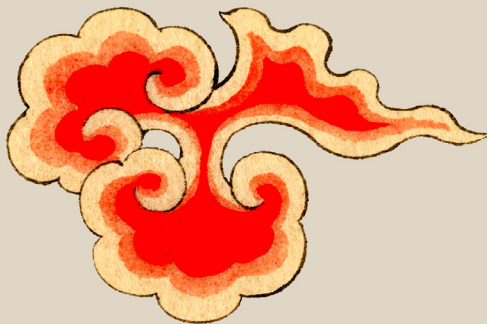


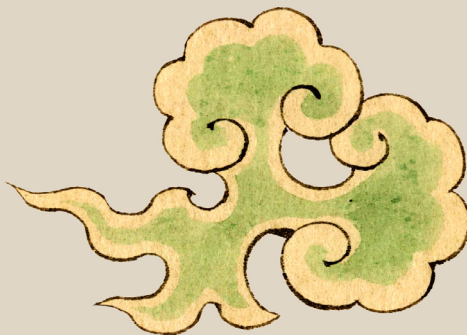
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TSURUOKA Yoshio

Foreword

VOLUME six of *Religious Studies in Japan* consists of three articles and two book reviews. From this issue onwards, we will also report on the academic works that have received the “Japanese Association for Religious Studies Award” (*Nihon shūkyō gakkai shō*), which traces its origins back to 1956, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of this association. Originally titled the “Anesaki Memorial Award” and established in order to honor outstanding achievements in the field, this annual award was renamed with its current appellation in 1966. Previous recipients and the titles of their works are published on the Association’s homepage.

Further changes are also afoot. Peer-reviewed articles will no longer have to follow the journal’s biannual publication schedule, but will be posted online regularly, as they are accepted and go through due editorial process. We are also planning to publish special issues dedicated to particular topics.

The two years since volume five have been marked by the chaos wrought by COVID-19. The pandemic greatly reduced domestic and international travel.

As for religious activity, whose essential meaning lies in people gathering and interacting—perhaps we do not even need to go as far as defining it in terms of “collective effervescence”—it too was heavily curtailed. Coming on top of ever-worsening climate change, the fate of religion in the world will likely become a central object of inquiry for contemporary scholars of the field.

TSURUOKA Yoshio is President of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies.

This chaotic situation also extends to academia. Fieldwork has become almost impossible to conduct and academic conferences can only be held by overcoming great difficulties. On the other hand, everyone has realized the convenience of online conferences and seminars. These can no longer be considered mere temporary substitutes, and might even become the standard in the future. If one possesses a certain level of English proficiency, it is possible to participate in conferences around the globe without investing much time or money. Venues for publicizing research results will also likely grow more diverse. However, the more this situation becomes the norm, the more we will realize the importance of direct interpersonal communication conducted in a shared physical space.

How to combine and harmonize online and in-person formats is an issue that has now been forced onto humanity by the enormous changes brought by the early twenty-first century. For us, who are in the middle of it all, it is impossible to completely see through the nature of such developments. At the same time, great changes have always been opportunities for creative innovation—could we perhaps say for “evolution”? With a history of thousands of years, religion will respond by taking on new guises. The study of religion will also achieve new breakthroughs in response to these transformations. I am looking forward to the challenges of this new era.

Tsuruoka Yoshio
Tokyo, January 2022

SHINZATO Yoshinobu

Musok as “Culture”

The Intangible Cultural Properties Discourse in South Korea

This paper examines the development in South Korea of the discourse on shamanism (*musok*) as intangible cultural property, focusing on the exclusion of its religious aspect. The country’s “national intangible cultural property” system, which started in the 1960s, has contributed to shamanic rituals and music by acknowledging their value. However, scholarship has not concretely examined this process. What elements of shamanism have been highlighted as cultural property? How has shamanism’s religious aspect been excluded? This paper shows how the intangible cultural property discourse on shamanism has highlighted shamanism’s artistic nature and communal aspect as Korean culture while negatively regarding its fortune-telling function and rituals, as well as the religious beliefs shared by *mudan* (shamans) and followers, as having little value. This exclusion of shamanism’s religious aspect shows its history of generally being removed from the category of religion and having only its cultural aspect tolerated.

KEYWORDS: *musok*—shamanism—intangible cultural properties—concept of “religion”—modern and contemporary South Korean history

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IN SOUTH Korea, shamanism (*musok*) was looked down on as superstition. However, after overcoming the social chaos that stemmed from liberation from Japan's colonial rule in 1945, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, from the 1960s onwards an affirmative gaze towards previously disregarded aspects of the country's culture took shape, and, in this process, a positive value was attached to shamanism.¹ Notably, in South Korea from the 1960s onwards, many shamanic rituals were designated as intangible cultural properties, and there are many *mudan* (shamans) engaging in this profession with state recognition. The designation of shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties has influenced the daily lives of *mudan* in significant ways. For example, it has rendered affirmative society's gaze towards shamanism.

Scholars played a major role in the designation of shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties, and with their discourse providing a boost, the state endorsed shamanic rituals. However, existing scholarship has not paid attention to how scholars attempted to legitimize shamanism as culture.

The field of folklore studies has led the research on shamanism and intangible cultural properties. Most of this scholarship has focused on presenting the skills involved in intangible cultural property-designated *gut* (shamanic rituals) or proposals for preserving and utilizing *gut* as intangible cultural properties (HONG 2005). In the field of religious studies, I Yongpŏm has furthered research on shamanism and intangible cultural properties and raised the issue that the cultural property designation process tends to exclude perspectives that see shamanism as religion. He argues as follows: Shamanic practices are recognized as culture. However, unlike Christianity and Buddhism, they are not recognized as religion. For this reason, during intangible cultural property designation deliberations, bringing up the religious and ritual aspects of *mudan* and their believers can be disadvantageous. As much as possible, religious aspects have been excluded, and shamanism's value only recognized in terms of its cultural aspects (I Yongpŏm 2011). He brings together these points as follows:

Rather than seeing shamanism as one traditional culture of the past to be protected by the intangible cultural property system, the valid social foundation

Acknowledgement: This article was supported by a JSPS Kakenhi Grant (no. 18J00609).

1. For an overview of the discourse on shamanism in South Korea from 1945 onwards, see SHINZATO (2017). This article is a revised and expanded version of part of my dissertation (SHINZATO 2018a).

for transmitting shamanism is precisely the societal awareness that it is a religion alive in the contemporary daily lives of South Koreans—just like Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. (I Yongpöm 2011, 437)

I Yongpöm asserts that when designating shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties, understanding it as “religion” is essential, as well as that this will serve as an important “social foundation” when transmitting them to future generations. These statements also indicate that perspectives seeing shamanism as religion are overlooked in the intangible cultural property system.

In light of I Yongpöm’s presentation of this problem, this article aims to make clear the historical transformation and concrete development of the discourse that narrates shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties. I will particularly highlight how their religious aspects are excluded. I Yongpöm makes important points for understanding shamanism’s phases in South Korea but does not concretely discuss the aspects of practices held to be intangible cultural property or how their religious aspects have been excluded. This article aims to address these points and contribute to the body of scholarship on discourses regarding shamanism. Also, the removal of shamanism’s religious aspects in the intangible cultural property discourse is significant in that it shows part of the history of shamanism in modern and contemporary South Korea. Throughout its modern and contemporary history, shamanism has generally been excluded from the category of religion and only had its cultural aspects tolerated. Below, by going over changes in the cultural property system in South Korea as well as why this paper uses intangible cultural property survey reports (entitled *Muhyöngmunhwajae chosapogosö*), I will lay the groundwork for then considering the discourse on shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties.

1. Intangible Cultural Property Designation and Intangible Cultural Property Survey Reports

South Korea’s 1962 Cultural Property Protection Law led to state policies related to cultural properties. This law “aims for both cultural betterment of the nation and contribution to the culture of humankind by preserving and utilizing cultural properties.”² Under this aim, tangible cultural properties, intangible cultural properties, natural monuments, and folklore materials became subject to designation. The category of “intangible cultural properties”—“theater, music, dance, craft techniques, and other intangible cultural products that have great

2. Translator’s note: All English translations of Korean are based on the author’s Japanese translations. See [https://www.law.go.kr/%EB%B2%95%EB%A0%B9/%EB%AC%B8%ED%99%94%EC%9E%AC%EB%B3%B4%ED%98%B8%EB%B2%95/\(00961,19620110\).Cultural Property Protection Law, Article 1, took effect 10 January 1962](https://www.law.go.kr/%EB%B2%95%EB%A0%B9/%EB%AC%B8%ED%99%94%EC%9E%AC%EB%B3%B4%ED%98%B8%EB%B2%95/(00961,19620110).Cultural%20Property%20Protection%20Law,%20Article%201,%20took%20effect%2010%20January%201962).

value in our country's history or art"—is especially important in relation to shamanism.³

While in 1961 the state had already launched the Cultural Property Management Bureau in the Ministry of Education and assigned cultural property-related duties to it, it took the opportunity to establish a cultural property committee as a Ministry of Education advisory body to survey and deliberate topics related to cultural property preservation, management, and utilization. The committee's first sub-committee was assigned to deliberate tangible cultural properties, the second sub-committee intangible cultural properties and folklore materials, and the third subcommittee natural monuments. Cultural property policy changes included the Cultural Properties Management Bureau rising in status to become the Cultural Properties Administration in 1999, as well as the creation of an additional Cultural Properties Committee sub-committee specifically for intangible cultural properties in 1985. However, the basic structure remained the same: the committee (primarily composed of scholars) or commissioned outside scholars would create reports on candidates chosen for deliberation by the committee, and designation would be decided based on these reports.⁴

This paper will focus on the discourse regarding shamanism in these intangible cultural property survey reports. These are important documents because they played decisive roles in intangible cultural property designation decisions. The Cultural Properties Committee primarily referred to these reports in its deliberations. In 1996, when improvements to the system for cultural properties' state designation, and designation procedures, were being discussed, it was seen as a problem that "skill surveys and designation deliberations tend to rely on the opinions of Cultural Properties Committee members that specialize in the relevant field." This shows just how much weight was held by these survey reports, which brought together the "opinions of Cultural Properties Committee members" (NO AUTHOR 1996, 874).

Two hundred and forty-seven reports on intangible cultural property candidates were submitted up through 1997, and these were published in twenty-five volumes. Between 1964, when intangible cultural property designation began, and 2020, 146 practices were designated as such; 113 were designated from 1964 to 1997, and thirty-three in 1998 or later. In other words, up until 1997, three or four new intangible cultural properties were designated every year, and from

3. Cultural Property Protection Law, Article 2, Item 2, took effect 10 January 1962.

4. Regarding transformations in the intangible cultural properties system and the importance of intangible cultural property survey reports in designation decisions, refer to CHŌNG Suchin (2008).

1998 onwards, one or two.⁵ While from 1998 onwards the basic structure—scholars creating reports upon which cultural property designation decisions were made—did not change, the foundation of cultural property administration was formed by 1997. Reports up until 1997 are currently viewable, and this paper covers up through this year.

While generally intangible cultural property designations were deliberated in the financial year following the submission of intangible cultural property reports, in some cases this took place several years after submission. However, as described above, up through 1997, of the 247 practices on which reports were submitted, 113 were designated. This averages out to seven individual reports submitted each year, three or four of which were designated. This is a 40 to 50 percent selection rate. Going through all of the reports, I have collected and analyzed shamanism-related passages therein. The selection rate for shamanism-related reports is about the same. This rate is somewhat high because the Cultural Properties Committee first deliberates whether a practice merits the creation of a report. In other words, reports are only created for practices whose value has been recognized to a degree.

The basic structure of these reports is as follows. First, in the introduction, the views of the people who carried out the survey are briefly presented. Then, in the main text, the practice’s origins, content, and characteristics, as well as the skill-holders’ brief biographies, are discussed. This is followed by the authors again emphasizing the practice/the skill-holders’ significance in concrete terms. Below I will consider the discourse that presents shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties while focusing on parts of the reports in which the surveyors clearly show their perspectives.

2. Shamanic Practices as Intangible Cultural Properties

1. THE EXCLUSION OF SHAMANISM IN THE 1960S

First, I will list the shamanic rituals and music currently designated as intangible cultural properties.

1. *Ŭnsan pyölsinje* (Ŭnsan mountain spirit ceremony). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 9, 1966.
2. *Kangnŭng tanoje* (Kangnŭng *tano* festival). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 13, 1967.
3. *Sinawi* (instrumental ensemble music). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 52, 1973, revoked in 1975 because skill-holder moved overseas.

5. I have referred to information regarding intangible cultural property designation included on the Cultural Heritage Administration’s website: <https://www.cha.go.kr/main.html> (accessed 12 February 2020).

4. *Yangju sonori gut* (*gut* of a cow play in Yangju). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 70, 1980.
5. *Cheju ch'ilmöridang gut* (Cheju *ch'ilmöridang* shrine *gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 71, 1980.
6. *Chindo ssitkim gut* (Chin Island *ssitkim gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 72, 1980.
7. *Tonghaean byölshin gut* (Tonghae coast *byölshin gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 82-1, 1985.
8. *Söhaean baeyönsin gut mit taedong gut* (Söhae coast *baeyönsin gut* and *taedong gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 82-2, 1985.
9. *Wido ttibae nori* (Wi Island *ttibae* play). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 82-3, 1985.
10. *Namhaean byölshin gut* (Namhae coast *byölshin gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 82-4, 1987.
11. *Hwanghaedo p'yöngsan sonorümgut* (Hwanghae Province P'yöngsan cow play and *gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no 90, 1988.
12. *Salp'urich'um* (*salp'uri* dance). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 97, 1990.
13. *Kyönggido dodang gut* (Kyönggi Province *dodang gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 98, 1990.
14. *Seoul saenam gut* (Seoul *saenam gut*). State Intangible Cultural Property no. 104, 1996.

Focusing on these fourteen practices, below I will examine the discourse on shamanism as culture. However, I want to point out that even though shamanic practices were highlighted as intangible cultural property from a variety of angles, as of the 1960s, they were still not recognized as culture. Above, I touched on society's negative gaze towards shamanism. Starting around the 1960s, a discourse that tried to assign value solely to shamanism's cultural aspects began to appear. However, it was largely limited to scholars and was not a way of thinking that spread widely in society. While scholars were deciding whether to designate practices as intangible cultural properties, they were unable to unilaterally instill value in practices of which society was critical. We can see this in the (1) Ünsan mountain spirit ceremony and (2) Kangnüng *tano* festival, as well as the words of folklore scholar Im Sökchae, who actively wrote shamanism-related reports in the 1960s.

