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Editors' Introduction

Borders, Performance, Deities

Borders are everywhere. They can be found not only on maps and at demilitarized zones, but anywhere where there is a question of in or out, more or less, or yes or no. Borders are crucial for understanding nations, estates, rules of conduct, social norms, and our very bodies.

When we think of the role of borders in religion, there are several classical approaches that immediately suggest themselves. Perhaps most obviously, borders suggest boundaries, modes of separating, distinguishing domains of space or perhaps thought. They are where we "draw the line," how we locate the inner and outer, the self and other, the native and foreign. Borders also lend themselves easily to spatialized modes of thinking. They can be drawn or represented graphically on maps, in graphs, and in charts. Perhaps most fundamentally, borders so conceived help us think in terms of structure, of lines of separation in physical and conceptual spaces. They are easily abstracted, capable of being conceived in almost mathematical abstraction, as static as the objects in an Euclidean proof.

This line of thinking has infused some of the most well-established theories across a number of fields in the humanities. It can be seen throughout the work of Mary Douglas, who in her *Purity and Danger* famously explored issues of pollution and taboo in terms of cultural boundaries and classifications (Douglas 1966). For Douglas, taboos serve as the borders of what is acceptable and in accord with social values—what is, in a word, safe. Societies need taboos and

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notions of impurity in order to represent and maintain the broader values in terms of which they are structured. Beyond those borders, Douglas argued, lay danger—not only in terms of (possibly imagined) physical disasters, but also danger for the coherence and foundations of society. As Douglas noted time and again throughout her work, taboos, impurities, and dirt are fundamentally modes of representing and enforcing social structure. For Douglas, rituals of purification are about eliminating ambiguity, clarifying and fixing the structures and borders within which the members of a community live.

Victor Turner theorized about the religious and social importance of borders as spaces "on the edge" (limens) of society, set outside of the norms and constraints of social behavior (Turner 1973). Here, in liminal spaces or at points of social transition, Turner explored how pilgrims, vagabonds, and social outcasts of various types could momentarily or permanently adopt or drop conventional social markers as they embraced new and undifferentiated forms of *communitas* and social identity. Clothing, modes of speech, sexual roles and performance, and so on, could be radically changed as the social boundaries that defined individual identities were temporarily held in suspension in festivals and rites that took participants outside of the realms of social structure, allowing for personal and social renewal and regeneration. Pilgrims on the roadways of medieval Europe could intermingle with fellow travelers of all social classes and experience encounters unmediated by normal social convention. Thus, in contrast to Douglas, for Turner borders were closely related to managing transitions, change, and, above all, *motion*.

Mary Louise Pratt proposed reading borders not simply as limits or barriers, but rather emphasized their role as "contact zones" in which disparate elements and cultures could engage each other (Pratt 1991). Unlike Turner, Pratt does not see borders. For Pratt, borders are to be found on the margin between self and other; they are sites of contact between that which is within and that which is beyond.

Pratt thus emphasized how the results of such interactions could result not in *communitas* and social renewal, but rather in a range of possible outcomes, many of which could be much more ominous. Pratt's contact zones are sites of contestation riddled with hierarchy, conflict, and inequitable power. For Pratt (1991, 34), contact zones "are places where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today."

Pratt's contact zones differ from Turner's liminal spaces in several other ways as well. Pratt, notably, extended her understanding of contact zones to include modes of writing and representation. Writing, genre, and language communities formed the crux of her analysis as she examined how people in unequal power

relationships seek to reach out, resist, and assert hegemony. Explicitly critiquing what she terms to be "utopian" understandings of community, Pratt emphasized how contact zones presupposed heterogeneity rather than bounded communities characterized by shared imagined ideals and histories.

Taken together, each of the above approaches underscored the fundamental importance of borders for social life. When seen as the intersection of in and out, strange and known, and ours and theirs, borders can fascinate. Seen in this light, borders are both at the periphery and at the center of the action—borders are where things happen.

