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BULLETIN
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With the 2018 academic year we were honored to have Tsuruoka Yoshio as the Roche Chair for Interreligious Research. Tsuruoka’s presence and research into Medieval European mysticism has made this past year at the Institute especially memorable. The Chair was established in 2003 with a generous donation from Robert Roche, a former exchange student at Nanzan University and a longtime friend of the Institute (nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/en/activities/the-roche-chair/).

Fukahori Ayaka has joined the staff as one of our two junior research fellows. In March 2018 Yokoi Momoko completed her two-year fellowship. This program for postdoctoral researchers is financed by the Van Bragt Scholarship Fund, established in memory of the first director of the Nanzan Institute, Jan Van Bragt (1928–2007). We are grateful to the Divine Word Missionaries of Techny, Illinois, for their assistance in the management of the fund. As with the established scholars who hold the Roche Chair, these young scholars play an important role in enlivening the Institute’s activities and opening us to new directions.

This past year saw a steady stream of visiting scholars from home and abroad, some for short research trips, others for longer stays. We have become so accustomed to these comings and goings that we often forget how much we owe to the contributions of these visitors both personally and academically—as we too often forget to thank our office staff for the care and attention they afford our guests during their time with us, in addition to handling the enormous amount of paperwork needed to keep an Institute like ours going.

Continuing a practice he initiated shortly after becoming a senior research fellow, Okuyama Michiaki has periodically arranged gatherings of local scholars for “Research Meetings” and “Salons” at the Institute. He, along with Matthew McMullen, also arranged another “Nanzan Seminar” for young doctoral students from abroad to present their work in Japanese and discuss it with their peers and older scholars. As with last year’s Seminar, we collaborated with Nagoya University’s Abe Yasurō, who assumed a generous portion of the expenses under the umbrella of a grant from Japan’s Monbukagakushō.

In 2018 the Institute was awarded a two-year grant from Nanzan University’s Program for the Promotion of Internationalization to pursue the topic “Establishing a Center for the International Dissemination of Japanese Intellectual Culture.” One of the principal focuses of the project is the preparation of a
Korean translation of the 2011 book *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, edited by our emeritus fellow James W. Heisig in collaboration with Thomas P. Kasulis and John C. Maraldo. In preparation for the translations, numerous meetings were held at the Institute and in Korea, where the Global Institute for Japanese Studies at Korea University in Seoul has played a pivotal role.

We were surprised this past year by formal visits from a number of European universities seeking a “Memorandum of Understanding” for ongoing collaboration in the exchange of scholars and the organization of joint projects. As we follow up these invitations, we are beginning to appreciate more and more the value of this kind of international coordination.

In a nutshell, that does it for 2018. We look forward to another productive year and to working with our friends and colleagues around the world.

Seung Chul Kim  
*Director*
2018

9 April Esther-Maria Guggenmos of the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, concludes her brief stay as a Visiting Research Fellow.

22 May Haewon Yang gives an in-house seminar on “Between Female Agency and Feminist Agency: Telling the Stories of Catholic Women Writers in Japan and South Korea.”

5 June Ōsaki Harumi (PhD McGill University) begins a ten-month stay as a Visiting Research Fellow.

7 June A colloquium is held with John Maraldo, Professor Emeritus, University of North Florida, on “The Question of Responsibility in Metanoetical Philosophy.”

15 June Seung Chul Kim gives a presentation at the International Conference on Korean Studies at University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

21 June Tim Graf presents and discusses his film “Buddhism after the Tsunami” at Tohoku University’s Graduate School of International Cultural Studies.


22–24 June Matthew McMullen attends the fourth meeting of the “Workshop on Tannishō Commentarial Materials” at Ryūkoku University.

28 June Paul Swanson gives a presentation at Nanzan University on “What is Translation? Reflections on 30 Years of Translating the Mohe zhiguan” for the first of a series of presentations by professors of the Christian Studies Department.

9 July Raquel Bouso, professor at the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, concludes her stay at the Institute, where she spent two weeks to complete a translation project undertaken in collaboration with the Institute.

18 July An in-house seminar is held with Ryu Jeidong (Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul) on “A Korean Rejoinder to Critical Buddhism with Special Reference to the Question of Social Justice.”

22 July Park Yeonjoo arrives at the Institute to pursue her research on medieval Tendai Buddhism. She concluded her stay on 29 August.

24 Aug. Seung Chul Kim gives a presentation at ASEACC (The Association of Southeast and East Asian Catholic Colleges and Universities) at Elisabeth University of Music, Hiroshima.

27 Aug. Seung Chul Kim gives a presentation at Istituto “Religioni e Teologia” at Lugano Theological Faculty, Lugano, Switzerland.

7–9 Sept. Matthew McMullen and Tim Graf attend the Japanese Association for Religious Studies Conference at Ōtani University in Kyoto. The Japanese Journal of Religious Studies advisory board meeting was held on the morning of 8 September.

3 Oct. A presentation on “The Basic Structure of Religiosity of the Japanese State and Society from the Perspective of Rituals and Festivals” is given by Shiokawa Tetsurō (Kokugakuin University).


17 Oct. A team from Tallinn University, Estonia, visit the Institute to discuss future collaboration. The team consists of Tõnu Viik, Director of the School of Humanities; Alari Allik, Head of Asian Studies; Marek Tamm, Professor of Cultural History; Maris Saagpakk, Associate Professor of German literature and Cultural Studies; Kristel Toom, Research Coordinator; Siiri Soidro, Head of Studies; Maris Peters, Internationalization Coordinator; and Kätlin Keinast, Senior Specialist for International Cooperation.

28 Oct. Tõnu Viik, professor of philosophy at Tallinn University, Estonia, arrives for a month’s research.


10 Nov. Gotō Haruko delivers an in-house seminar on “Locating Awe: Examples from the Outlying Islands of Okinawa and Northern Kyūshū.”

