at best." (Abe 1999: 12.) Then, what shall or can we consider as the elements necessary for a definition of 'esoteric' that can be applicable to the Nara period, when there was no concept of 'esoteric'? A preliminary attempt by the art historian Cynthea Bogel has focused on the reception of the people in the Nara period, trying to find whether they perceived the difference between esoteric and exoteric and if there was any, what was considered as 'esoteric' or 'different' from other types of Buddhism. I address the question of what 'esoteric Buddhism' was for people of the Nara period in my PhD research on

The earliest extant image of Kokuzō bosatsu, from the Nara period, and now kept at Gakuan-ji, Nara (cat.no.24).

the early worship of Kannon. I think this question is crucial for the study of Japanese religion after Kûkai as well, since the definition of 'esoteric Buddhism' and its central elements changed from time to time, and still does, as modern scholars have different perceptions of what Buddhist practice should be.

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Matsuda Seiichirō, 'Tokyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan hokan Jūichimen Kannon zō (Tōnomine denrai) ni tsuite (The Statue of Jūichimen Kannon in the Tokyo National Museum, originally preserved at Tōnomine),' *Kokka*, No.1118, pp. 7-23 and No.1119, pp. 32-48, 1988.
Kô-mikkyô, Exhibition catalogue, 2005.
Matsunaga Yukei, 1990 'Esoteric Buddhism: A Definition' from *Mikkyō*, Special Issue, October 1990, pp. 23-40.
Wada Teiichi, 1970, 'Nara-chō ni okeru mikkyō no seikaku –Shōsō-in monjo wo chūshin to shite,' in *Seishin Kagaku.*

Fieldwork Report

Carla Tronu Montane,
holder of the 2003 CSJR Research Studentship

Since October 2004 I have been in Japan conducting fieldwork, as a recipient of a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Science, Culture and Sports. I am based at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies (OUFS), in Minoh, which is northeast of Osaka. My advisor at OUFS is a specialist in Christian literature, Professor Rikiya Komei, from the Faculty of International Relations. At OUFS I attend some lectures on Japanese culture and religion, as well as courses on pre-modern Japanese and *kanbun*.

My PhD research approaches the Japanese Christian mission in the sixteenth century from a historical perspective, so that my fieldwork in Japan mainly consists of archival and bibliographical research. I do most of my research at the OUFS Library, gathering and reading Japanese research papers and primary sources on Christianity in pre-modern Japan. I have periodical meetings with Professor Komei and regular reading seminars with Dr Emi Kishimoto, who does research on missionary publications and dictionaries in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Japan within the field of Japanese linguistics.

Carla Tronu Montane

This is a view of Hirado Bay from Hirado Castle.

Being based in Osaka offers a good opportunity for some short research trips to relevant Christian places and archives. Last autumn I went to Hirado and Ikitsuki on a research trip with members of the Japanese Association of Folklore Studies where I was able to meet some senior Kakure Kirishitan and local historians. In March, thanks to a travel grant from the Japanese Foundation Endowment Committee (JFEC), I spent three weeks conducting archival research in Tokyo, at the Kirishitan Bunko of Sophia University, and also at the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo. While I was in Tokyo the 19th World Conference of the International Association for the History of Religion took place, and I attended some of the presentations. This also gave me a chance to meet my SOAS supervisor, Dr John Breen, as well as

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Dr Lucia Dolce and Professor Brian Bocking. I also had the opportunity to meet Dr Ikuo Higashibaba (Tenri University, Nara), a specialist in Christianity in early modern Japan.

Carla Tronu Montane

This artifact of a tile with a pattern of a cross is from the remains of the Santo Domingo Church in Nagasaki.

Also under the auspices of the JFEC, last September I went to Nagasaki for one week, to conduct research at the Museum of the 26 Martyrs of Nagasaki and the Nagasaki Prefectural Library. I also visited some interesting Christian sites, like the remains of the church of Santo Domingo, discovered in 2000 at Sakuramachi. This site is especially interesting because it presents remains of three different periods, the oldest being those of the Dominican church built by Father Morales in 1609, with a separate building for the convent of the fathers and a garden. However, it was destroyed after five years, when the order expelling the missionaries from Japan was issued in 1614, and two years later the house of the Magistrate of Nagasaki (Suetsugu Heizô) was built at the site. At the end of the eighteenth century the Suetsugu family was replaced by the Takagi family, which inherited their post and property. The result is that several domestic artefacts and wells from this period have also been unearthed. In the adjacent Museum for the Former Site of Santo Domingo Church, findings from the three different periods are exhibited. The most numerous are those related to Christianity, such as tiles with a cross pattern, rosaries, medals and holy relic boxes. I also visited Ôura Tenshudô, a highlight of the revival of Christianity in Nagasaki. It was built by French missionaries in 1864, and in 1865, when Christianity was still under prohibition, some Japanese people who had kept the Christian faith underground for generations, recognizing the statue of Saint Mary in the altar of the Oura Tenshudô, told Father Petit-Jean that they kept the same faith. The most exciting and motivating part of the trip to Nagasaki was the talking with Father Yûki Ryogo (formerly named Diego Pacheco), a very knowledgeable Spanish Jesuit, who has spent more

than forty years in Japan researching the Japanese church and its martyrs.

However, I did not need to venture far from Minoh to visit Christian remains, because the neighbouring cities of Ibaraki and Takatsuki hosted Christian communities in the past. In the sixteenth century Christian communities flourished under the lead of the Takayama family in the surroundings of Takatsuki castle. In the early twentieth century, a Christian tombstone was discovered in Ibaraki by a school teacher, whose persistent investigations led to two families that had supposedly been Christian. They denied it at first, but finally Christian objects and paintings that had been hidden and passed down for generations over centuries were brought to light. Last spring, I visited the Ibaraki City Museum of Christian Remains together with Professor Komei, Dr Kishimoto and other PhD students from OUFS. We also looked for the extant Christian tombstones that were discovered around the area in the early 20th century, which was not an easy task, since some of them are still well hidden in the woods.

I plan to stay at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies for one more academic year and return to SOAS in September 2006.

Carla Tronu Montane

Oura Catholic Church, Nagasaki

Fieldwork Report

Buddhist Vocal Arts

Fumi Ouchi

During the 2005-2006 academic year, I am staying in Japan to conduct fieldwork for my dissertation. This fieldwork has two main purposes: one is to explore the primary sources on medieval Buddhist vocal arts, and the other is to learn *shômyô*, a chanting form of sutra recitation with a sophisticated melody. Hopefully they will provide me with important information with which to expand my research on the attitude of Japanese medieval Buddhism as it relates to the sensory nature of human beings. This is deeply connected with one of the core arguments in my thesis. I suspect that the original development of Buddhism in Japan is highly correlated with the affirmative posture of Japanese culture to our somatic nature. Exploring the actual conditions of the performance of Buddhist vocal arts, formed in medieval Japanese, should therefore provide a clue for discussing this issue.

During the fist year of my research, I found out that the early Japanese Tendai school developed its original interpretation of the meaning of our natural bodies. That is to say, compared with Chinese T'ien-t'ai teaching, Japanese Tendai monks tended to show a more positive attitude to our natural bodies. This validated the usefulness of my approach, which considers the development of Buddhism in medieval Japan from its attitude to the somatic nature of human beings, especially its sensory phase. In my view, such an affirmative posture also stimulated the formation of various types of vocal arts at that time, as the aesthetics of Tendai *shômyô* demand an impressive performance and emotional expression. For example, according to several treatises on *shômyô*, the most important technique is *yuri*, a kind of ornamental melody pattern, because it sounds 'effective'.

