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FROM THE CHAIR

A Happy New Year to All!

2006 was another busy year for the Centre. We held two successful workshops, one in June in London, organized by Ornella Corazza of the Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS, and one in September in Kyoto, co-organized by myself and Ikuyo Matsumoto, hosted by the Art Research Centre of Ritsumeikan University. The themes addressed stretched from contemporary conceptions of the body to medieval rituals, but the participation of the public (the Kyoto workshop had an extraordinary audience of more than 130 people) demonstrated the interest in different aspects of Japanese religiosity and an appreciation for the multidisciplinary approach of the Centre. I would like to extend my thanks to the participants, and to the external sponsors, who, in a different capacity, made these exchanges possible.

Last year we also implemented some changes in the constitution of the Centre, including a new Advisory Board. I am very pleased to welcome Professor Barbara Ruch of Columbia University and Professor Richard Bowring of Cambridge University, who have graciously agreed to act as advisors to the executive. We thank them for their willingness to get involved with the Centre, and look forward to their feedback and to a fruitful collaboration.

Many of us have also spent most of 2006 in Japan. I have just returned to grey and rainy London after several months in Kyoto, where I was a visiting professor at Ritsumeikan University. It was for me a rare and exciting chance to do extensive fieldwork at archives and temples and shrines complexes in the area of the capital. I was overwhelmed by the extent to which traditional ritual life is still alive! Most of our research students, too, were in Japan last year, either starting or completing their fieldwork. Reports on their progress, and the exciting experiences they have enjoyed, are also included in this issue.

Of those who have stayed in London, I would like to thank Brian Bocking for taking care of the Centre during my absence, and Katja Triplett, who remains a Research Associate of the Centre, helping out in various ways.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate one of our associate members, Anna Andreeva, for completing her PhD at the University of Cambridge. Anna has now moved to another Cambridge to spend a year at the Reischauer Institute. Anna has not been able to raise sufficient funds to resume the awards that, in the previous five years, have brought several young researchers to SOAS. Although we can no longer offer a post-doctoral fellowship and a studentship, we are making two small grants available to students who intend to start their postgraduate studies at SOAS, either at an MA or MPhil/PhD level. I shall be grateful to our readers if these bursaries, albeit modest, are brought to the attention of potential students.

The CSJR seminar and postgraduate fora series continues on Thursday evenings with another array of speakers, and I hope to see many of you who live close to London at the meetings!

Lucia Dolce

(Front Cover) Altar of the Star Festival (Hoshi matsuri). As fundamental tools for the execution of the goma ritual, the shasuki (tiny bowl containing incensed water) with the lid decorated by a white paper fan and the sanjo (ritual stick), used for pouring the water, are placed on the main altar. In the background are sixty-four candles standing on the top of sekihan (white rice mixed with red beans, commonly used to make offerings or to mark a good event). The sixty-four candles represent the sixty-four hexagrams of the Iyijing, or the sum of the seven Dipper stars of birth (governors of long life), the seven Dipper Stars (governors of prosperity), the Nine Luminaries (governors of fate), the Twelve Celestial Mansions (governors of human temper), the Twenty-eight Costellations (governors of daily fortune), and the God of the Central direction. (Left) Burning the Hannyashinkyō. During the goma ritual a copy of the Heart Sutra (Hannyashinkyō) is placed on the side altar, dedicated to Fudō myō, as an offering to the deity. The fundamental idea of the offering is also emphasized by the red and white knot on the ribbon, which recalls the ancestral vital affluats based on the harmony of opposite principles (red-menstruation/female-yin; white-semen/male-yang) in order to underline a prosperous and propitious circumstance.
Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions
Seminars and Postgraduate Fora
2007

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
Thornhaugh Street  Russell Square, WC1H 0XG

18 January
The Iconoclasm of Sacred Space: The Mythology of Shinbutsu Bunri
Gaynor Sekimori (University of Tokyo)

25 January
Fudō: Japanese Versions of a Tantric Deity
Clemente Beghi (University of Cambridge)  Postgraduate Forum

1 February
'Picturing' the Rhetoric of Salvation:
The Reception and Illustration of the Chujohime Legend
Monica Dix (SISJAC)

8 February
The Construction of Japanese Christian Communities in Early Modern Japan
Carla Tronu Montane (SOAS)  Postgraduate Forum

22 February
A Buddhist Renaissance? Shifting Paradigms and Subverting Traditions within Japan's 'Funeral' Buddhist Temples
John Nelson (University of San Francisco)

1 March
The Queen Mother Cult and the Miwa Rulers of Early Kofun Japan
Gina Barnes (SOAS)

8 March
Preachers and Preaching Techniques in Medieval and Pre-Modern Japan
Hartmut Rotermund (École Pratique des Hautes Études)

22 March
Standardizing the Buddhas: Reconsidering the Elite/Popular Distinction in Japanese Buddhism through the Lens of the Meiji Period
John LoBreglio (UC Santa Barbara)  Postgraduate Forum

ALL WELCOME
For further information please contact the convenor Dr Lucia Dolce (ld16@soas.ac.uk)
THE POWER OF RITUAL
Interdisciplinary perspectives on medieval religious practices

International Symposium, 14-15 September 2006
Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto)

Andrea Castiglioni

On the 14th and 15th September 2006, the International Symposium Girei no chikara – The Power of Ritual took place at the Art Research Centre of the Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. The event was part of a joint project of the SOAS Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions, University of London, and the COE Program Kyoto Art Entertainment Innovation Research of the Art Research Centre of Ritsumeikan University. The organizers were Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS) and Dr Matsumoto Ikuyo (JSPS, Research fellow/ ARC, Ritsumeikan University).

During the welcome speech, Professor Kawashima Masao (COE Project Director) and Dr Lucia Dolce presented lines and modalities of research followed by the respective institutes. They stressed the necessity of creating occasions of encounter and comparison between scholars, where it is possible to elaborate new methodologies of study based on both the Japanese style of analytical approach and other styles coming from different methodological backgrounds. One of the very first distinctive merits of this symposium was precisely this opportunity to unite first level scholars with differently oriented analytical techniques, stemming from the perspective of different cultures and specialization fields, in order to analyze the structures and the meanings of Japanese Buddhist ritual during the medieval period.

Reconsidering the symposium’s various papers, presented under the light of a multidisciplinary approach, one interpretation seems to stand out to represent the concept of the symposium. This concerns the polymorphic and the polyphonic character of the ritual, that is to say, the capability of the ritual to create ever new and ever changing systems of signs, symbols and meanings, according to the environment (religious as well as lay) where it is performed. It is thus possible to understand how the use of the word chikara (power) in the title of the symposium was everything but casual. The term chikara serves to emphasize the neutral and malleable quality of the ritual, in opposition to other words, such as kenriki (ascetic power), which is also present inside the logic of ritual, but is much more limited to specific categories of religious actors such as the ascetic. Besides, in order to create a fluid, but, at the same time, systematic schema of analysis, the papers were arranged according to a threefold pattern: 1) the ritual as religious performance, 2) the ritual as creating a liturgical body, and 3) the ritual as a socio-cultural practice. On the afternoon of September 15, a round table discussion about the most salient issues which emerged during the symposium concluded the event.

The two opening papers were linked by a common element: sound. Professor Saitō Hideki (Bukkyō University) presented a study dealing with the evolution of ritual petitions (saimon), used to pacify the kami of curse (jusojin) in the religious tradition of Izanagiryū, in the village of Monobe (Kōchi Prefecture). Along with music, also the body performance, the voice and the ritual words of the celebrant (tayū) become the real protagonists of this sacred experience, which contains a double action meaning. On the one hand, the ritual shows its public aspect freeing the community from impurities thanks to the recitation of specific sacred petitions passed down from generation to generation; on the other hand, it keeps a sort of secret niche, where the tayū is allowed to express his individuality as chief ritual executor. This is the final and climactic moment of the ritual called, in the Izanagiryū tradition, rikan. During the rikan, the tayū...
whispers quickly a sequence of secret invocations, which he has personally created according to his experience and sensibility, in order to calm down the irate kami.

Following the crucial role of vocalisation inside the ritual, Ōuchi Fumi (Miyagi Gakuin Women’s University/ SOAS) focused on the sūtra-chanting ritual (shōmyō) of medieval Tendai tradition. Professor Ōuchi demonstrated how a rigorous analysis of the aesthetic canons of shōmyō, closely related to the other medieval aesthetic value of yūgen (deep and refined beauty), better known for its literary and theatrical implications, allows the ritual to be interpreted as an entity capable of creating discourses of power valid for different contexts. On the one hand, shōmyō attests that the sensorial nature of the ritual performance (in particular the different tones of voice’s vibration) allows the practitioner to develop a particularly positive attitude toward his body, visualized as a sacred instrument; on the other hand, this ritual is related to the political dimension. For example, in 1406, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu took part in the Osenbōkō ritual, not only playing the shō (a little mouth organ, also symbolic of imperial power), but also performing the role of top vocalist during the shōmyō. It was thanks to this ritual that Yoshimitsu was allowed to stress his authority at the imperial court and, at the same time, the Tendai school was able to emphasise its relevant role in the administration of power in both the religious and lay contest.

At the end of the first section of the symposium, Dr Lori Meeks (University of Southern California), presented a study centred on the role played by nuns during the execution of hōe (Buddhist rituals on large scale) at the Hokkeji of Nara. Dr. Meeks pointed out the necessity of starting a new analysis of the ritual, which could also take into account the important implications related to the gender discourse. About the specific case of hōe, it is necessary to pass over the rhetoric of the exclusion, which tends to interpret the female figures as merely passive in relation to a Buddhist ritual universe made of andro-centred practices. Indeed, thanks to the performance of the hōe, the nuns were able to re-create their role and their sphere of power, not only inside the religious community, but also in the world of laymen, who attended the ritual. Through the hōe, the nuns succeeded in legitimating their position inside a rigid ritual protocol and, at the same time, they also had the chance to modify some cultic characteristics of the ritual so as to shape a discourse of power favourable to them. An example of this transformation was the introduction, in the hōe performances at Hokkeji, of the particular cult of Empress Komyō, founder of the same temple, especially identified as a manifestation of Kan-non bosatsu.

The two papers presented during the late afternoon section of September 14 shifted the research axis toward the performativity of the ritual in relation with the corporeal dimension of the practitioner. Through a comparative analysis between scriptural sources as the Juhō yōjin shō and the apocryphal testament of Kūkai (Goyuigō), Iyanaga Nobumi (Independent scholar), underlined the urgency to radically rethink the canonical interpretation of the “Skull Liturgy” in the Tachikawaryū tradition, usually reduced to a sort of deforming heresy of the orthodox contents expressed by the ritual protocol of the Shingon school. On the contrary, the “Skull liturgy” makes sense only if analysed as a ritual of the mystic body, centred on the secret power, emanated from the limbs (see the numerous textual references to bones and skin) and by the vital functions of the practitioner’s body, first of all those linked with sexual reproduction. According to this, in the “Skull liturgy”, the practitioner tries to establish a perfect mystic union with the divinity in order to obtain a holy body, using the peculiar ritual capacity of embracing identical and opposite forces just like eros and thanatos. Then, it was again the aspect of duality (nijū) and its resolution (nijifuni), founding principle of Japanese medieval ritual, which was analyzed in the paper of Dr Lucia Dolce (SOAS). Through the analysis of the double cult of the Two Kings of Knowledge (myōō), Fudō and Aizen, spread throughout Japan during the Insei period, Dr Dolce demonstrated how medieval rituals were structured on various associative principles, in order to reach different purposes such as the creation of new ritual mod-
nels, the gaining of alternative ways of legitimacy in the religious-political context, and the possibility of re-shaping, *ex novo*, the body of the divinity. These dynamics created the possibility of new philosophical-meditative dimensions, antinomical to the orthodoxy of the established meditative way of thinking. It also became clear how in the associative logic that permeated the ritual structure of the Fudō-Aizen cult, the physical body of the practitioner took on the fundamental role of an entity capable not only of unifying the sacred dyad (Fudō-Aizen), but also of realising the perfect union of the divine triad (Fudō, Aizen and Cintāmaṇi) as the gorintō, Kūkai’s body, and the enlightened nature of the bodhisattva Nyoirin Kannon. In this regard, Dr Dolce emphasised the importance of the iconographical analysis of the ritual, using almost unexplored sources (in Japan as well as in other countries), such as documents from the Shinpukuji archives and an intriguing illustration of the real form of the practitioner’s body during the perfect mystical union with the Buddha (*jishin jōbutsu*), as recorded in secret commentaries of the *Yugikyō* (*Yōga Sūtra*). This precious document belongs to the Fuji Eikan Bunkō, kept at the Art Research Centre of Ritsumeikan University. During the conclusive discussion of the day, Professor Kadoya Atsushi (Waseda University) introduced a stimulating provocation. He underlined how the ritual process of empowerment, emerged under different guises in the issues touched by the various papers, could be interpreted as a sort of “sacred biotechnology”, centred on the mystical nature of the practitioner’s physical body and based on the creation/re-creation of fluid meditative ideals, capable of forming ever new relationships of power between the body-mind dimension of the individual and the sacred or lay sphere of power.

The second day of the symposium, which focused on the analysis of the ritual as socio-cultural practice, was opened by the paper of Professor Tanaka Takako (Kōan University) on the peculiarities of the cult of Shōtên (Gañēsa) in medieval Japan. Although the possibility of obtaining this-worldly benefits (*genze ryoku*), destruction of obstacles, extension of the life span, success in love, and realization of all desires are fundamental elements in the ritual dedicated to Shōtên, in India as well as in China, in the Japanese case it is possible to observe some peculiarities. Among these, the double ritual representation of the sacred body of Shōtên, as two human bodies (one feminine and the other masculine) with elephantine heads locked in an embrace, is, for sure, a feature detectable only in the ritual tradition of Japanese Buddhism. The ritual appears transversal and independent even from its own origins and expresses a strong adaptive capacity according to the cultural and cultural contests where it is enacted.

Once again, it was the transformative power of the ritual which was discussed in the paper of Dr Steven Trenson (Kyoto University/ École Pratique des Hautes Études), on the relation between esoteric rainmaking rituals performed by Shingon monks at Daigoji in Kyoto and the modifications in the cult of Seiryō Gongen (Dragon Princess, daughter of the Dragon King Sāgara). Dr Trenson stressed the fact that monks began to perform rainmaking rituals only starting from the end of the eleventh century, whereas before the ritual was enacted only after the rain had started falling, according to the protocol written down in the *Peacock Sūtra* (*Kujakukyō*). Besides, starting from the second half of the eleventh century, it is possible to notice a radical change in the cult of Seiryō Gongen, initially identified only as *avatāra* of Kannon under the double appearance of Jundei-Nyoirin and, subsequently, reshaped on the figure of the Dragon Princess (also a daughter of the Dragon King Sāgara) of the *Lotus Sūtra*, expression of a double nature of female and male. The power of the ritual to create an ever-changing paradigm shift is shown by the sacred figure of Seiryō Gongen, which was completely assimilated with the Dragon Princess and also associated to the cult of the Dragon King Zennyo by an evident feminization of the latter.

The last paper of the symposium, presented by Dr Matsumoto Ikuyo (ARC, Ritsumeikan University), focused on the political function and the double flux of power expressed by rituals. She presented a structural analysis of ritual forms utilised by the monks of Enryakuji and Kōfukuji to organize their “divine protests” (*gōso*) against the lay authority of the *bakuufu* or of the court. These included a fast and furious transportation of ritual palanquins and sacred trees of the Hiyoshi or Kasuga shrines along the streets of the capital. Dr Matsumoto underlined the binary nature of ritual power explaining how, on the one hand, the ritual manifested its “negative nature” by upsetting the regular protocol of the annual *kamimatsuri* and creating a sort of fracture with the traditional course of the annual events. At the same time, however, it also expressed a “positive nature”, because
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During the conclusive round table discussion, Professor François Lauchaud (École Française d’Extrême-Orient) remarked that many papers underlined the polymorphic and transformative value of ritual symbols by recourse to the term metaphor, which, in its Greek etymology, derives from the words meta (after, above) and fero (to take, to push) and perfectly represents the peculiar characters of Japanese medieval rituals. Professor Abe Yasurō introduced another topic of reflection, the concept of a “living Buddha”, which had been mentioned in the papers of Iyanaga and Dolce, and which could be used as a term of comparison with some of the ritual elements presented during the symposium. The audience also actively participated in the discussion, not only asking questions, but also suggesting further material of analysis. Professor Manabe Shunshō (Shikoku University), for instance, commented on the iconographies presented in the papers and spoke at length on his experience of Shingon practitioner. Referring to the paper of Dr Dolce, he also stressed the necessity of developing a research project focused on the Yugikyō, which was an important text for the entire tradition of Japanese esoteric Buddhism but has not been much studied as yet.