Both of these practices have diverse elements, such as dance and theater, that are not *gut*. These elements received the vast majority of attention in these practices' reports, with little being said of shamanism. Over the course of ninety pages, the Ünsan mountain spirit ceremony report discusses its origins, content, and holders (Im Tongkwön 1965). However, the only mention of shamanism is the word *mudan* appearing in the discussion of its content. No more details are

provided (Im Tongkwŏn 1965, 275). Similarly, the Kangnŭng *tano* festival report covers its origins and legends, content, and *gut* over approximately 140 pages (Im Tongkwŏn 1966). However, in terms of shamanism, while there is a description of the Kangnŭng *tano* festival’s *gut*, it is only described as one ceremony, and no attempt is made to delve deeply into shamanism (Im Tongkwŏn 1966, 357). The folklorist Hwang Rusi states that according to a researcher involved in intangible cultural property designation at the time, while the predominant view in 1960s society that shamanism was superstition made it impossible to designate a *gut* as an intangible cultural property, in the case of the Kangnŭng *tano* festival, people were rushing to restore Kwanno masked dance drama (*kamyŏngŭk*), which allowed this *gut* to be adventitiously designated (HWANG 2004, 372). While Hwang does not touch on the reason why the Ŭnsan mountain spirit ceremony was designated as an intangible cultural property, it was probably due to circumstances similar to those of the Kangnŭng *tano* festival; while other diverse reports dealing with shamanism were also submitted in the 1960s, none of their candidates were successful, and it was only in the 1970s or 1980s that shamanic practices finally started to be designated.

In the 1960s, the folklorist Im Sŏkchae actively submitted reports covering shamanic practices (on *Kwanbuk chibang muga* [Kwanbuk region shamanic songs] in 1965 [IM Sŏkchae and CHANG 1965], *Kwansŏ chibang muga* [Kwansŏ region shamanic songs] in 1966 [IM Sŏkchae and CHANG 1966], and *Chulpŏ muak* [Chulpŏ shamanic music] in 1970), but none were designated as intangible properties. This shows that the designations of the abovementioned two practices as such were exceptional. Perhaps gathering that it would be difficult for Chulpŏ shamanic music to receive designation, under the heading “Shamanic Music: The Current Situation,” Im revealed his agony as follows:

There are outstanding shamanic music skill-holders who have changed professions and also many who hide that they are a shaman. . . . Even protecting them and taking measures to prevent them from becoming demoralized might lead ordinary people to have the misunderstanding that, for example, shamanism, which is seen as superstition, is being protected; shamanic rituals and shamanic music cannot be separated. One is unable to justify protecting and nurturing shamanism, and this is very agonizing.

(Im Sŏkchae 1970, 405)

In the 1960s, it was basically impossible for shamanic practices to be designated as intangible cultural properties. This was due to concerns that doing so could “lead ordinary people to have the misunderstanding that, for example, shamanism, which is seen as superstition, is being protected.” From an early stage, researchers were equipped with logic to legitimize shamanism as culture.

However, in the 1960s and early 1970s, scholarly discourse on shamanism was not yet accepted by society.

One can also tell from the opinions voiced by members of the Cultural Properties Committee that shamanism was seen as especially problematic. While not many records remain, the committee's meeting minutes (*Munhwajaewiwönhoe hoeïrok*) every now and then contain direct statements on the subject. As an example, let us consider a report on the paper flower folk craft *kkonnil*, especially the artificial flower techniques passed down in shamanism and Buddhism. The report lists the "shamanic Kim Sökch'ul" and "Buddhist Kim Yöngdal" as *kkoch'il* craftspersons, and argues that their techniques should be designated as intangible cultural properties and preserved for generations to come (SIM 1973). However, in the end, *kkoch'il* was not designated. The reason for this can be found in the following exchange recorded in the meeting minutes:

Ye Yonghae: The surveyor's opinion is that Kim Yöngdal's skills are outstanding. What does everyone think?

I Tuhyön: In the case of *kkoch'il*, there is a problem because it is related to shamanism. Both individuals engage in shamanism. Since *kkoch'il* is part of shamanism, I think prudence is required.

Im Tonggwön: They are a kind of *mudan* boss.⁶ (NO AUTHOR 1979)

While the report introduces Kim Yöngdal as a Buddhist craftsperson, it is asserted that there is a problem because he in fact is in an intermediate position between Buddhist monk and *mudan*. The anthropologists/folklorists I Tuhyön and Im Tonggwön were core members of the Cultural Properties Committee. For them, there was no problem with Buddhism. In fact, in 1973 the Buddhist ritual/music *pömp'ae* was designated as a national intangible cultural property (no. 50; redesignated in 1987 as the Yöngsanjae [Vulture Peak ceremony]). In cultural property designation, there was no problem with "religion" itself (SÖNG and I Hyeku 1965). In *kkoch'il*'s designation decision process, shamanism, or more specifically committee members' negative view of it, became a problem.

However, this view of shamanism as problematic would gradually change. From the 1970s to the 1980s, despite almost no changes in the committee's composition, the skillful highlighting of shamanism's cultural aspects would enable such practices to acquire official recognition as an intangible cultural property. An example is the designation of (11) Hwanghae Province P'yöngsan *sonorüm gut* (a *gut* that prays for a bountiful harvest), which was surveyed by I Tuhyön, the person who made the "there is a problem because it is related to shamanism" comment above. In 1988, it was designated as an intangible cultural property, despite, according to the meeting minutes, deliberations clearly touching on the

6. Emphasis added by author here and below.

fact that that the skill-holders (the female shamans Chang Pobae and I Sönbi) were engaging in shamanism (NO AUTHOR 1988b, 449–95; I Tuhyön 1988). A *gut* that is directly related to shamanism and had been surveyed by I Tuhyön—who had opposed designating *kkoch’il*—was designated as an intangible cultural property without any problem in 1988. In the *kkoch’il* report, the artistic parts of shamanism are emphasized (SIM 1973, 652–54), and in the Hwanghae Province P’yöngsan *sonorüm gut* report, the theatrical/artistic aspects of the *gut* are brought to the fore (I Tuhyön 1988, 114–16). There was no major difference in terms of the logic employed, namely, that shamanism is culture. However, the former was rejected, and the latter accepted. The gaze of committee members toward shamanism had changed. Also taking into account Im Sökchae’s statements above, we can see this as showing that the general understanding of shamanism in South Korea had transformed. As we will see below, for all of the shamanic rituals designated as intangible cultural properties in the 1970s and later, their designation was made possible by skillfully highlighting these rituals’ cultural aspects.

3. *The Discourse on Shamanism in the 1970s and Later: Inclusion Only As Culture*

Before turning to intangible cultural property from the 1970s and later, I want to mention that for intangible cultural property surveyors, who primarily specialized in folklore studies, it was self-evident that shamanism was not a religion and they basically saw the beliefs and rituals found therein as superstitious or as having little value. For this reason, reports tended to refrain from mentioning, or to exclude, spheres related to *mudan* or followers’ beliefs, as well as these practices’ ritual aspects.

With that said, it is not that all shamanic practices covered in reports that highlighted beliefs and rituals were not selected for designation. For example, (14) Seoul *saenam gut*, which was designated in 1996, is an example of a designated practice whose report actively mentioned aspects relating to religious belief. The report regarding this shamanic rite in Seoul for the dead (and said to include a great number of palace ritual elements from the Chosön era) emphasizes its significance in the section on its origins and current situation, and then provides details on the practice under the following headings: “Seoul *Saenam Gut*’s Composition and Characteristics”; “Performers’ Daily Life History and Major Performances”; and “Performers’ Transmission Genealogy and Performance Standards” (CHO and KIM 1995). The surveyors clearly present their opinions when discussing its origins and current state. They emphasize both the gorgeousness of Seoul *saenam gut* and the views of South Koreans regarding deceased spirits that are identifiable therein: “*Saenam gut* is based on South

Koreans' unlimited and exceptional disposition, or foundation, regarding the deceased, and Seoul's *saenam gut* has the most gorgeous and exquisite structure" (CHO and KIM 1995, 506).

Due to the aim being designation as an intangible cultural property, the surveyors, naturally, touch on its artistic nature by referring to gorgeousness. However, we should note that this practice was designated after its report had mentioned its religious aspect: an "exceptional disposition" towards the deceased.

There is another similar case: (10) Namhae coast *byölshin gut*, which was designated in 1987. As far as I can tell from my research, these are the only two shamanic practices that were successfully designated as intangible cultural properties despite highlighting religious aspects. The report on Namhae coast *byölshin gut* (a rite for a bountiful fish catch), discusses its significance under the heading "Reason for Designation," and then continues by discussing this practice in detail: "The Bountiful Fishing Rite's Ceremonies and Content," "Music and Shamanic Dance," "Shamanic Implements and Shamanic Clothing," and "Performer Report" (HA and I Sora 1986). As is the case for *saenam gut*, the surveyors candidly state their opinions in the first introductory section. They assert that this practice's religious aspects are more valuable than its entertainment ones: "Religious belief is primary in Namhae coast *byölshin gut* and it does not have much entertainment"; "there is great religious belief"; there are elements that "make viewers serious," and so on (HA and I Sora 1986, 182). However, while the end result for this *gut* was the same as *saenam gut* (designation as an intangible cultural asset), we can tell that at least the Cultural Properties Committee overlooked this practice's religious aspects: in the committee's meeting minutes, Namhae coast *byölshin gut*'s reason for designation is described as follows.

Namhae coast *byölshin gut* is a major festival for a bountiful catch of fish. It is held in hamlets in the Namhae coastal area, primarily in Gyeongsangnam Province's Ch'ungmu and Köje Island. *The gut music is more outstanding than any byölshin gut extant in South Korea*, and it is also unique. Therefore, it shall be passed down and preserved. (NO AUTHOR 1988a, 482–83)

While the report clearly states that religious belief is primary in the practice and that it contains fewer entertainment-related aspects, when designated as an intangible cultural property, only its outstanding musical and cultural aspects were discussed. Due to biases in the committee meeting minutes, there is no way of finding out details regarding the gap between the report's content and the committee members' reasons for designation. However, in the sense that at least ultimately it was designated not because of its religious aspects but its musical and cultural ones, we can see Namhae coast *byölshin gut* as a practice

that, like the other shamanic rituals considered below, was recognized as a form of culture.

As for (3) *Sinawi* (a native Korean term referring to a form of improvisational instrumental ensemble music), which was designated in 1973, it was the first shamanic practice for which surveyors successfully acquired designation by highlighting shamanism’s cultural aspects. The report explains this practice under headings such as “Reasons for the Designation of the Shamanic Music *Sinawi* as an Important Intangible Cultural Property,” “*Sinawi* Music,” “Skill-holders’ Skills: Overview,” and “Skill-holder Report” (YU and I Pohyöng 1971). Like other reports, the surveyors state their opinions at the beginning. Therein, they assign value to shamanism by establishing grades within shamanic music and explaining that “hereditary shamans” are more artistically outstanding than “possessed shamans.” Shamanism can be roughly divided into possessed shamans who become *mudan* through an experience of being called to serve a spirit (found primarily north of the Han River) and hereditary shamans who do not have possession experiences and inherit their position (found south of the Han River). Noting that the hereditary shamans who have engaged in shamanism through generations maintain traditional lines of music and dance, the *sinawi* report emphasizes that it is necessary to preserve their shamanic music because these practitioners are technically and aesthetically superior. On the other hand, it also sounds the alarm that in recent years elements from possessed shamans are finding their way into hereditary shamans’ practices:

In shamanism as well, due to generational changes and trends, the ritual structures of hereditary shamans are very complex and the economic burdens great. For this reason, even south of Seoul, things like simple Seoul-style *scripture reading and fortune-telling* have made inroads. . . . This is a problem both from the standpoint of folklore studies as well as in terms of the folklore music system. Therefore, the shamanic music tradition that has been transmitted in the area south of Seoul must be preserved before it vanishes.

(YU and I Pohyöng 1971, 547–48)

If shamanism is included in the category “religion,” then “scripture-reading and fortune-telling” could be understood as shamanism’s religious functions. However, this report takes it as a given that shamanism is not a religion. While seeing scripture-reading and fortune-telling as having little value, the report calls for immediately preserving “the shamanic music tradition” as one original cultural form. In this way, upon entering the 1970s, a focus on cultural aspects allowed shamanic practices to be designated as intangible cultural properties.

The *sinawi* report speaks highly of elements in this shamanic practice that it sees as one original (prototypical) form of Korean culture. When *gut*, on the other hand, were designated intangible cultural properties, an emphasis on their

role in maintaining community order in hamlets (on their communal aspects) also served as an effective line of argument. One example is the (5) Cheju *ch'ilmöridang gut* (*gut* for the thunder god, which symbolizes the god of wind/rain and the god of agriculture). The report first concisely states the reasons for designation application, which is followed by sections entitled “Historical Origins,” “Characteristics,” “Shrines,” “The *Gut* Ceremonial Program,” “Textual Records and *Gut* Today,” and “Skill-holder Survey” (CHANG and HYÖN 1984). Unlike other reports, the authors especially focused their efforts on the “Characteristics” section. Therein, they state that a distinguishing aspect in the case of Cheju Island is that “the ritual for the thunder god exists as a village *gut*, a rite.” In other words, while in other places *gut* are “rituals of individual religious belief, it is a village *gut* in the case of Cheju Island.” This, the report says, is why designation as an intangible cultural property is appropriate (CHANG and HYÖN 1984, 636). Here, the authors find value not in small-scale *gut* that focus on religious beliefs but in *gut* that are “hamlet festivals” manifesting community spirit.

The report on (6) Chin Island *ssitkim gut* (a festival for souls of the deceased), which, like Cheju *ch'ilmöridang gut*, was designated in 1980, also emphasized communal aspects. After the introduction, this practice is explained under the headings “An Overview of Chin Island *Ssitkim Gut*,” “Chin Island’s Shamanic Music,” “Chin Island’s Shamanic Dance,” “Other (Decorations, Shamanic Implements, and the *Ssitkim Gut* Skill-Holder),” and “Appendix (Lyrics to the Shamanic Music of Chin Island *Ssitkim Gut*).” The surveyors offer their views in the concluding section titled “Recommendation Statement Regarding Designation as an Important Intangible Cultural Property” (CHI, I, and CHÖNG 1979). I want to highlight this recommendation’s emphasis on the practice’s communal nature. It is critical of shamanic divination, the practice’s individualized aspect carried out by *mudan* and believers that also involves religious belief. This criticism is the flip-side to the report’s high valuation of the practice’s communal aspect, namely, village cohesion.

Hereditary shamans, who carry on the shamanic ritual tradition transmitted from ancient times, today are not passing on the ritual performance techniques to their children and are themselves abandoning [this] occupation and switching to other ones. For such reasons, their techniques’ traditions are being lost and instead *dominated by pseudo-shamanistic rituals of fortunetellers and others. This is unfortunate for the transmission of traditional culture.*

(CHI, I, and CHÖNG 1979, 175)

According to the above-quoted passage, it is good for “the transmission of traditional culture” to not be “dominated by pseudo-shamanistic rituals of fortunetellers and others.” The attitude shown here holds that of the various parts of shamanism, it is *gut*, which is the fruit of the communal aspects and can be

enjoyed together by people, that has value. This stance attempts to exclude the divination function of shamanism and assign value to its cultural function, particularly its communal aspect.