A few years ago, I had the good fortune to meet a great *shômyô* performer, Ms Makiko Sakurai. She is the only professional female performer of *shômyô*. Although she is not a Buddhist priestess, she was trained in this Buddhist vocal art by Genyû Nakayama, a high ranking Tendai priest, and a master *shômyô* performer. Ms Sakurai has been also working on the restoration of a kind of medieval performing arts, *shirabyôshi*, which is deeply connected with Buddhist vocal arts. She has also learned *gagaku*, the oldest type of musical performance which was historically performed at the Japanese Imperial court. The musical theory of *shômyô* is highly influenced by that of *gagaku*. Therefore, Ms Sakurai is the most appropriate

Akiko Mitomo

Fumi Ouchi with her *shômyô* teacher Ms Sakurai. Ms Sakurai is wearing the costume of *Shirabyoshi*, female performers of the medieval period who sang and danced in male costume.

teacher to help me to start exploring the world of medieval Buddhist vocal arts.

I started lessons with her last October. I am learning *nijû-go-zanmai-shiki* with four classmates, one of whom is a scholar of Japanese literature, Dr Kayono Shiba, who has published on the development of the method of reciting sutras (*dokyô-dô*) in medieval Japan.

Nijû-go-zanmai-shiki is a liturgy based on the Pure Land teaching and it is the earliest form of the Japanised Buddhist vocal art, *kôshiki*. The melody patterns and vocal technique of *kôshiki* are simpler than the original *shômyô* imported from China and polished by Japanese monks to use for their religious training, or for adorning their rituals. This seems to be connected with the fact that *kôshiki* was created as a liturgy for groups including lay believers. In addition, while *shômyô* was basically learned and performed exclusively by Buddhist monks or priests, lay people could recite or sing at *nijû-go-zanmai-shiki*. Training can enable me to gain significant information to consider what types of musical methods were adopted to attract different types of believers, and how their aural or sensory natures were treated within religious contexts.

In fact, I discovered some interesting facts whilst learning the central parts of *nijû-go-zanmai-shiki*, which include the description of the six realms (*roku-dô*): hell, the realm of hungry ghosts, beasts,

fighting demons, human beings, and heaven. Of particular interest was to me was that the most emphasized part among the six realms is that of human beings, whilst it is hell that is always depicted most closely and impressively in literature and pictures that feature the six realms as their theme. Why is the realm of human beings not emphasized in *nijû-go-zanmai-shiki* ? I have not got a clear answer yet, but it might be related to the affirmative attitude to the real world as expressed in medieval Buddhist thought.

Another interesting feature I noticed is the way in which the description of the realm of human beings is emphasized. When one recites *kôshiki* tunes, different ranges of tone systems are used, ranging from low to high pitch. Among the six realms, only the realm of human beings uses the highest range, and consequently this part sounds most impressive and dramatic. Here can be observed an attempt to produce an effective representation in *koshiki* as well. This implies that rather than a negative attitude to the sensory nature of human beings, there is the notion that our somatic nature plays significant role in religious activities.

Thus, my lessons in Buddhist vocal arts have got off to a favorable start. I also had a great opportunity to expand my knowledge of Japanese Buddhist vocal arts last December in London. As I mentioned in another report in this newsletter, I joined the stimulating workshop and the concert on *shômyô* at SOAS, which afforded me the opportunity to meet some *shômyô* masters. I am considering studying *shômyô* with them, too. Learning from Buddhist priests would surely provide further experience and knowledge. Although it is very cold in Japan this winter and we have a lot of snow, I hope to be able to continue to sustain my pace and to further draw out rich fruit for my dissertation from the deep snow. I look forward to sharing more findings with you in the future.

Fieldwork Report

Personal and Social Dimensions of the *Akinomine* (Autumn Peak) Practice on Haguro Mountain

Tullio Lobetti,
Holder of the 2004 CSJR Research Studentship

Introduction

As is evident from the title, I will not address the theoretical and historical background of the *akinomine* (autumn peak) practice on Haguro-san, as extremely relevant scholars, like Miyake and Sekimori, have already studied this topic in depth, and recently a full-length documentary was produced which unveiled all the remaining "secrets" about this important Shugendô practice. The purpose of this work is instead to analyse, and possibly understand, the personal and social dimensions of such a practice. Personal motivation, social and institutional pressure and the mere desire for evasion are just some of the possible reasons that may lead "ordinary" and less ordinary Japanese and non-Japanese people to pursue a path of spiritual election by following the mountain paths of the Dewa Sanzan (Yamagata prefecture) on the trail of more seasoned *yamabushi*. Having participated in the *akinomine* myself, this paper represents an attempt to record my first-hand experience, as well as the impressions that I got from the other participants. In the wider context of present-day Japanese *shûgyô* (physical exertion practices), this may represent a small step in to understand by which terms many of the practices roughly labelled as "ascetic" are still alive in Japan today, and why, in some cases, they are gaining increasing popularity.

The *Akinomine*

The *akinomine* practice begins every year on the 24th of August and ends on the 1st of September. The first gathering of all participants is at the Shôzennin temple, in the village of Tôge, located at the base of Haguro-san. The initial gathering is a merry event. On the afternoon of the 24th, the main hall of the Shôzennin quickly fills up with practitioners who come from all over Japan and occasionally also from abroad. Many of them are practitioners who meet no more than once a year on this occasion, so their boisterous exchange of greetings is understandable.

As the room fills up, everybody has to find a suitable place to store belongings and to unroll the

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The main hall of the Shôzennin

futon at night. As in other kinds of social meetings, people tend to group. Those practitioners who are already well acquainted, generally choose a space in the hall, sometimes the same space of the previous year, and set up their equipment quickly and confidently. By virtue of the same principle, newcomers (including myself) also tend to stay together, placing their belongings on the ground more or less randomly, whilst nervously looking around, trying to understand what the next step will be. How people organise themselves inside the main hall of the Shôzennin might provide a number of hints about their personal background and motivation. Expert practitioners tend to form age and gender homogeneous groups. Their luggage is abundant, and smartly packed in plastic boxes. They generally bring all sorts of commodities with which to fulfil their physical exigencies during the practice. Wet tissues, crank-charging lamps and mobile phones; full sets of medicines, bandages, and first aid in case of minor accidents, are just some of the commodities included in their boxes. The general feeling is that their stay at Haguro-san should be as comfortable as possible. The majority already possess a complete shugenja outfit, which they can neatly put on in a matter of few seconds, and they have lengthy conversations comparing the quality of the fabric, the colour, and the circumstances in which their equipment was obtained.

Newcomers, conversely, stick together regardless of age and gender, and even nationality. The social glue that binds them is the stress of the new experience in the midst of a group of already well-acquainted strangers. Their luggage is sparse, mostly packed in suitcases or backpacks. The commodities that they bring with them are mainly essentials, based on instructions provided by the temple heads some weeks before. Therefore, all newcomers bring more or less the same equipment. Their general expectation is that their stay at Haguro-san is not supposed to be comfortable, so nobody packs an extended set of goods. None of the newcomers possessed a *shugenja* outfit that was hired from the temple, with the exception of a few items that had to be bought. Although the subgroups that comprise the newly formed community of practitioners form separately, some interaction between them occurs from the very beginning. It seems, in fact, that expert practitioners think that it is their duty to take care of the newcomers, and they generously give advice on practical matters, even if not explicitly asked for it. They are indeed attentive to the needs of others, generous and encouraging. Although the "groups" are not so prone to mix, the interaction is abundant and productive. The heads of the temple seem to be aware of this; in fact a large share of practical training is entrusted to senior practitioners, instead of being performed in an "official way" by the temple leaders. We were taught by older practitioners, for example, how to wear the shugenja outfit properly, how to hold the *juzu* (the Buddhist rosary), and the meaning of some elements in the attire. In addition, we were given a number of practical tips about how not to slip on wet ground, what to put in our carrier bags, and how to prevent small injuries.

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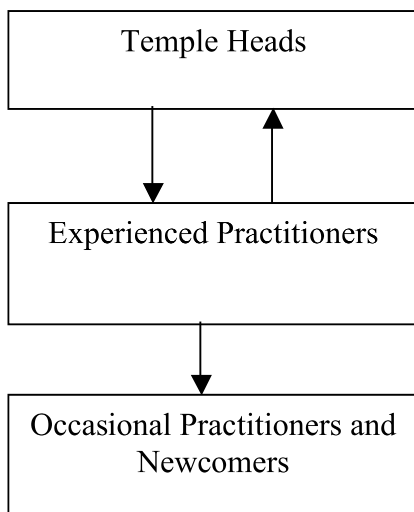
Preparing the *hashirinawa* (a waist rope to hold the surcoat in place). Shôzennin, first day.