立命館大学ワークショップ『儀礼の力』の印象から

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立命館大学ワークショップ『儀礼の力』の印象から
とによってある種の絶対が顕現する、という、ワークショップ
で盛んに用いられた用語である「二而不二」の考え方がある
このような「生命信仰」に結実する、というふうに考えればいいのかもしれない。この問題は、中世密教の核心にある問題
として、さらに掘り下げていく必要があると思う。

「二而不二」の考え方自体は、古くから存在するが、それをさ
ままざまな形でイメージと結び付け、儀礼化し、まさに「命」を
与えていた過程は、歴史の流れの中で見出すことができる
だろう。その最も重要な契機の一つは、三宝院流の創始者でもある勝覚だろう、というが、Trenson氏の発表
の大きなポイントだった。発表が英語だったので、充分に理
解できなかったのが残念だが、発表後の会話で、いくらか追
加の考えを聞けることができ、非常に刺激になった。勝覚の
重要性は、上島享氏の最近の論文でも詳し
く述べられており、非常に興味深い。

また、Dolce氏の発表で引かれた『神代巻秘決』（続神道
大系、2006年）の「生身不動愛染」という章は、非常に不
思議なもので、特に筆者にとっては、不動の「六月能延
法」のことを書かれていたり、東寺では、これが長者だけが知る
秘法とされた（これは能作性宝珠の作製法のことを想起させ
る）とか、あるいは比叡山ではこの法が箱の中に納められた、
と書かれていたのが興味深く感じられた。不動の「六月能延
法」のことは、「受法用心集」の閻魔本尊儀礼にかんする記述
の中に出ているが、東寺ではこの法が長者だけが知る秘法だっ
た。また比叡山では「一の箱」に収められていた、ということ
も、同じく受法用心集の閻魔本尊儀礼にかんする記述に見
える。これは、この不動愛染法と「閻魔本尊儀礼」がきわ
めて近い関係にあった、ということを示すもののように思う。

それは別に、「げぼう」と呼ばれる髑髏などの法具を持ち
歩く半俗の山伏や歩き巫女などと『受法用心集』の「彼の法」
＝閻魔本尊儀礼の法の行者が近い関係にあるだろう、という
ことも話題になった。「受法用心集」は口コミのような形で法を伝え
ていくものと思われる。

このような法の相伝の仕方自体が、正統的な密教の法の相
伝とは非常に違ったものと思われる。一般には、しかるべき
師匠に、しかるべき人の紹介を通じて入門し、その寺に住ん
で修行を積み、それが認められた後に受法するものだろう。
口伝のような形で伝えられていく宗教、と、やや異質な伝
統による宗教、あるいは「見られない形をとらえながら、口伝が
すぐに文書化され録して漏洩されていくもの」と、さまざまな
形態が存在したのだろうと思う。「集団の社会学」のよう
な見方で、そうした中世のさまざまな宗教の形態を考えるこ
とも重要ではないだろうか、と考えた。

Centre Activities


Ornella Corazza

On June 5-6 2006, the CSJR conducted a two-day workshop on Japanese contemporary theories of the body, focusing on the thought of a major figure in the field, Yasuo Yuasa (1925-2005). The workshop was aimed at discussing the Japanese way of perceiving the human body and the differences with the western approach, in which a sharp distinction between body and mind prevails.

Professor Brian Bocking (SOAS) opened the workshop on behalf of the Chair of Centre, Dr Lucia Dolce, who was away on research leave in Japan. He welcomed the participants and thanked the Japan Foundation and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation for providing financial support for the sixth CSJR international forum. Following his opening remarks, Dr Ornella Corazza briefly spoke about the work of the late Professor Yuasa, and the influence which he exerted upon many scholars who were fascinated and inspired by his thought and his encyclopedic knowledge in various fields of enquiry, such as Eastern and Western philosophy, neurophysiology, psychosomatic medicine, mind-body theories and other contemporary scientific debates.

Professor Brian Bocking (SOAS) chaired the opening session. The first speaker was Professor Manabu Watanabe (Nanzan University) who was a disciple of Yuasa and benefited from Yuasa’s guidance for more than 20 years. He opened his paper by giving an introduction to Yuasa’s life and work. Professor Yuasa was born in Hakata city in Fukuoka Prefecture on June 5, 1925. His education was interdisciplinary and was deeply influenced by his mentor Tetsuro Watsuji (1889-1960). Throughout his career Professor Yuasa was very active in academia; he taught for more than 30 years at universities such as Yamanashi University, Osaka University, the University of Tsukuba and Obirin University, while at the same time publishing more than 50 books and 300 articles. His scholarly endeavors are now being published as Yuasa Yasuo’s Complete Works [Yuasa Yasuo Zenshi (Tokyo: Hakua shob, 1999)]. He also established the Society of Mind-Body Science (jintai kagaku gakkai) in order to promote the study of the human body from an interdisciplinary point-of-view. The Japanese government posthumously presented him with an award for his outstanding contributions.

The keynote speaker was Professor Shigenori Nagatomo (Temple University), who presented a paper on Yuasa’s Theory of the Body. He argued that Yuasa’s theory of the body is an attempt to overcome what he termed the everyday ‘commonsensical’ dualism, which in the tradition of Western philosophy is well-rooted in Descartes’ 17th
century dictum ‘cogito ergo sum’. Yuasa conceived the practise of self-cultivation as an ‘existential project’ to overcome this commonsensical standpoint. According to his theory, one corrects the modality of one’s mind by correcting the modality of one’s body. This principle is based on the practical knowledge that the mind can be transformed just as the bodily capacity can be enhanced through training. In this sense the mind-body unity is viewed as an achievement rather than an essential or innate relationship. Professor Nagatomo illustrated this by elucidating Yuasa’s schematization of the body. According to his scheme, the body is comprised of four multilayered information circuits. These are organized around: (a) sensory-motor awareness; (b) kinaesthetic awareness; (c) the automatic nervous system, and (d) the unconscious quasi-body. The first circuit describes the activity of sensory nerves passively receiving stimuli from the external ambience and the activity of the motor nerves, which actively responds to it. The second circuit addresses an apparatus to cope with the external world in conjunction with the awareness of internal conditions of the body. As such, it represents ‘awareness of one’s own body’. The last two circuits are the greatest contribution to the theory of the body. The third circuit, the ‘emotion-instinct circuit’, governs the autonomic nerves and is fundamental to maintaining the life of an organism. The fourth circuit, ‘the unconscious quasi-body circuit’, is an invisible circuit that remains unconscious for most people and yet it becomes accessible in the course of self-cultivation. It captures the system of ‘ki energy’ flowing in the living human body upon which Eastern medicine bases its clinical practise. Professor Nagatomo summarized the goal of Yuasa’s theory as an attempt to capture the human being as a phenomenon that is intimately connected with a great, creative, living nature, while resonating with its activity.

The second session of the day, chaired by Dr Ornella Corazza (SOAS), was dedicated to another great figure of Japanese thought, Nishida Kitārō (1870-1945). Dr Matteo Cestari (University of Turin), in his paper Body and Knowledge in Nishida’s Philosophy, highlighted the centrality of the body (or the ‘historical body’) in the philosophy of Nishida. According to the latter, the body is a crucial point of knowledge, with functions that are a principle of individuation on the side of individuals, and a principle of determination on the side of the world. In this sense, the historical body is ‘the subjective aspect of the historical world’. Among other aspects of Nishida’s thinking, Dr Cestari focused in particular on the theory of ‘acting-intuition’ as a means ‘to know becoming things, to act becoming things’. This comprises two main concepts: a) intuition and b) action, which, according to Nishida, are inseparable.

Dr Gay Watson (SOAS) followed with a presentation on Embodied Knowledge: Buddhism, Psychotherapy and Neuroscience. Dr Watson argued for the commonality of these three disciplines, the truth of which can be found when considering knowledge to be an embodied phenomenon. For Buddhists, the body constitutes the foundational place of experience as is evident in many Buddhist texts; they maintain the importance of regarding the mind-body as inseparable. While noting that of all Western disciplines, psychotherapy had been the discipline which has most engaged a dialogue about Buddhism, she highlighted the necessity for engaging in body practices such as bodily postures and breathing exercises in order to realize energetic blocks and to improve the health of patients. She noted that Buddhist meditation can bring about profound benefits, particularly in improving emotional conditions, not only for the client but also for the therapist, and that the practice of mindfulness has recently become an object of study in neuroscience. She concluded that it is in light of these findings that Yuasa’s writings appear most compellingly persuasive, wherein it will be seen that the disembodied mind is an utter impossibility, because ‘mental’ processes are thoroughly and inextricably embodied.

The second day of the workshop was chaired by Dr Peter Fenwick, President of the Scientific and Medical Network and well-known for his scientific work on consciousness and near-death studies. In Imagining the Body in the Contemporary Japanese Context: Yasuo Yuasa's
Contribution, Professor Manabu Watanabe (University of Nanzan) presented Yuasa’s body theory and related it to the theories of Hiroshi Ichikawa (1931-2002) and Keizaburō Maruyama (1933-93), two contributors to a new reflection on the mind-body relationship within the context of contemporary Japanese philosophy. Professor Watanabe also applied Yuasa’s theory of self-cultivation to Saigyō’s waka poetry in order to argue its value in religious studies, by analyzing the religious meaning of the moon in Saigyō’s verses. As an example, he discussed ‘The Moon Disk Visualization’ (gachirin-kan), a kind of meditation method in which the practitioner imagines a moon disk. This visualization is a direct influence from the Bodhi-citta Śāstra. In this context, the moon disk is taken to mean “the body of bodhi-citta, the origin of every-thing, the source of advaya, non-duality, the absolute secrecy of various Buddhas, and the essence of dharma-dhatū” according to Kakuban’s Verses on Moon Disk Visualization. It symbolically points to the original state of the mind that is ‘innately pure, clear, and silent’ and is ‘filled with luminosity and cleanness’.

Professor Yukihisa Kurasawa (Obirin University) pointed out in his paper Rethinking Yuasa’s The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory, that the final work of Professor Yuasa was to suggest a new philosophy or science, which is capable of investigating the inner cosmos of human beings. This new science would be the science of the subjective experience, with a central focus on the human body. Yuasa proposed ‘subjective science’ to counterbalance ‘objective science’ by arguing that we cannot appreciate the meaning of truth in toto unless we delve into the inner cosmos buried within ourselves. Only then, Yuasa believed, would humanity become capable of attuning the macrocosm (physical universe) and the microcosm (human nature).

The workshop concluded with a round-table discussion chaired by Dr Peter Fenwick. Dr James Robison (Lampeter University) and Dr Ornella Corazza (SOAS) were invited to join the group of panelists, and the audience was actively involved. Many observations emerged concerning a growing multidisciplinary interest in issues related to the human body. This CSJR workshop represented one of the first attempts in the UK to discuss the topic from a Japanese perspective, where Professor Yuasa’s theory of the body is fundamental. It was agreed that, far from remaining simply a philosophical theory, Yuasa’s work carries various implications for everyday life. The most important one is an attempt to overcome a dangerous ‘commonsensual’ dualism, which leads us to live what has been called an ‘absent body’, or a lack of awareness of one’s own body. The discussion also moved to address the contemporary scientific study of consciousness. Neuroscientists are currently looking for what have been called the neuronal-correlate of consciousness (NCC), located in the brain. For instance Sir Francis Crick, who discovered with James Watson the double helix structure of DNA in 1953, comments that we ‘are nothing but a pack of neurons’. This approach has been revolutionised by computers as well as by the arrival of new brain mapping technologies. Despite the great fascination of these scientific discoveries, the objective measurements of the brain do not allow an investigation into the subjective (or ‘first-hand’) account of our experience. For this reason an embodied approach to cognition, as Professor Yuasa suggested, is necessary.

The workshop concluded with a note of appreciation to supporters in Japan, notably Mr Honda (Yoko Civilization Institute), Professor Shimazono (University of Tokyo), Professor Becker (University of Kyoto) and Mrs Yoko Yuasa. Hopefully the workshop has served to contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of Professor Yuasa’s theories of the body and will lead to a wider recognition and acceptance of his work.

Ornella Corazza recently completed her PhD at the Department of Study of Religions at SOAS and she is now an Associate Post-Doctoral Fellow at the same Department. (109131@soas.ac.uk)
Members’ Research Related Activities


John Breen gave a talk on Tenno wo katari, shinwa wo kataru at the JRC-Ochanomizu joshidaigaku joint symposium, SOAS, September 22-24; spoke on Chiitek netowa-ku no iji to kino at the 5th International Symposium, Shintokenkyu no kokusaiteki nettowa-ku no keisei, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, April 28; delivered a lecture on Le sanctuaire de Yasukuni ou la perte de la mémoire historique at Inalco, Paris, April 7; acted as discussant for the panel, The politics of Yasukuni shrine: from Meiji to present, AAS, San Francisco, March 25; spoke on Igrirusu no ojibunka to Hoshi no ojisama, at Hoshi no ojisama kai, Sogakudo, Tokyo, March 25. Publications: ‘Meiji shonen no shinbutsu hanzenrei to kindai Shinto no soshutsu’, Meiji seitoku kinen gakkai kyo, 43, (2006); ‘Nayami to meishin’, Jinja shinpo, 2858 (2006); ‘Yasukuni: rekishi kikou no keisei to sosshitsu’, Sekai, 756 (2006); ‘Komei seiken no kakuritsu to tenkai’, Chuo shigaku, 29 (March 2006)


New Publication on Japanese Religions:


Reviewed in this issue on page 37.
Research Report

Japanese Christians and Their Attitude Towards the Dead

Satomi Horiuchi

Visiting family graves and holding memorial services for the dead are still popular religious practices in Japan. These practices are mostly conducted in Buddhist style by Buddhist priests, and have been especially since the Edo period when, in the fifteenth century, all households were ordered to register as Buddhists at their local temple. The most popular practice for the dead is held during the obon period. Obon (originally urabon, from the Sanskrit ulambana) is an annual Buddhist event for commemorating one’s ancestors that takes place in mid-August. It is believed that each year during obon, the ancestors’ spirits return to this world in order to visit their relatives. This practice remains closely connected to Buddhism, since Shinto is concerned with ancestor veneration mainly in regards of the ancestors of the nation, such as Amaterasu-Omikami, the Sun goddess, or her grand-grand son Jummu Tenno, the founder of the Yamato dynasty.

Considering the pivotal role that ancestor veneration plays in the life of Japanese people, what is the Japanese Christian’s way of commemorating the dead? In terms of the theological perception of the dead, there are clear differences between the various denominations of Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians. Catholics believe in the existence of Purgatory, an intermediate state of existence between Heaven and Hell in which there is still the possibility for the dead to receive full grace from God, and where the situation for the dead may improve through the prayers offered by the living. Orthodox Christians do not have the notion of Purgatory but still believe the possibility of salvation after death, whereas Protestants, having denied the existence of Purgatory, do not call the matter into question and do not think about the dead too much. Some Christians find that the traditional Buddhist practices having to do with death are a problem as they may be directly connected to the ‘worship of the dead’ as explicitly forbidden by the Bible (Psalm 106:28; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6; Psalm 146:4). However, some individual Christians still follow these Japanese customs today, and churches in Japan, regardless of denomination, try to include these Japanese customs within their own doctrine and to respond to Japanese demands by holding memorial services for the dead.

During my fieldwork in Japan between November 2005 and September 2006 I visited churches from the United Church of Christ, an Independent Protestant church, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church to compare and contrast their view on the dead. Here, I would like to introduce some differences among the three denominations.

The United Church of Christ, established in 1941, is the biggest Protestant denomination in Japan. Under the severe circumstances of World War II, over thirty Protestant denominations, which had arrived in Japan in the early Meiji period, were united at the behest of Japanese Protestants whose aim was to build a stronger unity. Protestant churches in the West generally do not practice any form of practice for the dead person per se, but rather in order to console the bereaved. In the case of the United Church of Christ in Japan, for example, though pastors offer prayers during funerals and a memorial service for the bereaved in order to console them after losing their loved ones, this is never meant to benefit the deceased. Many Protestants believe that the dead are in God’s hands and there is no need to pray for them. However, the United Church of Christ has created several forms of memorial services, and the prime movers are usually the families or friends of the deceased rather than church leaders. The church members have no fixed period of time and program of memorial services, as would be the case in Buddhist practice, and the purpose of having memorial services is only to gather with people who knew the deceased well and to share memories. Often the gatherings are privately and informally conducted, and include a meal for the participants.

In contrast, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church always commemorate and pray for the dead. Catholicism was brought to Japan in 1549 when the Spanish missionary Francis Xavier landed in Kagoshima. However, Christianity was soon banned by the Edo government and was re-established only in the middle of the nineteenth century by Father Girard from Paris Foreign Missioners. There are sixteen Catholic dioceses and approximately forty-five thousand Japanese Catholics in Japan today (the number doubles when including immigrants). The Catholic Church aims to accept Japanese culture and one of its most significant attempts was the publication in 1985 by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, of a booklet titled ‘Sosen to Shisha ni tsuite no Katorikku Shinja no Tebiki’ (Guidance on Ancestors and the Dead for Catholics). This guide aims to solve the followers’ conflict between their ancestral beliefs and society, because Christians are often caught in a dilemma between their cultural and social demands and their faith. The
guide affirms the Japanese practice of ancestor veneration by providing a rationale from a Catholic perspective. For example, daily prayers for the dead are prescribed in Catholic prayer books.