And yet perhaps borders are even more than that. Perhaps they are not simply where agents meet and events take place; perhaps they are agents in their own right. Borders make a difference. Borders, both as concepts, and in their infinitely varied concrete specificity, take on lives of their own, creating affordances, blockages, dependencies, and entanglements with human and nonhuman forces alike. Borders frame. Borders define. Borders connect. Borders separate. Borders delineate. Borders literally let us know where we are and, therefore, who we are.

What happens, then, if we not only ask what happens *at* borders, but also ask what is it that borders *do*? How do they make a difference? To use LATOUR's (2005, 37–42) terminology, how do they function as mediators and not as intermediaries?

Perhaps the most obvious place to begin answering such questions is to note that borders inherently serve to *frame*. The borders of a nation, for example, are far more than geographical regions; to define a border is to define the parameters of one's own domain. Even more to the point, such borders also tell people which rules, customs, and laws apply, and where. Less grandly, Daniel MILLER (2010), drawing upon the work of Goffman, Gombrich, Bourdieu, and others, notes how enframing objects pervade our lives in ways that are both powerful and subtle. Borders demarcate sanctuaries, living rooms, museums and theaters, paintings, movie screens, and notepads. When they are stable, they provide continuity to our lives and enable us to learn and perform the bewildering variety of activities that sustain our lives. Such objects

> don't shout at you like teachers, or throw chalk at you as mine did, but they help you gently to learn how to act appropriately.… Before we can make things, we are ourselves grown up and matured in the light of things that come down to us from the previous generations. We walk around the rice terraces or road systems, the housing and gardens that are effectively ancestral. These unconsciously direct our footsteps, and are the landscapes of our imagination, as well as the cultural environment to which we adapt. (MILLER 2010, 53)

Borders thus make a difference not only where they are, but also—and perhaps primarily—where they are not. Borders are thus always and necessarily *hybrid*: inseparable from the territories that they bound, constantly acting upon those who enact them.

And yet borders are seldom stable for long. As we have already seen in the work of Pratt, borders do far more than simply shape human behavior and the transmission of culture. Janus-faced, borders both separate and connect, prohibit and entice, deny and invite that which is Outer and Other. Borders are thus both *hybrid* and *unstable* to their cores. They continuously invite, enable, and even demand the conjoining of unequal forces, leading to clashes, contestation, and disruption. Without borders, transgression would be impossible. Through transgression, borders are disrupted, destroyed, and erased.

When borders take material form, they create a further set of dynamics related to the forces of decay to which all material objects are subject. Enframing objects, whether roadways, garden walls, picture frames, or entry gates, exist in complex relationships with humans for whom they provide a host of affordances that at once benefit humans even as they become dependent upon the objects in question. Borders, in turn, require maintenance, regulation, and observation—they too become dependent upon human beings for their continued existence and ability to function. Borders thus enable and constrain. This dynamic of affordance and dependence has been analyzed in detail by Ian Hodder (2012), who terms such relationships "entanglements" that simultaneously stretch across multiple geographic and temporal domains. Borders thus help shape who we are, even as they constrain and enable what we may become.

Transgressions, decay, maintenance, and repair need not be limited to the material world. Borders and boundaries are no less important—and perhaps even more ephemeral—when they delineate the intellectual and social boundaries within which our daily lives unfold. Among the most important byproducts of such entanglements is the production of genres of texts that seek to express, clarify, sustain, or reconstitute the fluctuating cultural, legal, and ritual norms that make social performance both possible and meaningful. Borders enable and constrain, frame and entangle, disappear and reappear not only at the margins of society, but also at its core: in our homes, in our thoughts, and on our bodies.