At the end of the first day the people participating in the Haguro-san *akinomine* seem to belong to at least three different groups. The temple heads and clergy form the first. Most of them are ordained Tendai priests, due to affiliation of the Koganedô to Hiezan. In this early phase of the training they are generally very busy with all the arrangements and so their contact with the other practitioners is necessarily limited. The people regularly attending the *akinomine* training every year form the second group. They have developed strong ties between themselves and also feel confident about the practice and all the formal procedures that will follow. For them, participating in the retreat has become a pleasurable routine, a periodic event that marks this specific period of the year. Newcomers or occasional practitioners form the last group. They, of course, lack the knowledge and confidence of the more seasoned practitioners, but they share the enthusiasm. Feeling like a stranger inside an

already well-acquainted group, forces people to consider at least two strategies. The first is to isolate themselves completely, avoiding any form of confrontation that might result in possible damage. The second is to fight pressure and isolation by taking as many occasions as possible to produce a fruitful interaction. The easiest way to achieve the latter result in such a context is to continuously ask for information. In the beginning, in fact, the main form of interaction between newcomers and experts is the exchange of information, mostly oriented one-way from the expert to the novice. Although this facilitates interaction, it also has the side effect of creating a system of implicit vertical relationships. The scheme at this point is thus characterised by a three-group structure bound together by vertical relationships, with strong horizontal relationships present on the inside.



The relationship between the temple heads and the experienced practitioners is indicated with a double arrow because, in my opinion, there is a higher degree of dual interaction between the two groups. In many cases, expert practitioners help the heads and provide valuable advice, direct activities and organise the work of the other practitioners. During the communal supper at the end of the first day this tripartite scheme is again replicated in the location of people in the main hall. The temple heads have assigned seats in front of the altar, but all the other people are free to sit wherever they think is appropriate. Again the newcomers and the experienced practitioners group separately, replicating more or less the same subgroups of the initial luggage and bedding arrangement. Thus, at this early stage, the shugenja community is still fragmented, far from being homogeneous, and bound by horizontal style relationships. During this communal meal there is time for a short self-introduction, then futons are distributed to all participants, and the room is set for the night.

The first night at Shôzennin may be a somewhat unpleasant experience for people brought up in city flats and used to at least some degree of privacy. Apart from the unavoidable snoring, some people continue to chat and drink sake noisily late in to the night, apparently disregarding other's needs. This makes sleeping rather difficult, and many have only a few hours of sleep before being awoken by the sound of the *hora* (the conch-shell used as a trumpet by *shugenja*) in the early morning.

The following day the attention of all practitioners is concentrated on the preparations for the Ritual of Conception at the Koganedô. Although the *akinomine* itself actually starts the day before, with the *Oikaragaki* (the ceremony of “decoration” of the *oi*, the portable altar, where the spirits of the *shugenja* are held), the rite at Koganedô is the one that, in my understanding, really marks the start of the practice. It is first of all a doctrinal mark, since the rite symbolises conception, the conception of the embryos of the shugenja that will be held in the oi and nurtured through the practice until their full development. But it is also a powerful spatial mark. The sensation of setting out from Shôzennin is sharp, clear, and perfectly understandable. It is the setting out from the “normal life” made of everyday meals, water-flushed toilets, bathrooms, bedding, electricity etc. for the unknown world of the mountain where none of those commodities will be available.

This passage into a different dimension creates a palpable, though subtle, state of tension in all practitioners. The newcomers consider the days ahead with some worries, while the seasoned practitioners try to get into the proper state of mind for the efforts that will follow. One visible sign of all this is the fact that, unlike on the previous day, the participant’s level of concentration is visibly much higher. Eyes are more attentive, faces more serious. Jokes and laughter disappear from everybody’s lips. There is now a serious atmosphere.

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Arriving at the Koganedô for the Ritual of Conception. In the centre is the *bonten*, the paper decorated pole symbolising male fertility.

After the ritual at the Koganedô, the column of *shugenja*-in-training passes through the village of Tôge until arriving at the outer precinct of the Dewa Sanzan shrine. During this walk a number of mantras are chanted in a responsorial form, following a leading voice. The walk lasts for around 30 minutes and during this time the atmosphere loosens a little bit. People start chatting between mantras and many enjoy the nice landscape of Tôge village surroundings. No particular order is kept during the walk, and everybody feels free to change his or her position in the procession.

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Upon entering the precinct of the *jinja*, the atmosphere changes again abruptly. Again this change seems to happen due to a spatial motif. Passing through the red *torii* (gate) reveals a stunning view. Centuries old *sugi* trees (cryptomeria) are everywhere, powerful as columns and straight as needles while enormous fern leaves cover the ground. Broken rays of sun filtering through the leaves illuminate this dreamlike landscape, while all the signs of human civilization suddenly disappear. The sensation of entering is indeed powerful, and one is absorbed into a different reality. These kinds of mountain practices are in fact known as “mountain entering” rather than merely “mountain climbing”. The doctrinal symbology, that sees the mountain as the womb in which the foetus of the *shugenja* starts growing, finds here a powerful sensorial justification.

The way to the “First Lodging” is quite an enjoyable walk in the forest. The pace is slow in order to allow the older practitioners to follow the procession with ease; and the only demanding part constitutes the 2600-steps long staircase leading to the top of the mountain. At the end of the stairs the *shugenja* can enjoy a brief rest and some simple refreshment.

Upon arrival at the Kôtakuji a number of practical tasks are performed. First the participants are assigned to their “room” in the Kôtakuji. The word “room” is in inverted commas because many of these rooms are actually divisions of the main hall and other smaller halls, divisions made in a very theoretical way, since nothing marks the boundaries between one “room” and the others. All the “rooms” are named after the Chinese zodiac signs, for example, *ushi no heia* (room of the ox), the *ki no heia* (room of the snake) etc. Various criteria are used to group the practitioners in their rooms. First of all, a room is reserved only for women, regardless of their age or experience in the practice. Then two bigger rooms are assigned to the newcomers and the less experienced practitioners. Since the rooms are divisions of the main hall, there is plenty of possibility of communication between these three groups of practitioners. This division of the main hall also underlines an interesting feature of contemporary Haguro Shugendô. There seems to be almost no form of gender discrimination. Men and women sleep and change their clothes in the same room, share the same toilets and perform the same practices, sumo being the only exception. Women themselves seem to be quite conscious of this state of equality. In the words of Mrs. Kamimura, the eldest female practitioner and one of the most seasoned practitioners at all: ‘Here there is no man or woman. We are all equal, all *shugenja*.’

The new arrangement at the Kôtakuji somehow upsets the balances that spontaneously formed at the Shôzennin. The occupants of my room, for example, are exclusively newcomers, irrespective of age. All are Japanese, and separated from the other foreigners, I have to build new relationships from scratch.

Most of us arrange our belongings against the outer wall, except for someone who puts his luggage in the middle of the room. We are thus arranged in a sort of square shape, lying on the floor side by side following the perimeter of the room, and facing the other people staying in the middle of the room. This means also that when everybody is at his place there is no way of not looking at other people, except maybe for staring at the ceiling. In this circumstance interaction is a social prerequisite. Not being able to flee somewhere else, everybody has to cope with the reality of the “others” in the room. We know that we are going to share a number of nights together, dine and attend services at the temple, thus the sooner we get to know each other the better. ‘Where are you from?’ is the typical question in these cases. But at Kôtakuji it gains a completely different undertone. It does not matter that everybody except me is Japa-

nese; we were all strangers in a different world. The name of Japanese cities like Tokyo and Osaka belong to different realities that seem to be millions of kilometers away.