Finally, if compared to Protestants and the Catholic Church, the existence of the Orthodox Church is still in the shade of the main Christian movements in contemporary Japan. However, it is important to consider the number of Christians in Japan in 1898: 53,924 Catholics and 25,231 Orthodox, followed by Protestants. The Orthodox Church was brought into Japan from Russia by St. Nicholai in the 19th century and his missionary work was remarkable in terms of his literary study of works like the Kojiki and Nihonshoki and other literature in order to understand Japanese tradition and culture, and also his mastery of the Japanese language. He was also successful in obtaining a great number of followers. However, due to the outbreak of the Russo-Japan war, and the Japanese demand for learning English rather than Russian, the number of Orthodox followers did not increase as did that of Protestants and Catholics. In the case of the Orthodox Church, there are even richer rituals and memorial services at almost every liturgy than those of the Catholic Church. At Orthodox churches I observed monthly prayers for the dead, called pantikhida, a Slavonic word which refers to the requiem memorial offered by Eastern Christians of the Byzantine/Slavonic liturgical tradition for the repose of the souls of the deceased. The names of the dead were always included in the prayers, and the sense of solidarity between the dead and the living seemed to be strong. In addition to the services at the church, Orthodox priests regularly visited parishioner’s homes on the death anniversary family members, and/or family graves at Easter to offer a special prayer.

My research was also conducted at Christians’ homes to investigate how individuals practice in their everyday lives and also with the objective to obtain further evidence of private memorial services held by various Christians in Japan. In my future work, through observing the facts of both official memorial services and individual practices, I hope to elucidate the transformation of Christianity in Japan from the Meiji period to the present, and to consider its influence on Japanese religiosity in terms of treating the dead.

Satomi Horiuchi is a PhD candidate at SOAS, Department for the Study of Religions. Her research centres on Contemporary Japanese Christianity: Ancestors, rites and graves. (satomichan8@hotmail.com)

Research Report
Towards a Critical Biography of Yōjōbō Yōsai and His Successors in Late 13th Century Japan

Shinya Mano

My PhD project aims at writing a critical biography of Yōjōbō Yōsai (aka Myōan Eisai 1141-1215) and his successors in late 13th century Japan, the period of so-called Kamakura Buddhism. Kamakura Buddhism has been the subject of a huge scholarly debate since the beginning of modern Japan, as its interpretations have undergone changes according to the intellectual paradigm of the times. For example, foremost Buddhist monks of the Kamakura period such as Hōnen (1133-1212), Shinran (1173-1262), Dōgen (1200-1253), Eizon (1201-1290) and Nichiren (1222-1282), who are often called the founders of Kamakura Buddhism, have been subjects of revisions by both sectarian and non-sectarian scholars. Yōsai has been studied by many Japanese scholars, but is still discussed in a single framework as the founder of the Japanese Rinzai Zen school. The result has been a mystifying image of Yōsai in both institutional and sectarian contexts. It is the hypothesis of my dissertation that Yōsai was not considered the founder of Japanese Zen Buddhism in the Kamakura time but rather an Esoteric Buddhist monk.

In my dissertation I seek to revisit Yōsai’s image by exploring first of all how he was perceived in his time. Several problems concerning texts and methodology complicate this task, but I would argue that the mystification of his image is the result of the influence of two different works of Buddhist literature. Firstly, the Genkō shakusho is one of the most important and, at the same time, the most controversial source to examine Yōsai’s discourse. The Genkō shakusho may be considered the first official Japanese Buddhist hagiography, written by the Zen monk Kokan Shiren (1278-1346), who was one of the key persons to establish a centralised Zen institution in Kyoto in the early fourteenth century. In the Genkō shakusho Yōsai is distinctly depicted as a Buddhist saint since he is classified alongside monks who imported Buddhist wisdom, the foremost being Ganjin (688-763), Kūkai (774-835) and Saichō (767-822). The entry on Yōsai in the Genkō shakusho suggests that Yōsai could be considered as the founder of Japanese Zen Buddhism (K. 31 p.661). Secondly, after the Taishō era Japanese academics referred to Yōsai’s best known work, the Protection of Country by the Revival of Zen (Kōzen Gokuron) in the edition included in the Taishō Tripitaka. This is based on a manuscript copied in the Edo period, the preface of which asserts that Yōsai is the progenitor of Japanese Zen Buddhism (T. 80 No. 2543 p.1a). Taking into account these two examples, we can suggest that Yōsai’s image as a Zen patriarch was constructed with

1 Thanks to the effort of Yanagida Seizan, the most ancient format of the Gokuron has been reconstructed and is available in the volume of Nihon shisō taikei devoted to Medieval Zen.
institutional aims in mind and from a central perspective. Therefore, a careful examination of the traditional image and a re-reading of the cultural diversity between centre and periphery is necessary to reveal a more vivid and clear image of Yōsai, which will in turn shed light on medieval Japanese Buddhist discourses as a whole.

In deconstructing the conventional image of Yōsai, it is crucial to analyse his Esoteric doctrine, which greatly influenced his disciples, but has not yet been systematically examined. At the same time, it is useful to consider provincial temples related to Yōsai’s activity, within the framework of historical anthropology. Yōsai has only been discussed in the context of the centralised political and religious world of medieval Kyoto and Kamakura, while his influence on local temples and their interrelationship with central temples has been overlooked. Here I would like to present an example of the significance of exploring local temples and a very key point of Yōsai’s Esoteric doctrine.

Medieval temples such as Chôrakuji in Gunma, Jikôji in Saitama, Senkôji in Kumamoto and Mitsuzoin temples in Aichi confirm that local temples played an important role in the process of the expansion of Yōsai’s teaching. On this occasion I would like to underline the Shinpukuji temple, since its archives have recently revealed some early copies of Yōsai’s works, Mumyôshû, Ingoshû and Kaikenkyôshuketsu, to which I shall later refer, and one manuscript of his holographic epistle. It may be surprising that Yōsai’s source materials have been stored in Aichi prefecture but not in areas closer to the former capital. The second abbot of the Shinpukuji, Shinyu, is a key person to trace back the origin of the material related to Yōsai at the temple. Early in his career Shinyu spent time in Nara. Nara was one of the dynamic centres for medieval Buddhism, and the place where many monks studied and exchanged doctrinal information. Yōsai’s works were in possession of the Nara Buddhist communities, and Shinyu brought some of Yōsai’s manuscripts to the Shinpukuji, when he became the abbot. Those manuscripts are interesting because of Yōsai’s earlier connection with Nara Buddhism. Yōsai’s epistle, for instance, mentions Yōsai’s role in Nara as a promoter of donations for reconstructing Tôdaiji temple (Tôdaiji kanjin shoku [東大寺勧進職]). Although this aspect of Yōsai’s activity in Nara has been known on the basis of Tôdaiji documents, the epistle discloses Yōsai’s heretofore overlooked effort in Nara. The Shinpukuji archive thus provides an important clue to understanding Yōsai’s role in medieval Japanese Buddhism.

The second blind spot in our knowledge of Yōsai is the fact that his esoteric Buddhist teachings have not been systematically examined. This is even more surprising when one takes into account that, besides the Go-

2 These documents have been published in the latest volume of Shinpukuji zenpon sôkan, Chûsei sentoku chôsakushû, Abe Yasurô, ed., Rinsen shoten, 2006. I am most grateful to Professor Abe for welcoming me to the Shinpakuji archives during the chôsu and allowing me to see some of the original manuscripts.

3 See Abe Yasurô, in Chûsei sentoku chôsakushû, pp.523-24.

kokurôn, Yōsai’s works all relate to Esoteric Buddhism. I would like to suggest that Yōsai was one exponent of mainstream Esoteric Buddhism in the medieval time. In several of his existing esoteric works, Yōsai frequently addresses the exegesis of the bodhicitta and the nature of the preacher of Esoteric Buddhism (shingon kyôshu [真言教主]). Another characteristic aspect of Yōsai’s doctrine is his interpretation of the two kinds of truth, which are symbolised in the colour of yellow and white (ôbyaku nitai [黄白二諦]), and are presented as perfectly harmonised with one another (Bodaishinronukeketsu T.70 No.2923 p.31c and Ingoshû in Chûsei sentokucyoakushû p.449a). This concept is elsewhere expressed as the esoteric combination of noumenon and phenomena (richi myôgô [理智冥合]) (T.70 No.2923 p.31b and Kyôjigi kenmon ND. 45 p.404), based on the non-duality of the womb and diamond worlds (taikon funi [胎金不二]). The idea of non-duality is one of the most significant Esoteric Buddhist notions, and can be traced back to the works by well-known Esoteric Buddhists such as Kûkai’s Jûjushinron, Ennin’s Kongôchôkôshô, Annen’s Bodaishingishô and Chôen’s Shijôjôketsu. In this sense, Yōsai’s understanding of Esoteric Buddhism seems to be within mainstream Japanese Esoteric tradition, and reflects the influences that Esoteric Buddhism exerted on Kamakura Buddhism in general. We may consider that Yōsai’s aim in addressing the combination of the noumenic and phenomemic realities may have been to contrast the views of those monks who did not admit their equality. In any case, the relation between these two realities was debated by many medieval monks, and Yōsai’s participation in the discussion reveals his position, leaning to conventional esoteric doctrine.4

What I have listed above are only examples of basic and initial overviews that have prevented us from grasping Yōsai’s figure in a comprehensive and consistent way. There other areas that await further investigation, mostly importantly the Buddhist environment in northern Kyushu, where Yōsai stayed for approximately ten years and which used to be the main centre for cultural and economical exchange with China; and the history of Chôrakuji temple and the temple’s founder Yôchô (1165-1247), which is significant in order to trace the official inheritance of Yōsai’s esoteric lineage. Finally, within Yōsai’s Esoteric Buddhist doctrine, there have been two dominant streams, tômitsu and taimitsu, and it is essential to examine Yōsai’s dogmatic tendency towards one school or the other, and consider to what extent Yōsai’s doctrine may be classified as representing one or the other. I hope to cover these topics in my research and contribute to a revision of Yōsai’s image.

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4 See also Sueki Fumihiko, in ibid, p. 563.
Framing Batō Kannon: Research Notes on the Transmission and Transformation of the Horse-Headed Deity

Benedetta Lomi

Batō Kannon, (Sk. Hayagrīva; C. Matou Guanyin), is a wrathful manifestation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and has as a primary iconographic characteristic a small horse head emerging from his headdress. He is also one of the eight Dharmapalas, and is often called a Vidyārāja, a Wisdom King, hence the furious appearance. Batō is generally known as being the protector of horses and horse breeders, and as such, is still widely worshipped in Tibet, Mongolia and in specific areas of Northern Japan. Although the connection between a horse-headed deity and horses might seem straightforward, there is more to the study of this intriguing deity than is readily apparent.

In my dissertation, I intend to outline the worship of Batō Kannon in China and Japan, pointing out the different forms and features of Batō, from its introduction to the Esoteric pantheon up to the present. Such an overview is not aimed at delineating a homogeneous, cross-cultural practice, but rather to look at the bigger picture, in order to formulate two orders of questions through which the figure of Batō can be investigated and analysed. The first set of questions pertains to the process of transition and translation of the image between China and Japan, and the second to the discrepancies in the transformation of meaning of this figure through the specific influence of the Japanese religious milieu (in historical and religious terms). These questions, which are mainly based on the canonical sources mentioning Batō, are of course only preliminary, and will be reassessed during the course of fieldwork in Japan.

From an analysis of the canonical sources on Batō Kannon, it is possible to distinguish at least three different stages in the development of this deity. The first stage, from the introduction of the Horse-Headed Deity within the Chinese esoteric pantheon to roughly the 11th century has as a main canonical text the sixth chapter of the Dhāraṇī sūtra (陀羅尼集經), completed by Atigupta in the 7th century CE. The chapter, entitled “Mudrās and Mantras of the Bodhisattva Hayagrīva Avalokiteśvara” (Heyejielipo Guanshiyin Pusa Fāyín zhoupín [何耶揭唎婆觀世音菩薩法印品]), represents the oldest known text on Batō, and at a later stage a highly modified version of it was circulated as an independent text. From the text it is clear that Hayagrīva was worshipped in order to obtain protection from and cures for the bites of poisonous insects and snakes; to cure any head related diseases such as headaches and toothaches or pain at the top of the head; to protect against curses and spells cast by demons or evil people; and, finally, to win quarrels and even to make someone fall in love.

The section containing the rules for making an image of the deity provides a description of an Hayagrīva with four heads, each of different colour, two arms and a small horse head placed on top of the central face. This iconography is peculiar only to the Dhāraṇī sūtra, as Batō is usually represented and described in later texts as having one or three heads, and so far, I have not come across any image of a Batō with more than three heads.

Batō is mentioned in numerous other Chinese texts translated during the Tang period as being part of the Amoghapāśa or of the Avalokitēśvara Mandala, and his principal function is that of discarding evil influences, and removing any obstruction to the obtaining of enlightenment. Regarding the iconography, the brief descriptions provided in each text are also consistent with numerous Batō figures found in Dunhuang banner paintings. Batō is usually described as seated on a lotus flower, with a fierce and wrathful appearance, flames emanating from his body and a red skin colour; he has three eyes, bare fangs biting the lower lip, and four sets of arms, three of which hold the attributes of a club, a lotus flower, and a vajra with the remaining hand forming a mudrā.

The meaning and functions of Batō began to change after this figure was introduced in Japan, and this transformation is reflected in numerous medieval ritual manuals, the most important being, in this case, the Kakuzen-shō. From the analysis of this and other texts, it appears that even though this deity was still venerated as a means of protection from evil influences and from malicious people, or to cure a multitude of illnesses, there is no mention of any protection against snakes or poisonous animals. Instead, Batō is worshipped to bring peace and prosperity to the country, to prevent foreign invasions and calamities, especially droughts and floods, to protect the populace from famine, and to prevent epidemics. (These same functions are also found in a sūtra of Japanese composition, the Ritual Manual on Hayagrīva (Kayaka kiriba shiken ki [賀野陀理縛神驗軌])).

More importantly, in Japan Batō is for the first time enumerated as one of the Six Kannon; According to Nin-
steles of Batô were not only placed at crossroads to protect travellers, but are also enshrined in temples and worshipped to protect horses, cattle and horse breeders. This aspect of Batô, which seems to date back to the late Tokugawa Period at least, is never found in any Sino-Japanese canonical texts, and is therefore often regarded as a popularization of the esoteric Batô Kannon. While on the one hand it is true that at a later stage, Batô worship underwent a strong regional characterization, and its function and liturgy were clearly detached from the original canonical ones, it would be wrong to assume that there might not be a common ground. Batô Kannon was associated with the protection of horses not only in Japan, but also in Mongolia and Tibet, where the deity also maintained the power to discard demons, by neighing to scare them away.

In order to understand how Batô became the protector of horses in these different areas, it is important to look not only at the textual sources available outside of the Buddhist canon, but at also at the existence of other deities responsible for the protection of animals, or with characteristics similar to Batô (for example the Goddess of Sericulture is often depicted as having a horse’s head). Furthermore, the socio-economic factors that might have stimulated the flourishing of horse-related cults also require attention.

What emerges from this overview is that, on a broader level, the tutelary functions of Batô have shifted, through the centuries, from personal protection against poisons, knives and head related disease, to protection of the state.
and to dispel evil influence, and finally as protector of the animal realm and of horses. There are also a number of questions regarding the transmission and assimilation of Batō Kannon within different areas that need to be further investigated. For example, how did Batō become the protector of animals and part of the six Kannon in Japan, and what importance did this factor have in the future development of its worship? This must be accompanied by an effective study that traces the actual incidences in the introduction and shaping of Batō in Japan. Furthermore, in light of these considerations, it needs to be carefully considered to what extent the deity described in the canonical sources was known in China, and the degree to which these texts reflected an actual practice. Finally, are the cults of Batō that survive in contemporary Japan to be considered as mainly popular and characterized as regional, or is it possible to trace them back to a common origin?

The questions raised from the visual and textual materials collected thus far have facilitated the contextualization of the functions and meanings of Batō in the Japanese esoteric tradition, and also to highlight the ritual practices connected to this deity. The importance of considering such practices goes beyond the study of Batō, and might, on a broader level, widen our knowledge of the worship of Kannon, bringing new interesting insights to the study of Japanese Buddhism.

**Benedetta Lomi** is a PhD candidate at the Department for the Study of Religions at SOAS. Her research is on Batō Kannon/Matou Guanyin: cult, images and rituals of the Horse-Headed One. (benedettalomi@gmail.com)

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Toluoniji jing 陀羅尼集經 (Dhārāṇi-sūtra), T. 18, 901.


The Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions is pleased to announce the CSJR Research Student Bursary in Japanese religions to be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, from September 2007.

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Closing date for applications is June 1, 2007. The selection will take place in June and results communicated shortly thereafter.

The CSJR Research Student Bursary will be awarded to candidates proposing to register full-time or part-time for a research degree (MPhil/PhD) at SOAS in September 2007.

Candidates must have applied for a research degree at SOAS by June 1, 2007 in order to be considered for the CSJR Research Student Bursary. The awards will be made on the basis of outstanding academic merit, and the Centre reserves the right not to make an award in the event that no suitable application is received.