Other examples of shamanic practices that were successful in intangible cultural property designation due to an emphasis on their communal aspects are the (7) Tonghae coast *byölshin gut*, (8) Söhae coast *baeyönsin gut* and *taedong gut*, and (9) Wi Island *ttibae* play. These are rites for bountiful fish catches that were designated in 1985. In their reports, they are discussed in sub-sections found under the broad heading “Bountiful Fish Catch Rite.” For this reason, the composition of their reports is basically the same. For example, in the case of Tonghae coast *byölshin gut*, we find “Reason for Important Intangible Cultural Property Designation Application,” “Introduction,” “Characteristics,” “The Bountiful Fish Catch Rite’s Ceremony and Content,” “The Bountiful Fish Catch Rite’s Shamanic Music and Dance,” and so on. The practice’s communal aspect is particularly highlighted under the first subsection (I Tuhyön 1984). None of these three practice’s sections on reason for application actively mention shamanism. Rather, they emphasize the practice’s role in bringing vibrancy to villages and maintaining their order. For example: “The festival in village life and the entertainment/performing art function” (I Tuhyön 1984, 11), “Unity between shipowner groups and ordinary fishers, and the centripetal role that brings them together” (CHANG and HA 1984a, 123), and “Whole-village rites for a bountiful catch that is an enjoyable and fun festival for the whole village, including the old, young, men, and women” (CHANG and HA 1984b, 209).

In reports, there was also a discourse that, while closely connected to perspectives regarding ethnic roots and communal aspects, focused particularly on the practices’ artistic and traditional beauty to emphasize shamanism’s value. The report on the (4) *gut* of a cow play in Yangju, which was designated in 1980, describes it as a practice that developed from ritual and religious shamanism into artistic shamanism. This *gut* prays for family health and a good harvest for a year on the lunar calendar’s New Year and first day of spring. While in 1967 a report on the practice was submitted, it was not designated (I Tuhyön 1967). A survey was again carried out in 1975, and it was designated in 1980. The 1975 report’s section “Reason for Again Seeking Consideration as Important Intangible Cultural Property” only discusses the unsuccessful designation attempt in 1967 and the new survey being carried out. The “Historical Origins” section highlights this practice’s significance. This is followed by “Characteristics,” “The Cow Play’s Composition, Lines, and Lyrics,” “Materials Used in the Cow Play,” and “Skill-Holder Report,” which all provide detailed explanations (I and CHÖNG 1975). The explanation of this practice’s historical origins states that it must be understood as a form of entertainment and theater that focuses

on performance art, and not understood as a ritual. This line of argument highlights the value of the Yangju cow play and *gut* in terms of its artistic nature.

If one divides the functions of Korean shamanism into priests, divination/prophesy, shamanic medicine, and entertaining performance art, the “cow play” belongs more to the entertaining performance art function, and is something that shows the *process by which ritual develops into theater*.

(I and CHÖNG 1975, 299)

The report on (12) *salp'uri* dance (*sal* means “bad fortune” and *p'uri* “to undo”), which was designated in 1990, also emphasizes this shamanic practice’s artistic aspects. It mentions Kim Suk-cha as one of this dance’s skill-holders. Kim is a famous hereditary shaman, and is especially highly regarded for her performances of this dance. The report focuses on Kim’s dance. After providing an overview of the practice under the headings “Reason for Important Intangible Cultural Property Designation Application” and “*Salp'uri* Dance: Origins and Changes,” it describes her high-level skills in the sections “The Content and Characteristics of Kim Suk-cha’s Dance” and “Art-Holder Survey.” Also, “Kim Suk-cha’s Dance Scores” is attached as reference material (CHÖNG Pyŏnggho 1990). When discussing the reason for the application, the report emphasizes that the *salp'uri* dance is “the most outstandingly artistic dance of our country’s dances” (CHÖNG Pyŏnggho 1990, 619). At the same time, the report also states at key points that *salp'uri* is not religion. The two passages quoted below are found in the “*Salp'uri* Dance: Origins and Changes” and “Art-Holder Survey” sections.

While it is a fact that our country’s dances have been done at sites of *gut* carried out by *mudan* and at sites carried out by *p'ungmul* performers, even so, it is not the case that *salp'uri* dance is a religious ritual dance done by *mudan*.

(CHÖNG Pyŏnggho 1990, 620)

This dance is also performed in Kyŏnggi Province area’s *dodang gut*. Having said that, though, it is not a *mudan* dance that is part of a religious dance lineage.

(CHÖNG Pyŏnggho 1990, 630)

In these passages, *mudan* and *gut* are important concepts. *Mudan* generally present dances in the context of *gut*. Of course, shamanic religious beliefs regarding spirits of the dead and divine spirits play a role therein. The surveyor’s top priority was having readers in society, who see shamanism as superstition, recognize this practice as culture, and, therefore, from the surveyor’s perspective, religious dances in *mudan* and *gut* were only elements to be excluded. At the beginning of this section, I stated that scholars involved in the designation of intangible cultural properties generally did not see shamanism as religion. In the case of the *salp'uri* dance, however, we find an exception: the surveyor

presented *gut* as religion or religious ritual. However, with that said, here importance is attached to the *salp'uri* dance being art and culture, not religion. Like other reports, he assigns higher value to shamanism as culture. Also, while from an academic perspective we can call Kim Suk-cha a *mudan* because she is a hereditary shaman, in this concept, generally shamanism's religious aspects are strongly present. Therefore, the *salp'uri* dance report adopts the strategy of defining this dance as that not of a *mudan* but of the artist Kim Suk-cha, and emphasizing that it is entirely an artistic dance separate from dances with a religious genealogy, in other words, separate from *gut*.

As a final example, let us consider (13) Kyönggi Province *dodang gut*, a *gut* primarily done in village shrines called *dodang*. Unlike the *salp'uri* dance report, this practice's report emphasizes that the *gut* is also culture. While the *salp'uri* dance report primarily tries to show from an artistic perspective that the dance is culture, this report attempts to draw readers' attention away from negative ideas about shamanism by emphasizing not only *gut*'s artistic nature but also its communal aspect. Here as well, the existence of the *mudan* is eliminated. Shamanism's cultural value is emphasized while bringing the reader's attention to other aspects.

The Kyönggi Province *dodang gut* report's "Reason for Intangible Cultural Property Designation Application" section concisely describes the significance of this practice, and its "Central South Korea Hereditary Shamanism and the Decline of *Dodang Gut*" section is about difficulties its transmission faces. The practice is specifically discussed under the headings "The Content of Tongmak *Dodang Gut*" and "The Characteristics of Kyönggi Province *Dodang Gut*." Also, attached to the report are two sets of materials: "Skill-holder Survey" and "Kyönggi Province *Dodang Gut* Photographic Materials" (I Tuhyön et al. 1970). Interestingly, this report discusses Kyönggi Province *dodang gut*'s characteristics in terms of the four aspects of shamanism, music, dance, and theater, and its shamanic aspect is divided into "festival-like nature" and "artistic nature." These latter two could surely be adequately explained when discussing this practice's musical, dance, and theater aspects. Despite this, they are highlighted when discussing its shamanic aspect. The report is trying to hide the existence of *mudan* and *gut*, which tend to be seen as superstition, and emphasize the value of shamanism by focusing entirely on its cultural elements. First, let us turn to the report's discussion of the practice's "festival-like nature":

Dodang gut was a festival that aims to create harmony in the community around the village tutelary deity, and it is the largest event in the village. Through this event, a sense of community and communal ties are strengthened and order is maintained. Its core function is for people to gather in one place and enjoy themselves together. (I Tuhyön et al. 1970, 782)

Here, community harmony is highlighted as a function of shamanism, and *mudan* are not mentioned. The discussion focuses on the sense of community in the village and local area. Next, let us turn to the “Shamanic Aspect” section’s discussion of the practice’s “artistic nature.”

It is said that religion fades away and art remains. This shamanic practice of Kyōnggi Province hereditary shamans is now declining, but parts still remain that should be investigated with regard to its artistic nature.

(I Tuhyōn et al. 1970, 783)

From the statement that “art remains,” we can see that the authors understand Kyōnggi Province *dodang kut*, and by extension this shamanic practice, as more art than religion. Emphasizing this practice’s festival-like and artistic nature as its “shamanic aspects” was a method for legitimizing shamanism as culture and replacing the negative view of *mudan* and *gut*.

Conclusion

Above, I examined the historical changes and concrete unfolding of the discourse that discusses shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties. When doing so, I highlighted how shamanism’s religious aspects have been excluded. With few exceptions, in the 1960s it was impossible to designate a shamanic practice as an intangible cultural property. This was due to the negative view of shamanism at the time. However, in the 1970s, it became possible to do so, but only by skillfully highlighting shamanic practices’ cultural aspects. These cultural aspects primarily fell into three categories. First, a practice’s historical aspect—namely, its status as one original form of Korean culture. This was greatly brought to the fore in the report on *sinawi*. Second, a *gut*’s communal nature and order-creating function in villages. This was pronounced in the discourses regarding Cheju *ch’ilmōridang gut*, Chin Island *ssitkim gut*, and rites for bountiful fish catches. Third, the traditional beauty/artistic aspect found in the passages regarding *salp’uri* dance. From the 1970s onwards, when designating shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties, a discourse on shamanism as culture took shape while intertwining with these three aspects. This can be seen by the (4) report on the *gut* of a cow play in Yangju emphasizing its historical aspect and artistic nature, as well as the Kyōnggi Province *dodang gut* report highlighting its communal aspect and artistic nature.

We have seen that reports generally did not assess the religious aspects of shamanism. While Seoul *saenam gut* was an exception, in the other reports, neither shamanism’s divination and ritual aspects nor the religious beliefs shared by *mudan* and believers were assessed. Rather, these attempts to have shamanic practices be designated as intangible cultural properties avoided such aspects as much as possible. Beliefs and ritual aspects excluded by the reports’ authors

could have been understood as shamanism’s religious aspects when seen from another angle. However, these aspects had little value to the authors—they were only things to be excluded. This paper shows part of the history of shamanism in modern and contemporary South Korean history that has generally been excluded from the sphere of religion.

Having said that, it is incorrect to assert that from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s no one in South Korean academia saw shamanism as religion. Some scholars used the concept of *mugyo* (lit., “shamanism-religion”; modeled after terms for other religions, such as *Pulgyo* [lit., “Buddha-religion”; Buddhism] and *Kidokkyo* [lit., “Christ-religion”; Christianity]) to highlight shamanism’s religious aspects. This was first done by scholars seeking to have South Korean-style theology (referred to as “indigenization theology” or “people’s theology”) take root. Ultimately, it spread bit by bit in society through the fields of religious studies and psychiatry, students’ statements in the democratization movement, and so on (SHINZATO 2018b). However, this kind of perspective was not widely adopted, and even when people partially included shamanism in the category of religion, due to the influence of the concept of “religion,” it was criticized as a religion that lacks true ethics, a view of history, and a sense of community—in other words, as not being equipped with a universal set of values. This led to the formation of a viewpoint that saw shamanism as a religion that is not really a religion.⁷

On the other hand, in contemporary South Korean religion and folklore research, to a certain degree, a perspective that sees shamanism as religion has taken root. In the field of religious studies in South Korea, primarily from the 1990s, research has been published that calls for reflecting on the Christian-modeled concept of religion, especially positions that excessively emphasize monotheism and universal values.⁸ This led to a perspective that sees shamanism as a religion that has become widely established in related academic spheres. At present, though, scholars are still involved in intangible cultural property designation and management. For this reason, it is necessary to continue to observe—on the levels of both discourse and practice—how the religious aspects of shamanism will be reflected or excluded in the intangible cultural property system. This paper has limited itself to reports regarding practices that were designated as intangible cultural properties, and generally has not touched on those that were unsuccessful. By further surveying and analyzing such unsuccessful

7. Regarding the perspective grounded in the concept of “religion” that sees Korean shamanism as a “religion that is not a religion,” see CHŎNG Chin-hong (2003, 160–87).

8. Chang Sökman has systematically discussed the spread of the concept of “religion” in South Korea (CHANG Sökman 1992). This led people in academia to be strongly aware of issues surrounding this concept.

cases and related topics, I plan to further deepen our knowledge regarding shamanic practices as intangible cultural properties and, by extension, the relationship between shamanic practices and South Korean society.

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KAMEYAMA Mitsuhiro

Old Buddhism Strikes Back

On the Relationship between the New Buddhist Movement and Shaku Unshō

The True Dharma movement and the New Buddhist movement were the two representative Buddhist movements of the Meiji period. Shaku Unshō (1827–1909), the leader of the True Dharma movement, spent the first half of his life as a monk in the Edo period. When he encountered the tumultuous persecution of Buddhism during the Meiji Restoration period, he became convinced that the restoration of the precepts (*kairitsu*) would lead to a revival of Buddhism, and initiated a wide range of activities. On the other hand, the New Buddhist movement was formed by young radical Buddhists who sought to rebel against the conservative religious world. They presented the allegedly anachronistic ideas of Unshō as an “old Buddhism” which needed to be overcome, leading to an intense conflict. This article attempts to examine the clash between these two Buddhist movements during the Meiji period with this context in mind.

KEYWORDS: Shaku Unshō—The New Buddhist movement—precepts—modern Buddhism—Old Buddhism

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ALTHOUGH in recent years the dominant narrative has undergone reevaluation, the history of Buddhism in Japan after the Meiji 明治 era (1868–1912) is usually described as having reached its peak in the early twentieth century with the Spiritual Cultivation movement (Seishinshugi 精神主義), led by Kiyosawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903), a monk of the Ōtani 大谷 sect of True Pure Land Buddhism (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗), and his followers, and the New Buddhist movement led by radical young Buddhists disaffected by the conservative Buddhist world of the time. For example, Yoshida Kyūichi 吉田久一 (1915–2005), one of the leading scholars on the history of modern Buddhism in Japan, described the Seishinshugi as a movement that “sought to establish a modern faith by submerging itself in the inner realm of the human spirit.” In contrast, Yoshida described New Buddhism as a movement that “attempted to establish a modern faith by acquiring the qualifications of a modern religion through actively approaching the social” and, while acknowledging the limitations of the times, evaluated the New Buddhists positively (YOSHIDA 1959, 355). Yoshida’s assessment was based on a number of indicators to identify the “modernity” of religion (YOSHIDA 1961, 63). Against this backdrop, the sociologist of religion Ōtani Eiichi 大谷栄一 has recently proposed a reconsideration of such a teleological approach toward the “modernization of Buddhism” (ŌTANI 2012, 30). Parallel to this view, groundbreaking English-language scholarship on modern Buddhism since the first decade of the twenty-first century spearheaded by Donald Lopez and David McMahan has proposed understanding “Buddhist modernity” as a global phenomenon, finding common characteristics such as an orientation toward universality that transcends regional boundaries, an emphasis on scientific rationalism and on the individual, as well as a return to the Buddha. These insights suggest new avenues of research into the modernity of Buddhism (LOPEZ 2002, ix; MCMAHAN 2008, 3–25).