I have another question to ask to my fellow roommates: 'Why are you here?' This simple question brings out how variegated and heterogeneous personal motivations for religious practice can be. Someone is there because 'it is a tradition of Haguro, and I belong to this area'; somebody else 'to benefit my family'; 'because this brings me good luck'; 'because this makes me stronger'. Apparently only a minority is there for reasons that, from a western protestant point of view, may be defined as "spiritual". The person sleeping right beside me is there to 'find himself, after a life of hard work'. In this sort of restricted environment it might seem natural to expect a certain uniformity in belief and purpose, but this is apparently not the case. This unveils a substantial characteristic of Haguro Shugendô hidden under the structured collective environment of the *shugenja* community. From the point of view of intentions and belief, it is indeed a very individual experience. Everyone has his or her reasons for being there, and some are willing to unveil them, while others are not. Some are willing participants; some are forced by circumstances and tradition; and some are driven by a strong will to competition. Hiroshi, for instance, is a very clever and well-prepared Tendai monk; he came to Haguro-san because his master sent him there, telling him that the *akinomine* would be good for his general training. Together with Hiroshi there are some other full-ordered monks from various denominations. They constitute a smaller group within the newcomers' group, being new to Haguro-san, but not to that kind of practice. They already know all major sutras and *mudras* by heart and are familiar with the procedure for rituals. Given their background and experience, it might seem as though the *akinomine* would be less arduous for them, but there is another point to consider. Having been sent by their master or religious organisation on an official basis it is implicit that they do every step of the practice to the utmost. In fact they are always the first to act and the last to rest, working hard until their energies are exhausted, competing among themselves for the best results. They are probably also part of a delicate diplomacy between their home institution and the Shôzennin officials. It is in fact very likely that the Shôzennin's *sendatsu* (a term originally meaning guide, now indicating the heads of the temple) may have some kind of relationship with the masters and temples of the ordained monks participating to the practice. If so, they will probably enquire about their performance. On the other hand, practitioners that go on the Haguro *akinomine* on a personal basis do not have to deal with such pressure, and the first evidence of this may be found in their behaviour. I mentioned before the fact that almost all expert practitioners came to Haguro with copious amenities for their stay. Despite the fact that during the first three days of practice everybody is supposed to fast completely, drinking just water or green tea, almost all of the older practitioners enact a wide spectrum of little "cheatings". Sugar tablets, energy drinks, small candies, *anpan* and *dorayaki* are just some of the many kinds of snacks that people brings with them to relieve their fast at the Kôtakuji. This innocent "cheating" also includes perfumed wiping tissues, antiperspirants, inflatable pillows and so on.

Elena Russo is a SOAS alumna (MA Japanese Linguistics). During 2003-2004 she attended CSJR seminars, and the film screening: *Death and Rebirth in the Mountains: The Ascetic Training of Shugenja Practitioners in Japan*, and was inspired to participate in the practice.

As the practice goes on, our weariness, of course, increases. The *saitô goma* (fire sacrifice) rite marks the passage to the Third Lodging and, at the same time, our deliverance from the status of Hungry Ghosts. It is an important moment of progress in the practice, and for many it represents the occasion to benefit from the power and good influences emanating from the *goma* pyre. On a more practical level it is also the moment in which the practitioners are allowed to eat again, and for this reason it marks a peak in the practitioners' weariness. After three days of incessant fasting and practice, and after having spent one's last energies in building the *goma* pyre, we are all exhausted. Regardless of the doctrinal importance of the *saito goma*, most of the people are visibly nodding, including myself, and a few fall totally asleep. Even sitting properly on a bench while holding the sutra book, pretending to read, requires a considerable

effort. In that circumstance I begin to understand the meaning of a word that I have read many times in Japanese books about ascetic practices: *suteru* (to dispose, throw away). There we are, having expended our last energies in prostrating in front of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas more than 400 times on that day and having sawed wood for the pyre in the remaining time. Our legs cannot move another step; our backs cannot stay straight; our eyes cannot stay open. The *goma* pyre crackles the sutras in our stead. My everyday life seems to be thousands of miles away. I cannot say, of course, if everybody at the Kôtakuji shares these sensations, but from what I witness, I can at least say that all of our physical sensations are the same in that we are all equally prostrate. If a communal experience does exist in this sort of practice, it is my opinion that it should not be sought by considerations of apparent communal belief or behaviour. The centre of the collective experience is in fact the body, the physical dimension of all practitioners. We share physical conditions, rather than religious belief. It is for this reason that perhaps the practice is fulfilled by all in the same way, regardless of the different levels of ability in reading sutras or making mudras. At the conclusion of the *saitô goma*, I develop a new way of understanding the condition of my fellow practitioners. Although their opinions are sometimes conflicted, and their behaviour is sometimes hard to understand, I develop the subtle certainty that all of our bodies are feeling the same, soaked in the same physical dimension of the holy mountain. The effectiveness of the spatial component is most vividly perceivable in many moments of the practice, and this may be attributed to the interaction between the macroscopic environment of the mountain and the microcosms of our bodies. The ontologically shared dimension of this interaction is in fact defined by the coalescence of these two universes in mere spatial terms: entering the mountain. The practice works towards discarding the remainders of the outer world by severely testing the body. Once the older body is disposed of, the individual can be reborn as new from the same substance of the holy place. This sensation of rebirth is vivid and sharp on the last day of practice when, after a last service at the Dewa Sanzan, the newborn *shugenja* give a loud cry (the cry of birth) and then rush outside the shrine precinct with the same desperate will for life as that of a newborn baby. Just as on the day when we entered the precinct, the idea of now being out is equally strong. It may mean different things to different people. For me it means above all the fact that it was all over, and although arduous, I have made it until the end. But to all of our bodies this certainly means the possibility to finally eat a decent meal, to take a bath, and to rest properly.

I dearly remember all the people I met on Haguro-san. Although I may have failed to understand their minds, I clearly remember the smell of their sweat, their bleeding feet and their heavy breath when climbing the steep slopes of the Dewa Sanzan. They were like me; their bodies were like mine. Together we built a social and communal dimension grounded on our physicality and on the physical constituency of the environment, rather than on the basis of a shared mental and cultural framework. It feels strange to be so close to somebody yet understand so little; it deeply challenged my rationalistic formation, my will of knowledge in intellectualistic terms, and the dualistic background that separates body from mind for the welfare of the latter. Bodily practices acted instead as a means of reconciliation of these two entities, giving us a new unity, in a sense, a new birth.

Note: The names of the participants mentioned above were changed to maintain anonymity.

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Elena Russo

The author, Tullio Lobetti, practices *sumô* on the fourth day, alongside the entire group of male practitioners, regardless of age.

Information on Japanese Religions

第19回国際宗教学宗教史会議世界大会

The International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) XIXth World Congress Tokyo 2005

Gaynor Sekimori

One of the largest congresses ever held by the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) took place in Tokyo from March 24 to March 30, 2005. Organized by Professor Susumu Shimazono (University of Tokyo), President of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies, it attracted over 1600 participants. The world congress is held every five years by the IAHR, which is made up of 35 national and four regional member associations. This year, five plenary sessions and seventeen sessions (averaging eighteen panels in each), broadly covering the theme, "Religion: Conflict and Peace," were held in conjunction with a special session devoted to Japanese religions and also to the study of religion in general. Given the vast scale of the conference, it is inevitable that any one participant was able to experience only a tiny amount of what was on offer. I would like therefore to report here on that segment of the conference that I participated in directly, and pass on certain observations that I made at the time.

The conference was held at the Takanawa Prince Hotel complex in Tokyo, in a number of buildings situated amidst beautiful gardens which are a famous site for cherry blossoms. It opened on March 24 with addresses by IAHR officials, including Noriyoshi Tamaru, the Congress Chair, Peter Antes, President of IAHR and Armin Geertz, Chair of the International Congress Committee, as well as congratulatory speeches by Prince Mikasa, the Honorary Congress Chair, and Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi (in abstentia).

The Opening Symposium, entitled "Religions and Dialogue among Civilizations," followed with four panelists presenting a variety of views concerning whether the clash of civilizations and religions is the main threat facing the world today, and suggesting the possibilities and limitations of dialogue among them. The plurality of religious, cultural and academic viewpoints covered suggest that it can only be through the appreciation of diversity that critical issues can fruitfully be discussed.