Application forms and further particulars may be downloaded from the CSJR webpage (www.soas.ac.uk/Centres/JapaneseReligions/) or are available from:

The Scholarships Officer, Registry, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London, WC1H 0XG.

For informal inquiries, please contact Dr. Lucia Dolce, CSJR Chair, e-mail: ld16@soas.ac.uk. Further details on the CSJR and its activity may be found on the Centre webpage.

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, Dept 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, Batō 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)

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

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

Masaaki Okada, Decision making process in Japanese new religions abroad: the case of Tenrikyo UK (Prof. Bocking, Study of Religions)

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

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

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

MA Japanese Religions Dissertations 2005-2006

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

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The Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions is pleased to announce the CSJR MA Japanese Religions Bursary to be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The value of the bursary is £2000, which may be used either towards remittance of tuition fees or maintenance for the first year of study. The Bursary is open to students with an outstanding academic record regardless of nationality.

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For informal inquiries, please contact Dr. Lucia Dolce, CSJR Chair, e-mail: ld16@soas.ac.uk.

Further details on the CSJR and its activity may be found on the Centre webpage.
Fieldwork Reports

Tullio Lobetti, holder of the 2004 CSJR Research Studentship

In June 2006 I began my fieldwork in Japan with the aid of the Japan Foundation, which granted me a Fellowship lasting 12 months, until June 2007. I joined Keio University in Tokyo, under the supervision of Prof. Suzuki Masa-taka, department of Humanities and Sociology. With his help I started planning my activities in Japan, which, by virtue of the methodology I chose to follow for my fieldwork research, would require my direct participation in a number of ascetic practices.

Thanks to the introduction of Prof. Suzuki, at the end of July 2006 I was accepted to participate in the okugake shugyō practice (Shugendō), under the auspices of the Tōnanin temple in Yoshino. The okugake shugyō is a remarkably long and physically demanding Shugendō walking practice that takes place on the Omine Okugake Michi, the sacred route starting from Yoshino and reaching Kumano via the mountains Omine, Misen, Hakkyogatake and Shagagatake. The tradition tells us that this route was traced by En no Gyōja himself (the mythical founder of Shugendō) in the early 9th century; most of the route runs along the mountain ridges of the Kii mountain range at an altitude above 1000 meters, and it is dotted by numerous sacred places in which additional shugyō (ascetic exercises) called nabiki are performed. Many of these ascetic feats are performed on Mount Omine, including the repentance at the Nishi no Nozoki, where the practitioner is hung over a cliff with a rope and is asked to confess his sins in the face of death, and the ura no gyōda, a difficult route through steep stones behind Ominesan-ji culminating in the byōdō no iwa practice where the practitioner has to go around aoulder protruding off of a cliff literally hanging on the boulder itself.

As a following step, and thanks to the help of a leading scholar in Shugendō studies, Dr. Gaynor Sekimori, I was able to participate, from 27 August until 1st September, in the Akinomine mountain practice held by the Dewa Sanzan Jinja (Shinto Shugendō) in the Dewa Sanzan area, Yamagata prefecture. The practice consists of the “Shinto” version of the Akinomine held at the Kōtakuji temple in the same period, in which I already took part. The main differences I noticed in the Shinto version of the practice were a marked conviviality and enjoyment on the part of the participant; a more group-oriented rather than individual participation, accompanied by a stronger senpai-kōhai (senior-junior) group structure; a more “popular” kind of participation, involving mainly people from the countryside and their demand for worldly benefits regarding everyday life, and, finally, this practice involved a far lower degree of physical exertion.

Still concentrating my attention on “popular religion”, at the beginning of October I joined a group of Ontake-gyōji (pilgrims venerating Mount Ontake, in Nagano prefecture) in their Ontake matsuri held at Honjo Jinja, Saitama. It was interesting to observe how many of the so-called “popular” practices are in fact “popularized” versions of rituals and practices commonly held in established religious environments, particularly Buddhism. These Ontake ascetics, for instance, were performing “simplified” versions of Buddhist rituals like the goma, followed by the hiwatari (fire walking) practice, in which I also took part.

To further investigate the activities of the Ontake-gyōji groups, from the 23rd to the 25th of January 2007 I participated in the annual winter practice (samugyō - cold practice ) held by the Jiga Daikyōkai, an Ontake group based in Agematsu village, set at the foot of Mt. Ontake itself. Central in this practice, which consists mostly of long marches in the snow between sacred places, were the several episodes of kami possession (kamiyakari) of the group leaders (sendatsu) during which the mountain deities spoke with the group of believers, offering practical advice and foreseeing future events.

For the following months, I am planning to participate in the ascetic exercises of established Buddhist schools. Thanks to the aid of my supervisor, Dr Lucia Dolce, I was able to establish a connection with one of the sen-nichi kaihōgyōja of Mt. Hiei, Uehara-sensei, and this will hopefully enable me to practice alongside with him in April. I am currently arranging my involvement into some of the ascetic training of the Shingon priests at Koya-san, and I have already set my participation in the demanding Spring Sesshin of the Toshōji (Sōtō Zen) in Tokyo.

Besides my activities of participant observation in all the above mentioned ascetic trainings, during 2006 I attended various conferences and symposia held in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan, such as:

- September 14-15: International Symposium "The Power of Ritual: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Religious Practices", co-organized by the CSJR and the Art Research Centre, Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. (Please see the report on page 4 of this issue.)
Carla Tronu Montane, holder of the 2003-2006 CSJR Research Studentship

Since October I have been back at SOAS after my second year of fieldwork in Japan. Overall, it was a great experience both for my research skills and also for my personal interests. In addition to collecting materials for my PhD thesis, I completed an MA degree in Japanese Studies at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies (OUFS). I wrote an MA Thesis titled *Kirishitan Funerals in sixteenth and seventeenth century Japan*, in which I analysed the issue of ritual adaptation in the Jesuit mission’s records of funerals for lay Japanese Christians. What started as a few case studies developed into a comparison between the ritual handbooks used in Portugal at the time, initially used by the Jesuits in Japan, and the *Manuale ad Sacramenta Administranda*, the ritual handbook for missionaries in Japan, published in 1605 in Nagasaki.

The Masters programme included coursework, in Japanese literature, thought, and folklore, all of which were conducted in Japanese. It was challenging, but also very stimulating. The most inspiring courses for me were those in *Kirishitan* literature and history, taught by Prof. Rikiya Komei, who was also my academic adviser at OUFS. I attended a seminar in which we translated and analysed extracts from the Gospel that the Jesuits had translated into pre-modern Japanese in the sixteenth century, and attended a course on the embassy of the four Japanese boys to Europe (1582-1587).

Apart from my coursework, I was able to devote my time to the careful reading of pre-modern Japanese publications and manuscripts used by the Jesuits in Japan. Dr Emi Kishimoto, a specialist on multilingual dictionaries published in pre-modern Japan guided me in these studies. In particular she helped me to become familiar with some key texts for the study of Christian ritual in Japan: the *Dochiriina Kirishitan*, a basic but unabridged Christian Doctrine in Japanese published twice in 1592 and 1600; the *Dochirina Ihon*, known among scholars as “the other Doctrine”, an unpublished document that resembles the Christian Doctrine above, but elaborates on certain aspects, like the Christian concept of Heaven and Hell; and the Japanese appendix of the *Manuale ad Sacramenta Administranda* mentioned above.

In December 2005 I attended the lectures of the annual meeting of the *Kirishitan Bunka Kenkyukai* [Research Association of Christian Culture] and an international colloquium at Sophia University in Tokyo on “Integration and Division between Universalism and Localism in Jesuit Mission Reports and Histories”. In January 2006 I presented on *Kirishitan no sōgigirei to Nihon Bukkyō girei he no tekiō* (*Kirishitan funerals and the adaptation to Japanese Buddhist Funerals*) at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies. This was also the topic of my published article, ‘Kirishitan no sōgigirei to Nihon Bunka he no tekiō*, Nihongo Nihon Bunka Kenkyû, 16 (November 2006). In August, after defending my MA dissertation, I spent a few days in Tokyo visiting the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo and collecting primary sources in Japanese related to Japanese Christian communities. In September, just before returning to Europe, I was able to attend the International Symposium on *The Power of Ritual: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Medieval Religious Practices*, co-organised by the CSJR and the Art Research Centre of Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto.

Just after returning to Europe, in October 2006, I attended the International Symposium *Alessandro Valignano S.I. Uomo del Rinascimento, ponte tra Oriente e Occidente* [*Man of the Renaissance, bridge between East and West*], organised by the Carichieti Foundation, which took place at the Teatro Marrucino in Chieti, Italy. (See report on page 38 of this issue.)

I am very grateful to my academic advisors and teachers at OUFS, to the Japanese Government for the scholarship program that made these two years in Japan possible for me, and for a grant from the Japanese Foundation Endowment Committee (JFEC), which covered part of the expenses of my research trips to Tokyo. Finally, I owe my best memories in Japan to the members of the OUFS’s Tea Ceremony Club and its two Tea Masters. For this academic year, as a recipient of the CSJR studentship in the Japanese Section of the Department for Languages and Cultures of Korea & Japan at SOAS, my plan is to concentrate on writing my PhD thesis on the construction of Christian communities in pre-modern Japan.

• September 16-18: Nihon Shûkyô Gakkai, held in Sendai at the Tôhoku Daigaku.
• October 28-29: Anthropology of Japan in Japan (AJJ) conference, held at the Meijiakuin Daigaku. Tokyo.
I also attended a number of seminars and lectures held at my host institution, Keio University. Among the other activities, I also wrote an essay about the Japanese self-mummified Buddhas for the book *Back to the Future of the Body*, which will be published by Cambridge Scholars Press in March 2007.
Fieldwork Report

Hell’s Bells
Walking Among the Dead in Kyoto
Andrea De Antoni

While you are walking through the streets of Kyoto, on the eastern side of the Kamo River, and very close to it, you might accidentally step into Rokuhara (now written 六波羅原, but during the Heian period it was written 六波羅原). This rectangular area, with a base about seven hundred meters long and about three hundred and fifty meters in altitude, is limited by Matsubarakadōri on its northern side and by Gojōdōri on its southern one, while Yamatoōjōdōri and Higashiōjōdōri respectively trace its western and eastern boundaries. However, if you find yourself in Rokuhara during the period between the seventh and the tenth of August, you will probably not be able to walk very easily. In fact, during obon (盂蘭盆) (or urabon (盂蘭盆)) and especially during those four days, in Rokuhara the so-called rokudō mairi (六道参り), one of the most important and peculiar activities of the annual religious calendar (gyōji (行事)) of Rokuhara, takes place and the streets around the so called “crossroad of the six realms” (rokudō no tsuji [六道の辻]) become extremely crowded.

Mairi is the nominalization of the verb mairu, which means “to go” or “to visit a temple”, therefore “rokudō mairi” literally means “visiting the six realms”. It consists of walking through Rokuhara, and paying homage at local temples in order to meet and welcome (omukae suru) the spirits of the dead, who visit their homes during urabon. The main temple of the zone and the centre of this mairi is Rokudō Chinnōji (六道珍皇寺), but also Saifukuji (西福寺) and Rokuharamitsuji (六波羅蜜寺) have a role during the rites which regulate the relationships between this world and the one of the dead in the place which is believed to be the connection point between this world and the otherworld.

Rokudō Chinnōji was founded by Abbot Keishun (建仁僧都) under the reign of Emperor Kanmu, and prospered at the time of Kūkai. The main hall and the tower were restored by Ono no Takamura (小野篁), a statesman who lived during the first Heian period (about 802-852), serving Emperor Saga, and who is renown as an intellectual and poet. Rokudō Chinnōji decayed during the Nanbokuchō period, but it was revived as a Rinzai temple, related to Kenninji (建仁寺). It is dedicated to Yakushi Nyōrai, represented by a statue, which is also an “important cultural property” (jūyō bunkazai), which is exhibited only during the rokudō mairi and which is said to be a work of art made by Saichō. Inside the boundaries of the temple, on the eastern side, there is a famous Enmadō, in which two wooden statues are enshrined: one represents Emma Daigō (閻魔大王), the supreme judge of the spirits of the dead. It is believed to be a work by Ono no Takamura, while the other statue, which is 190 cm tall, represents Ono no Takamura himself, and it is thought to be life size.

People believe that this statesman used to serve as a government official at the Imperial Court during the day, while at night he worked in Enma’s office. Many legendary tales have been recorded of people who maintained that they met him. Among these, one of the most authoritative was given by Fujiwara no Yoshisuke, the minister of Nishi Sanjō, who helped Ono no Takamura when he was punished because of an accident when he was a student. Thereafter the minister died of a disease and was taken in front of Enma in order to be judged on account of the actions he made during his lifetime. Thanks to Ono no Takamura’s intercession, he was allowed to go back to this world. The day after, the minister went to Takamura to try to determine whether his blurred memories of the night were true. When he asked, the statesman replied, “I just returned the favour you did for me, but don’t tell anybody what you have seen.” Yoshisuke honoured and respected Takamura, but could not help recounting his incredible adventure.

A second legend about Takamura’s role as intermediary between the worlds of the living and the dead is about Takamura’s father-in-law, Fujiwara no Tadamori. He, too, died of a disease and was taken in front of Enma. Because of Takamura’s intercession he came back to life. He promised he would copy the Hannyakyō within three years. However, when the three years had passed, he had still not copied the sūtra, because he was too involved in his businesses. When Takamura scolded him and he saw that the frightful face admonishing him was the same that had helped him in the underworld three years before, he understood that what he remembered was true and so he...
quickly copied the sūtra. However, the story about Takamura dropped also from Tadamori’s lips.

Although the figure of this statesman seems to be connected to both the history of Chinnōji and its function during the rokudō mairi, it does not seem to be the most important feature of the temple or, at least, it does not seem to play a fundamental ritual role. One can suppose that the historical and economical connections with such an important and popular political figure might have legitimized the identity of Chinnōji as an institution. Furthermore, the role Takamura plays in the underworld, together with his relationship with Enma, who is considered to be the highest ranking official in the otherworld, legitimize Chinnōji in its ritual function. However this does not seem to be very relevant in today’s mairi course; no particular attention or worship is given to the statue of Takamura (nor to the one of Enma), although I think they constitute the necessary representation of power within the dynamics of the ritual discourse in Rokuhara.

Nevertheless, the legends about Takamura’s role clearly show the direct relationship between the temple and the underworld, a relationship which is also demonstrated by two different elements. The first is the well on the back of the hondō of Chinnōji, which is believed to communicate with hells (jigoku). Rokuhara and, in particular, rokudō no tsuji is thought to be the entrance of hell, therefore the dead spirits which return home during obon are believed to come up from this well. Additional evidence of the tight relationship between Rokuhara and the otherworld is to be found when contrasting it with another area, that of the Daikakuji (大覚寺), located in Saga (western Kyoto), in front of which a “Quarter of the Six Realms” (rokudōchō [六道町]) is thought to be. The place which is indicated as daikakujimae, is also called “The six realms of the living beings” (sei no rokudō [生の六道]), because Takamura used to come back there from the underworld. By contrast, Rokuhara is indicated as the “Six realms of the dead” (shi no rokudō [死の六道]), because, while Taka-

The other elements which mark the relationship between Rokuhara and the otherworld is the so-called mukaegane (迎え鐘), the bell which is believed to call back the dead. This bell is sealed inside a building from which a long and thick rope comes out horizontally. People stand in an interminable queue in order to pull the rope and ring the bell. However, different from normal bells, people pull the rope toward themselves, instead of pulling it down. It is said that underneath the bell there is a very deep hole, which goes down underground, until it reaches hells. Therefore, when the dead hear the sound of the bell, they come up and gather on the small branches of kōyamaki (Sciadopitys verticillata), their living relatives bought beforehand in order to take their ancestors home.

The ringing of the bell is only part of a more complex series of ritual practices performed at Rokudō Chinnōji. First of all, the visitors go to the hondō and have the ancestor’s posthumous name (kaimyō) written on a tablet (suitōba). Then they queue to ring the bell. Finally, after purifying the tablets by using incense sticks, they walk to the Jizōsonshitsu, dampen the tablets using branches of kōyamaki and recite prayers. They leave the tablets there and go back home taking the branches with them.

The second important temple in the area is Saifukuji. It is much smaller than Rokudō Chinnōji and also its ritual function seems to be less relevant in the mairi. Its role seems to be tied to the worship of the bodhisattva Jizō,
providing a salvific aspect which is not so present inside the ritualty of Chinnōji. Saifukuji stands on the rokudō no tsuji. It is said to have been built by Kūkai and was inaugurated by enshrining a statue of the bohisattva Jizō, to which the temple is dedicated. When it was built, there used to be six Buddha halls within the temple precincts, but presently, only three remain. The correlation between the temple and Jizō started when Empress Danrin, the wife of Emperor Saga, invoked the Jizō of Rokuhara and asked him to help prince Masayoshi to recover from a disease. From then on the prince’s health improved and he eventually managed to rise to the throne as Emperor Ninmyō. From that time, the Jizō of Saifukuji has been known as “Kosodate Jizō”, the “Jizō who [helps] bring up children”. On the one hand, this way of referring to Jizō shows the function to which this bodhisattva - and, specifically, the one to which Saifukuji is dedicated - is associated. Nevertheless, this Jizō is also called “Rokuhara Jizō”. This name does not show any particular function, but it clearly creates and displays a direct relationship between Jizō - and, consequently, Saifukuji - and the ritual discourse on death related to this area.