16–22 Nov. Tim Graf, Matthew McMullen, and Paul Swanson attend the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Denver (USA), where they participated in an editors’ roundtable discussion on the morning of 18 November.

19 Nov. Tim Graf serves as a panelist at a showing of the film “The Departure” at the AAR annual meeting in Denver (USA).

22 Nov. Nanzan Visiting Research Fellow Jacynthe Tremblay is honored with the Canada-Japan Literary Award.

26 Nov. A team from l’Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium, visits the Institute to discuss future collaboration. The team consists of Baudouin Decharneux, Professor Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres; Sylvie Peperstraete, Professor Centre Interdisciplinaire d’étude des religions et de la laïcité (CIEL); and Pierre Bonneels, Professor Faculté de Philosophie et Sciences Sociales.

30 Nov. A Nanzan Salon is held with a presentation by Kawamura Tadanobu on “The Status of Shrines and the Meiji Restoration from a Legal Perspective.”

7 Dec. Paul Groner (professor emeritus, University of Virginia) gives a presentation on “Reflections on the Movement to Revive the Vinaya in Kamakura Japan, With a Focus on Shingon Ritsu (Esoteric Vinaya) Eison’s Chōmonshū.”

14 Dec. Seung Chul Kim gives a presentation at the Conference for the 30th Anniversary of Department of Religious Studies of Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan.

15–16 Dec. Matthew McMullen attends an international symposium at Komazawa University held to honor the late Stanley Weinstein.

26–27 Dec. Paul Swanson travels to Kyoto to attend the 65th annual CORMOS Conference, on the theme “Why is it Wrong to Take Life Lightly? Religion and Capital Punishment.”

2019

13–15 Jan. The Nanzan Seminar for the Study of Religion and Culture (A Nagoya University JSPS Core-to-Core Program) is held, with five international PhD candidates and post-graduates presenting papers in Japanese.

19 Jan. Paul Swanson travels to Osaka to serve as a commentator (along with the director Kitamura Minao) at a special showing of the documentary film “Shugen” on the Haguro Aki-no-mine practices.


28–29 Jan. A Workshop is held with ten visitors from Korea to discuss the translation of Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook.

22 Feb. Tsuruoka Yoshio (University of Tokyo, Emeritus; 2018–2019 Roche Chair fellow) gives a talk on “Religion’ and ‘Mysticism': Reflections on Forty-five years of Religious Studies.”

17 March Matthew McMullen participates in the Shingon Workshop held at the Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture at the University of Southern California.

20 March A Japanese translation of the first volume of Edward B. Tylor’s Primitive Culture was published with the collaboration of the Nanzan Institute in the Japanese series “Selection of Classics in the Study of Religions.”

23 March Tim Graf travels to Sendai to attend a symposium in honor of Satō Hiroo on the theme of “The Past of the Study of Japanese Buddhism and an Outlook on its Future” at Tohoku University.

30 March Hans Ucko arrives to spend a year at Nanzan as the 2019 Roche Chair Fellow.

Other visitors included:

2018

2 March John LoBreglio, Editor, The Eastern Buddhist
21 April Myriam Constantino, Colegio de Mexico
1 May Anthony Haynes, Clear Water Academy
19 May Wang Yexing, Staff Reporter, Kyodo News
22–23 May Clark Chilson, University of Pittsburg
6 June Kin Cheung, Moravian College
11 June Aaron Proffitt, University at Albany, SUNY
15–18 June Elvin Zoet, PhD University of Utrecht, Netherlands
20 June Jesse LeFeuvre, PhD candidate Harvard University
26 June Eric Swanson, PhD candidate Harvard University
14 July Bret Davis, Loyola University Maryland
14 Aug. Damiano Bonato, graduate student, Università di Padova
27 Aug. Genivaldo C. de Oliveira, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo
30 Aug. Bruce Winkelman, University of Chicago
23 Sept. Erez Volk, Translator and Software Engineer, Tel Aviv
31 Oct. Damian Flanagan, scholar and journalist
6 Nov. Ian Reader, University of Manchester
3 Dec. Edin Branković, PhD student, Bosnia
Calendar of Events

17 Dec. Kim Hallal, Professor of Philosophy, Sogang University, Seoul, Korea, Lee Jang Hee, Professor of Ethics, Gyeongin National University of Education, Incheon, Korea; with Jung Kyong Moon

2019

17 Jan. Thomas Kasulis, Prof. Emeritus, Ohio State University
The rise of memorial services for pets in Japan reflects a growing demand, showing the increasing influence of pets in Japanese families and society in general. I have not done the research on this phenomenon necessary for a full academic study, but in this essay merely reflect on my own experience of two recent memorial services and share some thoughts about the religious implications for the Buddhist tradition of such memorial rites.

Our Cavalier King Charles Spaniel “Mae” passed away last Sunday—Easter Sunday. She joined her half-sister “Sora,” who had passed last summer. Both were an integral part of our family for more than fourteen years. We were faced not only with how to deal with the grief, but the practical problem of how to properly dispose of the body. The idea of throwing the body out along with the weekly burnable garbage was, of course, unthinkable. We could contact the city office (or a business that handles such matters) to arrange for a pickup, for a small fee, so that the body could be properly disposed of along with road kill and other animal remains of the day, but this was unpalatable. We had anticipated this situation, and a quick search had revealed the option of a memorial ritual and cremation at a local Tendai Buddhist temple. A short visit to the temple provided information on what this involved, and upon confirming that our pet had certainly passed, we made a reservation for a memorial service.

The basic service consists of a short memorial ritual, followed by cremation and disposal of the bones and ashes. A long menu of optional and additional services is also available, similar to such memorial rites and practices for human beings. We could ask for an individual service rather than group service; request ongoing memorial rituals at pre-determined passages of weeks, months, and years; maintain a memorial tablet at the temple along with thousands of other similar tablets; arrange for an individual grave, and so forth, all for an appropriate fee. We decided on an individual service, but otherwise to forego the ongoing
memorial rites, and to take the memorial tablet (and a small urn for some of the bones and ashes) back home for a keepsake. The remaining bones and ashes would be spread out on a special mound on the temple grounds along with the remains of innumerable other pets.