Seen in these ways, borders are ubiquitous across the physical and intellectual landscapes of premodern Japan. Mythically, we see them at the heart of the great transgressions of Susanoo, who precipitates the ascendance of the sun goddess Amaterasu when he literally "crosses the line" by violating the border of the goddess's weaving chamber before moving on to further abominations such as removing the signposts that demarcate the borders of the fields. The imperial myths, of course, were also profoundly entangled with the emergence of the nascent Japanese state that was defined and bounded by the capitals and seven

great highways that marked the external and internal borders of the realm. From its inception, the "Land of Eighty Thousand Kami" was also and necessarily the "Land of Seven Circuits."

In this concrete sense, one epochal moment in the framework of lines and borders that permeate the articles of this volume can be traced back to the late seventh and eighth centuries, when the construction of the first capitals for the emergent Japanese state was accompanied by the development and extension of elaborate transportation networks centered upon the roads and waterways that both connected the realm and defined its contours. The highways constructed during this period continued for centuries to serve a variety of practical functions, allowing for the transport of taxes and corvée labor from remote provinces to the capital. Thus at one and the same time they both defined and made possible the existence of urban life and the administrative capabilities of the newly constituted realm.

The ongoing project of delineating the geographic and social boundaries between and within the capital and provinces simultaneously required the even more ambitious project of delineating the legal and administrative borders that would for centuries serve to frame and distinguish the ranks, entitlements, and social status of courtiers and commoners across the realm. These legal and economic borders in turn ceaselessly demanded the drawing and redrawing of borders that marked everything from the social geography of the capital to the boundaries of far-flung estates. Over time, this led to the production of legal codes and ritual manuals as well as the codification of court protocols and courtier diaries designed to record and comment upon ritual precedent at court. As a result, from at least the late tenth century onwards, the geographic and social borders that shaped public ritual, poetry, and even musical performance came to be thoroughly intertwined with broader notions related to the construction and expression of political authority, proper modes of governance, and even the proper modes for propitiating the buddhas and kami of the realm.

But the Japanese state was defined by more than legal codes and the geographic borders delineating its provincial circuits; above all else it focused on the cultural and political core of realm: the capital. Here, too, borders played a literally defining role that framed notions far more than geography. Over time, the roadways and riverways that defined both the core and the edges of the capital became entangled with different sets of mappings, as the borders of pure and impure, social status, and even cultic domain became open to question and therefore required persistent, and evolving, answers. Henceforth shrines and burial grounds were to be excluded from the metropolis that housed the ruler's palace, and each, in turn, required the demarcation of their own borders and domains. As a result, over the course of the Heian period, the siting and definition of shrines, the borders of tombs, and the establishment of protocols of

propitiation and exclusion all entered into a new era of constantly shifting modes of regulation, transgression, and oversight. Thus, perhaps even more than for the living, the unstable borders of premodern Japan played a crucial role in shaping, defining, constraining, and enabling the kami and the dead.

As the material and geographic borders of premodern Japan shifted and moved in continuous flux, so too did the human identities with which they were entangled. This was true not only for peasants assigned to life within the boundaries of particular estates, but also for courtiers who performed their roles in the face of constantly changing challenges to and understandings of protocol and ritual propriety as well as the clerics, vagabonds, and entertainers that traversed the roadways of the realm. By the middle of the eleventh century, several shifts in the understandings and uses of these borders had profoundly influenced the emergence of new ritual forms of Japan's medieval period. Within Buddhist clerical circles, new and unstable protocols for social, ritual, and medical practice were continuously redefined, transgressed, and reformulated by high-ranking clerics, itinerant monks, and holy men as they variously engaged or avoided corpses, spirits, diseases, and social outcasts. Over time, new forms of clerical identity emerged within the ever-shifting borders that contained and defined the character and movement of spirits, and indeed, the nature and accessibility of superhuman worlds.