In addition to the issue of rethinking modernism, another focal point is the reexamination of the various roles of the precepts, which are said to have lost their meaning as religious practice after the decriminalization of the precept violation. Despite its indisputable centrality in normative Buddhist practice, the precepts also occupied a complicated position from the viewpoint of the conceptualization of “religion” in modern Japan. According to Isomae Jun’ichi, within the concept of religion there is an unconsciously embedded emphasis on “belief,” or verbalized belief systems such as doctrines, to the neglect of “practice,” or nonverbal customary acts such as ritual practices (ISOMAE 2014, 27–67).

Ōtani points out that the leading Buddhist intellectuals who identified with the ideal of “New Buddhism” embodied a belief-centered concept of Buddhism, and indeed attacked the practice of the precepts.¹ This article will deal with the intersection of these two pivotal Buddhist movements that developed during the turn of the century: the New Buddhist movement led by a younger generation of Buddhists, and the movement to revive the precepts led by Shaku Unshō 釈雲照 (1827–1909), a leading precept-upholding Buddhist monk (*jikaisō* 持戒僧) of the Meiji period.

As will be discussed below, the young New Buddhists dismissed Shaku Unshō, who devoted his life to the movement to revive the precepts, as “old Buddhism.” In turn, Unshō rejected the New Buddhists. This confrontation between the two movements is visible in the established history of Buddhism, as can be discerned in the following statement: “The ‘New Buddhism’ movement confronted the two Buddhist movements of the period. One was the Spiritual Cultivation movement, and the other was the Meiji faction led by Unshō, which took the conservative Buddhist position” (TAMAMURO 1967, 359). Although the conflict between Unshō and the New Buddhists is one of the highlights of the history of Buddhism in Japan since the Meiji era, it has not been sufficiently examined compared to the extensive attention given to the relationship between Seishinshugi and the New Buddhist movement.² This article, therefore, traces the relativization of the narrative of the “modernization of Buddhism” as well as the changes in the way precepts were discussed through examining the conflicts between the two leading movements in Meiji Japan. Section one briefly introduces Unshō and the New Buddhist movement, section two examines the relationship between Unshō and the founding members of the New Buddhist movement in the first decade of the twentieth century (1900–1910) through the journal *Bukkyō*, and section three and the following sections examine the ideological conflict between New Buddhism and Unshō. In terms of methodical approach, I analyze the discourse of the essays in the two movement’s main journals, *Shin bukkyō* 新仏教 (New Buddhism; first published 1900) and *Jūzen hōkutsu* 十善宝窟 (Ten Thousand Treasure; first published 1889), to reveal a cross-section of “the future of precepts in modern times.”

1. Ōtani positioned both Seishinshugi and New Buddhism as the representative movements of belief-centered religiosity in modern Japanese Buddhism; see ŌTANI (2012, 30).

2. Abe Takako 阿部貴子’s recent essay took up the relationship between Unshō and the New Buddhist movement (ABE 2011). While her work mainly focuses on providing an overview of the conception of morality embraced by religious intellectuals, it paid little attention to the ideological confrontation between the two movements.

1. *Shaku Unshō and the New Buddhist Movement*

Shaku Unshō was a leading precept-upholding monk during the Meiji period. He was born in Izumo 出雲 Province (present-day Shimane Prefecture) in 1827 (Bunsei 文政 10).³ He entered the priesthood in the Shingon sect of Buddhism and trained as a monk during the late Edo 江戸 period (1603–1867). During the time of Buddhist persecution triggered by the edict to separate Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu hanzen-rei* 神仏判然令) issued by the new government in the first year of the Meiji period, Unshō led a movement for the protection of Buddhism with the aim of restoring the precepts. He organized the Jūzenkai 十善会 (Society for the Ten Virtuous Precepts) to revive Buddhism with a focus on the Ten Precepts proclaimed by Jiun Sonja Onkō 慈雲尊者欽光 (1718–1804), a Shingon monk of the early modern period known for his pioneering Sanskrit studies (*bongaku* 梵学). With this organization as a foothold, he entered into a controversy concerning national morality (*kokumin dōtoku* 国民道德) commonly known as the “moral education debate” (*tokuiku ronsō* 德育論争) starting in the late 1880s. Furthermore, in 1879, he embarked on a program of denominational reformation by restoring the Threefold Training (*sangaku* 三学) and by tightening the monastic code. He soon failed, however, in these efforts and moved to Shin Haseji 新長谷寺 Temple in Mejirodai 目白台, Tokyo. There, he established the Mejiro Monastery 目白僧園, a unique institution for training Buddhist priests, and expanded the Jūzenkai movement. From early on, Unshō showed interest in improving education through developmental training and secular education. In the first decade of the twentieth century, he positioned Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism as the “Imperial Way,” or the Unity of Three Ways (*sando ikkan* 三道一貫), and combined these three ways with precept-centered thought in an effort to engage in the education of the citizen-subjects (*kokumin kyōiku* 国民教育). In order to achieve this, he made the establishment of the Tokyo school his lifelong project, but it was not completed due to his sudden death.

On the other hand, as shown in the previous section, the New Buddhist movement has been positioned as a milestone in the modernization of Buddhism in conventional scholarship on modern Japanese Buddhist history. In 1899, progressive young Buddhists who sensed an atmosphere of stagnation within the Buddhist world stemming from the clericalism of the time, such as Sakaino Kōyō 境野黄洋 (1871–1933), Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭 (1872–1933), Katō Genchi 加藤玄智 (1873–1965), and Takashima Beihō 高島米峰 (1875–1949) formed the Buddhist Puritan Association (Bukkyō Seito Dōshikai 仏教清徒同

3. For biographies of Unshō, see YOSHIDA (1902) and KUSANAGI (1913a; 1913b). The brief sketch of his life in this section is based on these sources.

志会, later renamed the New Buddhist Fellowship, Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai 新仏教同志会). The origins of this organization have typically been seen as having emerged from the journal *Bukkyō*, first published in 1889, as well as from the Warp and Woof Society (Keiikai 経緯会) of Furukawa Rōsen 古河老川 (1871–1899) established in 1893. In recent studies, it also has been pointed out that there was a broad backbone behind the movement, including the Association of Self-Reflection (Hanseikai 反省会) led by the students of the Honganji school of Futsū Kyōkō 普通教校, the “New Buddhism” theory of Nakanishi Ushirō 中西牛郎 (1859–1930) in the Meiji 20s, and the Tetsugakkan (the Philosophy Hall) group led by Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919; see TAKAHASHI 2012, 57–61).⁴

In “Our Declaration” (*Wagato no sengen* 我徒の宣言; 1900), which symbolizes the starting point of the New Buddhist movement, it stated that “the monastic customs of the present day should be improved, the temple organization should be renewed, and the old Buddhism should be gradually modified to make it a religion that finally meets the needs of the times” to rationalize doctrines and deny rituals. In addition, the New Buddhists declared that they were distinct from the “old Buddhists” and that “we do not have the slightest desire to help or share similarities with the old Buddhism” (SHIN BUKKYŌ SHI 1900a, 4). In line with this, they attacked the established Buddhist denominations as “old Buddhists” of which the Mejiro faction (Mejiro-ha 目白派) led by Unshō was a symbol to be toppled. In the next section, I will examine the role of Unshō in the journal *Bukkyō* in the 1890s as a stage in history leading up to the conflict.

2. *Shaku Unshō and the Journal “Bukkyō”*

The purpose of this section is to examine the image of Unshō presented in the magazine *Bukkyō* in the 1890s as background to the later confrontation between the New Buddhist movement and Unshō, which will be discussed in the next section, and to clarify how the confrontation ultimately developed. As mentioned above, the magazine *Shin bukkyō* is said to have been the successor periodical to *Bukkyō*, but with a more critical stance on the ideal future orientation of Buddhism. More specifically, when Sakaino Kōyō, who had played a leading role in the New Buddhist movement, took charge of the magazine’s editorials after the death of Furukawa Rōsen, his radical new editorials triggered a deepening of the conflict with established Buddhism, and prompted the founding of the Bukkyō Seito Dōshikai in October 1899 (IKEDA 1976, 282–83). To trace the genealogy of

4. Ōtani Eiichi also unveiled the genealogy of the discourse on “New Buddhism” in Meiji Japan, tracing back to as early as Nakanishi Ushiro’s idea of Buddhist reformation and the Hansaikai movement. See ŌTANI (2012).

the criticism of Unshō by the New Buddhists, it is essential to examine the fractious relationship of Unshō with the journal *Bukkyō* in the 1890s.

It is also noteworthy that, in the context of the same period, the debate over the reevaluation of the precepts in the Buddhist world came to a head well over twenty years after the original promulgation of the so-called meat-eating and marriage ordinance (*nikujiki saitai* 肉食妻帯令) of 1872. As explained by Ikeda, “the controversy over the issue of the precepts was rekindled around the time of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894–5” (IKEDA 1976, 264). According to Richard Jaffe, this delayed development was due not only to the modernization of the sect’s internal organization, but also to the reality that the sons of legally married monks began to serve as abbots of their temples after the meat-eating and marriage ordinances. Furthermore, Jaffe explains that at this time, the emphasis on the discourse surrounding “meat consumption and clerical marriage” shifted from the “doctrinal” focus of the early to mid-Meiji period to a focus on more practical realities surrounding contemporary Japanese Buddhism (JAFJE 2001, 189).

On the other hand, Unshō seems initially to have been interested during this period in discussing the precepts entirely from the standpoint of doctrinal orthodoxy. For example, in *Mappō kaimō ki* 末法開蒙記; 1897a; 1897b), he claims that the *The Candle of the Latter Dharma* (*Mappō tomyo ki* 末法燈明記; c. 801), which is said to have been written by Saichō 最澄 (766/767?–822), is a forgery that proselytized an evil theory “to destroy the wisdom eyes (*keigan* 慧眼) of the disciples of the latter-day Dharma and to corrode the minds of the learners of Buddhism,” and that the practice of the righteous precepts is possible even in the present age of the Latter Day of the Law (UNSHŌ 1897a, 4 *recto*). Nonetheless, his interest was in denouncing the “decadence” of contemporary monks. This, in his view, was contrary to the doctrine and orthodox intent of the Śākyamuni Buddha and denominational founders, paying little attention to the issue of the precepts from the practice-related aspect of the current state of the denominational organization.

In fact, however, Unshō was struggling to provide a rationale for the precepts that would go beyond mere doctrine and monastic discipline, and the key words therein were “national morality.” As mentioned in the previous section, Unshō advocated national education through the “Ten Virtuous Precepts.” Yet, the seed of the idea of demonstrating the usefulness of the precepts, which were originally the normative practice for Buddhists, by linking them with the secular public can already be found in the Edo-period monks who engaged in dharma-protection activities (*gohōsō* 護法僧; NISHIMURA 2018, 5–38). Unshō also legitimized monastic education based on the precepts from the standpoint of upholding social morality. In 1890, he established the Mejiro Monastery, renaming it from the previous Kairitsu Gakko 戒律学校 (School of Precepts)

under the three principles of “resolute aspiration for enlightenment” (*dōshin kenko* 道心堅固), “firmness of the essence of the precepts” (*kaitai kengō* 戒体堅剛), and “dual training in the Threefold Training” (*sangaku sōshu* 三学双修)” for the development of Buddhist priests (KUSANAGI 1961, 125–26). According to the prospectus for the founding of the school, based on the historical view of decadence that the corruption of monks since the late Heian 平安 period (794–1185) mainly caused by the demise of imperial rule and the rise of Samurai hegemony had also led to the corruption of society as a whole, the school was established in order to

restore the morality of society and promote the prosperity of the nation. Therefore, if we wish to restore the morality of society, to promote the prosperity of the nation, and to become a people of dignity and virtue, we must rely on monks who adhere to the Dharma and precepts. This is the reason why I wish to revive the precepts through purity and discipline.

(KUSANAGI 1913a, 120)

Furthermore, there is a similar logic in Unshō’s use of a metaphor in classical Chinese (戒香自然に、四民を薰し、皇化を裨益) that emphasized the role of the precepts in enhancing imperial rule and facilitating the elevation of the morality of the people (KUSANAGI 1914 *kenpakusho shū*, 12). It can be said that by reformulating this concept from the period of the Meiji Restoration in the framework of national morality, Unshō linked the legitimacy of the precept-upholding monks to social morality.

In the 1890s, Unshō expanded the Ten Virtuous Precept Society, recruiting prominent figures from various fields to its ranks of supporters, called “outside protectors” (*gegōsha* 外護者) such as influential educator Sawayanagi Masatarō 沢柳政太郎 (1865–1927), General Miura Gorō 三浦梧楼 (1847–1926), Prince Kuninomiya Asahiko 久邇宮朝彦 (1824–1891), Prince Komatsumiya Akihito 小松宮彰仁 (1846–1903), and prominent politician Ito Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), and published the monthly journal *Jūzen hōkutsu* and the Buddhist women’s magazine *The Dharma of Mother* (*Hō no haha* 法の母, first published in July 1893), and these activities were expanded against the backdrop of the heightened controversy over the precepts in the monastic world at the time. Considering the fact that, during this time in particular, many Buddhist associations were failing to continue their organizations and journals, this rapid progress is worthy of attention. In 1901 the membership of the Jūzenkai reached the staggering number of seven thousand, and it led to the creation of a nationwide network of over twenty branches (KYORAISHI 1901, 46). Examples of evaluations of the activities of Unshō at the time include the editorial of the *Hanseikai zasshi* 反省雑誌 of 1897 titled “Shaku Unshō and Shichiri Kōjun” (ANON 2005) and *Meiji jūniketsu* 明治十二傑 (KISHIGAMI 1899).

On the other hand, a review of *Bukkyō* during this period shows that in the first half of the 1890s, Unshō was an active contributor to the magazine and the relationship between the two was comparatively good.⁵ An editorial titled “The Buddhist World in Meiji 26” (*Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai* 明治26年の仏教界) in *Bukkyō* claimed that “observing this year in the Buddhist world, in terms of morality, the idea of the precepts seems to have taken center stage” (*Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai*, 1893, 43). In the same publication, an essay discussed Buddhist organizations and intellectuals that promoted the precepts as Koizumi Ryōtai 小泉了諦 (1851–1938) of the True Pure Land denomination, who contributed an article titled “Precept Speech.” It also touched on the Self-Reflection Society that advocated the prohibition of alcohol and the advancement of virtue, the “Lesser Vehicle” Buddhist Dharmapala (1864–1933), who made a return visit to Japan, and Shaka Kōzen 釈興然 (1849–1924), who returned from Ceylon and founded the True Lineage of Śākyamuni (Shakuson Shōfū-kai 釈尊正風会). Among these figures, Unshō was considered the most eminent and was referred to as the “luminary of the Kantō region” (*Kantō no kōmyō* 関東の光明; *Meiji nijūroku nen no bukkyō kai*, 1893, 43).