The memorial ritual itself is short—about fifteen minutes—and again similar to memorial rites for human beings. A Buddhist priest in his robes chanted various homages in the usual drone, including a recitation of the Heart Sutra, and closed with the offering of incense by all participants (see photo). The body, wrapped in a burial shroud embroidered with rainbow colors by my wife, was then wheeled into the cremation room next door, where we were invited to use a fresh leaf to place drops of water on the lips of the departed and make our last farewells. After the commencement of the cremation, we were invited to return in about an hour to contemplate and pick up the final dry white bones.

I do not have the expertise or access to information to write a proper academic study of pet memorials in Japan, so this short essay is merely an observation from my limited individual experience. I cannot say how common or widespread this experience is, or how other people respond to such a situation. It does, however, raise a number of interesting questions. Traditionally, for example, animal existence in Buddhism was considered in a negative light, a part of the cycle of transmigration that one may be reborn into as punishment for beast-like behavior. Hence derogatory terms for animals such as chikushō 畜生 and kedamono 獣. I assume that most Buddhist temples in Japan would refuse to allow the burial of animal remains in a human cemetery on temple grounds, not to mention the quandary of how to respond to the increasingly common request to include the remains of pets in the family grave. Indeed, our temple advertised itself as a specialist in pet memorials, a kind of holy ground specifically for animal burial. But Japanese society is changing; the idea of pets (mostly cats and dogs but also birds and many other sentient beings) as a beloved part of the family is widely accepted. The problem of “pet loss,” the trauma and grief that one must deal with upon the death of a pet, is a common topic of discussion and commiseration. Our experience with pet memorials at a Buddhist temple reflects one way that traditional Buddhism is responding to the current “needs” of Japanese society. I doubt that there is much awareness of whether or not this is a “religious” or even “Buddhist” practice, and yet it is a religious and Buddhist response. Neither am I aware of any attempts to explain these practices in terms of classical Buddhist teachings; in any case such attempts would be of interest only to a few (such as myself) and would be considered irrelevant to most of the people participating in such rituals. Questions such as whether or not the pet is “reborn” someplace (in a Pure Land, or at the “rainbow bridge”) may be considered by some but without deep theological or Buddhalogical conviction.
As we waited in the parking lot after returning to the temple to pick up and place selected bones into our urn with a choice of special tweezers or long chopsticks, we noticed a number of visitors—some carrying flowers—come to pay their respects and remember their pets at the general burial mound in the temple yard. A large group of more than ten people (probably a family, including all ages from very small children to seniors) gathered in the waiting room next to the crematorium clutching a small box in anticipation of their turn for a memorial service. I believe we all shared the same hope: *pace, pace, requiescat in pace*.

The Buddhist altar where memorial services for pets are conducted
The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture began hosting the Nanzan Seminar in 2013 as a venue for international graduate students to discuss their research on Japanese religions and receive feedback from Japanese scholars. The seminar provides a rare opportunity for non-native Japanese speakers to present their work in a casual and supportive academic setting. This year’s participants traveled from Europe, the United States, and Kansai to present on the current status of their dissertation research. Topics ranged from contemporary Buddhist youth organizations to medieval taxonomies of deities, and each presentation was followed by comments and, hopefully, fruitful discussion.

The fourth meeting of the Nanzan Seminar for the Study of Japanese Religions was held at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture on 13–14 January 2019. For the second consecutive year, the seminar was organized in collaboration with the Nagoya University JSPS Core to Core Program, which promotes the development of academic communities for the study of Japan’s cultural heritage and texts.

The fourth meeting of the seminar continued the tradition established in 2013, 2015, and 2018 of inviting international graduate students to present their research on Japanese religion. This year’s seminar included five PhD students from the United States, Italy, China, and Germany, six commentators from Japanese universities, the Nanzan Institute staff, and several local and international scholars of religion. The seminar was conducted in Japanese. Each presenter was given forty-five minutes to present his or her research project followed by forty-five minutes of questions and comments from the discussants.
The Seminar began with opening remarks from Torisu Yoshifumi (President, Nanzan University), who gave a brief summary of the history and significance of the Nanzan Institute. Kim Seung Chul (Director, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture) followed up with a comment on the progress of the Nanzan Seminar since its first meeting in 2013, and Okuyama Michiaki (Permanent Fellow, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture) discussed the objective of the Seminar as an opportunity for international graduate students to present and discuss their research in Japanese with scholars in Japan.

Presenters

Presentations at this year’s Nanzan Seminar included a diversity of research topics, ranging from the disappearance of youth in Buddhist youth groups to beliefs surrounding the death of the medieval Buddhist reformer Eison. The presenters were:

Silke R.G. Hasper (Heidelberg University), “Where is the Youth? Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist Youth Groups in Contemporary Japan”
Franziska Steffen (MLU Halle-Wittenberg), “How to weld and wield ‘religion’ in the Meiji period? Contrasting criticism against the ‘heretical’ Tenrikyō with its response as ‘Japan’s only true Shintō’”
Emanuela Sala (SOAS University of London), “‘A kami with any other name…’ Ōmiya no onkoto, the Yōtenki, and the problem of kami identities”
Jesse Drian (University of Southern California), “Local Traces and Sacred Spaces: Networks of Benzaiten Manifestations”
Xingyi Wang (Harvard University, Ryukoku University), “Eison’s Two Bodies: His Final Moment and Rebirth”

Discussants

Five Japanese scholars representing various fields of research in Japanese religions (medieval Japanese literature and religion, philosophy of religion, religion and gender, aesthetics, religious texts, religious history, and others) were invited to provide comments and advice to the presenters:

Abe Yasurō 阿部泰郎 (Nagoya University)
Iwata Fumiaki 岩田文昭 (Osaka Normal University)
Kobayashi Naoko 小林奈央子 (Aichi Gakuin University)
Chikamoto Kensuke 近本謙介 (Nagoya University)
Yoshida Kazuhiko 吉田一彦 (Nagoya City University)
Silke R.G. Hasper (Heidelberg University) *Where is the Youth? Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist Youth Groups in Contemporary Japan*

Hasper’s PhD dissertation examines the public image of contemporary Buddhism. Specifically, as she stated at the beginning of her presentation, her research addresses a dilemma currently facing Buddhist institutions in Japan regarding the growing criticism of their traditional means of income. “Buddhism in Japan today,” Hasper stated, “faces a huge dilemma. While most temples depend on the income from funeral rituals, this very element puts Buddhism in the center of criticism. The Japanese public’s understanding of Buddhism emphasizes funeral rituals and the honoring of ancestors at temples, an image which is then often combined with the accusation of old priests being greedy.” In her talk for the seminar, Hasper discussed youth engagement within Buddhism, or, rather, the lack thereof. Although youth engagement is a possible way of overcoming the association of Buddhism with funerals, these groups no longer draw attention from the general public.

She began her presentation by reviewing the literature on *Bukkyō seinen kai* 仏教青年会 (Young Buddhist Association), noting that researchers have mostly ignored the organization. One reason for this lack of research, Hasper noted, might be the difficulty of identifying the groups. Traditionally, statistics of the *Bukkyō seinen kai* were held by the temples, but with restructuring after the war the relationship between the temples and youth associations was lost, and the activities of these associations became more autonomous. Hasper, however, outlined several characteristics of the contemporary *Bukkyō seinen kai*
exemplified in her two case studies of the Keiō gijuku Bukkyō seinen kai 慶應義塾仏教青年会 (Keio Young Buddhist Association) at Keio University and the Zen Nihon Bukkyō kai 全日本仏教会 (All Japan Young Buddhist Association), an umbrella organization of several Buddhist Youth clubs. She argued that despite differences they share similar activities; both clubs, for example, engage in peace-making activities and encouraged inter-religious exchange. She concluded that, although contemporary Buddhism has lost much of its relevance in contemporary Japan in the eyes of the general public, activities of Buddhist associations such as the Bukkyō seinen kai may once again help to facilitate social engagement with Buddhism.

Commenting on the Bukkyō seinen kai, Iwata suggested that Hasper provide more in-depth historical background on the formation of the association. Although Buddhism does not seem to be a point of interest for the youth today, it was popular among younger people in Meiji Japan. “In the Meiji era,” Iwata stated, “Buddhist youth associations were active throughout an array of various religious affiliations, but after the Second World War the affiliation with Buddhist sects was cut off.” Iwata pointed out that since Buddhist youth associations are no longer very active, it might be more interesting for Hasper to study past members who have stayed in contact with the associations following their graduation from university. As an example, he mentioned Maekawa Kihei 前川喜平, a public critic of Prime Minister Abe, who in his book mentions how his experience as permanent secretary of Bukkyō seinen kai influenced his critiques of the Abe administration. Iwata also recommended looking into the history of the youth association at Keio Gijuku and Tokyo University, noting that their annual reports would offer an interesting source for Hasper’s future research.

Next, Kobayashi reflected on Iwata’s comments. She proposed whether it even makes sense to compare the current Bukkyō seinen kai with that of the Meiji era as the purpose of such youth groups has changed quite a lot over time. She mentioned how she had conducted fieldwork within a Buddhist youth association related to the Sōtō sect. Considering that the average age of its members was 41 led her to question the meaning of “youth” in this context. She also emphasized that the creation of an association for female priests in Nagano had changed the dynamic of the Bukkyō seinen kai. Therefore, whether or not contemporary Buddhist youth associations could accurately be compared with those of the Meiji era, Kobayashi concluded, was debatable. Hasper responded that the problem of defining “youth” had been her primary interest when she began her investigation of the Bukkyō seinen kai and that she was still looking into how to approach the problematic. Nevertheless, she thought it was still important to consider the historical background of the association.

Chikamoto stated that he was curious to know to what degree, if any, there existed a connection between the Bukkyō seinen kai at universities and the
temple authorities of Buddhism. For instance, is there an infrastructure internal to the Buddhist sects that deal with the associations in a similar fashion as funerals? He also mentioned that many groups of younger lay Buddhists sometimes engage in public events and wondered if such groups had any interaction with Buddhist youth groups at the universities. Hasper replied that most associations had some kind of relationship with the head temples of the Buddhist sects, although such agreements vary among the different groups.

Broadening the discussion, Abe wanted to know why the image of contemporary Buddhism has become so negative. He furthermore suggested expanding the scope of research to also include more positive understandings of Buddhism in society that go beyond the funeral criticism. How should Buddhists today discuss their views on life and death? Do the youth associations play a role in such discussions? Abe also wanted Hasper to tell more about the specific activities of contemporary Buddhist youth associations. He mentioned that it would be interesting to know to what degree activities such as zazen is practiced among members. Zazen, Abe noted, was a big activity among young people in the Meiji and Taisho eras, and people such as Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 were famous for having practiced it.

Franziska Steffen (MLU Halle-Wittenberg) How to weld and wield ‘religion’ in the Meiji period? Contrasting criticism against the ‘heretical’ Tenrikyō with its response as ‘Japan’s only true Shintō’

The second presentation of the day focused on the brief historical period from 1890 to 1902. During this period, journalists and intellectuals attacked the new religious group Tenrikyō, claiming its faith and healing practices were fraudulent and superstitious. According to Steffen, the history of Tenrikyō reflects the global boundary-drawing exercise between “science” and “religion” at the turn of the century. In her presentation, she contrasted criticism of Tenrikyō with primary sources from its formative years to demonstrate that both sides employed discursive categories recently imported from the emerging field of religious studies. These categories, namely the concept of “revealed religion” were used to delegitimize or legitimize the Tenrikyō as a Shinto religion.