Among the most important of such shifts can be seen with the adoption and dissemination of continental understandings of disease that constructed the human body itself as a site of contestation between a number of superhuman agents as well as physical forces. Throughout the period, the preservation of health was commonly conceived as defending the borders of the body from the transgression of an ever-changing and increasing host of malevolent entities that required new modes of ritual protection, new therapies, and new sites of ritual praxis to combat them. As these in turn became entangled with new understandings of the nature of the ruler's body, esoteric ritual practices, *materia medica*, and even evolving notions of the state, new ritual possibilities and dangers emerged both at court and across the countryside of the provinces of the Japanese islands.

During this time, notions of *kegare* 穢 (defilement) similarly came to be an overarching concern in virtually every aspect of the daily lives of courtiers as the elaboration of the physical, spatial, and temporal boundaries within which even the most routine matters could be undertaken. This was reflected perhaps most obviously in the sheer volume of impurity taboos that came into existence. These were stimulated both by a heightened concern for older prohibitions that were hinted at in the earliest imperial chronicles, and by a relentless increase in new forms and types of prohibitions driven by the increased prominence of systems of ritual practice loosely referred to as Onmyōdō 陰陽道. As crossroads

and private residences came to be prominent sites for the pacification of spirits and expulsion of impurities, new geographies and protocols for demarcating the boundaries of death and pollution came to be a major concern for court ritualists, courtiers, and commoners throughout the capital and beyond.

As increased concerns with the afterlife proliferated across the Japanese islands, new understandings of the borders between this world and the next helped generate new modes of religious activity not only within Buddhist temples but also on the roadways of Japan. By the late Heian period, the roadways and marketplaces of Japan had thus become extraordinarily complex contact zones in which clerics, commoners, vagabonds, and aristocrats "met and grappled" with each other as well as the denizens of the superhuman realm that were believed to be on the move across the realm. These contacts in turn led not only to new modes of dance, chanting, singing, and storytelling; they also helped reorient the spiritual topography of the Japanese islands.

The proliferation of rites and spectacles on the roadways was in turn matched by a transformation in the relationship between the denizens of the capital and the kami ensconced in their shrines. Most notably, by the second half of the tenth century, shrines came to be objects of pilgrimage for courtiers of all stripes seeking health and worldly benefits. In marked contrast to the eighth century, by the end of the tenth century the borders of the capital were ringed with shrines housing the tutelary deities of the most powerful lineages at court, and by the end of the eleventh century courtiers were also taking to the roadways as pilgrims, seeking the aid of the kami for virtually all matters of import in their lives.

Pilgrimage, in turn, helped stimulate a series of seminal developments in the field of Japanese literature. Whereas in the eighth century the kami had been approached orally, by the twelfth century the shrines of the kami had become sites not only for oral petitions (*norito* 祝詞), but also for poetry exchanges, oracles, and even quasi-contractual vows that were regularly recorded, anthologized, and archived. These materials, in turn, played a major role in the manipulation of cultural capital by retired emperors and courtiers. They also played a key role in stimulating the development of an extraordinary corpus of texts detailing new mythologies and histories that fundamentally reshaped the extraordinarily complex entanglements between courtiers, monks, vagabonds, corpses, and kami that gave rise to the medieval Japanese episteme.

Each of the articles in this volume explores the complex process by which the physical and social terrain of the Japanese islands was reimagined in light of the synergies and mutual interactions of each of the above developments. Hirano Tae's article, "Kami and Buddhist Poems in Imperial *Waka* Anthologies," examines the selection and placement of oracular poems attributed to the kami and buddhas in imperial *waka* anthologies. In so doing, Hirano illuminates the shifting borders that defined the relationship between buddhas and kami. Perhaps

even more remarkably, she also delineates the rapidly changing practices by which writing and literary production had become crucial contact zones that enabled new means for humans to interact with the superhuman world. These developments, in turn, were spurred both by earlier trends toward the extension and redefinition of imperial power through processes of literary production, anthologizing, and commentary, on the one hand, and the emergence of a pilgrimage culture in which courtiers and retired sovereigns traveled to the kami in their shrines, on the other.