Of interest was the panel held early in the conference entitled "The Lotus Sutra and Peace." Chaired by Gene Reeves (University of Tsukuba), it discussed various aspects of the influence of the Lotus Sutra on society, particularly in terms of its potential for resolving conflict. Hiroshi Kanno (Soka University) spoke on inclusivism and tolerance in the Lotus Sutra, Chieko Osawa (University of Tokyo) on the Sutra's influence on the writer Kenji Miyazawa, and Tomonobu Shinozaki (Risshô Kosei-kai) on Nikkyo Niwano's understanding of peace based on the Sutra. The discussion of the influence of Lotus teaching on Miyazawa Kenji held great interest for me, as I can see considerable Miyazawa influence in the works of the great animation artist, Hayao Miyazaki, known worldwide for his film, "Spirited Away." In addition, the World Congress for Religion and Peace (WCRP) sponsored a panel, chaired by Yoshiaki Sanada (Chuo University), which discussed Peace Studies and the role of people of religion in the modern world.

Two other panels that attracted considerable interest discussed the religious dimension of Japanese popular culture and the nature of Japanese Buddhism. The former was concerned with how *anime*, *manga* and music portray religious themes, either intentionally or subconsciously. Western culture, though increasingly influenced by Japanese *anime* and *manga* through film, computer games and the printed media, does not tend to associate such media with religious proselytization, so Mark McWilliams' (St. Lawrence University) presentation on how comic books are used within the new religion Kofuku no Kagaku gave many participants a new dimension of understanding about Japanese religious culture. The latter panel provided various perspectives on the study of Japanese Buddhism, particularly from the viewpoint of the dominance of western discourse about religion on the way it is studied both in

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IAHR Tokyo Conference Organizer, Professor Susumo Shimazono (University of Tokyo), President of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies

Japan and abroad. Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS) in particular provided a fascinating glimpse of the way Japanese Buddhism was seen in the west from the seventeenth century, particularly of the way Buddhist images were portrayed through the European gaze.

On the evening of March 25, the ethnographic filmmaker Minao Kitamura (Visual Folklore) presented a two-hour documentary of the annual mountain-entry ritual practice of Hagurô Shugendô called *Aki no Mine* (Autumn Peak). The Akinomine takes the form of a religious drama of death and rebirth in the mountain, and Mt Hagurô preserves what is considered a medieval form of a mountain-entry ritual which can no longer be found anywhere else in Japan. Shugendô rituals are essentially private, and this film represents the first time movie cameras were allowed inside Kotakuji temple at Mt Hagurô, Yamagata prefecture, where the ritual takes place over nine days in August each year. A capacity audience of around 200 heard an introduction from the pre-eminent scholar of Shugendô, Hitoshi Miyake (Kokugakuin University), before the film started. Although the soundtrack was in Japanese, I prepared an English translation, which I read out in conjunction with the Japanese, and which is also available on the Internet(www.mfj.gr.jp/film/narrationhagurof.pdf).

On March 27 a series of panels on Japanese religions was held, with Japanese as the chief medium of discussion. It began with a special session chaired by Paul Swanson (Nanzan University), and with Makoto Hayashi (Aichi Gakuen) as respondent, looking at religion and politics in Japan. Helen Hardacre (Harvard University) took up the thorny issue of constitutional revision and its implications for religious groups and organizations, stressing that the stances they take will "largely define the position of religion in Japanese society" in the coming years. Fumihiko Sueki (University of Tokyo) looked at the combinatory nature of Japanese religion, where a clear cut divide between "Shinto" and "Buddhism" did not exist formally before the religious changes that took place in the 1870s and did not disappear even after the government legislated to clarify what belonged to each. Professor Sueki believes that modern Buddhism has been too concerned with appearing to be rational and so has tried to gloss over its esoteric, magical, and even funerary, elements. He calls such surface rationalization the "upper structure" and contrasts it to a "lower structure" which includes the above elements. Thus he criticises modern Buddhism as having failed to deal openly with the faith of the people. The third speaker was Yoshio Yasumaru (Hitotsubashi University), who spoke about issues concerning the separation of religion and state in modern Japan and the way that "freedom of religion" was interpreted.

I was involved again that afternoon, in a panel organized by the Association for the Study of Japanese Mountain Religion (Sangaku Shugen Gakkai) called "Shugendô and Mountain Beliefs and Practices in Japan." Hitoshi Miyake, the President to the Association, opened the panel with a paper entitled "Shugendô and Mountain Beliefs and Practices," where he made reference to the designation of the sacred mountains and pilgrimage routes of the Kii peninsula as a World Heritage site in 2004. Shugendô emerged from this region and formed into an independent organization around the thirteenth century, centred on priests from the esoteric Tendai and Shingon schools who went to the mountains to gain spiritual power, which became the pivot of their magico-religious activities. It represents a combination of native beliefs, Buddhism, Daoism and Yin-Yang divinatory practices (Onmyôdô) and it was an important current in medieval religion (Akeshi Kiba). Christian missionaries who lived in Japan in the sixteenth century wrote of its existence in their reports to Europe (Hartmut O. Rotermund). During the early modern period Shugendô centred on great mountain shrine-temple complexes and village *shugenja*, who performed a variety of religious services for their communities and were closely involved

Peter Flügel

in local ritual events (Kesao Miyamoto). It was banned in 1872 by the Meiji government as part of their policy to separate Buddhism and Shinto, though the way the policy was carried out was not uniform among Shugendô centres, being affected by local interests and conditions (Gaynor Sekimori). However after the Second World War, religious organizations were given the freedom to operate independently, and female practitioners in particular have greatly increased in number in recent years, in what was traditionally a male-only preserve. Where restrictions on female practice still remain, questions have been raised about whether this represents religious differentiation or social and gender discrimination (Masataka Suzuki). This session drew a near-capacity audience, again attesting to the interest Shugendo has evoked in contemporary academic circles.

This emphasis on my personal interests is perhaps misleading as to the great variety of reports that were presented at the conference. Social engagement, home schooling, New Age movements, bioethics, the media, "non-religious" spiritual culture, religion and science, death, suicide and euthanasia, medicine and healing, and abortion and infanticide were issues covered in regards the social dimension of religion. There were a large number of papers on the major world religions as well.

There were also a number of panels that discussed arts and music within religion. Participants had the additional opportunity to examine various facets of these themes through used by performers in the religious dance dramas called *kagura*, through the special lecture on the "Ten Ox-herding Pictures" of Chinese Ch'an (Zen). I particularly enjoyed the *kagura* performance centring on the dance of the mountain deity (Gongen-mai) that closed the conference. It was given by the Otsugunai troupe of performers from Mt Hayachine in Iwate prefecture, and gave many of us the opportunity to be "bitten" by the lion-headed deity, so as to be purified by passing beneath its body, and to be reborn.

I was delighted by the degree of interaction and dialogue that was achieved among all the scholars present. I look forward to the further internationalization of my own field of Japanese religious history, as Japanese it and foreign scholars continue to work together, enriching one another, and the field, with their own particular academic strengths.

Dr Gaynor Sekimori *(University of Tokyo) was holder of the 2000-1 CSJR Postdoctoral Fellowship. Now an associate professor at the Institute of Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo, she is also the managing editor of the International Journal of Asian Studies.*

Katja Triplett

A Japanese religious blessing ceremony first for the outgoing and the newly elected Executive Committe of the IAHR.

The Theme of Pure Lands in Japanese Religions: A report on the 11th EAJS Conference Vienna, September 2005

Anna Andreeva

In September 2005, the University of Vienna hosted the 11th Conference of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS). Held once every three years, the Conference always attracts a large number of scholars from Europe, Japan and United States, and needless to say, has a catalytic effect on many fields of Japanese Studies. This year, the section on Religion and History of Ideas was no different: for three days scholars from many countries presented their research and exchanged ideas on the topic of Pure Lands in Japanese Religions. The section was hugely successful, and due to the pervasiveness of this theme in many areas of Japanese religious discourse, a great number of the papers presented brought up a variety of exciting perspectives on the topic.