Furthermore, NAKANISHI Ushirō, a pioneering advocate of New Buddhism, touted Unshō’s efforts as an example of the reformist trend of the time (1892) and presented the founding of the Mejiro Monastery as emblematic of the emerging trend of New Buddhism. According to his critical dichotomy, “Old Buddhism is theoretical (*rironteki* 理論的) while New Buddhism is empirical (*keikenteki* 経験的)” (NAKANISHI 1892, 98). Disaffected with the philosophizing of Buddhism promoted by Meiji Buddhist intellectuals, Nakanishi associated the reassessment of the precepts represented by Unshō with the rising tide of New Buddhism heading in the direction of an “empirical” base. In this way, one of the reference points of Unshō’s movement was based on the progressive image of New Buddhism, rather than reactionary Old Buddhism (NAKANISHI 1892, 97–102).

In the latter half of the 1890s, however, a number of criticisms of Unshō began to appear. Among these critical discourses, Unshō was characterized as spreading superstition among the upper-class and representative of an aristocratic Buddhism that adhered to the social status of its followers abandoning the lower classes.⁶ After 1899, when the Buddhist Puritan Association was formed, the criticism evolved into a firestorm of what could be called “Unshō-bashing.”

5. The journal *Bukkyō* traces its roots to *Nōjunkai zasshi* 能潤会雑誌 founded in August 1888, and Unshō was one of its leading members along with Fukuda Gyokai 福田行誠 (1809–1888) and Kaji Hōjun 梶宝順 (1864–1920).

6. Examples include DAIROKUEIISHI (1896), DAIGOSHI (1897), TOKEIDAIANSI (1898), TOPPITSUSEI (1899), and ANON (1897).

The two main incidents that defined this conflict were the “halo problem” (*enkō mondai* 円光問題) and the “Ninnaji Temple independence disturbance” (*Ninnaji dokuritsu sōdō* 仁和寺独立騒動).

First, the “halo problem” was an incident in which Unshō is alleged to have sent to the Hakubunkan a self-portrait that had been crafted to imitate the halo of a Buddha at the time of his election as one of the Meiji Twelve. In response to this, Hōkō Dōji 方光童子 (real name unknown) stated that “I do not want to overlook the issue of Master of the Vinaya Unshō’s *enkō* Problem” because it encompassed three critical issues: (1) the fate of precept-based Buddhism, (2) the destruction of superstitious Buddhism, and (3) the nefarious effects of aristocratic Buddhism. Furthermore, he ascribes the essence of the controversy to the fact that Unshō, who was merely a Buddhist monk, sought to increase his stature as he gained admiration from the public (Hōkō Dōji 1899).

The second incident, the “Ninnaji Temple independence disturbance,” refers to when Unshō, who had distanced himself from the Shingon sect due to setbacks in the denominational reforms of the Meiji 10s, was granted the title of high priest and became the head priest of Ninnaji Temple in 1898. Together with the bureau chief, Morioka Jusan 森岡寿算 (d.u.), and the former princely abbot (*monzeki* 門跡) of the temple, Prince Komatsumiya Akihito, he reportedly took the opportunity to carry out denominational reforms. This led to an uproar surrounding the issue of independence and separatism within the Shingon sect, which had a relatively weak foundation for a centralized system.

It was also during this period when the Shingon sect began to introduce educational reforms, including the introduction of general education (*futsugaku* 普通学). As can be seen from the fact that Unshō and his patron, the educator and bureaucrat Sawayanagi Masatarō, were opposed to this and advocated traditional monastic training, there was also a concurrent conflict over the educational policy of the sect.⁷ The plan that Unshō had developed at this time was documented in detail in a letter to his disciple, Unyu 雲雄 (d.u.). According to these letters, he wrote that he wanted in particular to

restore the precepts, which are the vital root of the True Dharma, and make the precepts the great master on which monks rely, to establish the foundation of mediation and wisdom, and to remove the evil customs of the middle ages and return to antiquity by establishing all the systems based on the true ideas of sutras and the Vinaya of Śākyamuni Buddha and divine commandments of the denominational founders and monk-emperors, and to rekindle the majesty of the country pacified and protected (by Buddhism), and repay

7. On the introduction of general education into the Shingon denomination, see ABE (2014).

the debt to the imperial household and nation. This is the original intention of the independence of the head-temple. (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 381)

As seen from this quotation, he sought to make an appeal for the reform of the monastic community from the restorative standpoint of combining the “monastic garden” system with the failed denominational reform plan of 1879 discussed in the previous section.

On the one hand, Unshō partially allowed monks with unique talent who excelled in monastic training, or the “upper roots” (*jōkon* 上根), to learn non-Buddhist studies (*gegaku* 外学) for the purpose of “making non-Buddhists embrace the correct teaching and liberating them (*gedō shōju saido* 外道摂受濟度; KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 372). In addition to this, he planned to establish the Higher School of the Threefold Training (Kōtōsangakuin 高等三学院), taking inspiration from the national universities with graduate schools. Since he linked this to the “deterioration of morality in the nation” (*kokka tokufū no taihai* 国家徳風の退廢) and the ideal of “making learning flourish and the propagation of the teachings” (*kōgaku fukyō* 興学布教), he legitimized his denominational reformation associating the role of Buddhism with national morality and moral suasion (*kyōka* 教化). Thus, in common with Buddhists of his time, he planned denominational reform with a focus on improving Buddhism through moral suasion (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū* 382).

The conflict appeared to come to a tentative close when Unshō resigned as the head of Ninnaji Temple and returned to Mejiro Monastery. Yet, he continued to be the subject of criticism, as can be seen in an unnamed editorial (ANON 1899), in which Unshō’s ambition to collude with the government and become an independent chief abbot of a sect and the center of the Shingon Vinaya school was criticized (in figure 1, Unshō is satirized as a person who would dismember the sect like a chicken). In an editorial in *Bukkyō* in 1900, the same year that the first issue of *Shin bukkyō* was published, an essay denounced the selfishness and worldliness of the old Buddhists, and even cited Unshō as a representative of these tendencies (ANON 1901).

As we have seen in this section, the contours of the confrontation between the New Buddhist movement and Unshō can already be gleaned from the criticism of Unshō in the late 1890s in the journal *Bukkyō*. In a sense, this is not surprising given the fact that the writers of both *Bukkyō* and *Shin bukkyō* overlapped, and that their criticism was concentrated particularly in the infancy of the New Buddhist movement. However, it is noteworthy that simultaneously, as the public image of Unshō as a pure precept-upholding monk was being crafted, an image of Unshō as the leader of the “old Buddhism,” which preached “aris-



FIGURE 1. Unshō divides up the Shingon sect.

ocratic Buddhism” and “superstition,” was also taking shape.⁸ The next section will discuss how this image developed within the New Buddhist movement.

*3. Narrating the Precepts at the Turn of the Century:
New Buddhists’ Discussions of Unshō*

In this section, I will examine an article titled “A Discussion of Shaku Unshō and the Dismissal of the Mejiro Faction’s Principles” (“Shaku unshō shi o ronji

8. While the image of Unshō as an “aristocratic” Buddhist can be found in accounts such as ANON (1897), my focal point lies in the transformation of the connotation of “aristocratic” from a virtuous monk who won the popularity of the upper echelons of society, to an image of a monk who skillfully exploited the upper-class to enrich himself.

mejiroha no shugi o haisu” 釈雲照氏を論じ目白派の主義を排す), written by KISSHŌZABUTSU 吉祥坐仏 (real name unknown) and published in *Shin bukkyō* (1902). I will examine as well as the article “The Last Luminary of Old Buddhism, Precept Master Unshō (“Kyūbukkyō saigo no kōmyō: Unshō rishī” 旧仏教最後の光明・雲照律師 (1912) by SAKAINO Kōyō, one of the leaders of the New Buddhist movement. The former was a direct criticism of Unshō published in *Shin Bukkyō*, while the latter was a critical biography published in *Taiyō* after Unshō’s death. As religious scholar Ōmi Toshihiro has pointed out, “in the extreme, [the New Buddhists] seemed to think that the existing temples and monks would eventually disappear,” and, from a completely lay-Buddhist-centered standpoint, developed a belief that monks were useless and unnecessary (ŌMI 2009, 29). In general, in the thick of the uproar over the so-called “meat consumption and clerical marriage” edict that continued to roil the world of Buddhism during the Meiji period, the New Buddhists stated a clear argument. The “old Buddhism” that suffered from the contradiction with the practice of the precepts would transform itself into a “New Buddhism” that did not separate monks and laity.

For example, in an article “A Discussion of Clerical Marriage” in *Shin Bukkyō*, the author GYŪSEN 牛涎 (1901; real name unknown) claimed that the Old Buddhists, while stubbornly adhering to the old forms and customs of their respective denomination, took the position of promoting “meat consumption and clerical marriages” for the convenience of proselytizing, which he denounced as “ugly remnants of the Old Buddhism” (GYŪSEN 1901). Against such a background, he said, “Marriage is the great path of humanity, and marriage between a man and a woman is a natural promise.” He affirmed meat-eating and marriage from the standpoint of the Great Way of Humanity, stating, “It should not be out of place to say that the precept of seeking true liberation by rejecting [marriage] is a morbid precept that comes from erroneous, fundamentalist thought.” He then makes the bold suggestion that the problem of “meat consumption and clerical marriage” is a problem that fundamentally exposes the contradictions in the system and the way of being of the old Buddhism, and that the problem of meat consumption and clerical marriage can be solved by overthrowing the old Buddhism and reaching the ultimate goal of the New Buddhism, which advocated “no separation of monasticism and laity” (*sōzoku mubetsu* 僧俗無別).⁹

9. “It is not until they attain a state in which there is no separation between laity and monks (*sōzoku mubetsu*), through [wearing] lay clothing and lay costumes and [practicing] meat consumption and clerical marriage, that there will be an opportunity for them to realize in stark relief that the doctrines of conventional Buddhism are world-renouncing, and to arouse their earnest intention to taste New Buddhism which is this-worldly (*gense shugi* 現世主義). Presum-

At the beginning of his essay, Kisshōzabutsu acknowledges Unshō's impact as "the current darling of the Buddhist world," yet then raises the question, "Should Unshō be called the representative of Meiji Buddhism, and is this really an honor in the history of Meiji Buddhism?" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89). He then proceeds to explain that the rationale for the elimination of the Meiji faction led by Unshō resulted from "the enormous extent to which it spreads the poison of superstition throughout society, and obstructs the prospects of cultivating new religion, and places an obstacle in the progress of thought" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89–90). Kisshōzabutsu stated that in addition to the premise that Unshō's moralism was pessimistic because it was based on the "Lesser Vehicle" (Skt. *Hīnayāna*, Jp. *shōjō* 小乘), that his ascetic life was unnatural and abnormal, and also that he lacked a systematic theory, the specific point of his criticism was that he was a monk of the Shingon sect, allegedly the most "superstitious" of all the sects to perform the esoteric incantations and prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈禱) ultimately disseminating the superstitions of the "old Buddhism" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89). On the other hand, the discourse of such criticism can be found in the six major guiding principles of the New Buddhist movement in the abovementioned "Our Declaration."

In addition, what is noteworthy in Kisshōzabutsu's essay is his criticism of the distinction that should be made between Buddhist precepts and national morality. Specifically, he asserted that the Buddhist precepts are only "religious" regulations and that it is completely meaningless to link them to the remedy of "social" moral degeneration.¹⁰ Kisshōzabutsu's view on the precepts is contrary to the way that Unshō and other Buddhists from the early to mid-Meiji period applied the precepts and morality in the framework of "national morality," and the New Buddhists treated them within the framework of religion, suggesting a new development in the ideas surrounding the precepts. In addition, in the traditional Buddhist practice of the "Threefold Training," which consists of precepts, meditation, and wisdom, Kisshōzabutsu understood "the so-called precepts as a passive means of externalization against meditation and wisdom." Therefore, according to him, it is precisely because of this external property that the precepts inevitably ossify into "formalism," which is not a reference to the consideration of the "inner conscience" or a "base in a spiritual function." In so doing, Kisshōzabutsu ascribed negative labels to the practice of the precepts

ably, the current problem of meat consumption and clerical marriage truly constitute skillful means to disseminate New Buddhism" (GYŪSEN 1901, 521).

10. "The precepts in Buddhism are not something to name morality in the legitimate sense, do not have the nature to discipline the people's minds in society as the principles of general morality, and only religious regulations laid down to attain religious goals, so it is utterly meaningless to rescue the socially moral degenerations utilizing it" (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 93).

because they are only concerned with adherence to the items set forth by the Buddha (KISSHŌZABUTSU 1902, 89).

Alternately, SAKAINO (1912) discusses the precepts mainly from the standpoint of social progress. Sakaino saw the emergence of Protestantism in place of the old Roman Catholicism, or rather, the emergence of Lutheranism which allows clerical marriage in place of Catholicism based on celibacy as a natural demand of the times. The Buddhist precepts would ultimately also decline, providing a rationale that that was the “global trend” (SAKAINO 1912, 173). It also should be pointed out that the idea of locating New Buddhism within the framework of the religious revolution and the old and new religions in Christianity was a logic commonly shared by the New Buddhists, who compared themselves to the “Puritans.”¹¹ Thus, Sakaino asserts that it is inevitable that the precepts, which are solemn and single-minded, “must give way to religion that takes into account the whole of human nature and emotions” from the viewpoint of “humanistic ethics” (SAKAINO 1912, 173). In line with this, he concludes that the “Ten Virtuous Precepts” advocated by Unshō cannot satisfy contemporary people as an ethical theory in light of current ethical views (SAKAINO 1912, 174).

In fact, as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, Sakaino had already made a similar argument (SAKAINO 1901, 588) in *Shin bukkyō*. In the article, he declares that the celibacy of the old Buddhism “goes against the progress of society,” and that “the world is increasingly demanding a healthy New Buddhism, and New Buddhism’s lack of a distinction between monks and laity, or the theory of no monks, is something that many in society are beginning to actualize” thus developing his argument in a framework of “social progress.” Furthermore, Sakaino stated that “the pessimism and supernaturalism of medieval Christianity gradually became worldliness and optimism as the world progressed, and new religion became a major force against old religion. This, however, was not corruption but rather a trend which represented the progress of humanity, definitively proving the truth of the no-monk theory.” Sakaino thus emphasized the progress of this trend and continued by asserting that the emergence of the “*upāsikā* sect, or denomination of lay practitioners” of Jōdo Shin Buddhism, or True Pure Land Buddhism, in the Japanese archipelago was a stage in this historical development (SAKAINO 1901, 588). In this way, Sakaino’s position, in common with both of these essays, regards the lack of practice of the precepts by the old Buddhists as a corruption, and drawing on this premise concluded that Unshō was the “Last Luminary of the Old Buddhists” (SAKAINO 1912, 174). Thus, even Sakaino, who from a socially progressive and human-

11. For instance, an editorial clarified the positionality of New Buddhists, saying that “when we say that we disregard old doctrine, old faith, and old institutions, it is just like Luther and Calvin denounced the Pope’s Catholicism” (SHIN BUKKYŌ SHI 1900b, 224).

centric standpoint predicted the elimination of precepts, had a complicated understanding of them.