In her article, "Spirit Pacification in Imperial *Waka* Anthologies: The *Senzai wakashū* and *Shinkokin wakashū*," Yoshino Tomomi explores how *waka* and even the anthologizing frame itself were used to effect changes in both the human and superhuman worlds. Whereas, Yoshino notes, imperial anthologies had originally been used to extol the virtuous reign of the contemporaneous ruler, by the end of the Heian period such anthologies were also being repurposed as a means of pacifying the aggrieved spirits of the dead. Here we see *waka* being used as a means of engaging not the kami in their shrines, but rather the potential danger that the spirits, if left unpacified, could possibly return to cause problems for the living. This development was made possible by the belief that the gods and buddhas remained connected to the human realm through poetry and that poetic anthologies furthered these connections. Crucially, here we also find that the pacifying effect was derived not from the specific *waka* composed by or for the aggrieved spirits, but rather by their inclusion within the anthologizing process.

Matsuyama Yūko, in her article "The Cultural Meaning of *Setsuwa*: Ono no Takamura's Journey to Hell and Back," explores how the literary genre of *setsuwa* 説話 not only disseminated Buddhist concepts and narratives across time and space but also allowed for the creative appropriation and localization of such narratives at specific sites. As she traces out the transmission of tales relating the otherworld journeys of the Heian courtier Ono no Takamura, Matsuyama shows how such tales led to a reimagining of the physical boundaries between the human and superhuman worlds by residents in Kyoto. This imaginative appropriation, she further shows, in turn generated new modes of ritual practice for engaging the spirits of the dead as well as the cult of the bodhisattva Jizō 地蔵.

Abe Yasuro's article, "The Emergence of Medieval Borders in Kamakura: Sacred Space of Tsurugaoka Hachimangū," brings together a number of these threads through an intricate mapping of the shifting architectural, spatial, and political borders that accompanied the construction of the Kamakura capital in Japan's medieval period. Beginning with a close examination of the sociospatial borders within Tsurugaoka 鶴岡 Shrine, Abe details how the cultic center at once served to both amplify and define complex relations between political power, kami worship, artistic performance, and Buddhist proselytization in the vicinity of the Kamakura lord. Drawing upon both textual and visual materials

from the period, Abe shows how Tsurugaoka served as an extraordinary contact zone where even the most powerful officials could come into contact with sumo wrestlers, mounted archers, young acolytes (*chigo* 児), courtesans, physiognomists, crossdressing *shirabyōshi* 白拍子 dancers, poets, itinerant preachers, sutra chanters, and warrior monks. As Abe shows, such interactions led not only to moments of harmonious *communitas* but also to extreme forms of political and social contestation, hegemony, and violence as performers at times literally danced for their lives and warrior vendettas led to extended chains of killing.

Abe further shows, however, that the borders of the shogun's capital were far more than sites of extraordinary complexity, danger, and cultural production. Most obviously, as befitting a center built for a military ruler, Kamakura was "an armed citadel" defined by "clearly demarcated borders, specifically designated routes and special zones determined by its steep hillsides, excavated passes, and shorelines." Far from being a simple bordered metropolis, Kamakura was conceived of as a constructed royal city (*ōken toshi* 王権都市) that was constituted by an elaborate network of

> multilayered borders that formed an enclosed, sacred space (*kekkai* 結界)…. These borders, which emerged as a result of negotiations between the court and the warrior regime, were set by yin-yang masters (*onmyōji* 陰陽師)… and followed the precedent set in the Nanaseharae 七瀬祓 (Seven River Purification) and Shikaku Shikyōsai 四角四境祭 (Festival of the Four Directions).

The borders of Kamakura were thus from their inception designed to do an enormous amount of work, as they mapped the physical and ritual barriers that kept defilements and dangers of all sorts at bay. As Abe shows in his discussion of the experiences of the mendicant monk Ippen 一遍 (1239–1289) and his followers, however, the social and religious borders of the capital were no less real and no less difficult to breach. The picture that emerges is thus one of a city defined by borders not only at its periphery, but also at its very core.