There is one more temple, which, because of the history of its foundation, presents an interesting relationship to the area and, consequently, to death, which permeates every single stone in Rokuhara. During the Tenryaku era, in the year 951, Kyoto was struck by a terrible plague, which spread throughout the city. It is said that the monk Kūya made a statue representing the Jūichimen Kanon, the eleven-faced Kannon, and took it all around the city on a carriage, giving the ill people tea that he had dedicated to the Buddha, and teaching them to chant the nenbutsu. Suddenly the plague stopped. During the following ten years the master, with the collaboration of many citizens, copied the six hundred fascicles of the Daihannya kyō and erected a temple, calling it Saikōji (西光寺), since its purpose was to diffuse the light of the doctrine of the Western Pure Land (saishō jōdo) inside and outside the city. However, because the temple was commonly known as “The temple of Rokuhara” (Rokuhara no tera), Kūya’s disciples, referring to the Sanskrit term pāramitā (波羅蜜 in Japanese), which is a part of the entire name of the Hannyakyō (Hannya haramitsukyō [般若波羅蜜経]), decided to call the temple Rokuharamitsuji (六波羅蜜寺), the “Temple of the Six Pāramitā”. The same associative process was transferred to the name of the entire zone, which started to be written 六波羅, instead of the original 六原.

The choice of the name Rokuhara seems to have a relationship with death and burial practices as well. In fact one the kunyomi of the kanji of “roku” (六) is “mu”, which is the same as the onyomi of the kanji of “haka” (墓), which means “grave, tomb”. It seems that, because of the sound, the two kanji were superimposed, and the way to write the word that was formerly used to simply indicate a “burial place”, namely “musho” (墓所), was distorted, becoming “musho” (六所). Moreover, since this place was considered to be the “wild” (genya [原野]) were many spirits gathered, it was given the name of Rokuhara (六原).

The reason why this area and these temples have a direct relationship with death and the otherworld is that Rokuhara was the entrance to Mount Toribe (Toribeyama). It was identified with Toribeno, which was a wild field at the foot of Mount Toribe. Consequently, the names “Toribeyama” and “Toribeno” became synonymous. This zone was considered to be a site for burial services since the archaic days. From the mid-Heian period and on, Toribeno was recorded as the place where the corpses of both animals and human beings were cast and abandoned. When Emperor Kanmu relocated the capital to Heian, he decided that Rokuhara had to become a burial area mainly for common people, while the Empress and all the aristocrats had to be buried exclusively in southern Toribeno (Emperors were buried in separate mausolea). Therefore he ordered the construction of Chinnōji (originally named Atagodera [愛宕寺]) so that it could protect and manage the zone of Rokuhara.

According to the iconography of many religious traditions, and in Buddhism as well, this and the other world are divided by a river. The Kamo River, on the shores of Rokuhara, provided the pattern on which the symbolism of the area was organized, at a time when the imagery of the otherworld and the whole cosmology began to be structured. At the time of its foundation, Heian was entirely built on the western side of the Kamo River, according to geomantic principles by which the onmyōji (陰
Rokuhara is considered to be the entrance of the otherworld, so, during urabon, every spirit, without distinction between ancestors, hungry ghosts (gaki) or the ones who fell into hell, is thought to come back to this place. This is shown both by the tight relationship between Rokudō Chinnōji and hell, and by segaki (伽藍鬼) services which are performed in this temple on the seventeenth of August, the day after the daimonji (the five giant bonfires lighted on the hills of Kyoto) which represents the official ending of urabon.

Segaki is a rite which is aimed to expel hungry ghosts and basically consists of offering food to them in order to appease their hunger and chanting sūtra; it is often performed on the mountains. However, different from the offerings to the ancestors, which are usually seasonal vegetables (like carrots, cucumber and pumpkin) and cooked rice, in separate bowls, the offerings made to gaki are generally the same vegetables, but mixed with raw rice. The dispute over the cultural symbolic meaning of “raw” and “cooked” (or, more generally, “treated” since in many cultures, like the Japanese one, raw food is eaten) is quite old and, certainly, it bears relevance to my argument. However, I think it might be generally accepted that the parallel is between “non-cultural” (defining it “natural” would not be exact) and “cultural” food.

Offering cooked rice to the ancestors has a symbolic meaning of acceptance of common social and cultural dynamics. In fact, the ancestors are welcomed home and share food and alcohol with the rest of the family, since they are considered actual members of the group. Moreover, they provide the legitimization for the structure of the family itself and, in a wider sense, of the whole society. On the contrary, since hungry ghosts such gaki or muenbotoke (無縁仏), which are a symbolic representation of social deviance, are not accepted in the city of the dead, and are driven away by offering the same food as the one which is offered to ancestors, although it is not culturally treated. In this way, they are recognized as “non-animals”, since the base of the offerings is the same, but, at the same time, they are not completely accepted inside society, since they are not allowed to share the same social rules and, in fact, they are generally offered water instead of alcohol.

There are also a variety of representations of impurity in Rokuhara. This might be one more piece of evidence that this area is not only tied to representations of the structure of socio-political, economic and religious power, but also to social deviance. In particular, Saifukuji and Chinnōji own two kumano kanjin jikkai mandara (熊野観心十世曼荼羅), which represent the whole otherworld, but in which the portion dedicated to the torments of hell and to the Ten Kings (十王) seem quite relevant.

Moreover, in Saifukuji, there are some pictures which represent the phases of the decay of corpses and, different from Takamura’s statue, they seem to attract the attention of visitors to the temples. I think these are evidence of the tight relationship between the two temples and impurity as a symbol of liminality. Furthermore, the story of the foundation of Rokuharamitsuji (as marginal as it may be in rokudōmairi), which was built after a pestilence, traditionally believed to be caused by gaki or muenbotoke, is also tied to death in its most impure aspect.

I think that one more interesting point is the relationship between Rokuhara and Jizō, the pitiful bodhisattva who helps mizuko who dwell on the “riverbank of sai” (sai no tsuji). Jizō is also associated with crossroads, and this might be the reason why Saifukuji stands on the rokudō no tsuji, but the whole of Rokuhara seems to be connected to this bodhisattva. Very close to Rokudō Chinnōji there is a famous shop which sells “candies to bring up ghost children” (ゆれいこ sodateame), which were very popular among women before and after childbirth. They used to offer them to the spirit of a child who was said to have disappeared on Toribeyama and whose crying voice might still be heard from underneath the graves. This tradition still exists, but only during obon.
Thus Rokuha used to present a geographical and symbolic liminality, but, during the Heian period, also a social one. In fact poor people, usually women, used to live along the riverbank, deriving some income from boiling down sea water for salt or burning gathered seaweed for minerals contained in the ash to be used as fertilizer. Moreover, as far as I know, burakumin (部落民) used to live on the eastern side of the Kamo River too. This might be considered as an evidence of the relationship between a geographically and symbolically liminal space and a social liminality.

Nowadays Rokuha is no longer a geographically liminal area, since it is nearly a central zone in Kyoto, but it seems to have maintained every symbol of liminality. It is still connected to obon and still considered the entrance of hell. Rokuha Chinnōji still presents itself as the place in which urabon begins and as the connection point between this world and the world of the dead, stressing, for example, the peculiarity of mankaegane, which cannot be seen and which must be rung in a different way from all the other bells, since categories which can be applied to the spirits of the dead must be different from the ones of the living world. There is no doubt that this reputation not only means the continuing of an ancient tradition, and of a whole religious discourse, but it also implies a fair amount of money. People give monetary offerings to the temples and also, during the rōkudō mairi, rōkudō no tsuji becomes a small market which vends all that is needed to welcome ancestors. This might also explain why the area dedicated to the dead and, in particular, the rites for hungry ghosts, were not moved from Rokuha as it was becoming a part of the city.

Nevertheless, the fact that an area which is connected to impurity, to representations of death, hell, and, therefore, to symbolic discourses of liminality, still stands in the centre of Kyoto, remains an oddity. I wonder whether there is another reason connected to the place where Rokuha stands. Since the city was built according to divination processes, it might be possible that the precise point on the eastern side of the Kamo River was considered as the acme of impurity, according to onmyōdō (陰陽道). I also wonder if elements of social liminality (such as a buraku) are still present in this area, as much as during the Heian period. At the moment I do not have sufficient sources to explore these possibilities, but I intend to gather further information and attempt to answer these questions. I am almost sure there is a good possibility to find the right answer. Because I know the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

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**Fieldwork Report**

**Like a Carp on the Cutting Board?**

Tullio Lobetti

Among the many Japanese rituals that are regularly held in the first days of the year in order to ‘open’ the new year, one of the most peculiar is perhaps the carp-cutting ceremony (manaita-biraki (まな板開き)), lit. cutting board opening) held at the Bandō-Hōonji (板東報恩寺) temple in Asakusa (Tōkyō) on the 12th of January. There the head master of Shijō-ryū (四條流) (a school of traditional Japanese cuisine) wearing a traditional Heian period eboshi skilfully slices two large carps on a wooden cutting board set in the temple main hall, using nothing but a knife and a pair of pointed metal chopsticks, without touching the fish directly with his hands.

The way in which the ceremony is conducted is closely associated with what the Shijō-ryū calls the hōchō-girei (包丁儀式), the ritual of the kitchen knife. This is a highly stylized form of food cutting that, according to the Shijō-ryū, dates back to emperor Kōkō (光孝天皇) (830-887). Kōkō tennō is mainly known as a poet and calligrapher; in fact some of his most celebrated waka are collected in the famous Fujiwara no Teika’s collection Hyakunin Isshu (百人一首). This emperor, however, is also mentioned by Fujiwara no Yamakage for his passion for the culinary arts, and credited for starting the ritual of the kitchen knife. This ceremony is currently performed in Japan by the Shijō-ryū school in a number of major events concerning cuisine, like meetings, expos etc. and sometimes in temples or shrines, as a demonstration of the peculiarity of Japanese aesthetic regarding food and its preparation. The manaita-biraki ritual, however, can be differentiated from this scenario of food aesthetics, particularly on account of its particular connections with the Jōdō Shinshū tradition, Buddhist cosmology, Shinto belief and ritualization.

The Bandō-Hōonji temple was founded by Shinran’s disciple Shōshin (性信) in 1214 in present-day Mitsukaido city (Ibaraki prefecture) and relocated to Asakusa in 1604. It is not strange, therefore, that the provenance of the ritual is from a legend regarding Shōshin himself. It is told that when he reached the Kanto area, where he was sent to spread Jōdō Shinshū doctrine, he was visited by a mysterious old man with white hair. The man told him: “Your doctrine has solved all my long-standing doubts! It is my wish now to become your disciple.” Shōshin kindly accepted his request, making him his disciple with the name of Shōkai (性海). Filled with joy, the old man thanked him and left. The legend tells us, however, that the old man was no ordinary being, but none other than the deity Tenjin (天神), who was also worshiped in Mitsukaido city. On the following days he is said to have appeared every night in the dreams of the Shinto priests.
appointed to his worship, saying: “To honour Shōshin, every year send him two carps from the pond. Be sure to fulfill my command”. Since then, in fact, every year on the 11th of January two carps are sent from Shimo-fusa-Bandō-Hōonji (下総板東報恩寺) (on behalf of Tenjin) to the Hōonji temple in Asakusa for the manaita-biraki ceremony taking place on the following day. Acts of praise for a Buddhist saint from a local deity were not an uncommon rhetorical device, in the narrative of an era when kami and buddhas coexisted on the same grounds. Interesting is to see how, in our case, this connection apparently survived the Meiji period and is still presented to us in a way that may be reasonably close to its original form. Both the Hōonji temple priests and the Shijō-ryū masters proudly agree in affirming that this is how the ceremony has always been performed since the pledge of Tenjin, but actually the sources on this topic are scarce.

During the ritual itself, however, one might benefit from a swift but detailed explanation of almost every single act, and it is on the basis of this direct experience (and from a few leaflets given to us by the temple) that I will attempt to provide a sketch of this fascinating ceremony.

After a brief sūtra recitation, a representative of the temple enters the main hall in slow procession accompanied by shakuhachi music (unfortunately only recorded), solemnly holding the offering tray on which the two carps are placed. He duly lays the tray on the cutting board, bows at the altar and leaves. This is the only segment of the ritual performed by Hōonji priests; the rest of the ceremony will be the exclusive task of the Shijō-ryū masters.

Once the priest leaves the hall through a side door, one of the representatives of Shijō-ryū makes his appearance. Beautifully clad in a Heian period eboshi costume, he makes his way toward the cutting board holding a tray containing what, with some western esoteric flavour, we may call the Tools of the Craft: a kitchen knife and a pair of sharp-pointed long metal chopsticks.

After having set aside the carp on the tray, with the sole aid of a knife and chopsticks the master skilfully cuts a piece of white paper and thoroughly cleans the cutting board. Then he picks up one of the carp and, careful not to ‘wound’ it, sets the fish in the proper position on the board. Having accomplished this duty he leaves the hall, bringing with him the tools.

It is now the turn of the Shijō-ryū master appointed for the cutting, who solemnly enters the hall followed by all his assistants dressed in the eboshi attire and ranked on the basis of their colours. With slow and accurate movements he accommodates himself in front of the cutting board, carefully checking his own set of tools. Using the chopsticks he lifts the carp, immediately hurling it back on the board with a loud noise. Then, starting from the fish body, he lifts the knife over his head with a quick movement. With this gesture, we are told, the spirit of the fish has been ‘shaken out’ from its body and it is now temporarily held in the blade of the knife. Having ‘removed’ the remains of the fish sensibility for pain, or at least so it seems, the actual cutting procedure can start. All of the following steps will be entirely performed with the sole use of the tools, with no contact at all between the fish and the hands of the master.
First the abdomen is cleaned of all the remaining blood with a piece of white paper (the carp came already disemboweled); afterwards the paper is folded, used to wipe the cutting board and finally set aside. The fish is then for the first time pierced by the chopsticks and lifted enough to allow two deep cuts right under its head. The back, just below the dorsal fin, is cut away, then sliced in three smaller pieces and offered as a memento of Tenjin’s vow. The fish is subsequently lifted again and the right and left sides are skilfully sliced with a smooth continuous movement. We are told that one side represents human beings, while the other stands for kami. The two sides are momentarily set apart while the master cuts away the head from the backbone with a single, confident blow. The head is then placed upright in the upper left corner; the process of ‘reconstruction’ of the carp’s body, which we shall see later, will take place with the exact starting point being the head. After this, the tail is also severed from the remains and set aside; it will be the last piece put in place in the ‘reformed’ body of the carp.

The left side of the fish is then taken back to the centre of the cutting board where the central fillet is sliced away with a single stroke; it is then placed on the left side while the remains go on the right. The fillet is then cut in three pieces, representing respectively the Buddhas: Amida, Dainichi and Shaka.

As anticipated, after all the necessary cuts, the body of the carp is then reconstructed starting from its head. The middle section with the backbone goes in the centre, while the two sides occupy their respective places on the left and right. Between the head and the midsection are set the two main offerings, the carp’s back on the left and the sliced fillet on the right. Finally, when the tail is put in place the opus seems to be almost complete.

One last time the master cleans all the stains on the cutting board with a slice of paper. Then, raising his knife and passing it over the sliced carp he ‘returns’ the spirit to the body. The carp is then sprinkled with flower petals and the offering rite is concluded.

The complexity of the ritual and the meanings ascribed to it, are such that, in my opinion, to define it simply as an ‘offering presentation’ would be a misrepresentation. It is true that it appears to be a case of ritualization of a common everyday act, and in an island-nation such as Japan, almost nothing is more common that cutting fish. This is true, however, only if we remain inside the scope of the Shijō-ryū school, which efficaciously combines a refined aesthetics with the far more mundane act of food-making. This may well have been the motivation animating Kōkō tennō himself, as he was certainly a conscious connoisseur of the beautiful and the gracious. Aesthetization however, in its quality of mere pursuit of the beautiful per se, does not require any other purpose, while the manaita-biraki seems to have many. One such purpose is already clearly discernible by its name: this ritual, like many others held at the beginning of the year, is aimed to petition for safety in a particular activity for the following months. In this case it is about the safety of the cutting board, and the daily act of cutting in the kitchen. Offerings were made to the temple with the expectation that the petitioner would be spared from the annoying occurrence of slicing one’s own fingers, together with the food, during his/her daily kitchen duties. But, as often happens, benefits catalysed around an object, in this case the cutting board, tend also to affect pro metafora all the related environment. The protective properties of the ritual are thus extended from the board to the kitchen, and from the kitchen to the food, ensuring that no harmful meals will ever be cooked there, and from the food to...
the health of the family eating it. The people attending were for the vast majority women, mostly middle aged, but some were also younger. In a still clear-cut gender-defined Japanese life, the daily preparation of the family meal is one of their main concerns, and it is therefore no surprise that the ritual is mainly supported by them.