Steffen pointed to the continual problem within religious studies of reframing religion in relation to modernity. In recent years, Japanese and foreign scholars have contributed to a new understanding of Shinto, Buddhism, and the ongoing religious discourse of the late nineteenth century. Focusing on the new religious organization of Tenrikyō and highlighting the use of “superstition” as a tool of exclusion, Steffen argued, reveals the intrinsic discursive nature of the concept of “religion.” In other words, through an analysis of late nineteenth-century discourse regarding the legitimacy of Tenrikyō as a “religion,” Steffen draws
attention to the manner in which the categories of religious studies framed the debate over Tenrikyō’s status as a religion. In the discussion, Iwata pointed out how the differentiation between religious belief and superstitious belief throughout the Meiji era played a significant role in the formation of the concept of religion. Intellectuals such as Inoue Enryō and his study of monsters and superstition were also involved in this debate. He wanted to know to what degree the disputes between journalists and Tenrikyō could be seen as a byproduct of these studies. Furthermore, Iwata added, it would also be interesting to investigate whether the influence of the concept of religion that developed following the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) affected the religious practice of Tenrikyō. “Logically,” Iwata stated, “changes in the concept of religion must have influenced in the self-image of Tenrikyō,” and then asked Steffen whether she thought there existed a difference between the theoretical discussion of religion, led by people such as Inoue Enryō, and the practical exercise of religious healing.

Chikamoto asked Steffen three questions. First, he wanted to know how the changes that occurred in Shinto during the late Meiji era affected Tenrikyō. Following the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), he pointed out, whether or not Shinto was a religion was a topic of much debate. In result, the discourse shifted from Shinto as a religion to Shinto as national polity. How, he asked, did Tenrikyō fit into this historical framework? Second, he requested a clarification of Tenrikyō’s political involvement. New religions, he said, are often criticized at first, but once they have established themselves they usually become political. Tenrikyō, to his knowledge, never become political. Why was this the case? Finally, Chikamoto was curious about Tenrikyō’s interaction with Christianity when the organization began to expand overseas. According to Tenrikyō, Tenri is the birthplace of humanity. How were such ideas received outside of Japan, especially among Christians?

Steffen agreed with Chikamoto that Tenrikyō did not involve themselves in politics. She stressed that one answer to this might be that during the time of Nakayama Miki, the founder of Tenrikyō, new religious groups were not very involved in politics. Regarding Tenrikyō interactions with Christians, she noted that during the 1890s members of Tenrikyō were generally hostile towards Christianity. This might also be why Christian missionaries were unsuccessful in their efforts to convert members of Tenrikyō, although they pointed out similarities between their faiths. Steffen mentioned that although Nakayama Shōzen (the second leader of Tenrikyō) studied both Christianity and theology at the Tokyo Imperial University, Tenrikyō did establish an official policy towards Christians.

Abe also commented on the historical aspects of Shinto as national polity. According to Abe, the formation of State Shinto was reflected in criticisms of
Tenrikyō. In attempt to define Shinto as a cultural and civic institution, it had to be distinguished from new religions such as Tenrikyō. This was accomplished by labeling Tenrikyō as superstitious. Furthermore, Abe stressed that Nakayama Shōzen’s attempts to influence religious studies at the Tokyo Imperial University was an effort to establish Tenrikyō as a recognized religion.

Emanuela Sala (SOAS University of London) ‘A kami with any other name…’

Ōmiya no onkoto, the Yōtenki, and the problem of kami identities

According to Sala, medieval sources seem to have been confused regarding the identity of the two deities Ōmiya 大宮 and Ninomiya 二宮. As she stated, “Multiple narratives on their enshrinement coexist, often in contrast with each other.” Sala noted that the position of the kami as “tutelary kami of the land” is unclear, their aspect is doubtful, and their “proper names” are often interchangeable. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the Yōtenki 耀天記, a text composed between the thirteenth and fifteenth century that includes miscellaneous material on the traditions of the Hie shrines. Sala’s aim was to inquire into the possible reasons underlying the vague identities of these deities and how further study of their development can explain the multiple mythical discourses of medieval Japanese Buddhism.

In her presentation, Sala focused on a section in the Yōtenki concerning Ōmiya and Ninomiya. The section explicitly discusses doubts regarding the identity of the two deities. In her analysis, Sala argued that the identities of the deities had been reformed and manipulated by various authors, which again had influenced the overall narrative of the text. Furthermore, she explained that these changing narratives highlighted institutional shifts within the organization of medieval temples as well as the construction of identities for these particular deities within the text itself. According to Sala, there have been previous studies on how kami identities were formed, both in the west and in Japan. These works, however, do not discuss the deities of sannō shintō 山王神道 in depth.

Sannō shintō can be defined as a medieval discourse on the deities at the Hie shrines 日吉神社 (also read as Hiyoshi) in Sakamoto, Shiga Prefecture. However, Sala explained that in medieval Japan sannō shintō had not yet been constructed as a unified system. Rather, what later came to be called “sannō shintō” was comprised of various narratives, doctrinal analyses, and artistic depictions that often contradicted each other. The mosaic uniting these different narratives was what, according to Sala, led to the conceptualization of the identity of the deities.

Sala made an interesting point that sannō shintō, in many respects, was the only medieval discourse on the deities of Hie. No other material existed on the deities Ōmiya and Ninomiya prior to the establishment of Enryakuji 延暦寺 except for the short mentions of them in Kojiki 古事記 and Nihon shoki 日本書紀. “We must therefore,” Sala explained, “see all medieval conceptualization of the
Hie deities as strongly grounded in Tendai thought.” This does not mean that religious institutions other than Tendai did not take part in the conceptualization and diffusion of the discursive practices that we call *sannō shintō*, but it reminds us, Sala stressed, that we cannot continue our research on medieval kami identities focusing only on the shrines. Material and texts concerning kami enshrined at the Hie shrines were often composed by Buddhist monastics operating there. Therefore, Sala’s research on the two deities Ōmiya and Ninomiya seeks to provide further detail on the much-overlooked role of shrine lineages regarding kami mythologies.