Remarkably, even within the New Buddhists the attitude was not monolithic, as can be seen, for example, in the case of the Shingon monk Tōru Dōgen 融道玄 (1872–1918) who warned against a radical pace of change. Tōru pointed out that, despite the importance of the Threefold Training in Buddhism, “strict precepts, asceticism, and seclusion from the world” and “abandoning worldly affairs and indulging in Zen meditation and contemplation (*zazen kanpō* 座禪觀法) are not something we Buddhists agree with.” Against this backdrop, he raised the following direct questions concerning the ideological stance of New Buddhists, mentioning that the “New Buddhists,” who take a negative stance toward the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the Twelve Causal Paths, which are the fundamental principles of “primitive Buddhism,” “call themselves New Buddhists and bear themselves with the name Buddhism without doubting themselves. I don’t know, is there something that makes our faith Buddhism?” he asked, raising fundamental doubts about the ideological basis of the New Buddhism (TŌRU 1905, 542).

4. *Shaku Unshō’s Refutation of New Buddhism: On Buddhist Reformation, Practice, and Belief*

As discussed in the previous section, the New Buddhists’ emerging criticism of Unshō and the precepts were grounded in a belief in the natural state of human beings and rejected extreme asceticism. A similar criticism of Unshō’s precept-centered ideas can be seen with journalist TAGUCHI Kikutei 田口掬汀 (1875–1943) whose article (1902) dismissed the strict adherence to the precepts as abnormal “asceticism” and “un-naturalism (*fushizenshugi* 不自然主義)” (TAGUCHI 1902, 148–53). Taguchi rejected the precepts as the most rudimentary stage of development in the history of religion, thus showing that these epistemological criticisms were not limited to the New Buddhists. In other words, during the Meiji period, as the popular phrase “Law of Heaven and Humanity” (*Tenri jindō* 天理人道) indicates, it was common to criticize the precepts from the perspective of essential human nature as an episteme and social evolution. In this section, I will examine Unshō’s position in response to the criticisms of the New Buddhists discussed above.

First, if we contrast the discourse of the New Buddhist critiques of the precepts discussed in the previous section with the position of Unshō in the same period, we find that he denounced the “corruption” of monasticism and planned to reform the organization of temples under the concept of “monastic gardens.” In addition, as can be seen in UNSHŌ (1901), he endeavored to transcend the denominational barriers in the name of “true Buddhism” from a

holistic viewpoint and seek an “authentic” monasticism modeled on the ancient monk-nun order (*sōniryō* 僧尼令) and the modes of monasticism of southern Buddhists, especially those in Ceylon (UNSHŌ 1901). This was the basis for his attempt to build a monastic order based on strict precepts and the Threefold Training.

It is easy to see from the articles in the *Jūzen hōkutsu* that Unshō was opposed to the Buddhist reformation movement that arose in the decade from 1900–1910. Unshō, for example, shows a certain understanding of the attempt to alter “morality” in line with the progress of the world and to transform “religion” into a “new religion” in line with the “spirit of the times,” yet expresses doubts about its foundations (UNSHŌ 1902b, 1). Here, Unshō emphasizes the fact that the “the essence of Śākyamuni’s teachings” (*kyōtai* 教体) is unchanging regardless of the passage of time, and aggressively attacked the idea of “reforming the essence of teachings” as an act of “The Heavenly Devil *pāpīyas*” (*tenma hajun* 天魔破旬) or “demonic followers” (*matō* 魔党; UNSHŌ 1902b, 1–2). The specifics of Unshō’s reforms can be found in the outline of the independence plan for Ninnaji Temple discussed above in section 2. As a reform plan, he proposed the emphasis on Chinese studies (*kangaku* 漢学) to cultivate the foundation for reading all the sutras, and as a general rule, a ceremony to take the tonsure should be held between the ages of sixteen or seventeen and twenty-one. He further proposed following the “Four Great Orthodox Theories (*shidaihakusetu* 四大白説)” and the “Six Harmonious Principles (*Rokuwakyō* 六和敬)” for practice, and for spiritual education following the *Catalog of the Threefold Training* (*Sangakuroku* 三学録), the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* (*Uburitsu* 有部律), as well as the *Yogācāra bhūmi śāstra* (*Yugaron* 瑜伽論). The “Four Great Orthodox Theories,” was used by Unshō as the slogan for his reformation and meant that only “scripture” should be the ultimate base of practice to ensure that monks would not be misled by the times (KUSANAGI 1913b, *shokanshū*, 370–73).¹²

On the other hand, while acknowledging that “a religion that is incompatible with the science of today in the end cannot possibly control the world of modern thought,” Unshō states that, in relation to the theory of evolution, Buddhism “does not evolve in the same way as one climbs a ladder but evolves freely in accordance with the situation. That is, it has the nature to transform and appear all at once like the reflection of the shadow of a mirror.” In this way, Unshō sought to show the constancy of Buddhism by arguing that its essence was in a dimension which transcended progress (UNSHŌ 1902c, 1).

Like the New Buddhists, Unshō was also in agreement concerning the need to improve evil practices (*heifū* 弊風), which he described in terms of “wash-

12. On the “Four Great Orthodox Theories” which Unshō reiterated as a guiding principle in his Buddhist renovation, see UNSHŌ (1886).

ing” and “removing rust,” expressions which precluded any change to the core of Buddhism (UNSHŌ 1902c, 4). He described the following four examples of people in his time who “chatter about reform” but fall into “error and misunderstanding”: (1) those who “seek unnecessary protection and interference from authorities”; (2) those who “follow the example of the reformation of foreign religions and mistakenly fabricate new principles”; (3) those who “seek to master the truth of Buddhism by merely studying foreign studies”; and (4) those who “pointlessly feed on charity and the public good in this world, and without restraint seek to make it the keystone of religious reform.” Unshō regards these four types as opponents of “Buddha’s holy injunctions” (*Buddha no seikin* 仏陀の聖禁) and the “admonitions of the denominational founders” (*shūso no suikai* 宗祖の垂誡; UNSHŌ 1900, 2).

In this context, Unshō advocated the attainment of the highest level of enlightenment (*bodai* 菩提) through the elimination of the three poisons of greed, anger, and foolishness, which he felt to be the “great purpose of Buddhism.” According to Unshō, it was only through a life of reclusion (*tonsei* 遁世) following the exemplars Śākyamuni and Kūkai 空海 (774–835), as well as Zenmui Sanzō 善無畏三藏 (637–735), who renounced their wealth and nobility, that Buddhism had won the respect of the emperors and the public. Therefore, he denounced monks who consumed meat, took wives, and wore worldly clothing. In line with this, Unshō asserted that at the quintessence of the revival of Buddhism was resuscitating the elimination of the three poisons and the simultaneous practice of the Threefold Training, and went as far as accusing those who advocate another way to salvation as being the “followers of the heavenly demons” (*tenma gedō no tōryo* 天魔外道の党侶; UNSHŌ 1900, 7–8).

Also in *Shin Bukkyō*, Unshō attempted a rebuttal of an article by Murakami Senshō 村上專精 (1851–1929), one of the theoretical leaders of the New Buddhist movement, which appeared in UNSHŌ (1902a), in which young New Buddhists attempted to interview “senior figures in the field of religion” (TAKASHIMA 1903). In this writing, UNSHŌ refuted Murakami’s dismissal of esoteric incantations and prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈祷) as superstition in an essay (1900) as well as Murakami’s positioning of “faith” as something that transcends the realm of modern scholarship. Specifically, Murakami had written that, “I, myself, know that the establishment of faith that brings spiritual comfort is not something that can be achieved through academic research. We know that faith can be obtained by more than learning and understanding” (MURAKAMI 1902, 30–31).

Ōmi expressed a core shift in the late 1890s in religious discourse from “philosophy (*tetsugaku* 哲学)” to “experience (*taiken* 体験)” among young people known as “agonising youth (*hanmon seinen* 煩悶青年)” who were anguishing over issues of personal consciousness and the ego, which led to their growing concern over religiosity (ŌMI 2014, 56). From this period onward, the confessional issue

of individual “faith experience (*shinkō taiken* 信仰体験)” or “faith” (*shinkō* 信仰) occupied a central place in the narratives of the emerging young generation. It is noteworthy that the main point of contention raised by Unshō, regarded as representative of the “Old Buddhists,” centered on the concept of “faith” which the New Buddhists had made the core of their movement. In addition, as Hoshino Seiji has noted, the spread of modern academic discourse, which led to skepticism about religion, and the issue of the clash between education and religion, resulted in the widespread idea that the construction of the modern category of *shinkō* or “faith” in fact “transcended” modern science, while at the same time maintaining its integrity, thereby ending the conflict between the two.¹³

In contrast, Unshō criticizes the idea of dividing faith and theory as being in “the style of Western learning” by using a phrase from the *Daichido-ron* 大智度論 (The Treatise on the Great Virtue of Wisdom; Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*), that he often quoted: “One can enter the great ocean of the Dharma by the means of faith, and cross the sea by means of wisdom.” In this way, he criticizes the idea of separating faith and theory as “Western academic style” (UNSHŌ 1902a, 118).

Consequently, he emphasizes that faith and knowledge are one and the same, epitomized by “stages in the Buddhist Path of Faith, Understanding, Action, and Enlightenment” (*shin-kai-gyō-shō* 信解行証), which begins with faith, develops sequentially, and finally ends with enlightenment (UNSHŌ 1902a, 118). He also states that in the traditional practice of the Threefold Learning, precept-centeredness functions as the absolute foundation of “Meditation” and “Wisdom,” which can be contrasted with the argument of Kisshōzabutsu in the previous section. In this way, Unshō’s stance was formed from a practice-based Buddhist framework carried out by monastics. He believed that in Christianity, for example, the reason that faith and scholarship needed to be separated was that it is a doctrine that does not conform to logic, as can be seen in the discrepancy between the creation in the Bible and academic understanding. Thus, Unshō pointed out that there was no need for a “totally reason-oriented Buddhism.”

Murakami’s position was to harmonize “religion” with “modern knowledge,” which is primarily philosophy, while placing “faith” in a transcendental realm that cannot be captured by modern academic knowledge, in order to achieve coexistence between the two. On the other hand, in the case of Unshō, his

13. As Hoshino Seiji, who examined the theories of religion proposed by Buddhist intellectuals such as Inoue Enryō and Nakanishi Ushirō, together with Christian intellectuals in the late Meiji period, has pointed out, one of the defining features of their understandings of “religion” was the twofold attempts to emphasize integrity with “human wisdom,” while framing it in a transcendental category beyond “human wisdom” (HOSHINO 2012, 126–27). On the neologism of *shinkō* and its entanglement with the New Buddhist movement, see Wu (2020).

understanding of “knowledge” was based on sutra-oriented wisdom (Jp. *hannya* 般若; Skt. *prajñā*) in the traditional Buddhist sense. Despite this discrepancy, both were in agreement in terms of their aspiration to harmonize faith and scholarship. While Unshō, an old monk who built a solid foundation of Buddhist training in the late Edo period, attempted to return to the ideal past of the True Dharma based on the Threefold Training in which the revival of the precepts had a central position, the New Buddhists, many of whom received modern education in the 1880s, aimed for the radical reformation of Buddhism attuned to the dawn of the new era. In this regard, the clash of Unshō and the New Buddhists reflected the epistemological contestation over the meaning of knowledge, faith, religious decadence, and reformation, sharing a common awareness of the fundamental problems.

Conclusion

In this article I have examined discussions of the precepts and Buddhist reformation within the thought of Shaku Unshō and the New Buddhists. Although it has rarely received much attention, in early postwar research on the “modernization” of Japanese Buddhism the precepts were presented as having a close relationship to Buddhism, despite the assumptions Japanese in the modern period witnessed the increasing deviation from the precepts. For example, Yoshida Kyūichi, who problematized the self-centered quality of the precepts, envisioned the process of the modernization of Buddhism as one in which the practice of the precepts overcame its backward nature, and developed into a socially oriented “New Precepts” (*shin kairitsu* 新戒律) which he coined as his unique analytic concept (YOSHIDA 1961). Ikeda Eishun 池田英俊 (1929–2004) and Kashiwahara Yūsen 柏原祐泉 (1916–2002), who are considered, along with Yoshida, to be the leading scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism, also spoke of modernization centered on the “spirit of self-discipline and autonomy” (*jikai jiritsu* 自戒自律) brought about by the Meiji Buddhists’ attempts to restore the precepts. Yoshida regarded the New Buddhist movement as the embodiment of the “new precepts,” while in the case of Ikeda and Kashiwahara, they saw the Seishinshugi movement led by Kiyozawa Manshi as the culmination of the spirit of self-discipline and autonomy. In this process, Unshō’s attempt to revive the precepts was positioned as a prelude to personal discipline lacking social orientation on the one hand, and spiritualism on the other.¹⁴

These scholars, who had direct experience of the Pacific War, attempted to reconstruct the “modernity” of Buddhism and open up new horizons as an

14. On the role of the precepts in the historiography of postwar scholars of modern Japanese Buddhism, see KAMEYAMA (2019).

antithesis to Buddhist devotion to nationalism, and its collaboration with the colonial administration and the war effort. Although the fact that their narratives and historiography are ultimately reduced to Seishinshugi and the New Buddhist movement raises fundamental issues to be reconsidered, if we take into account that the reiterated terms “new precepts” and “spirit of self-discipline and autonomy” are analytical terms that emerged from their awareness of these issues, it can be said that, within this political context, these pioneers of modern Japanese Buddhism used the issue of the precepts as a pretext or premise to depict what Buddhism should be (and should not be) in postwar Japanese society. In contrast, this article has focused on the specific modes of discourse of Unshō, the leader of the movement for the revival of the precepts, and his opponents, the New Buddhists.

This article has confirmed that although the New Buddhists rejected an uncritical reception of the traditional discipline of the precepts, through their efforts, it was modern narratives that emphasized the inner realm as “social evolution,” “inner conscience,” “spiritual function,” and “humanism” as *épistémè* constructed in modern Japan. Even within the Shingon sect within which Unshō was affiliated, Wada Shōkai 和田性海 (1879–1962), a member of the New Buddhist Fellowship Society who later became president of Kōyasan University and chief abbot of the Kōyasan Shingon sect, adopted this line of discourse. In his book, WADA (1923) singles out the ideas of precept-upholding monks such as Jiun and Unshō as examples, noting that the trend of the time was “humanity centric and devoted to humanism” (*ningen honi jindō raihai* 人間本位人道礼拝), and that “religions that focus on precepts are doomed to be destroyed” (WADA 1923, 7).