The opening session was held on August 31. The keynote speaker, Professor Sueki Fumihiko (University of Tokyo), addressed the concepts of 'this-worldness' and 'other-worldness' in Pure Land Buddhism. His lecture, whilst encompassing many aspects of Pure Land thought in Japan, highlighted the complexities of the discourse and provoked much thought on the purpose and function of the addressed concepts in the various religious practices of Japan.

The first day of the Conference, gave a good start to the work of the section. It was opened by Meri Arichi (SOAS) who presented a discussion of the iconography of the Pure Land as seen on the medieval *Sannô Miya Mandara*, as well as its representations at the actual sacred sites. Anna Andreeva (University of Cambridge) followed

suit with a case study of kami worship in Miwa, and its relationship to the activities of the Saidaiji monks who attempted the restoration of the *Vinaya* precepts amidst the rise of the Amidist practices in the 13th-14th century. Peter Knecht (Nanzan University) presented a paper which concentrated on the Ise Sankei Mandala and the image of the Pure Land.

The next session consisted of three papers, all of which investigated the concept of the Pure Land in varying contexts. Karen Mack (Jodo Shu Research Institute) presented an interesting perspective on the phenomenon of invoking Fudô for rebirth in image and text, whereas P. Keller Kimbrough (Colby College) talked about the topographies of the Pure Land in medieval Japanese fiction. William Lee (University of Manitoba) assessed the concepts of the Pure Land as they appear in Shugendô rituals, *kagura* and *hanamatsuri*. In the afternoon, Gail Chin's (University of Regina) consideration of the skilful means of the Abject Buddhist Body in the *Yamai no soshi*, was followed by the presentation by Kimura Saeko (Tsurumi University), who approached the imagery of Tosotsu Heaven in medieval Japan as a another land of rebirth for women. Fabio Rambelli (Sapporo University) prompted a sparkling discussion with his ideas on the limits of Buddhist salvation, where he touched upon the problem of icchantikas, bodhisattvas and lepers in the Buddhist universe of meaning as it appears in medieval Japan. The last session of the first day was opened by Harold Bolitho (Harvard University) who talked about Takizawa Bakin's beliefs. The day was rounded up by the discussion of the Jishû monasticism in the Pure Land tradition, presented by Sybil Anne Thorton (Arizona State University).

Day two was just as stimulating and productive. Agnieszka Kozyra (Warsaw University) brought up the discussion of the Pure Land elements in the philosophy of Nishida Kitarô in her paper dedicated to the process of overcoming *jiriki-tariki* dualism. Maximiliane Demmel (University of Munich) followed with the discussion of rebirth in the Pure Land as it appears in the controversial interpretation by Suzuki Daisetsu. Steffen Doll's (University of Munich) talk entitled, 'A phenomenology of self' concentrated on the interpretation of the Ten Ox-Herding pictures by Ueda Shizuteru. The figure of Shiratori Kurakichi became a focal point for the presentation by Yoko Takau-Drobin (Goeteborg University), who discussed the transition of his theories of Yamataikoku between 1910 and 1942. Paul Swanson (Nanzan University) drew attention to a figure of Takagi Kenmyo: a forgotten silhouette of martyr and misfit in the political landscape of the Meiji era. Brian Victoria presented a paper on the militarization of the Pure Land in the context of Modern Japan.

The afternoon session was dedicated to a panel aimed at contextualizing the Pure Land Buddhist tradition in modern Japan. The Panel comprised four speakers and a discussant, Shin'ya Yasutomi, from Otani University. Michael Conway discussed the Dôbôkai Undô movement in the post-war Japan, particularly, the figure of Yasuda Rijin. Ugo Dessi assessed the present-day social activities of Jôdo Shinshû. The modernization of Shinshû in modern contexts, such as in case of Matsumoto, was a theme of the presentation by Takami Inoue. Elizabetta Porcu presented a discussion on the facets of Pure Land Buddhism in Japanese culture.

The last session of the day was started by Kayoko Nohara (Tokyo Institute of Technology) who observed religious culture as it appears in translated literature and reality in Japan. Yoshida Tomoko (University of Oklahoma) discussed the activities of Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993) in regards to modern historiography on Jôdo Shinshû. The last presentation of the day was delivered by Galen Amstutz (Ryûkoku University), who discussed the concepts of tariki, the adaptive unconscious and authority.

The third and the last day of the conference began with a presentation by David Plath and Ronald Toby (both University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) of the film, Cosmic Disc: the Kumano Kanji Jikkai Mandala. The session was followed by a fruitful discussion. Ineke Van Put (Leiden University) presented her work on Sukhâvatii in the Context of Intermediate Existence. Mark Blum (State University of New York at Albany) talked about the Antarâbhava sûtra and its implications for linking the Itermediate Existence doctrine with Amitâbha's Pure Land. The last session of the conference was closed by the appointment of the convenors for the next EAJS conference, and proposals for topics.

Many thanks go to the organising committee of the 11th EAJS Conference, the University of Vienna, and the convenors of the section, Drs Galen Amstutz and Mark Blum. Their work ensured a productive and stimulating time for all the participants of the section on Religion and History of Ideas. Galen Amstutz and Dr Susan Formaneck (Austrian Academy of Sciences) will take over as the organizers of the next panel at the 12th EAJS Conference, which will be held in September 2008 at the University of Lecce, Italy.

Anna Andreeva *is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. Her research is concentrated on the activities of the Ritsu lineage in the Kamakura and Kenmu periods, and one of the examples of medieval kami worship, Miwa Shinto.*

Ritual of Sacred Entertainment: *Hongawa Kagura* UK Tour

Shino Arisawa

This year a *Hongawa Kagura* troupe from Kôchi prefecture in Japan came to the UK to give a tour of performances and workshops in Bath, London, and Llangollen between the 21st of May and the 3rd of June. The tour offered a rare opportunity for western audiences to see one of the oldest extant forms of *kagura*, a religious ritual of sacred entertainment.

The first performance took place at the Guildhall in Bath, as a part of the Bath International Music Festival. The windows in the hall were shaded and the lights were dimmed to create a twilight effect; *Hongawa Kagura* has been performed at night since its inception in the early 16th century. The troupe consisted of five male performers, whose performance included recitations of prayer, dances, which represented several deities, and also a theatrical performance with dialogues. Although the music seemed to be very simple at first, with repeated sequences of drums and cymbals (sometimes with singing or recitation), the atmosphere gradually increased in intensity and the dancers danced more vigorously. The performers wore masks depicting deities, and this made their appearance rather unearthly. The theatrical repertoire, which started with dialogues between a deity of a woodman and villagers, was very comical and its "personalised" deity illustrated the Japanese religious belief that, just like human beings, deities have individual personalities and are approachable. The audience looked particularly excited when the performance reached the moment in which the deity Yata scattered handfuls of dried beans onto the stage and towards the audience. This segment reflected the belief that one still has a wicked heart if pain is felt when the beans make contact with the body.

Lucia Dolce

Lucia Dolce

Not only was the *Hongawa Kagura* performance itself fascinating, but also of great interest were the lectures given before the performance by Mr Noritake Kanzaki, a Shinto priest and folklorist, and Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS). The lectures described the aspects of Japanese religion found in *kagura*, including the veneration of nature, ancestral worship, polytheistic belief, and its amalgamation with Buddhism. The lectures also covered the history and performance context of *kagura*, its development from ritualistic form (celebrating and worshipping ancestors and deities in individual regions) to a more theatrical aspect, which provides more entertaining features for the audience.

Mr Kanzaki explained that Japanese deities live close to people, usually in natural environments such as in forests, rivers, and mountains. *Kagura* generally starts with a ritual to purify the stage in preparation for inviting deities to participate in the performance along with the participants, to possess the performer during the dance, or to tell the oracle. Mr Kanzaki said, "When we ask our deities to come down to our place they do so quicker than I travel from Tokyo to Bath."

As part of the *Hongawa Kagura* visit, workshops were also held for families to learn about the music and dance, as well as making *gohei*, a religious implement for purification made of plaited strips of paper. Many children accompanied by their parents were jumping up and down to the *kagura* music, and they also waved *gohei* around enthusiastically.