We can briefly investigate, however, other levels of interpretation that are worth at least a thought. First, the process involving the ‘shaking out’ and the ‘returning’ of the spirit of the carp to its body is obscure and, in the lack of explanation, open to speculation. The first act may be motivated by the ‘Buddhist’ will of not ‘sacrificing’ a living animal, while the second may be intended as the ‘Shinto’ need of not putting a dead body into a sacred place. The whole procedure, in fact, is clearly aimed to absolute purity, and the whole ceremony may also be understood as the pursuit of the utmost pure way of preparing a meal. The interaction with a Buddhist institution, however, brings in other meanings that go well beyond the simple purity issue. The arrangement of the slices of carp on the board, for instance, presents a taxonomy that can lead to articulated cosmological reflections. The carp seems in this case to represent the balance between the two worlds of man and deities, having at its core the presence of the enlightened beings, here efficaciously portrayed by the most prized of the cuts, the inner fillet, while the offering due to them is represented by the far more humble finned back. This does not remain a mere representation, however, since to this small world is actually given life, by the restitution of its spirit.

A small, living carp-universe, is then set on the board binding together deities and earthly beings, and through the identification between this microcosm and the macrocosm in which we all live, a powerful connection is established and benefits are spread in the actual life of people. Finally, I cannot help but consider how the figure of this ‘sanctified’ carp perfectly counterbalances the popular Japanese way of saying ‘like a carp on the cutting board’, to indicate a no-way-out, utterly doomed situation. In this case at least the poor fish seems to have actually worked out a solution.

The manaita-biraki ritual certainly deserves further investigation, given the variety and sophistication of its various meanings. The explanation given to us during the performance was, of course, brief and schematic, and still leaves many points unclear. It is my intention to return to the Hoonji in order to ask for further information, particularly regarding the manner of cutting the second carp, which is far more complex and deserves closer attention.

The few details gathered so far, however, already seem to demonstrate a fact that I think is of pivotal importance in the understanding of the elusive category of “ritual” and its implications. Reducing the ritual to the result of a mere process of ritualization or stylization of otherwise menial acts is, in my opinion, an extreme, reductionist position that eventually fails in taking into account the meanings produced by the ritual performance itself. Rituals offer us more than only sets of more or less sophisticated attached meaning and symbols. The meanings of the ritual are also in the performance itself; otherwise there would be no difference between reading a ritual procedure and actually performing it.

What could be more common than cutting fish in Japan? If performed properly, even fish-cutting can be turned into an universal act, expressing- and what is more important- actually translating into everyday reality, universal implications such as the balance between the worlds of man and deities. If a ritualization process exists, and we want to define ritual as the product of such process, it may be then seen in the transformation of the performance of a relative act into the absolute act, shifting the locus of our agency from the particular to the universal, from the ontic to the ontological. This is what, in my understanding, creates that ‘sense of ritual’. After all, the main benefit that rituals can provide may just be to remind us that our actions are meaningful, and that what we do, no matter how insignificant, affects the life of all around us.

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Pilgrims of the Empty Roads:
A Travelogue of the Shikoku Henro

Text and Photos by Yaara Morris

“Look, panda!” said my fellow pilgrim. We were walking towards Mirror-like Clear Waterfall Temple, in the mountains along the 1,400 km pilgrimage route around Shikoku Island. I raised my eyes from the rice paddies flanking the path. A Japanese man wearing a furry panda costume was approaching. It was not the first time we had met a pilgrim circling the island anti-clockwise, but we had never seen one dressed as a panda before.

“Why a panda?” I asked. The man said that sometimes he is a rabbit. He elaborated: “I am not just doing the henro, the Shikoku pilgrimage, “I plan to walk around all four main islands of Japan”. I looked at myself through the eyes of the panda, clad in the traditional dress, and wondered, how did I end up as a pilgrim? And how do we all choose our costumes and paths? Near Mirror-like Clear Waterfall Temple, almost three weeks into the pilgrimage, the panda gave me a new perspective.

The henro is a circular eighty-eight stage pilgrimage associated with the figure of Kōbō Daishi, posthumous name of Kūkai (774-835), founder of the Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism, who was later to become, in folk belief, an image of a living saviour. Etymologically, henro means a linking route, or a route that encompasses, but it also refers to the temples along the route, and to the pilgrims, uniting the three in a single sacred entity. The henro route circumscribes the island’s seacoast with occasional detours inland into the mountains, and links eighty-eight temples in a symbolic structure that leads the pilgrim through a process of death, regeneration, and birth.

Shikoku, birthplace of Kōbō Daishi, is the smallest of Japan’s four main islands, situated south of Honshu, across the Inland Sea. The name Shikoku means ‘four provinces’, deriving from the historical four feudal domains that correspond to its current prefectures: Tokushima, Kōchi, Ehime, and Kagawa. In the symbolic geography of the henro, each prefecture is analogous to one of four stages of the spiritual quest: awakening of faith, religious practice, enlightenment, and Nirvāṇa, and the island as a whole is a mandala, a sacred cosmic map, in which the circular pilgrimage unfolds.

During the pilgrimage I found that this symbolism may have a strong hold in reality. In Tokushima, walking through typhoons, I developed, often in great pain, a sense of confidence in my physical and mental abilities to pursue the pilgrimage. In Kōchi, the henro - the sea, the fishermen’s ports, the villages, and the rice paddies on the path – became my life, but my body ached, and I had a partially torn ligament in my pelvis. In the mountains of Ehime I felt an incredible sense of freedom. In Kagawa I found friendship, love, and gratitude.
I first heard of the *henro* in a TV documentary, while living in a grey student dormitory in Tokyo. It was about an adolescent who suffered from *hiki komori* (‘withdrawal’), a phenomenon not uncommon among Japanese youths, who confine themselves in their rooms, refusing to attend school or engage in any kind of social relations. The movie followed his therapeutic journey around Shikoku with a group of male and female pilgrims of different ages.

In the film, the pilgrims were uniformly dressed in white robes and bamboo hats and were holding staves, their costume imbued with death symbolism; the white robe representing the pilgrim’s burial shroud; the hat inscribed with a Buddhist poem about transience; and the staff symbolizing both the body of Kōbō Daishi, the prototypical pilgrim, and the pilgrim’s gravestone. Written with alternative ideograms, *Shikoku* can also mean, the ‘land of the dead’, dovetailing with this symbolism of death. The pilgrim is symbolically dead to the world and his journey is in the realm of death.

The terrain varied dramatically from picturesque villages, rice paddies, seascapes, and remote mountain wilderness, to asphalt roads, highways, and grey cities dotted with colourful neon lights. The pilgrims walked through these different landscapes silently in a line. Despite the strange topography – a profane image of a mandala - all participants in the film, including the adolescent, portrayed the *henro* as a spiritual journey that brought a sense of renewal.

Two years later, clad in the same dress, following the same silent route, I was searching for a new path. As I was doing the *henro* and was becoming a *henro*, I realized that this is often what draws people to Shikoku; paths lost, paths sought, and paths to be found. My narrative is one thread in the long history of the *henro*, but it is one among new threads that add a different colour to a phenomenon that was uniquely Japanese until recent years. The journeys and writings of scholars like Ian Reader, author of *Making Pilgrimages*, were a source of inspiration and a treasure house of knowledge.

Today the Shikoku *henro* is perhaps the most popular pilgrimage in Japan. However, its nature has changed in the course of history. Most pilgrims nowadays do the *henro* as a ten-day organized bus package tour – about one hundred thousand a year. Others travel on their own by car or motorbike, often breaking the route into a number of pilgrimages. These forms of pilgrimage focus on the worship at the temples rather than on the path, but they are the *henro* in modern Japan.

A shorter way to do the *henro* is to visit the small-scale or miniature replicas of the eighty-eight sites which are dispersed around the country. Depending on their size, they may take either a few seconds or a week to complete. A miniature *henro* on Mt. Takao near Tokyo reminded me of the exotic pavilions of Disneyland in which one can travel great distances in no time. However, the replicas signify the centrality of the *henro* and the circular-pilgrimage pattern in Japanese religious thought, and demonstrate the process of making symbols and sanctifying space through ritual practice.

The eighty-eight temples of Shikoku are all of equal significance and are venerated as sites related to the early life of Kōbō Daishi. Their numerical symbolism is ambiguous. Some interpretations claim that the number signifies the eighty-eight delusions that are to be removed in the search for enlightenment, or the eighty-eight Buddhas of the present and past worlds, or the eight countries and eight stupas in India that hold the ashes of the historical Buddha, or else a four-fold mandala with eighty worlds to which eight sites were added. Most scholars agree that these popular interpretations have no historical basis, but they are integral to the *henro* today.

The fixed numerical order of the temples is a development of the 18th century and is therefore not crucial for the *henro* process. However, most pilgrims today begin their journey at Ryōzenji (Temple 1), close to the port of Naruto, the main entrance to the island in the Edo period (1600-1868), and end in Ōkuboji (Temple 88), where it is said that Kōbō Daishi enshrined his staff upon his return from China. Pilgrims often follow his example and leave their staves behind. A stone bearing the inscription *ke-chiganjo*, place of the completion of the vow, marks the “end” of the circuit.

It is customary to walk back to Ryōzenji on a thanksgiving visit, or *orei mairi*. For walking pilgrims, who put more emphasis on the path than on the worship at the temples, a complete circumnavigation of the island, ending in a return to the starting point, may be significant. In
my case, the return to Ryōzenji forty-three days later was a symbol of gratitude to the island and its people, and it allowed me to reflect on my journey and prepare myself for the life that awaited me elsewhere.

Upon completion of the henro, pilgrims visit the Ryūkō-in Temple and the Oku-no-in, the mausoleum of Kōbō Daishi where his body is enshrined in a state of eternal meditation. Both are on Mt. Kōya in Wakayama Prefecture. It is on this sacred and magical mountain, the land of the dead, that the pilgrims shed their attire and are reborn into this world.

The temples of the henro are affiliated with several Buddhist sects and dedicated to different deities of the Buddhist pantheon. But each temple contains a hall of worship to Kōbō Daishi. The pilgrims, similarly, may belong to various religious sects or to none, and yet faith in Kōbō Daishi seems a recurrent feature, even if only for the period of the pilgrimage.

The normative pattern of worship at the temples for walking pilgrims consists of:

- Bowing in front of the temple gate.
- Purification at the water basin inside the temple.
- Lighting candles and burning incense in front of the halls of worship.
- Offering coins and osamefuda, a paper card bearing an invocation to Kōbō Daishi and the personal wishes and details of the pilgrim.
- Reciting the Heart Sutra, the Mantra of Golden Light, and the invocation in praise of Kōbō Daishi and personal prayers.
- Stamping the pilgrimage album, nōkyōchō, at the temple’s office.

None of these stages are obligatory and many walking pilgrims shorten the process.

Since returning from the pilgrimage, people often ask me whether I prayed at the temples. I did, but the importance of my prayer was of a different kind. After a day of walking in silence, hearing my voice recite sutras had a kind of transformative effect. I became absorbed in a motionless sealed space that contrasted with what Ian Reader has called the “moving landscape of the pilgrimage”. Recitation helped me to hear my voice and often aroused feelings I was not aware of during the walk. Twice I found myself crying out of exhaustion and loneliness, but usually there were feelings of joy and gratitude.

Pilgrims still walk the 1,400 km route. Their numbers are estimated at 2-3,000 a year and it usually takes between forty and sixty days. Few, however, do it during the hot, humid summer. Some pilgrims quit in the middle, some slowed down, while others eventually used local transportation between certain temples. I continued to walk, sometimes up to thirty-five, even forty, kms a day. When exhausted, I would take a break, swim in the sea, or spend the day in a port with friendly fishermen, taking pictures of boats, nets, and rust. But overall I found that the heat actually helped me to develop a pilgrim state of mind, known as the ‘henro-boke’, or ‘pilgrimage senility’. More positively, it involves a total immersion in the walk. I was living from one step to the next. Notions of space and time changed.

I left for Shikoku alone. Unlike other pilgrimages, the henro is traditionally an individual and solitary practice. Most young walking pilgrims I met cherished their solitude. Even when walking together and camping out together at night, there was always a feeling of being alone, no sense of commitment, or attachment to a fellow pilgrim. Each of us kept to himself or herself. Sometimes I would join other pilgrims; at other times I remained alone for days. Yet I felt no real difference.

I started out on the pilgrimage in July 2006, after having completed a two-year study period in Tokyo. The heat at times was unbearable. Some pilgrims quit in the middle, some slowed down, while others eventually used local transportation between certain temples. I continued to walk, sometimes up to thirty-five, even forty, kms a day. When exhausted, I would take a break, swim in the sea, or spend the day in a port with friendly fishermen, taking pictures of boats, nets, and rust. But overall I found that the heat actually helped me to develop a pilgrim state of mind, known as the ‘henro-boke’, or ‘pilgrimage senility’. More positively, it involves a total immersion in the walk. I was living from one step to the next. Notions of space and time changed.

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It was only towards the end of the pilgrimage that I found myself with two pilgrims who became close friends: Ayumi-san, a stoical and lovable individual, who planned to start a pedicure-manicure course, and Kim-san, the wildest woman I know, whose wisdom and warmth never ceased to amaze me. We formed a little world within the henro.
The older pilgrims, despite their solitude, seemed to attach greater value to the notion of a pilgrim community. They were open and generous and knowledgeable about the history of the *henro*, its temples, legends, and path. They were transitory guides.

Tanaka-san, an experienced male pilgrim, was a supporting presence throughout the journey, although we hardly ever walked together. Our friendship began when one day I took a picture of him speaking to a woman who was spreading seaweed on the pavement to dry. I forgot my staff there. Half an hour later I heard him call me and we went back together to look for my staff. I was surprised to find a pilgrim willing to add extra kilometres on such a hot day. Later, I learned that it was his fourth or fifth time around Shikoku. Space and time meant little to him compared to the spirit of the *henro*.

Tanaka-san is well-known in the *henro* landscape. He first came to Shikoku five years ago, following his mother’s death. At the time he was still working in a corporation, and did the *henro* in small sections in the course of a year. Later, he quit his job to do the *henro* all at once. He kept coming back. His current pilgrimage was mainly for research purposes, looking at the various lodges along the path, comparing prices, and checking out the meals. He plans to establish a pilgrim lodge next year and move permanently to Shikoku to immerse himself in the *henro* way of life.

In the course of the pilgrimage Tanaka-san would leave small gifts for me along the way, like a watermelon at a shop near a temple, or he would call my cell phone after I spent a night camping alone on a bench in the marketplace or by the seaside. Knowing that he was around, I never felt completely alone.

Although I loved talking to the older pilgrims, especially to the homeless perpetual pilgrims who knew the *henro* better than anyone else and embodied its spirit, most of my journey was spent among younger pilgrims, who, like me, slept outside or in *zenkonyado*, temple lodgings free-of-charge, and who were at a stage in life closer to mine. There are social structures within the pilgrim community, and more often than not, I found that pilgrims of similar age-groups, gender, profession, bonded during the *henro*.

Interestingly, pilgrim facilities along the route, such as the *zenkonyado*, distinguish between perpetual pilgrims and others. They allow only pilgrims who have not made this a way of life to spend the night, thereby reinforcing difference within the pilgrim community. Although some of these perpetual or “professional” pilgrims were a product of the recession of the Nineties and the spread of unemployment, such pilgrims were inherent to the *henro* already in “the golden age of the Shikoku pilgrimage” during the first half of the 19th century. They may therefore be seen as a current manifestation of the traditional beggar pilgrim.

The Shikoku *henro*, in tandem with numerous other Japanese pilgrimages, has its roots in the late Heian period (794-1185) in the activities of religious mendicants who travelled across Japan to deepen the Buddhist faith among the people through the recitation of sutras and sermons, the distribution of talismans, the popularization of Buddhist figures of worship, and the promotion of pilgrimage as a means of attaining salvation and gaining worldly benefits. The specific origins of the *henro* are unclear. According to legend, Kōbō Daishi founded the pilgrimage in 815. But it was probably created by monks of Mt. Kōya, headquarters of the Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism, who came to Shikoku during the 11th century seeking to visit places associated with his life and to propagate his cult.
In the 12th century the Shikoku Henro was already an established form of ascetic practice, related most prominently to Kōbō Daishi, but also to other Buddhist figures, whose travels, asceticism and miraculous deeds were integrated into the henro. These figures reappear in foundation stories of temples, visual images, and legends related to places along the way.

In a cave near Cape Muroto, it is said that Kōbō Daishi had undergone a period of ascetic practice, after which he took the name Kūkai - air and sea - the only things visible from inside the cave. Stepping out of the cave into the bright light, I could imagine his re-birth into a new name, a lonely figure surrounded by dark sharp rocks that make the expanses of the sea and sky seem almost inaccessible.

The physical terrain is a symbolic, historical, and sacred landscape that fuses the individual journey with those undertaken by holy figures, creating a notion of infinite space and time. In their different colours and shapes, the sea and sky follow the pilgrim throughout the journey.