In general, Unshō’s ideas of the precepts were reimagined and foregrounded by the faithful practice of the Buddhist “scriptures” as expressed in the Four Great Orthodox Theories, reversing the clerical degeneration and retrieving the ideal age of the True Dharma. As Nishimura Ryō, who has contributed to a broad range of fields within the study of early modern and modern Japanese Buddhism, points out, the “orientation towards realizing the religious community (*kyōdan* 教団) of the time of Śākyamuni” through the practice of precepts and the study of scripture is one of the characteristics of the movement to revive the precepts initiated by Vinaya monks in the Edo period (NISHIMURA 2018, 62). Yet, it is also true that the ideas of Unshō, who positioned his own activities as the “True Dharma” movement following Jiun’s footsteps, can equally be seen as trying to cope with “modernity” based on his fundamentalist attitude to return to the “scriptures” and the “founders.” This is in contrast to the New Buddhists who, under the influence of “free inquiry,” and inspired by Unitarianism, adopted an attitude that emphasized a critical stance and “rationality” to adjust to the rapidly shifting modern settings surrounding Japanese Buddhism

while remaining connected to society. However, to dismiss Unshō's thought as a manifestation of "backwardness" or "pre-modernity" on the basis of the contrast between the two would mistakenly lead to an affirmation of the conventional modernist research attitude.

For example, the tendency to construct an evolutionary theory that harmonizes Buddhism with the materialistic understanding of evolution or the Spencian theory of religious evolution was seen in many Buddhists, exemplified by Inoue Enryō, who adopted "Suchness" and "Buddha-nature" as the source of his theory. Unshō also sought to provide apologetic discourses in order to avoid the contradiction between the theory of evolution and the immutability of the body of teachings by emphasizing the flexibility (*jizaisei* 自在性) of Buddhism. Furthermore, in response to the psychological theory that the barbaric and infantile conscience also develops in accordance with the progress of knowledge in the world, Unshō identifies conscience with Buddha-nature, and argues that conscience, which is "the good virtue of the mind possessed by mankind," does not change with the "discretion" or "persecution" of the period (UNSHŌ 1903, 19). In this way, he defends the unchanging nature of the teaching that "the Buddha is the founder, the Three Treasures of the Mahayana are the Teaching, and the pure practices of the tonsure, dyed robes, and precepts are the base of the religion" (UNSHŌ 1903, 22).

In this sense, Unshō's restorative or fundamentalist ideas constituted a reactionary approach to address the multifaceted challenges he and contemporary Buddhists faced as part of the modern religious dynamic on the Japanese archipelago. The basic stance of Unshō and the New Buddhists is that they both recognized the "corrupted" aspects surrounding the conventional Japanese Buddhist world and shared a common discursive style oriented to disassociate with it. In the case of Unshō, Buddhist practice is universally specified by the Buddha's intentions expressed in the sutras, and he aimed to return to the ideal "past" through fundamentalist and dogmatic ideas based on the practice of the precepts. The New Buddhists, on the other hand, from a lay-centered standpoint and grounded in the language of "free inquiry," sought to promote a radical Buddhist reform that would break down the temple organization and monastic system by reconstructing Buddhism in the "present." This conflict has been reinterpreted by the New Buddhists as a framework of "new and old" Buddhism, but we can state that the two reform movements described in this article both represent "Buddhist modernity."

(Translated by Bruce Grover)

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KOBAYASHI Naoko

The Necessity of Gender Perspective in Folk Religious Studies

Focusing on Female Practitioners

It is difficult for women to undertake ascetic practices (*shugyō*) in Japanese society. First, traditional teachings such as the so-called five obstacles (*goshō*) and the notion of blood as pollution (*ketsue*) are mobilized to prevent women from entering sacred spaces and states. Second, if a woman is married, she will immediately encounter major barriers to the completion of her ascetic training. This creates the challenge of maintaining the role of housewife at home while also undertaking the training. In contrast, male practitioners (*gyōja*) are less likely to encounter such problems, even if they have a family. There is an asymmetry at play based on gender differences: this becomes clear through an analysis of gender dynamics. This paper critically examines how folk studies (*minzokugaku*) and folk religious studies (*minzoku shūkyō kenkyū*) have depicted female religious practitioners. It will then discuss the need to cultivate an awareness of gender dynamics by researchers and religious authorities, and will explore the possibility of achieving gender equality in religious groups.

KEYWORDS: gender—folk studies—*minzokugaku*—mountain devotion—female practitioners—patriarchal systems

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ONE DAY in the summer of 2018 a confraternity devoted to the mountain Kiso Ontake 木曾御嶽 and based in Aichi Prefecture announced the name of a new person—a woman—who would enter a special ascetic path. It was also on this day that a memorial service (*kuyōsai* 供養祭) was held for Tengyoku Reijin 天玉靈神, who had presided over the organization from the end of World War II until 1975. Tengyoku Reijin was apotheosized as a numinous spirit (*reijin* 靈神) following her death and has been worshipped down to the present as the confraternity's most revered ancestral deity. During her lifetime, she served the role of the *nakaza* 中座 (spirit medium) in the Ontake confraternity's *oza* 御座 ritual (in which a deity descends into the body of a medium). After her death, she became a spirit who descended into the body of the *nakaza* and provided oracles. On this day, Tengyoku Reijin descended to the seat of the *oza* and provided the following oracle through the woman who had just been introduced as the new *nakaza*.

As for the woman whose body serves the kami, I will respond to her request for assistance. Nevertheless, practice for a woman (*onago* おなご) is sevenfold that of a man (*onoko* おのこ). It is a chosen path of hardship and suffering....

A woman's ascetic practice requires the difficult task of severing herself from everything ... thus we cannot overlook our experience as female practitioners.

This oracle concerned the severity and guardianship of this particular role, transmitted from one woman who chose another woman for this path. The words, “practice for a woman is sevenfold that of a man” alongside “a woman's practice requires the difficult task of severing herself from everything,” speak to that hardship and suffering. In other words, one's gender significantly determines the level of difficulty in practice.

What does this sevenfold amount of “hardship and suffering,” alongside the act of severing oneself from everything, refer to? When I later asked the president of the organization (a male guide, or *sendatsu* 先達, in his fifties), he replied, “The challenge for women begins with the ‘five obstacles’ and the difficulty of achieving buddhahood.” As an Ontakekyō 御嶽教 confraternity, this organization was formerly one of the thirteen modern sects of sectarian Shinto (Kyōha Shintō 教派神道) and thus performs Shinto-style rituals. That said, for him the greatest challenge facing women was premised on a Buddhist reference to the so-called five obstacles, namely the teaching that those born as women cannot become Brahma kings, incarnations of the god Śakra, Māra kings, wheel-

turning sage kings (*tenrin jōō* 転輪聖王; Skt. *cakravartin*), or buddhas.¹ He then noted an added challenge for female practitioners: “The stress of being unable to engage with the gods during their time of red impurity (menstruation)—cumulatively seventy to eighty days out of the year, or two years out of every ten—in which they cannot perform the duties of their practice (which includes private rituals at home).”

What other obstacles exist? In considering the life of Tengyoku Reijin, we can postulate several. When she chose the ascetic path, she personally decided to not marry or have a family. In contrast, the woman selected for this event had a family and was raising children. I interpret the impossibility of “severing oneself from everything” as a reference to keeping a household and family, alongside the various Confucian-based obligations of a woman (as wife, daughter, and mother). It is difficult for a woman with such commitments to undergo numerous training sessions at night, spend long periods of seclusion in the mountains, and perform any number of duties and ritual ceremonies every month, all the while maintaining a household and raising children. I have met a number of female practitioners, but given the demands that this lifestyle places on one’s family, many opt out, making the number of them who pursue life-long devotion small (KOBAYASHI 2007).

In contrast, what is it like for male practitioners? Rarely have I encountered one who deliberately chose to stay single for the purpose of his religious practice. Furthermore, I often hear male practitioners lament over lost family time in the face of training sessions that include weekends, holidays, and sometimes extend through the night.² Yet I rarely hear of them “suffering” over having to

1. Translator’s note: The five obstacles (*goshō* 五障) refers to a passage in the “Devadatta” chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra* when the daughter of a dragon king announces her aim to attain buddhahood. The buddha’s disciple Śāriputra responds by declaring that a woman cannot reach five pinnacles of existence. While she ultimately proves him wrong (transforming into a buddha in front of him), the narrative was widely invoked in Japan as evidence of women’s inferiority. Before the disassociation of buddhas and kami (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) in 1868, Ontake confraternities were not designated as Shinto. They drew heavily from Buddhist rituals and concepts, and this influence remained after the confraternities’ official designation changed to sectarian Shinto.

2. Male practitioners who were active in the Ontake confraternities of western Aichi Prefecture from the Meiji through Showa eras were known for “discarding their families” in order to exclusively pursue their practice (*shugyō* 修行) of helping others. On the other hand, suppose the wife of the male practitioners, in hoping to better understand his practice, followed her husband in the performance of pouring water on oneself (a type of water ritual intended to assist others outside of their family). If he entered the river to perform the ritual and she followed by doing the same, he would most likely scold her for it. Moreover, men who fully devoted themselves to practice at the expense of their families (following the ascetic ideal of discarding the family) were forever revered and praised as highly virtuous ascetics, while their wives were forgotten to history.

maintain both a family and their religious practice. If we apply this issue to general society, many women struggle to maintain household tasks, childcare, and possibly parental elderly care on top of a career (that many ultimately give up as a result). This is rarely the case for men. In Japanese society, a woman who chooses the ascetic path immediately faces the double bind of a gendered expectation that she will also continue as the principal caregiver in her family.

An additional cause of this “hardship and suffering” resides within the male-centered social sphere of practitioners. Female practitioners on the same level as their male counterparts find themselves on the receiving end of discriminatory treatment and suffer as a result of the inferior position they are placed in. While Tengyoku Reijin did serve a long tenure as the second president of the organization, many members initially argued that a man should lead them. Restricting their options to men, they proposed male disciples who had limited experience in actual practice. Tengyoku Reijin strongly opposed this and ultimately succeeded in taking the position.

It is noteworthy that Tengyoku Reijin was the premier disciple of the previous president. Should she have been male, one can expect that her accession to president would have gone unimpeded. As a woman, moreover, if she had been married or had a family at the time, she would have most likely removed herself (or been removed) from the field of possible successors. In fact, that happened to a female practitioner known as Kakusuehime Reijin 覚末媛靈神 (1893–1975) who had served as Tengyoku Reijin’s *maeza* 前座 (the one who ritually manages the descent of a spirit into the *nakaza*). Kakusuehime Reijin, who was married, demonstrated extraordinary powers in recovering lost objects and performing healing rituals during her lifetime. She had a great number of devotees, yet despite their support as well as her renowned abilities, Kakusuehime Reijin was not called on to become the organization’s president on the basis of her gender and expected family obligations. In other words, it became a typical example of a broader pattern in religious organizations whereby male practitioners dominate the outward public sphere (ROSALDO 1974, 23).

Facing beliefs about the five obstacles and blood impurity alongside the household expectations of women, all within a male-centered social sphere of practitioners, Tengyoku Reijin’s oracle points to the fact that acute elements of suffering and hardship not experienced by her male counterparts would shape her experience. Yet a hint of resignation was audible in the oracle in that the suffering and hardship endured by women that came before her in the Meiji 明治 (1868–1912) and Showa 昭和 (1926–89) periods continues for women down to the present.

This article explores the realm of mountain worship and activities of practitioners within the scope of Japan’s field of folk studies, giving special consideration to the historical circumstances of female practitioners through the

perspective of gender. Male centrism remains deeply rooted within the patriarchal structures and customs of mountain devotion (*sangaku shinkō* 山岳信仰). I will investigate the problems and inherent biases that arise from gender difference and asymmetry within the realm of mountain worship by considering how power structures are produced out of such gendered relations. Moreover, I wish to critically examine the scholarly depiction and treatment of women in this religious sphere by taking into account the position of the researcher and the methods used by ethnologists who have shaped the study of mountain worship and its practitioners. Finally, while reflecting on my own position as a scholar, I will reflect on the necessity for scholars and practitioners to reexamine how religious groups might achieve gender equality.

The Problem of Sexuality for Female Practitioners

There continues to be a deeply held conviction that female practitioners have special abilities and experiences that differ from ordinary people simply by being women. Yanagita Kunio's 柳田国男 (1875–1962) explanations of “women’s spiritual power” (*onna no reiryoku* 女の靈力) and “female spiritual superiority” (*josei no reiteki yūisei* 女性の靈的優位性) have long been taken as self-evident in the field of folk studies. Furthermore, it is widely believed that this ability is based on women’s reproductive capacity and that this physiology is somehow fundamental to womanhood. The same is true in religious studies, which adopted ethnological research methods.

In regard to female ritualists, Yanagita Kunio theorized that *onari* オナリ worship in Ryūkyū 琉球, whereby sisters spiritually protect their brothers, and their relative superiority in these religious rituals, served as the foundation of ancient forms of worship in Japan. He proposed that women’s “unique physiology” in regard to bearing and raising children “made them especially suitable to “seeing and listening to the kami” (YANAGITA 1998, 254, 269). Inheriting these ideas, many scholars have coupled women’s physical ability to bear children with their spiritual power and channeling of kami (*kami gakari* 神がかり).

Yanagita’s student, Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953), likewise regarded female mediums (*miko* 巫女) as wives of the kami and viewed “menstruation as a sign of the kami’s voice,” thereby linking female ritualists to women’s physiology (ORIKUCHI 1985, 466; 1970, 143). Orikuchi’s contemporary Nakayama Tarō 中山太郎 (1876–1947) remarked that “menstrual blood was treated as taboo material that should not be handled or approached” but also used by “a great many female mediums” in their incantatory rituals (*jujutsu* 呪術). Further, “it goes without saying that most women have highly receptive and sensitive (*shinkei-teki* 神經的; glossed as “hysterical”) dispositions in comparison to men and are thus more likely to be spirit mediums” (NAKAYAMA [1930]2012, 163, 75).

Indeed, there was widespread discourse at the time linking women's hysteria to menstruation by claiming the latter itself was the cause (ŌTA 2008).