Abe mentioned that the *Yōtenki* probably is the most difficult work regarding *sannō shintō* considering its length and lack of uniformity. Therefore, identifying the kami in specific chapters was *subarashii*. Abe recommended that it would be beneficial for Sala to include chapter thirty-two of the *Yōtenki* in her research, which provides a more systematic description of the *sannō* deities. Furthermore, a modern Japanese version is available and used in contemporary Shinto liturgies.

Yoshida also provided a helpful comment. He noted that it is important to think of the identity of the deities metaphorically, as they changed over time. As an example, Yoshida talked about the transformation of the kami of Hie and how they first appeared as mountain deities. Originally, there was just one deity of the mountain, but at a certain point it turned into two. If you look at the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三大実録, you find sources on the creation of the kami of Hie. Later, the meaning changes again, and “Hie no kami” returned to its original concept of the deity of the mountain. Yoshida also suggested that Sala look into the idea of “yama no kami” and to consider whether the *sannō* deities were originally Japanese or imported from China.

**Jesse Drian (University of Southern California) Local Traces and Sacred Spaces: Networks of Benzaiten Manifestations**

Drian’s presentation was a reexamination of the *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 system from the perspective of sacred space. Drian pointed out that in the *honji suijaku* system the transcendental buddhas and bodhisattvas take the forms of worldly deities, like kami in Japan, in order to best serve the needs of worshipers. The *honji suijaku* system, in other words, provided a means for explaining how multiple kami could be identified as the same buddha. Although this system provided the monks with a way of organizing diverse cosmological schemes, Drian reminded us that it provided a launching point for scholar monks to compare information about the deities enshrined at different temples and shrines.

According to Drian, such identification problems led to various questions among the monks. “Are the different manifestations of a buddha the same, different, or the same but different? Is the deva Benzaiten 弁財天 appearing as the
Itsukushima 慶島神社 deity the same as the Benzaiten of Chikubushima 竹生島, and if
so, what is the relationship between their spaces?” Drian tried to illuminate these
questions by exploring how medieval scholar monks tried to answered them. His
conclusion was rather interesting as is pointed out how these monks in their efforts
to answer these questions constructed networks linking different Benzaiten and
their associated sacred spaces, consequentially, enabling each Benzaiten to simul-
taneously be seen as the same in essence and as what he termed “spatially unique.”

The intriguing aspect of Drian’s presentation was that he brought together
the methodologies and perspectives of a site-based study and network analysis
to investigate how deities and sacred spaces were understood through their
interrelations in medieval Japan. Although, as he pointed out, “studies in single
cultic sites have provided scholars of Japanese religions with an exceptionally
detailed picture of the religious landscape of medieval Japan,” he emphasized,
it is sometimes necessary to take a step back and see how religious ideas, texts,
and deities developed and moved translocally. Beginning his research from the
Itsukushima Shrine 慶島神社 and its origin narrative, he carefully explained how
the complex ideas regarding the space of Itsukushima became interconnected
with other sites of Benzaiten deities.

Abe was the first to comment on Drian’s presentation. He pointed out that
Drian’s presentation was very well-organized, clearly-structured and insightful.
However, as a piece of advice, he suggested that Drian should have provided
more detailed background on the evolution of Benzaiten sites. Abe further
pointed out that the notion of sacred grounds in Tendai varied according to the
connections between specific deities. In some cases, for example, networks were
drawn connecting different sites throughout Japan rather than individual Ben-
zaiten deities. In this respect, Abe recommended additional sources that provide
imagery of Benzaiten. He further suggested several origin tales regarding sacred
grounds related to mountain temples such as Zenkōji 善光寺.

Paul Swanson also chimed in on Drian’s presentation. Drian noted in his
talk that the Keiran shūyōshū 渓嵐拾葉集, and compendium of Tendai esoteric
practices and doctrines, employs a triangular diagram to explain the relation-
ship between various forms of Benzaiten and their locations. Swanson pointed
out that he came across the same configuration when writing the Foundations of
T’ien-t’ai Philosophy in which it was used to illustrate the doctrine of the three
truths (emptiness, conventional, and their intersection). Therefore, the Tendai
influence on medieval honji suijaku discourse is undeniable.

Yoshida cautioned Drian not to assume that such tales of gods in Japan
and origin stories about their locales were strictly a Japanese innovation. In
fact, many of these stories were imported from India and China. For example,
stories regarding the origins of devas called kishin 鬼神 were taken from tales
incorporated into early Mahayana Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore, as Yoshida
pointed out, what constituted a “honji” and “suijaku” was always quite vague. A “suijaku” deity could become a “honji” for another deity, and “suijaku” deities were sometimes divided into further subclasses. Therefore, one must be careful not to assume that honji suijaku was in any way a stable discourse on Buddhist taxonomy.

Xingyi Wang (Harvard University, Ryukoku University) 

**Eison's Two Bodies: His Final Moment and Rebirth**

Wang’s dissertation research primarily concerns Vinaya revival movements in China during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These movements were in connect with Buddhist intellectuals in Japan, and there are several parallels between the Vinaya revival efforts on the mainland and on the archipelago. In her presentation at the seminar, Wang focused on the Vinaya master Eison (叡尊 1201–1290) and his preparation for death. Based on descriptions in his biography written by a close disciple and a statue of himself, which had commissioned to be made toward the end of his life, Wang argued that the image of Eison represents a medieval ideal of death and the transformation of the physical body.

In the second part of her presentation, Wang positioned Eison’s biography and his statue within a broader Japanese Buddhist tradition. While it is commonly accepted that Eison was a major figure in the Vinaya revival movement, Wang suggested that it is important to consider his relationship to the Hossō school as well. Examining Eison’s preparations for death at the end of his long career as a monk, Wang pointed out how Hossō thought influenced his understanding of his own mortality. The carefully arranged dying and death of Eison, Wang stated, provided an example of how the doctrinal and practice aspects of Buddhism were conceptualized and embodied as a singular whole over the course of Eison’s life.