I spent the first night of the pilgrimage with three male pilgrims on pieces of cardboard spread on the cement floor of a belfry above a temple gate. Outside, below the gate, on the ground, an older homeless pilgrim was sleeping with his dog. In the morning he told me it was the first time he had ever seen a female pilgrim sleep in the belfry. Indeed, I did not meet any female pilgrims who were camping out during my first few weeks. It is a man’s world. And it was also my first encounter with a homeless pilgrim. He was on his thirtieth round at the time.

Later, I encountered many homeless perpetual pilgrims, some of whom had led normal, and even successful, lives before leaving for Shikoku; others were homeless before and simply relocated; some were obscure figures who resisted any form of categorization. Common to all, however, was a total immersion in the henro, and a conspicuous indifference to the world outside.

Differences are blurred by the concept of dōgyō ninin, “two people, one practice”, implying that the pilgrims travel with Kōbō Daishi or are his manifestations. On an individual level this may become a source of strength when facing physical and emotional difficulties alone. Within the pilgrim community, this concept symbolically creates a sense of equality or sameness. More significantly, inscribed on their hats and bags, the concept of dōgyō ninin marks out the pilgrims and shapes the relations between them and the locals.

One way in which it affects the attitudes of the locals is through settai, or almsgiving. This tradition has existed on the island at least as early as the Edo period. The settai may appear in various shapes and forms other than money-and-food giving, which are common.

One day, while I was alone on the road, an elderly woman on a scooter approached me and asked for my backpack. It would be nice to walk without it, she said. She drew me a little map, two roads with no names, and two squares to mark the police station and her house, and asked me to stop by on the way to the temple.

An hour later I met my friend Tanaka-san, whom I had not seen in two weeks. He asked about my backpack. I showed him the map and he laughed. Somehow we managed to find her house. She invited me to spend the night.
As I entered the house she announced, loudly: 'There is a guest, a henro.' But there was no one around, or at least, so I thought. The house was full of spirits. It was obon - the festival of the dead – and she was busy with all of us at once, giving food and drink, and much care and love. As the evening wore on I came to accept the presence of her 'family' all around.

Whether or not this woman saw me as a manifestation of Kōbō Daishi, the dōgyō ninin has the power to blur the lines of demarcation between past and present, sacred and profane, legend and reality, and is embodied by the liminal image of the pilgrim.

The obon followed me through the later stages of my pilgrimage. The graveyards were full of visitors and flowers, there were festivals and dances for the dead in the villages and towns; the dead were all around us, and within us, the passers by. One morning an 89-year-old woman arrived on her bicycle at a small deserted village temple where I spent the night. As I was brushing my teeth, she prayed beside me. Later we walked together to her husband’s grave, which was on my route.

Another settai was proffered by a manager of a local convenience store. I bought lunch and inquired about the choice of trails. He pointed out the most scenic one on my map, gave me candies and juice, and sent me off. A few minutes later I returned to inquire about internet access in the area. He smiled playfully, took off his uniform, and left the store (so much for Japanese work ethics!). We spent the next few hours in his car wandering around the town. He showed me the marketplace, the beach, and a shrine, and then presented me to a manager of a big factory, who let me use his computer. The convenience store manager left me off at the start of the mountain trail with a fresh slice of watermelon and a warm smile.

The settai, beyond a traditional support system for pilgrims based on the identification of pilgrims and Kōbō Daishi and on the religious merit of almsgiving, allows the locals to momentarily and spontaneously withdraw from the framework of daily life and enter the liminal state of the pilgrimage - but within their own environment.

I also came across more systematized forms of settai, such as restaurants that provide free meals and temples that provide free lodgings, or individuals who clear the henro trails and clean the huts where pilgrims stay nights. In some cases such settai have been institutionalized within families.

The most moving systematised form of settai I encountered was provided by a sick middle-aged man. A few years ago, Okuyama-san, a wealthy “salary man”, discovered that he had throat cancer. He was told that he
had to have his vocal cords removed. But he saw no life without speech and he refused. His doctor advised him to quit his job and do what made him happy. Okuyama-san was at a loss. One day he saw a documentary about the *henro* and decided to dedicate the remainder of his life to the walking pilgrims. He would provide them with a temporary home along the route.

In the luxurious house he built for this purpose, Okuyama-san hosts pilgrims, prepares their meals, and does their laundry. At night he drinks and smokes and shares his thoughts, memories, and feelings with his guests. For Okuyama-san, the *settai* has a therapeutic value. I wonder whether in his own home he can express himself as freely as he does in this house, a space of love shared with strangers, much like the *henro* itself.

The idea of pilgrimage space fascinated me throughout the *henro*. The path itself seemed to challenge any fixed notions of the sacred and the profane. As parts of it traversed cities, industrial areas, and dull little towns, I started to wonder whether the sacred and the profane could overlap. At the same time, the path also challenged the idea that temples and mountains are sacred while urban spaces and highways are not. The pilgrimage route crosses all of them.

This became apparent already at the beginning of the pilgrimage. On the second day, I was walking with three male pilgrims in their late twenties. We stopped in a convenience store for breakfast. Within minutes they were leafing through fashion magazines, *manga*, and porn, a sight familiar to anyone who has spent time in Japan. But they were in pilgrim attire.

A few days later, we were walking along the Yoshino River. I suggested that we go for a swim. Surprised at the idea, they asked whether I did not think it improper for a *henro*. I said that bathing in rivers has always been part of Japanese pilgrimage. What confused them, I think, was the presence at the site of recreational bathers. But they agreed, and it was only after this initiatory experience that they accepted my presence among them.

Our paths crossed many times later, but I never saw them again express the remotest interest in the world beyond the *henro*. The convenience store became integral to the pilgrimage - a place to eat, wash, buy band-aids, and rest on the paved area outside. And bathing in rivers had become something of a ritual for us.

Towards the end of the pilgrimage a karaoke arcade similarly changed into a “pilgrim lodge”. In the outskirts of a city at night, after bathing with Kim-san and Ayumi-san in a public bath, we inquired among the locals about a place to camp out. They told us that all the parks were closed due to the flow of non-pilgrim homeless from Kansai, who were seeking the relative comfort of *henro* life. Someone suggested a karaoke arcade. Through the night, laughter and alcoholic singing thrust into our dreams. But we were in a different place.

The following day we entered the city. I realized that the roads had become silent. I no longer heard the cars. The *henro* process transformed supermarkets, convenience stores, highways, tunnels, love hotels, and karaoke arcades into ‘other spaces’ of the pilgrimage realm. Although I always preferred quiet mountain paths and bamboo forests to highways and towns, the real beauty of the *henro*, I think, lay in revealing the oneness of space, sacred and profane.

I lingered in Japan for a month after the pilgrimage. I felt a new sense of belonging. During the pilgrimage I let the sun, wind, and rain leave their marks on my skin and the path shape my body. My knees were swollen, my feet bruised, I lost weight, I gained muscle, and I had my torn ligament. I embodied the *henro*. But more importantly, after two alienating years in Tokyo during which I had lost much of my confidence and happiness, I felt myself again. Mountains were still just as steep, but my fear was gone. I felt alive and free.

The *henro* has no beginning or end. It is a circuit. There is a process that leads to the *henro* and a process that continues from there. At Narita airport, I noticed that the clerk at the check-in counter took special interest in my staff. I told him that I had done the *henro*. His expression changed instantly, he held the staff, and suddenly I saw a child in an older man’s body smiling at me. He had done the *henro* ten years before on a motorbike. Since then, he said, he dreamt of the day he would go back.

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Clemente Beghi

A book like this is something really welcome in the field of Japanese Religious Studies as it fills a big void. Everyone knew that secrecy was there, but probably few understood exactly what it meant in detail, and, for some strange reason, no scholar ever investigated the subject in depth.

One of its strong points, for which the editors should be praised, is variety, as we not only find articles dealing with different aspects and periods of Japanese religious culture, but also articles about more general issues and other countries as well. The book is organized in three distinct parts. After a clear introduction by Mark Teeuwen on the meaning and the various forms of secrecy, as well as a synthetic overview of the contents of the book, we begin the prefatory part with an article by Albert de Jong, in which he defines the phenomenon of secrecy and analyzes its several features in various religious cultures, especially the classical world. Then, instead of moving directly to the Japanese archipelago, we go to India and China. Ronald M. Davidson addresses how Tantric Buddhism developed in the subcontinent, in a very short and violent period, and the ways esoterism worked in this context, with secret scriptures continually being produced and revealed. Martin Lehnert discusses the introduction of the secret teachings to China. As most of the original texts were lost, the Indian transmitters came to represent the knowledge contained in them and eventually Amoghavajra was able to make esoteric Buddhism the source for state rituals.

With Part Two of the volume, “Analyzing Japan’s medieval culture of secrecy,” as the title says, we move to the main topic of this book. Fabio Rambelli does an epistemological analysis of Japanese esoteric Buddhism and its different categories, showing how, while in Mahāyāna we have an absolute devoid of signs, in Mikkyō the absolute is conceived as the totality of signs. He also addresses the question of the transmission of esoteric teachings; the contents, from a social point of view, were not secret at all as they were often taught to groups, but the legitimation to possess them was given only through initiation. Lucia Dolce shows us the process by which Tendai Buddhism managed to make the classical exoteric doctrines fit into the discourse of secrecy, with esoterism becoming an ever more comprehensive category. She then discusses how an esoteric Lotus practice, involving the mandalization of the Lotus, was created. Mark Teeuwen focuses on the socio-economic context of esoteric practice, where religious and economic capitals are strongly connected, and shows how secrets are created, found, and stolen, as exemplified by the history of the development of the imperial enthronement unction, sokui kanjō, described in great detail. Still on the legitimacy of the imperial power, we have an article by Kadoya Atsushi on the imperial regalia, their meaning and their connections with the Buddhist treasures and with Ise shrine. Iyanaga Nobumi sheds light on “that school”, kano ryū, a stream of esoteric thought that has been so far confused with the Tachikawa-ryū, which was active in producing secret texts, often with dark and highly sexual connotations, thus ending up being denounced as heretic by mainstream Shingon. Susan Blakeley Klein takes us to the world of nō and its esoteric commentaries, while Bernard Faure directs our attention to Vināyaka, its connections with the “wild” spirits, kōjin, and its role as a placenta deity. The last article of this section is again on lineages: Bernhard Scheid discusses the esoteric and non-esoteric transmissions of the Nihon shoki and their relationship with Shinto and Buddhism.

In the third and last section of this book, “The demise of medieval secrecy”, we move forward historically, going to the Tokugawa period. William M. Bodiford talks about the Anraku reforms initiated in the 17th century by the monk Reikū Kōken who, following the general epistemological shift towards clarity and “evidentiary learning”, denounced Tendai secret transmissions, considered heretic, and which lead to the replacement of these transmissions with vinaya ordination. Anne Walthall, on the other hand, shows how the shogun used absence, in a way similar to that of the hidden buddhas, as a tool for power. Secrecy was still very important, but lost its...
connections with the secret teachings. The last article, by Kate Widman Nakai, takes us to the late Tokugawa period and the Mito school thinkers. With them court rites open up and become public rites in the Confucian frame of the promotion of virtue.

All in all this is a very dense and varied book. It may be read as a single unit, which gives us a clear and wide idea on the phenomenon of secrecy in Japan, or by choosing only the articles related to our field of research. In either case, this is a book well worth reading. The only comment that I can make is that it would have been nice to have article on Tibet and the idea of secrecy in this country. All too often we miss making comparisons with perhaps the only other country apart from Japan where esoteric Buddhism flourished and remained alive till modern days. This is a volume useful to any scholar dealing with Japanese religions, especially in the medieval period, but would be of great interest also for those researching Japanese history, society and culture as a whole. I very much hope that it will get the attention it deserves and not remain something everyone talks about but that no one has ever actually read.

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**Valignano Year in Chieti**

Coinciding with the 400th anniversary of the death of Alessandro Valignano SJ (1539–1606), 2006 has been designated “Valignano Year” in Chieti, the Italian town where he was born. Valignano is known in the field of East Asian religions for his role as Visitor of the Jesuit Asian missions, and for having pioneered the accommodation method of evangelisation in Japan and China. On 27 and 28 October an International Symposium entitled “Alessandro Valignano S.I. Uomo del Rinascimento, ponte tra Oriente e Occidente” [Man of the Renaissance, bridge between East and West] was held at the Mariccino Theatre in Chieti.

On Friday 27 October the symposium opened with welcoming greetings by Mario di Nisio, president of the Carichieti Foundation, which sponsored the event. A publication had been prepared especially for the occasion: *La Città di Chieti al tempo del padre Alessandro Valignano* (1539-1696) [The City of Chieti at the time of Father Alessandro Valignano (1539-1696)], and the pages dedicated to Valignano in the authoritative book *I Grandi Missionary* [The Great Missionaries] by Pasquale M. D’Elia SJ, which had been reprinted in facsimile.

Martín Morales SJ (Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu (IHSI), Rome), the moderator of the first day, opened the morning session, which focused on Valignano’s persona. The first panel comprised the Archbishop of Chieti/Vasto, Bruno Forte, who spoke on the actuality of the Valignano’s message in the present global world, and Marcello Valignani (Università di Ferrara), who presented the history of the Valignano family. Augusto Luca (Pia Società di San Francesco Saviero per le Missioni Estere) followed with a presentation on the life and thought of Alessandro Valignano. Carmelo Lisón Tolosana (Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, Madrid) presented a paper in which he argued that Valignano was twice “colonized”. The first instance was by Spain at his birth, since Chieti was part of the Kingdom of Naples, which was under Spanish rule when Valignano was born, and the second was when he arrived in Japan; Valignano was so mesmerized by the culture that he was colonized again, although this time willingly. The speaker suggested that this was the reason for Valignano’s request that all missionaries adapt to the Japanese style of life. Valignano wanted to build a new Church in Japan free from the influence of the European Church and Lisón concluded that, in fact, the twice-colonized Valignano actually wanted to colonize Japan, the Society of Jesus, and Europe. This generated many critical contributions from the audience in the open discussion that followed.

The evening session was centred on Valignano’s role in the missionary context. Charles J. Borges SJ (Loyola College, Maryland) presented “Redrawing the Face of the

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**Information on Japanese Religions**

**Man of the Renaissance, Bridge Between East and West: Alessandro Valignano S.I.**

Carla Tronu Montane

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Jesuit Mission in India: Valignano’s Highs and Lows in Missionary Strategy”, suggesting that upon Valignano’s arrival in India internal tensions between the provinces of Goa and Malabar, and logistical problems with the other Catholic orders, prevented him from familiarization with the culture, and thus his first reaction was to dismiss it. Gianni Criveller (Holy Spirit Seminary, Hong Kong), presented a paper emphasising the deep link between the Japanese and the Chinese missions, pointing out that Valignano and Ricci’s collaboration was so close that it is very difficult to distinguish one’s policy from that of the other. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Pennsylvania State University) talked about the role of Valignano as the Visitor of China and its meaning for the history of the Jesuit missions and compared Valignano’s attitude towards Chinese and the Japanese societies.

The last panel of the first day concentrated on Japan, with papers by Renzo De Luca, SJ (The Museum of the 26 Martyrs, Nagasaki) on “The Politics of Evangelization: Valignano and his Relations with the Japanese Rulers of the Sixteenth Century”, and Masakazu Asami (Keio University, Tokyo) on Valignano’s perception of the relationship between lord and vassal in Japan. Renzo De Luca talked about the strategic contributions of Valignano within the Japanese mission, from early success to final expulsion and prosecution. Masakazu Asami explained the problems that the Japanese Christian converts’ sense of loyalty to their lords caused to the missionaries. The Franciscan friars wanted to apply European law to Asia, and prohibited all native social customs that led to idolatry, while Valignano wanted Japan’s social order and its loyalty codes to be respected and suggested allowing Japanese Christians to maintain their social rituals or customs, like constructing Buddhist temples, or accompanying their lord to Buddhist worship.

On Saturday 28 October the first panels of the morning session kept the focus on Japan, starting with Fernando García Gutiérrez SJ (Universidad de Sevilla), who talked about Valignano and the introduction of Western Art in Japan. He said that Western art was appreciated from the beginning in Japan, but due to the long distance, and the high cost and risk of importing art via Portuguese trade ships, Valignano understood that the mission needed to be able to produce religious art in the field. Kenji Igawa (University of Tokyo) spoke on ”Valignano’s description of Japanese society and Japanese Historical Materials”, illustrating the contrast between Jesuit missionary letters and Portuguese and Japanese commercial records. Finally, Sukehiro Hirakawa (University of Tokyo) spoke on the influence of Valignano’s cultural adaptation policy on Masanaga Nakamura, a Confucian scholar and Meiji modernizer. Reflecting on Nakamura’s baptism, the speaker raised issues about religious syncretism; although Nakamura was baptised after his experience in London in 1876, he did not renounce Confucianism and on his deathbed asked to die as a Shintoist. Professor Hirakawa suggested that the cause lay in the fact that Nakamura approached Christianity through the books written by Matteo Ricci, who, following the accommodation policy of Valignano, explained the Christian doctrine in Confucian terms.