Andrew Macomber, in his article entitled "Disease, Defilement, and the Dead: Buddhist Medicine and the Emergence of Corpse-Vector Disease," similarly demonstrates the extraordinary degree of contestation, confusion, and concern that accompanied the reimagining of the therapeutic landscape of late twelfth-century Japan with a detailed analysis of the emergence of "corpse-vector disease" as a medieval diagnostic category. Macomber shows that in a capital overflowing with death defilement and corpses, new modes of medical diagnosis and *materia medica* became intertwined with courtier anxieties, inter-monastic rivalries, and esoteric ritual theory to produce new framings of pollution, the body, and human health. Crucially, Macomber shows that from at least the tenth century, pollution came to be conceived of as existing not only in the external environment, but also *within* the human body. This interiorization

of defilement in turn precipitated new understandings of karma as it related to purity, ritual transgressions, and, of course, disease. These shifting borders in turn called forth new modes of Buddhist praxis as clerics developed new ritual means to combat karmic defilements that were located within the borders of the body. Quoting the work of Benedetta Lomi, Macomber notes that thereafter the bodies of ailing patrons were posited not as spectators of ritual purification, but rather as objects of ritual therapy.

As Macomber makes clear, shifting understandings of the borders of the body and the geography of pollution were also almost certainly conditioned by historical developments related to the rapidly proliferating number of corpses within the borders of a capital ravaged by epidemics and political upheavals. By the thirteenth century, notions of "defiled *ki*" pervading the entire realm had in turn led to the drawing and policing of new types of borders centered not upon geographic distance but rather upon ethical and religious injunctions. Ironically, at least in the case of corpse-vector disease, such practices were designed to work upon not only the living but also the dead, as the source of the disease was believed to be spiritual agents trapped within the borders of the living that broke free from their hosts upon death.

The complex relationship among health, textuality, and performance is also central to Haruo Shirane's article "Defilement, Outcasts, and Disability in Medieval Japan: Reassessing *Oguri* and Sermon Ballads as Regenerative Narratives." Shirane explores the complicated entanglements generated by roadside performances, Buddhist discourses on defilement and disability, and social marginality in medieval Japan. Shirane shows how sermon ballads served as contact zones within which social identities performed by itinerants, penitents, performers, warriors, and outcasts were conspicuously constructed, contested, destroyed, and rebuilt. As he traces the careers of such figures as Oguri across the geographic and cultural landscapes of the Japanese islands, Shirane reveals the extraordinarily rich mappings within these texts of the social, religious, and even cosmological borders that shaped so much of the medieval Japanese *imaginaire*. In so doing he further shows that the identities of protagonists, antagonists, performers, and audiences were also in turn enmeshed in the constantly shifting borders that defined pure, impure, health, sickness, and disability in the human body.

Much as Macomber demonstrates how shifting boundaries of the human body, public health, and the dharma all allowed for and even demanded the performance of hitherto unseen ritual and social identities, Shirane shows us how sermon ballads served to define the very borders and pathways to redemption that they described: in these texts, borders are not only sought, they are also through the very act of representation created, transformed, and renewed. Perhaps even more importantly, Shirane also reminds us that the boundaries of

the contact zone itself were also inherently unstable, as the very act of narrative performance itself was used to entertain and, ultimately, transform the audiences that engaged them.

Taken together, these articles thus illustrate both the challenges and possibilities offered by a renewed focus on the role of borders in premodern Japan. On the one hand, with all of their concrete complexity, hybridity, and Janus-faced resistance to simple characterization, borders threaten to entangle even the most intrepid scholar in an ever-proliferating and ever-changing meshwork of dependencies and affordances. On the other hand, however, they promise to shed light on the extensive and often subterranean networks that gave rise to, shaped, and made meaningful the cultural, ritual, and material practices of premodern Japan.

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