Iwata was the first to comment on Wang’s presentation. He wanted to know more about Wang’s interpretation of Eison’s death. Wang had mentioned in her talk that when Eison died miraculous signs had appeared, which she termed as a sign that the dharma body of the Buddha was present. Iwata wanted to know if there existed any sources or texts that confirms this claim. It is said that when Eison died auspicious signs appeared, but this interpretation contradicts sources on Eison’s birth. These sources stress that he endeavored to be reborn in Tusita Heaven, which was an aspiration that ran counter the more popular ideal of rebirth in Amida’s Pure Land.

Following up on Iwata’s comment, Chikamoto suggested Wang take a closer look at Eison’s commentaries and writings on ritual texts. He also recommended that she study Eison’s comments on Huizhao’s Quanfa putixin ji 勧発菩提心集 and the Kasuga gongken genki 春日権現験記, which would help Wang’s
research in making a connection between the study of the Vinaya and religious movements in Kamakura period.

Yoshida suggested that Wang might compare the hagiographical account of Eison’s death to the death of Shotoku Taishi in the *Nihon shoki*. Shotoku Taishi’s death scene could be interpreted in one of three ways. It could be understood as emulating the death of the Buddha; it could be interpreted as an imitation of the death of the Hossō patriarch Xuanzang; or, it could be understood as a doctrinal statement on rebirth in Tusita Heaven. This episode in the *Nihon shoki* was probably the basis for depictions of Eison’s death, not to mention other religious figures such as Kūkai.
Dancing with the Gods
Observations of the Niino Snow Festival

Tim Graf and Matthew D. McMullen
Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture

The Niino Snow Festival is a three-day event that attracts visitors by combining traditional arts and prayer rituals for worldly benefits at a secluded local mountain shrine. Weathering the cold, fatigue, and the smoke of burning wood, participants engage in night-long dances with local gods in expectation of a bountiful harvest. The 2019 Nanzan Seminar comprised an excursion for attendants to witness the festival’s aesthetically pleasing yet ultimately challenging environmental setting and performances. It is within this context that we observed and learned how decreasing participation in the course of rural depopulation has changed the festival over time, raising questions as to how long it will survive in its current form.

Every year during the final days of the extended New Year celebration (13–15 January), the valley of Niino 新野 in southern Nagano Prefecture attracts visitors to the Niino Snow Festival (Niino no yuki matsuri 新野の雪祭り). The three-day festival is said to usher in the new year and petition the gods for a bountiful spring. Organized and performed by members of the Niino community, the festival begins on the 13th at Suwa Jinja 諏訪神社 located to the north, before it reaches its zenith on the morning of January 15th at Izu Jinja 伊豆神社 in the south. Nestled amidst the majestic stretch of forest connecting the central mountain range of Nagano and Shizuoka Prefectures to the southern Japanese Alps of Aichi Prefecture, this seasonal event is a rare glimpse into the rites and costumes of local mountain shrines.

Attending the Niino Snow Festival provided for with a welcome opportunity to explore combinatory practices of kami and Buddhas (shinbutsu shūgō 神仏習合) in contemporary Japan. The theoretical challenges posed by shifts in how the relationship between buddhas and kami have been variously interpreted over time and in diverse religious contexts formed a recurring theme in this year’s Nanzan Seminar discussion. New approaches to the study of combinatory practices guided the papers presented by Emanuela Sala and Jesse Drian on Dancing with the Gods: Observations of the Niino Snow Festival.
medieval Buddhism in particular, but shinbutsu shūgō was also a topic that came up during Franziska Steffen’s talk on Tenrikyō in the Meiji era. Our excursion was, thus, not only a recreational experience and bonding event; it was relevant to and interactive with the general theme of the Seminar. Presenters were able to witness the interplay of diverse religious beliefs and practices within a local and social context on site. We are grateful to Abe Yasuro and Chikamoto Kensuke of Nagoya University for leading the Seminar presenters and participants on this excursion following the closing of the fourth Nanzan Seminar.

The bus trip to Izu Jinja took approximately two hours along a series of mountain roads. The shrine itself is inaccessible by car, requiring visitors to climb a sequence of stairways before reaching the main buildings, where the main events took place all night long. With temperatures hovering just below freezing, we wrapped in our warmest garments, packed some snacks to tide us over through the evening, and began the ascent up the mountainside.

When we arrived around 9 pm, preparations were still being made for the events scheduled to start after midnight and carry on well past sunrise. Musicians had already been warming up and began a series of traditional melodies as a part of the kagura 神楽 ensemble, while a group of firefighters assembled wood for a bonfire in the courtyard opening to the main hall. A tent selling udon noodles and warm sake (atsukan 熱燗) seemed to be the center of

The snow-covered stairways to Izu Jinja
the pre-festival activities, and, so that is where we gathered to await the main celebrations.

While awaiting the main events, we collected bits and pieces of information about the festival’s history from locals and our guides from Nagoya University.
The festival allegedly has a 750 year tradition that dates back to a combination of rites venerating the local deity Izu Gongen 伊豆権現, a classical style of dance called Takigi Nō 薪能, and shrine performances associated with Kasuga Taisha 春日大社 in Nara. These combinatory practices were influenced by the performances and rituals of diverse major cultic sites, including Kasuga Taisha and Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮, among others (Yamada 2019, 1).

Why this location was chosen for the festival is not exactly clear. Niino has an altitude of approximately eight hundred meters, and sits at the intersection of Akiha Jinja Hongū 秋葉神社本宮 to the East, Atsuta Jinja 熱田神社 to the West, Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮 to the South, and Zenkōji 善光寺 to the North. Perhaps its equidistant location from these major cultic sites made the Niino valley the ideal spot for such an event, as also one of the local participants in the festival explained. Traces of ryokan lodges in the valley and its proximity to the old Enshū Kaidō 遠州街道 route (now National Highway 151) suggest that the area may have been a popular stopover for travelers, which may have contributed to the popularity of the festival. Whatever the case might be, the Niino Suwa and Izu Jinja have hosted the festival longer than anyone can remember.