The second panel opened with a series of presentations on the major works of Valignano. Adriana Boscaro (Università Ca’Foscari, Venezia) talked about Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos Costumes e Catangues de Jappâo, a book on etiquette for missionaries in Japan, in which Valignano established regulations for missionary life, from daily-life to the internal hierarchical structure, modelled on Japanese culture. Boscaro argued that although not all of his proposals flourished in Japan, Matteo Ricci applied his cultural adaptation policy in China. Jesús López Gay SJ (Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma) presented the contents of El Sumario de las Co-sas del Japón, an extensive report to the General Father of the Society of Jesus on the Japanese mission. López-Gay stressed the work of Valignano, who understood the problems and objectives of the mission and restructured it completely, by training the missionaries in the Japanese language, creating a native clergy, introducing the press, printing doctrinal books in Japanese language, and maintaining the silk trade.

In the afternoon session, Pedro Lage Correia (Universidade Nova, Lisboa) contextualised the production of
Valignano’s *Apologia*, which was the response to the accusations that Jesuits had moral responsibility for the execution of six Franciscan friars and seventeen Japanese converts in February 1587. According to Correia, Valignano’s strategy in the *Apologia* was not only to argue that the Franciscan method of evangelisation was not appropriate in Japan, but also to underscore this problem in all mendicant orders in all Asian missions, and to sustain that the problem lay in the rules of the mendicant orders, constructed for monastic life and not for evangelisation.

Antoni Üçerler (IHSI, Roma) introduced Valignano’s last work, the *Principio y Progresso de la Religión Cristiana en el Japón*, a history of the Jesuit mission in Japan. At the end of his last visit to Japan (1598-1601) Valignano planned to write a history of the Japanese mission, in five parts, corresponding to the number of years of office held by the five superiors of the mission, from the arrival of Francis Xavier up until Valignano’s time, but the history was only completed to 1570 when the second superior of the mission, Cosme de Torres, passed away. Üçerler is preparing a critical edition of Valignano’s original manuscripts, which remained in Goa until William Marsden bought them in 1759 and donated them to the British Museum at the end of the eighteenth century, where they remain.

After the break, Franco Mazzei (Università “l’Orientale”, Napoli) and Vittorio Volpi, (UBS Italia S.p.A) talked about Valignano’s lesson in diversity management during a time of globalisation. They suggested that economic globalisation has not resulted in the universal spread of Western values, but rather in the revalorisation of cultural specificity. They stressed the importance of cross-cultural management in such a society and saw in Valignano’s evangelisation method, “inculturation”, a relevant pattern for the business community to apply to cultural diversity management. They suggested that Valignano’s hermeneutic method, based on respect, and not tolerance, for “the other”, is the only way to transcend the two traditional approaches of Orientalism: the particularistic and the universalistic approaches.

The symposium closed with a talk by Adolfo Tamburello (Università “L’Orientale”, Napoli), who presented some conclusions that had been reached during the two-day symposium, and highlighted some controversial issues or open questions that will undoubtedly still keep scholars busy. The wish of many participants and attendees to repeat such an experience of reflection and discussion was expressed, and it is hoped that this will be realised, if not before, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Valignano’s birth in 2039.

Lastly, a note of appreciation is due to the organizers for their outstanding hospitality, and for having facilitated a high level of student participation. In addition to a dinner for the organisers and the speakers, coffee and confectionery were served during the morning and afternoon breaks, and a buffet of pastries at the lunch break. This facilitated fluid communication between the organizers, the presenters and an audience or almost 300 attendees, of which 40 were university students. The high level of student participation was the result of the generous sponsorship of both the Carichieti Foundation, which offered travel bursaries to Italian university students to enable attendance at the conference and to the initiative of several Italian universities with programs in Japanese studies, which counted attendance at the conference as formative units. The Organising Committee and the Scientific Committee, co-ordinated by Prof. Marina de Russo, did a splendid job, which was deeply appreciated by all concerned. In closing I would like to thank the organizers and the Carichieti Foundation for the travel bursary which they kindly extended to me, which gave me the opportunity to participate in such a great conference.

**Carla Tronu Montane**, holder of the 2003-2006 CSJR Research Studentship, is a PhD candidate at the SOAS. The topic of her research is Christianity in pre-modern Japan. (127166@soas.ac.uk)
Sacred Sites, Buddhist Lineages and the Emergence of Esoteric Kami Worship in Early Medieval Japan

Anna Andreeva

This year I have been incredibly fortunate to be awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard. Following five years at University of Cambridge, where I wrote my PhD dissertation entitled “At the crossroads of esoteric kami worship: Mt Miwa and the early beginnings of Miwa(ryū) Shintō”, I have found myself in another Cambridge, and at the center of many fascinating events and meetings.

One of many pleasant duties of postdocs at the Reischauer Institute is giving a presentation at the Japan Forum Lecture Series. These lectures, which are held each week at the Institute, attract a large audience, and are the highlight of the term’s program of Harvard events dedicated to Japan. My presentation at the Japan Forum Lecture Series took place on December 8, 2006, and was dedicated to the emergence of esoteric kami worship in early medieval Japan, with specific references to two sacred sites, Ise and Miwa.

Much has been said about the Great Shrines of Ise which famously enshrined the imperial ancestor Amaterasu, and were an ancient cultic centre where the imperial family worshipped kami. Although the worship of kami was probably conducted at Ise since prehistoric times, by the Kamakura period, the Ise shrines were facing a difficult situation: the donations from the imperial family almost ceased, the land domains were managed as if they were a private possession of shrine and temple administrators, and the dispute between the shrines themselves was starting to be an increasing burden.

The cultic centre in the vicinity of Mt Miwa in south-eastern Yamato was another ancient kami site, with rich connections to the imperial family. According to records in the Nihon shoki it appears that in prehistoric times the Kami of Miwa was the protective deity of the early Yamato rulers before they turned to worship of Amaterasu. For a number of reasons, the cultic site in Miwa was abandoned and almost forgotten until the late 13th century, when the Buddhist lineages arrived at Miwa and reinvented it as a cultic center where kami were worshipped along with Buddhhas.

In most cases the veneration of kami in the context of esoteric Buddhism resulted in the production of secret theories and rituals specific to these cultic sites. An important stage of this process was the so-called ‘mandalization’ of sacred space. Medieval scholar-monks, particularly trained in the Shingon tradition, imagined the sacred sites where the old native gods were enshrined, as manifestations of the sacred icons of esoteric Buddhism, the Two Mandalas. This technique would thus transform a sacred site into what Mark Teeuwen calls a ‘mandalic power point, where the dharma-body itself saves sentient beings through objects, buildings, and landscapes that represent ‘True Reality’ (Teeuwen 2006). By doing so, the notion that a famous site where the ancient kami were worshipped was in fact a physical representation of the Buddhist land of eternal bliss (or in some cases, hell) opened the door to many possibilities. In most general cases, an unruly, unenlightened and unpredictable kami that often had the power of curse, tatari, was then pacified. More importantly, with the subjugation of kami by the Buddhist order, the possibilities for experimenting with and inventing new salvation techniques – an achievement invaluable for any Buddhist in the times when people believed it was the end of the world, became almost endless.

In Japan, the first attempts to envisage the sacred space, which in many cases were mountains, as a manifestation of the Two Mandalas, were documented by practitioners of mountain pilgrimage in central Japan (Ômine, Kumano and Yoshino) sometime during the late 12th century. These major centers of mountain pilgrimage had developed their own visions of the Buddhist universe on earth, whereby each peak of the mountain range along the route was identified with a corresponding deity of the Two Mandalas. These visions first appeared as secret theories among the mountain monks, and, with the empowerment of the cultic sites such as Kumano and Yoshino they became further reinforced and spread. In the medieval period, Japan eventually became a ‘patchwork quilt’ of such sacred areas, where each and every cultic...
centre was a manifestation of the entire mental universe of Tantric Buddhism (Grapard 1982). This was the early stage of the transformation of the sacred landscape of medieval Japan, the reinvention of its mental map.

Images of the Two Mandalas, statues of Aizen Myōō, a portable Ise shrine, its sacred mirrors and shitōn syllable mandalas, as well as maps of pilgrimage routes in medieval Japan, were the evidence that I investigated during my talk. Having started with setting out issues and definitions, I discussed the process in which important sacred sites in Japan became perceived as manifestations of the Two Mandalas, and how esoteric theories about kami, specifically those referring to the association of imperial deity Amaterasu (or Tenshō Kōtaijin) with esoteric deities Dainichi and Aizen Myōō, emerged in early medieval Japan. An important role in dissemination of such theories was played by esoteric Buddhist and Shugendō lineages which produced, modified, and exchanged such secret theories and rituals. According to a recent study, The Culture of Secrecy (Routledge 2006) which is also reviewed in this issue of the Newsletter, this secret ‘trade’ led to the transmission of the secret knowledge that was, for instance, produced at Ise, to other sacred sites in medieval Japan. For example, the monks of the Saidaiji lineage who resided at Ise, also played an important role in production of esoteric theories at Miwa, another important sacred site, long-forgotten by wealthy donors and the official Buddhist establishment. I demonstrated this by discussing the contents of the Origins of the Great Miwa Deity, a text that was compiled by the Saidaiji monks as early as 1318.

By the end of the talk I was very glad to get several interesting and thought-provoking questions and good feedback. My many thanks for this chance to present my research at Harvard go to the RI Director Professor Susan Pharr and the Associate Director Dr Ted Gilman, Professor Helen Hardacre whose wonderful support and guidance has been a great help, Professor Ryūichi Abe whose insight on the matters of Esoteric Buddhism provoked me to search for further answers, Professor Harold Bolitho for his concern and encouragement, and also to many others. (andreeva@fas.harvard.edu)

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Information on Japanese Religions

The Annual Meeting of The American Academy of Religion
November 18-21, 2006
Washington D.C.

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One would never be able to imagine just how many people the Washington Convention Center can house on a chilly November day. The monumental building at Mt.Vernon in Washington D.C stands as a reminder of the human ability to reach out, grasp a piece of land and realize a vision that would come to be filled with the sound of earnest discussions and laughter, enveloped in an invisible cloud of words and ideas and the aroma of coffee. Between 18-21 November it was a meeting place for scholars of religion from all over the United States and around the world. The annual congregation of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature hosted several hundred sessions on a variety of topics, all of them relevant, enlightening, fascinating, and thought provoking. The “Muhammad Cartoon” Controversy, the Human Genome Project, and Evils in Religious Traditions, were just a few of the program highlights. Apart from vivid discussions on these and many other themes, one could have a very difficult time in choosing where to go from wild card sessions, endless receptions, job talks, and publishers’ meetings, to thematic workshops, book exhibitions and film showings. All of these events were listed in the program, which itself was reminiscent of a travel guide to continents, countries, cultures, and times.

The sections on Buddhism and Japanese Religions were among the very well attended, and provoked lively discussion. On November 18 the morning session was opened by James Ford (Wake Forest University) who made a short introduction to this session’s theme, “Japanese Religiosity from Tokugawa to the Present”. The first presentation was by James Baskind (Yale) who discussed the mortification practices in the Japanese Ōbaku school. Wilburn Hansen (Stanford) presented a paper entitled “Japanese Nativist Healing Debate; Magic vs. Medicine”, and Gaynor Sekimori (University of Tokyo) made an excurse into the revival of Nikkō Shugendō. The last paper was by Mark Wheeler MacWilliams (St. Lawrence University) who engaged the audience in a discussion of “Manga as Living Visual Narratives in Kajika no Kagaka”. Responding to the papers was Barbara Ambros (University of North Carolina). The session concluded with a business meeting presided over by Paula Arai (Carleton College).

Another session dedicated to Japanese Religions and Politics was held on Saturday evening. Paula Arai was again presiding, whilst the responses to the papers were given by Richard Jaffe (Duke). Jason Josephson (Stanford/École Française d’Extrême-Orient) opened this session with a paper on “Taming Demons: The Anti-super-
tition Campaign and the Invention of Religion in Meiji Japan”. Hwasoo Kim (Harvard) talked about the strategic merger of the Korean Wŏnjong and Japanese Sōtōshū in colonial Korea, and William W. Hunt (Nashville) discussed the relationship of religion to the Okinawan anti-base protest movement. The last two papers were given by Yuki Shimada (Princeton Theological Seminary), who attempted to reconsider the Yasukuni Problem, and Irit Averbuch (Tel-Aviv University), who cast light on the ‘discourses of re-appearing’ in the paper entitled “Re-enactment and Aftermath of the Rite of Nuno-hashiri Kanjō-e at Mt. Tateyama”.

The Sunday morning session on November 19 was opened by the Buddhism section with an overarching theme of “New Perspectives on Buddhist Hagiography in East Asia”. Jacqueline Stone (Princeton) presided over this section, and Robert Campany (Indiana University) was the respondent. The first paper was delivered by Stuart Young (Princeton) who investigated the earliest hagiographies of Nāgārjuna and Asvaghōsa in the Chinese context. Next was Joshua Capitano (Penn State) who talked about the immortalization of Bodhidharma in a paper entitled “The Chan Patriarch in Buddhist Sources and Beyond”. Chris Callahan (Harvard) concentrated on ‘Reading with form and genre, contesting paradigms and memories’ in his consideration of Kakunyo’s Godenshō. Heather Blair (Harvard) delivered the last paper, her vision of accounts of Nichizō, whom she called ‘the genre-crossing holy man’.

The Buddhism section continued in the afternoon, but this time the discussion was dedicated to discussing the achievements and future tasks of the AAR Buddhism section, which turned 25 years old this fall. Charles S. Prebish (Penn State), presiding over the former co-chairs’ roundtable, set out the theme: “Twenty-Five Years and Looking Forward”. It was a lively meeting with many old and new members in attendance. Anne Blackburn (Cornell), Jacqueline Stone (Princeton), John McRae (Soka University), John Strong (Bates College), Leslie Kawamura (Calgary), Peter Gregory (Smith College), Collett D. Cox (Washington) and George Bond (Northwestern) comprised a wonderful panel and shared their experiences and concerns in running the Buddhism section at the AAR over the years. This was followed by a business meeting led by Charles Hallisey (U. of Wisconsin) and Janet Gyatso (Harvard) who proposed nominations for new members of the committee for the Buddhism Section.

The Buddhism section met again on Monday afternoon to listen to papers presented on the topic of “Clerics and Family, Clerics as a Family” which was dedicated to a reconsideration of the role of the family in Monastic Buddhism. The first presentation was by Shayne Clarke (McMaster) who spoke about monastic families in Indian Buddhism and ‘locating the family in homelessness’. Next was Gina Cogan (Boston University) who presented a well-thought out paper entitled, “Serving the Buddha through Serving the Emperor: Imperial Buddhist Monks and Nuns as Abbots, Abbesses and Adoptees in Edo Japan”. The audience was impressed by the performance of Annabella Pitkin (Columbia) who talked about the renunciant relationships of Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyalten in a paper discussing non-sectarian ideals and homelessness. Lori Meeks (University of Southern California) talked about Buddhism and Family Business in Medieval Japan, inviting the idea of ‘inheritance of the monastic trade’. At the end of the session John Strong (Bates College) gave an in-depth analysis of the presented papers and entertained the audience with his witty comments.

Tuesday, November 21, was the last day of the conference, but despite a somewhat relaxed atmosphere, the Buddhism section once again attracted a large audience and many thought-provoking papers were presented. It was opened by Robert Buswell (UCLA) who made introductory remarks to the session’s theme, “Tantric Buddhism through the Chinese looking-glass”. Paul Copp (Western Michigan University) presented his notes on the nature of some practices in Tang Buddhism, confronting the audience with an important question: “If not “Tantric” or “Esoteric” then what?” This was a good beginning to the overall discussion of this theme of which all of the presenters and respondents had insightful contributions to make. Richard D. McBride (Washington University, St. Louis) continued the session with a paper entitled “The Mysteries of Body, Speech and Mind: The Three Esoterica in Medieval Sinotic Buddhism”. Next on the panel were Charles Orzech (University of North Carolina) who discussed Tantras and their translations in Tang and Song China, and George Keyworth (University of Colorado) who attempted to re-consider Tantric Buddhism in Song China. The last paper was given by Robert Gimello (Harvard) who concentrated on the nature of the distinction between the “Exoteric” and “Esoteric” (Xian/ Mi) in Later Chinese Buddhism. This and other papers provoked lively comments from the section’s respondent Robert Sharf (UC Berkeley), and an engaging discussion with the audience ensued.

These few days in November, of course, could not possibly provide enough time for all the participants to brainstorm all the issues and questions that modern scholarship of Buddhism and Japanese Religions have to deal with. Yet, a lot of important moves forward were made and many significant conclusions were drawn. Apart from discussing academic trends and future areas to explore, the participants of the Buddhism section agreed that attracting more young scholars of East Asian religions and Buddhism, in particular, to participate in the committee and co-chairs’ meetings and active engagement in running the section would be a tremendous help, and also a further contribution to the field. A suggestion was made that attracting more European scholars to participate in future AAR panels on Buddhism could also bring more diversity and positive drive to the field. Hopefully, next year will show how far these suggestions were put to practice.