As an ethnomusicology research student, I enjoyed talking to the performers, finding out about their

lives, and hearing various stories about their early encounters with *Hongawa Kagura*. Nowadays it is very common for most *kagura* to depend on "part-time" performers who have other regular work. Members of the *Hongawa Kagura* troupe, for example, also work for private companies, or at government offices. They volunteer their time to train, rehearse and perform *kagura* during the peak season in November and December.

Mitsuo Aochi (27), for example, works for a construction company. Mitsuo's first encounter with *Hongawa Kagura* was in a workshop at his primary school. After that first encounter, *Hongawa Kagura* stayed within the recesses of his mind, and every time he saw performances at shrines he thought that someday he would take part in this sacred event. Mitsuo told me that it was "the weight of 500 years of tradition" that attracted him. Mitsuo also said that whenever he dances he feels the existence of deities within himself. For example, when he performs the "Dance of the Tray", he tries to dance with the feeling that deities are on the trays that rest on his palms.

Lucia Dolce

Prior to the performance, I wondered if the audience in the UK would appreciate the religious significance of the ceremony, or whether it would be regarded only as entertainment with music and dance. Mituso was also wondering how *kagura* would be perceived by the audience "that might have never seen Japanese people in kimono". His anxiety was alleviated at the start of the performance when he spoke in English to an audience for the first time saying, "I am a woodman, OK?" When the performance was received with laughter and clapping, Mitsuo thought to himself "I have got through to my audience. They understand me!"
I asked Mitsuo what motivates him to continue performing *kagura*. Mitsuo explained to me that there are many repertoires in *Hongawa Kagura*, each of which has a different recitation and dance, even the drum playing different. It is therefore impossible to master all of these repertoires within one or two

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years, because they are in themselves very broad and deep. Mitsuo told me that his attraction to performing *kagura* is to train himself to achieve the breadth and depth of this tradition, which is somewhat like "climbing Mt. Everest, where people struggle to reach the top by training for many decades."

He later told me that he realized "human beings are great" because even Mitsuo, who was unable to speak English, could communicate with people, even if only by means of paper and scissors, as in the example of the *gohei*-making workshop. *Kagura* performances in different contexts, either in Japan or abroad, at a shrine or a concert hall, evoke a variety of feelings and impressions on the audience, as well as on the performers. This first *Honkawa Kagura* overseas tour not only offered a unique opportunity for western audiences to be introduced to an ancient and rare Japanese religious ritual, but also for the members of the *Honkawa Kagura* troupe to enjoy a cultural exchange with people in the UK.

Shino Arisawa*, who acted as a translator during the Hongawa Kagura tour, is a PhD candidate at the Department of Music, (SOAS). Her research centres on the perception of continuity and change within Japanese "traditional" music.*

Japanese Religion and Popular Culture

Japanese Sacred Places in Stereoscopic Relief

Janet Leigh Foster

Stereoscopy was borne of the Age of Enlightenment. The impulse to scientific inquiry sparked by the 18th century philosophical movement, which advocated wisdom as the foundation for a system encompassing ethics, aesthetics and knowledge, led people to look for new means to expand their vision of the world. It was a time when science was often opposed to religion, yet at the beginning of the next century, the invention of stereoscopic photography would result in representing the essence of sacred sites.

In 1838, Sir Charles Wheatstone, inventor of the first stereoscopic viewing apparatus, gave a lecture at the Royal Society of London in which he explained how images could be made in stereoscopic relief. Imitating the way our eyes work together to perceive the world in three dimensions, stereoscopic image pairs depict the same view from slightly different angles. When the images converge through a viewer, the result is a three dimensional picture. In 1849 Sir David Brewster invented a portable device, the lenticular stereoscope, and collaborated with William Fox Talbot to make the first photographs in stereoscopic relief.

Unveiled to great acclaim at the 1851 Festival of Britain, stereoscopic photography became a major industry in 19th century Britain and the United States. Image pairs were mounted on cards that could be seen in 3-D through viewers. Themed sets of cards were produced in multiples of thousands, and then printed again as companies sold their negatives to other concerns. Most of the exported stereoscopic photographs of Japanese religious sites were taken by anonymous foreign photographers who were on assignment for British and American companies between 1860 and 1900. Scenes of temples and shrines were considered to be traditional and uniquely Japanese, and were therefore popular subjects.

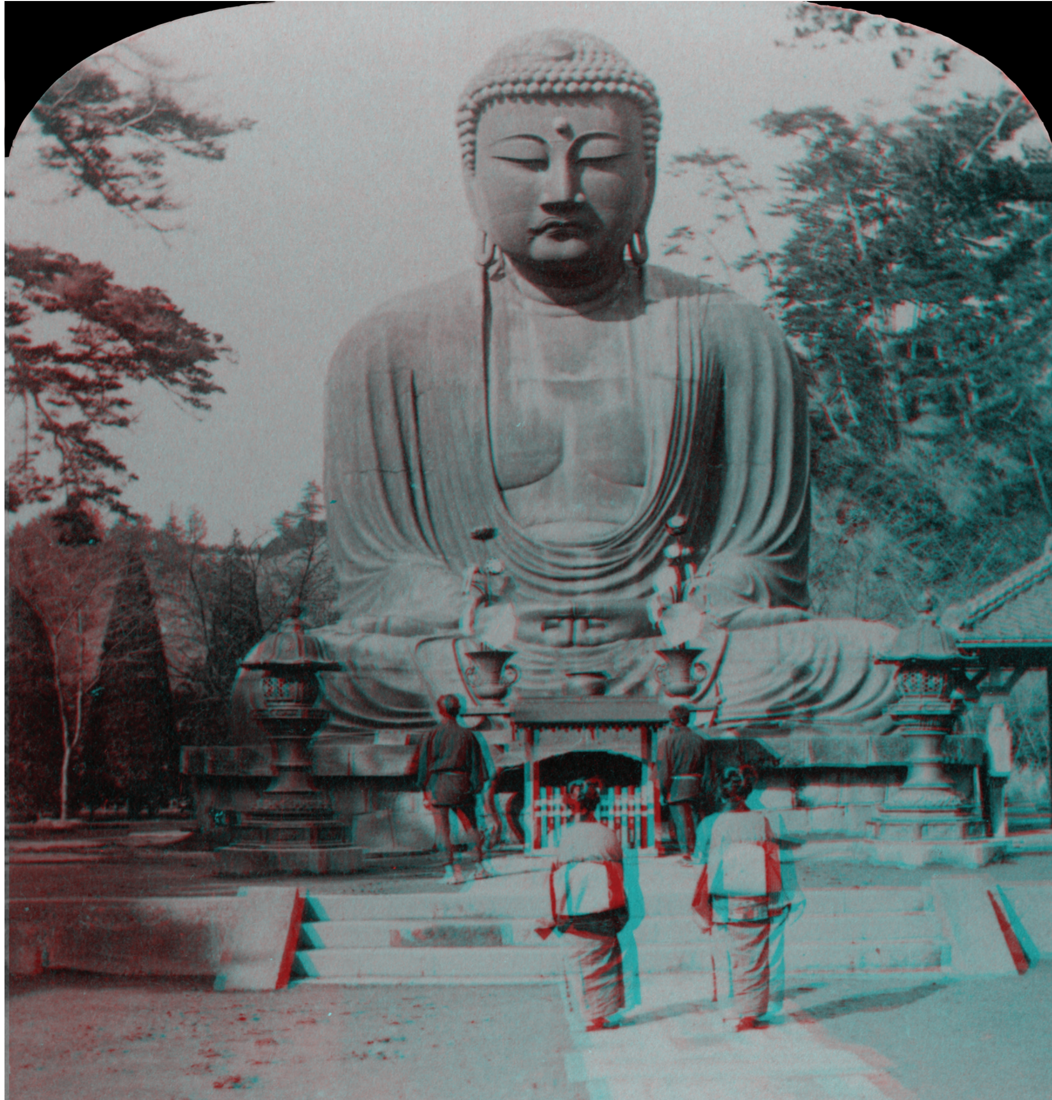
These photographers captured not only the scene itself, but because they were working in a stereoscopic genre, also inadvertently expressed an intrinsic aspect of the subject. Viewing a photograph in stereoscopic relief evokes considerations of spatial representation, an important feature of religious sites, used to convey ontological conditions that cannot otherwise be expressed.