The modern form of the festival was popularized by folklorist Origuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953), who, along with fellow local historian Hayakawa Kōtarō 早川孝太郎 (1889–1956) dubbed the event the “Niino Snow Festival” in 1925. Before this, it was known by various titles such as Dengaku Matsuri 田楽祭り and Nizenji Kannon no Omatsuri 二善寺観音のお祭. The name “Snow Festival”
was based on a legend associated with New Year's festivals, which claimed that if snow falls during the day of the celebration there will be a bountiful harvest that year. The snow is also symbolic; the white snowflakes were thought to resemble grains of rice falling from sky. Therefore, the heavier the snowfall, the greater the coming year's rice harvest would be (YAMADA 2019, 2-3).

As midnight approached, some twenty firefighters assembled to check their safety equipment and prepare to lift the torch. Approximately one meter in diameter and seven meters tall, the torch consists of a large cedar tree that had been split in half and stuffed with pine branches and kindling. Using poles and pulleys, the firefighters slowly lifted the torch upright and secured it within a preconstructed scaffolding. A wooden boat fastened to a set of pulleys was then lit on fire and slowly drawn to the top of torch. Once lit, it was time to begin the main festivities.
It is within this context that the Niiho Snow Festival presents perspectives on the communal effort characteristic of Japanese temple and shrine festival culture. The festival wouldn’t be possible without the workforce of volunteers.
Yet while twice as many men are said to have helped raise the massive torch in the past, nowadays only around twenty firefighters remain. Yamada Takehiro, a long-time observer of the Niino Snow Festival, who has attended the ceremonies at Izu Jinja more than ten times, confirmed that the number of active participants has been decreasing year by year (Yamada 2019, 77). As a result, the torch has gradually become smaller, making it easier to erect with fewer participants. The festival’s safety standards have also changed over time. In the past, those who raised the massive tree stems could only rely on their own strength and the gods for protection under the moon light, as wires were absent at that time. Nowadays, by contrast, thick wire is used to hold the large torch in place, which decreases the risk for those involved in raising the pole. Judging by the nonchalant remarks of some of the locals, however, it also partly diminished the thrill and excitement for one of the festival’s peak moments.

It would be easy to dismiss declining participation in the festival as proof of a presumed decline in faith, or as the result of lacking interest in traditional temple and shrine festivals among younger Japanese. However, it is important to consider recent social changes facing rural communities. Declining birth rates and the aging of local Japanese communities are two important factors that put the continuation of many shrine and temple festivals at risk (see for example Sakurai and Kawamata 2016).

Devilish mountain ghosts (tengu 天狗) entering the stage
What attracts visitors to the Niino Snow Festival is not only its history or legendary origin, nor are the buddhas and kami worshipped and expelled as parts of the rituals necessarily known by those who attend these rituals. Much of the festival’s attraction is aesthetic. The festival’s visual power, for example, can hardly be overstated, as different types of colored masks mark the participants’ transformation from human actors into gods, mountain ghosts, and devils. Twenty-three different masks are used in the Niino Snow Festival, each embodying the presence of the gods during the ritual dances. Yamada Takehiro (2019, 1, 13, 15) describes an infamous incident in which a photographer requested that one of the dances be repeated in order to capture a better photo. The request drew criticism from angry festival attendants, who claimed that this was not just a dance. The special horse (called kyōman 競馬 in Japanese) performing the dance was considered to be a powerful kami, and it was improper, even sacrilege, to make such a demand of an invited deity.

Designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property 国指定重要無形民俗文化財 since 1977, the Niino Snow Festival has been widely acknowledged as a rare occasion to observe a confluence of traditional arts and religious rites performed at a local mountain shrine by the local community. In retrospect, despite being cold and exhausted, the opportunity to see the traditional dances and rites set to the tune of a kagura ensemble was worth the sacrifice of comfort. In fact, such austerities seem to be one of the appeals of the event. As Yamada
(2019, 14, 169) emphasizes in his account of the night-long event, the “three mui” of being sleepy (nemui 眠い), plagued with smoke (kemui 煙い), and cold (samui 寒い) are what gives the festival its distinct atmosphere. Nonetheless, we recommend that prospective festival-goers bring plenty of warm attire and, perhaps, take a nap before the events begin.

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April 2018–March 2019

James W. Heisig [emeritus]

Book


Essay


Academic presentations


“Of Gods and Minds,” the Duffy Lectures on Global Christianity, Boston College, 11 February–18 March, 5 times.


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Kim Seung Chul 金 承哲

Book


Essay

Translation

Academic presentations


FUKAHORI Ayaka 深堀彩香

Academic presentation

Research report

SAITO Takashi 斎藤 喬

Book
Essays


Academic presentations

2018 「柳桜口演『四谷怪談』におけるお岩の恋着」 [The Crazy Love of O-Iwa in Ryūō’s Yotsuya kaidan], 4th Graduate Seminar of the Department of Religious Culture, Aichi Gakuin University, 3 August.

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Okuyama Michiaki 奥山倫明

**Article**


**Essay**


**Translation**


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Paul L. Swanson

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Conference, workshop, event participation

2018  Commentator at a Nagoya University/Harvard University International Workshop on 「日本宗教研究の最前線」 [The Forefront of Japanese Religious Studies], Nagoya University, 21–22 June.

2019  Commentator at a Nagoya University/Swiss National Science Foundation conference panel 「異端とその宗教的言説—日本と西欧の比較史学の試み」 [Heresy and Its Religious Discourse: A Japanese and Western Attempt at a Comparative History], Nagoya University, 4–5 March.
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YOKOI Momoko 横井桃子

Article


Tim Graf

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