Stereo cards were often sold in boxed sets as travel libraries to be seen through viewers such as the Holmes model shown below, produced by Underwood & Underwood in 1901. The anaglyph shown on the facing page is a digital re-mastering of this stereo card.

The stereoscopic photographs of Japanese sacred places included here are image pairs from stereo cards, which have been digitally re-mastered as anaglyphs. A method devised in 1891 by Luis Ducas du Hauron to free stereoscopic photographs from the confines of a mechanical stereo-viewer, anaglyphs were produced by printing both negatives of a stereoscopic image onto one sheet of paper through filters, one blue or green, and the other, red. When seen through glasses with filters of the same hues, the result was a three dimensional image. The stereoscopic photographs included here are from the collection of the author. The anaglyphs were made by David Burder FRPS FBIPP, Director of 3-D Images Ltd.

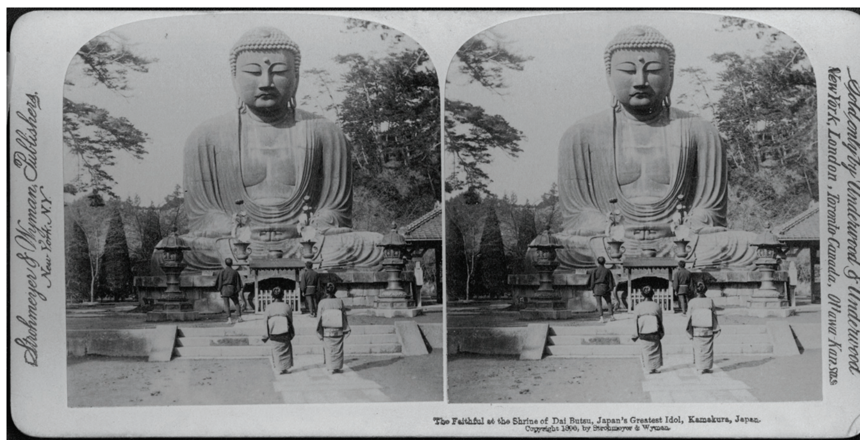
Anaglyph by David Burder FRPS FBIPP

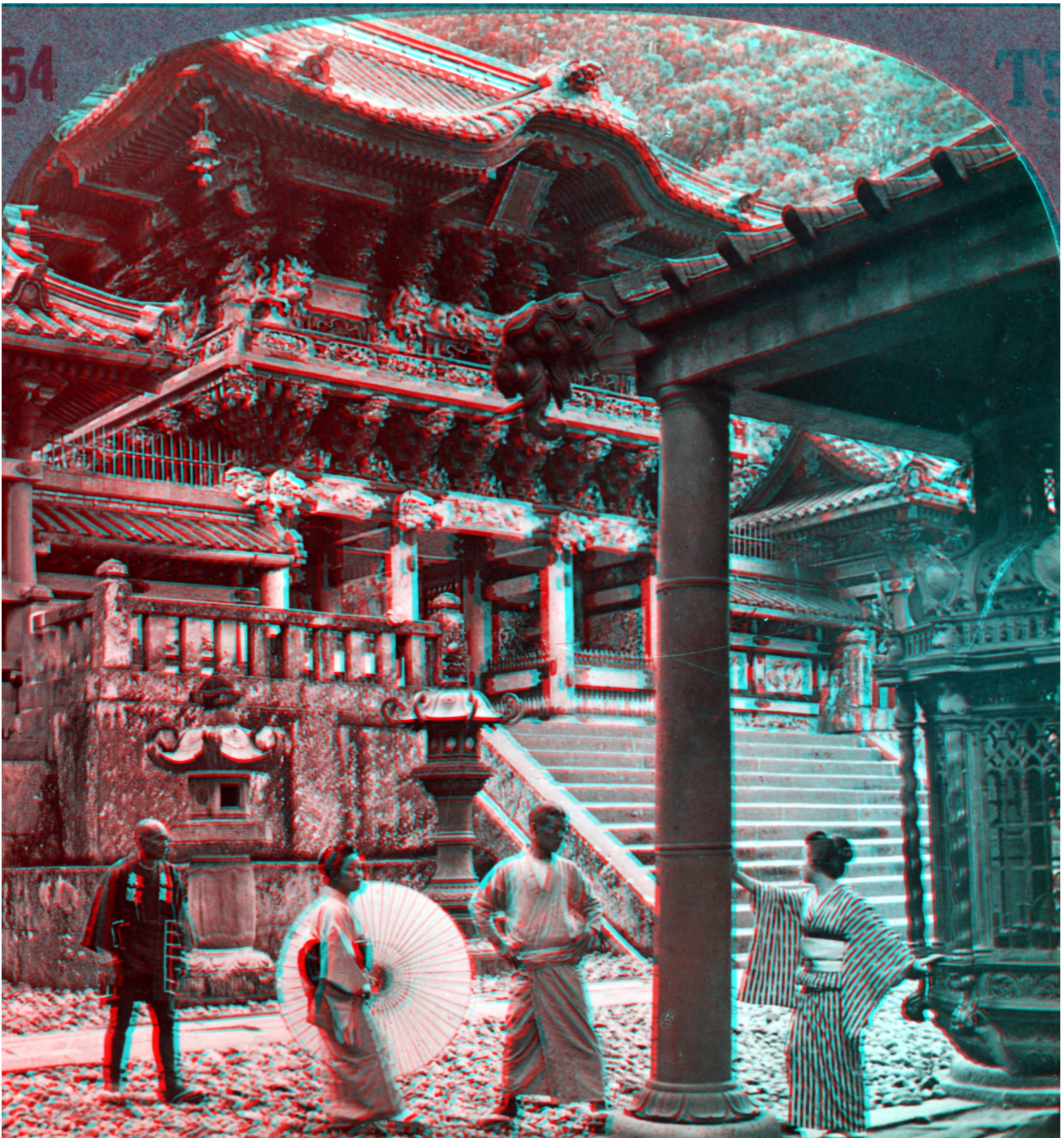
At high tide Itsukushima Shrine, on the island of Miyajima, appears to be floating on the water. The entrance to the shrine is indicated by a *torii* (gate), a structure which demarcates sacred and secular space. The composition of this photograph, however, leads the viewer away from the shrine, towards the landscape. Thus the *torii*, which symbolizes an entrance, is depicted as an exit, and the sacred area it delineates becomes ambiguous. Is it the shrine which is not visible in the image, or is it the landscape?



Anaglyph by David Burder FRPS FBIPP

The Great Buddha of Kamakura, cast in bronze, was erected in 1252 on the grounds of the Kotokuin temple, in the western part of Kamakura. Designated a National Treasure, this statue has been a source of inspiration for centuries. Featured in an 1892 poem by Rudyard Kipling, "Buddha at Kamakura", it was also a popular subject for stereo photographers. Although the stereo card (below) is dated 1896, copyrighted by the firm of Strohmeyer & Wyman, the exact date is unknown. The photograph could have been made before that, depending on the amount of time it took for the negative to travel from Japan, and on whether the company which produced this card was the first to issue it.





Anaglyph by David Burder FRPS FBIPP

In Japanese sacred architecture, spatial representation is used to convey ontological conditions which cannot otherwise be expressed. This stereoscopic photograph depicts one of the temple gates at Tôshôgû in Nikkô. The gate dates to the beginning of the 17th century, to Ieyasu Tokugawa, founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, who is enshrined at the site.

The author wishes to thank David Burder FRPS FBIPP, Director of 3-D Images Ltd . (www.3Dimages.co.uk) for the anaglyphs and 3-D glasses. Appreciation is also due to David Starkman of Reel 3-D for further advice.

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