Postwar folk studies have continued to speak about women in essentialized terms. Miyata Noburu attempted to revise the discriminatory notion of pollution (*kegare*) in Yanagita Kunio's theory of "sister power" yet ended up proposing that menstruation "aligns with women's productive nature ... signifying its high cultural value" and that "a mother's ability to birth and raise children demonstrates an unusual power" (MIYATA 2006, 26). In his chapter, "What Was the State of Existence for Women in Ancient Times?," NISHIGAI Kenji (2012, 11) more recently argues that "if we look to primordial worship in respect to Japan's ancient cultural foundation (*kisō bunka* 基層文化), menstruation was not viewed as impure (with the colors red and white symbolizing impurity), yet we must recognize other special qualities of women besides this characteristic." Taking the examples of *miko* 神女 and *itako* イタコ (blind spirit mediums), these theories link together a woman's ability to bear children with "the female medium's unification with the kami."

In contrast to these views on the reproductive capability and spiritual power of women, the notion of "female practitioners" seeking marriage or raising children is met with surprise and incredulity. Do married male practitioners with children face the same sort of reaction? Most male clergy are married with families, yet the majority of female clergy remain single (often compelled to do so) in ways that resemble the historical norms once maintained by established Buddhist organizations.³ Furthermore, there is an image of celibate life as virginal and pure, and the *rejection* of married life as romanticized and admired. If either image becomes fractured, however, the woman is the object of criticism. The Sōtō Zen nun, Iijima Keidō 飯島恵道, who was raised in a convent, has written that she unconsciously absorbed the refrains that "nuns cannot marry," "married nuns are defiled," and "nuns who marry should return to lay life" to the extent that she believed that marriage for her as a nun was out of the question (IIJIMA 2017, 83).

In similar fashion, many female *nakaza* (who receive divine spirits into their bodies) in Ontake confraternities (like the aforementioned Tengyoku Reijin) remain unmarried. The reason lies in the ideal that they must remain single and protect their chastity if they are to receive kami into their bodies. In contrast, it is deemed neither negative nor compromising for men performing the role of *nakaza* to marry and maintain a sex life.

Up through the twenty-first century, there were female practitioners serving as *nakaza* for the spirit of Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師 (Kūkai 空海; 774–835) for a

3. Translator's note: Legalization of clerical marriage in the Meiji period led to an increase in married clerics, and Shin Buddhist priests have long married.

Kōbō confraternity in the Chūbu region, but their performance of these possession rituals was also enlisted by Ontake confraternities in the area (KOBAYASHI 2013, 274). Women born between approximately the latter half of the Meiji through the early Taishō 大正 period (1890s–1910s) were especially prominent in this role. The majority of them remained single and resided in Shingon temples for nuns (*andera* 庵寺). One woman whom I studied resided in one such temple in the Nakagawa 中川 district of Nagoya City where she worked with the Kōbō and Ontake confraternities. As a female practitioner, she lived from the early Taishō period until her death in 2006 and never married. She received the spirit of Kōbō Daishi and acted as a medium for conversations between her followers and his spirit.

The English feminist scholar of religion Ursula King has argued that women rarely abandon normative familial roles (wife, mother, and so on) in order to pursue religious lives or alternatively, commit to marriage and children if they are already religious ritualists (KING 1995, 16). However, it is well known that men regularly act as ritualists and religious specialists while simultaneously maintaining their roles as husbands and fathers.

As discussed above, some female religious specialists remain single for the purpose of their ascetic practice, while others feel no choice but to marry in response to certain social expectations. As another example, one female ritualist (1928–2009) in my field observations served as a *nakaza* in the northwestern region of Aichi Prefecture. She remained single for many years in order to fully carry out her practice. However, when a younger man eventually became her disciple, she was told that “it would be frowned upon to have a younger man frequenting the home of an unmarried woman.” As a result, she ended up marrying for the purpose of outward appearances.

Female Practitioners Within a “Patriarchal Society”

I have shown how narratives of hardship, misfortune, and sorrow within the family and household are treated as the essence of the female practitioner’s circumstances and that her rigorous ascetism is often romanticized as a response to those circumstances (KOBAYASHI 2016, 43–68). Within a male-centered and patriarchal society, however, it should be apparent that it is not the qualification of practitioner (*gyōja* 行者) that coincides with misfortune and sorrow but rather that of gender, namely female, where the majority of these cases arise.

Following from Yanagita’s notions of “women’s spiritual power” and “sister power,” Okinawa ethnologist Iha Fuyū 伊波普猷 argues that the figure of the mother possesses great spiritual acumen and can thus communicate the affairs of the gods. While Iha held Yanagita in great esteem, constitutional scholar Wakao Noriko has countered that their theories about women are pointedly

antagonistic (WAKAO 1994, 3). She notes that Yanagita idealized women as, in his own words, “matrons to the *ie* [patriarchal institution of the family] of the past generations of society,” remarking that “women’s existence centered within the *ie* in ancient times” and that “behind every prosperous household was a powerful woman” (YANAGITA 1963, 325). In sum, he felt that women served the patriarch of the *ie* by, as WAKAO (1989, 192) puts it, “managing the household with their entire being,” and fulfilling “the core duties of housework and raising children that intimately tied them to the *ie*.” If Yanagita idealized women as matrons to the *ie* and mothers as possessors of great spiritual ability, Iha took these ideas one step further. Pressing the case beyond Okinawan women, he attributed a woman’s spiritual ability to the philandering behavior of the husband. As WAKAO (1994, 11) recounts, Iha argued that “ignoring the wife’s personhood and inflicting such pain” enabled the kami to descend into her. Under such logic, “the basis of a woman’s religious capabilities reside in the lived pain of her personhood, which is defined by her gender,” and in practical terms, “this reveals the true face of the actual problems experienced by Okinawan women.” In sum, for Yanagita, a woman’s personhood was based on their role as ideal homemakers for patriarchal heads, while for Iha, it was a question of “how a woman’s personhood related to her sense of self” and this rested on “her limited range of individual authority” (WAKAO 1994, 3; 1989, 201).

Iha’s explanation of the mother is telling when we turn to the issue of female practitioners in mountain worship. Although some female practitioners are married, many turned to ascetic practice as a means to either escape the oppression and violence they suffered from their husbands or the problems stemming from their husbands’ financial debts and philandering. In other words, we cannot assume that women simply enter ascetic practice for religious reasons but are often attempting to unburden themselves of the various problems they face in their male-dominated households.

I recently gained a telling revelation in my fieldwork. The research concerned a female practitioner who, born at the end of the Meiji era in the western district of Nagoya City, had led a confraternity in the area that was connected to Kōbō Daishi and Ontake confraternities. I was interviewing her descendants, who reside in the same house where she spent her life. Impressed by all of the records in the sanctuary within their home attesting to her mountain worship, I asked, “What was the driving motivation behind your grandmother’s devotion and practice?” to which one turned to the other and remarked, “Well, I suppose that our grandfather’s philandering was a factor.” For a moment, I was perplexed by this unexpected response, though this was not the first time I had heard of female practitioners from this era with similar circumstances. After all, this was a time in which men regularly engaged in prostitution within the same urban space they co-inhabited with their mothers, wives, and daughters

(YOKOTA 2014, 164).⁴ One cannot overlook the circumstances in which real suffering caused by their husbands may have increased their perserverance in religious life. Moreover, this suffering most likely extended beyond just female practitioners to many other women of that era.

The popularization of prostitution and the solicitation of sex in the modern era was deeply entangled with another emergent concept: a new model for women as “good wives and wise mothers” with an emphasis on biological reproduction for the sake of the modern family and *ie* (YOKOTA 2016). Many middle-aged men in modern Japan held the “double-standard notion that they should seek good wives who will serve as wise mothers, as they simultaneously—and unproblematically—engage with prostitutes” (YOKOTA 2014, 165–66). Iha also found the prostitution to be interwoven into the modern family structure (IHA 1975, 52–53), yet as the head of the household during this time, the man oversaw the lifestyles of his female family members and regulated their sexual conduct in ways that did not apply to his own sexual freedom.

Citing the legendary accounts of mountain-based communities in Yanagita Kunio’s *Tōno monogatari* 遠野物語 (1910), cultural anthropologist Funabiki Takeo 船曳建夫 has suggested alternative readings to stories from “deep in the mountains” that seemingly reflect “tragedies of abduction” and “variant marriages’ (*irui kon* 異類婚) with beings from a ‘strange realm’ (*ikai* 異界) that make return home impossible” (FUNABIKI 2000, 23). Instead, if we change the orientation of the story away from the mountains and to the plains, we can detect other motives driving women from their homes into the mountains. Indeed, women in the nineteenth century held “little authority in the home, endured difficult labor conditions,” and “could not escape abusive marriages.” In particular, in the eighth tale from *Tōno monogatari* on the “Old woman from Samuto 寒戸,” a “young daughter loses her whereabouts after removing her sandals under a pear tree.” This can be read as an “account of escape” by a girl fleeing a painful life, giving the tale a “modern” shade of a Meiji-era incident. “Taking the words literally, she realized her own departure from the home (*shukke* 出家)” (all quotes from FUNABIKI 2000, 24). In other words, *Tōno monogatari* is not simply a collection of strange and mysterious tales about *yuki onna* 雪女, *kappa* 河童, and *tengu* 天狗 passed down in the Tōno 遠野 region of Iwate Prefecture. We might

4. Yokota’s study of male patrons in the modern-era pleasure industry examines patron lists from brothels. These lists included the names, addresses, ages, occupations, appearances, visiting hours, monetary amounts of consumption, and assigned prostitutes of the patrons. The results from these records reveal that the number of men soliciting prostitution in large cities rose dramatically in the 1910s and 1920s, with the trend extending to surrounding agricultural villages by the 1930s. He refers to this stage of expansion as one of “prostitution for the masses” (*taishū baishun shakai* 大衆買春社会), in other words, a society in which most middle-aged men patronized the pleasure industry on a monthly basis.

additionally think of them as offering a glimpse into the social conditions of Tōno's "flatlands," surrounded by mountains, at the time of its compilation. Funabiki advises us to look beyond the romanticized "story tale" (*monogatari*) to the "real talk" (*jissai no hanashi*) uttered in the background.

As mentioned above, female practitioners have not been the only women facing the uneven obligations to family and household. Their circumstances indicate a broader problem for women in male-dominated traditional family structures. This issue is not simply limited to the family but extends to regional associations and religious organizations, with influences that are deeply rooted in all aspects of life today.

In July of 2006, I met a female practitioner of Shugendō 修験道 (mountain asceticism) in her twenties during a period of ritual asceticism. Influenced by her grandfather, who had been a member of the group, she joined the group's practice of seclusion in the mountains. At the time of our meeting, it was her fourth year undertaking this practice. She explained to me that her father ruled over the family with violence, inflicting it upon her and her brothers. She had quit her job and left her home in order to take up mountain seclusionary practices and was certainly relieved to be freed from her father's abuse. Nonetheless, she found herself utterly exhausted during periods of seclusion. When asked about it, she confided,

I'm delighted when I face the kami and buddhas. Yet there are times when I wonder if I'm being exploited in my practice [by the group]. I'm so busy I barely have time to stand up—it's painful.... [It's like I came for the kami and buddhas but] can't overcome my suffering without feeling delusional.

The group is mostly comprised of male priests and practitioners, with a leadership of only men. When I attended the banquet following the entire ritual program, I observed her frantically pouring rounds of alcohol for the group's leaders. She bluntly told me that I should also pour them drinks. The reason, in her words, is that they "remember if you don't come and pour them alcohol" and will treat you coldly thereafter. Despite leaving her home to pursue this path, she could not escape the duty of pouring alcohol. In short, the conditions this Shugendō organization subjected her to in some ways mirrored the patriarchal family structure she had left. Incidentally, one of the male leaders asked me at the banquet, "How can we attract more female practitioners?" While I was tempted to respond that "no woman is pleased with a group that assumes she should pour alcohol for the male leadership," the experience gave me a glimpse into the patriarchal structure to which this Shugendō order was still bound. Speaking again later with the female practitioner, she continued to describe the joy she experienced from "facing the kami and buddhas," though I was concerned about her unusually high level of fatigue. Later, in a devastating update

from an older female practitioner in the group, I learned that she had taken her own life.

There are other women in that order who style themselves as female practitioners. While they do not undergo the austerities of mountain seclusion like her, they do participate in other rituals, memorial rites, and special events while maintaining a normal life at home. Among them are several women who have suffered from domestic violence by their husbands or divorced them as a result. It is not that women who are subjected to these forms of abuse gain some sort of spiritual elevation in the process, as Iha posited. These are simply the problems that many women experience in their daily lives.

The Static Image of Women in Folk Studies and the Need for Gender Perspective

As mentioned above, it is invalid to view female practitioners as preordained “strange others (*ishitsu no tasha* 異質な他者)” whose religious lives were somehow predetermined and distinct from other women. It is also undeniable that scholars—including me—who have made these women the object of their research, collected their stories, and described them, have unknowingly constructed a static image of female practitioners (KAWAHASHI 2012, 58). In order to move beyond this inaccurate depiction, it is essential for us, as scholars, to be aware of the power disparities that lie between researcher and interlocutor, alongside a gender perspective that encourages self-reflection.⁵ Furthermore, it is incumbent on us to “constantly look back at our work with reflexivity and ask ourselves what we are speaking about, from what standpoint, and for what purpose” (KAWAHASHI 2012, 60; KAWAHASHI 2019a, 20).

These challenges, of course, extend to the general public. What I observe as an ethnographer is the authority I am granted every time I present my business card. On countless occasions, I have noticed the response I receive when the recipient of my card reads my title of associate professor in contrast to my time as a graduate student. Moreover, the times in which I have observed a group of only men serving as the central performers in folk rituals and festivals in Japan are overwhelmingly prevalent. In order for fieldwork to proceed unhindered, one must receive recognition and approval by these men. Yet I have often overheard on my first visit words to the effect of, “I heard a researcher was coming, but it’s a woman?” A female acquaintance involved in editing a book on the folk history of a certain region that had been organized by the municipal government relayed a similarly painful experience. At the time of research, she

5. For example, Nagaoka Takashi notes in a response to my work that I lacked critical awareness over the authority inherent in my role as a researcher when working with female practitioners in the field (NAGAOKA 2018).

overheard the older male representatives of the site's shrine and temple parishioners bemoan the fact that a woman had come. Such experiences are rare for male university professors. And yet that cold reception disappears for me after introducing myself with my business card. At once, the atmosphere changes as I hear, "Ah, she is a university professor!" Each time, I am acutely aware of the authority and ability to conduct research that my business card and title bring.

Another issue concerns the advantages and disadvantages of a "woman's perspective" in ethnography. Compared with other fields of research, ethnologists in Japan early on paid significant attention to the lives of women. This is primarily because women were often situated at the margins of society instead of the centers of political and administrative authority. As a result, their lives became important vectors for understanding the history and traditions of quotidian life and culture. Yanagita Kunio himself encouraged women to enter folk studies, and in stressing the importance of a "women's perspective," contributed to the development of female scholars. A meeting between him and Segawa Kiyoko 瀬川清子 (1895–1984) led to the establishment of the Josei Minzoku Kenkyūkai 女性民俗研究会 (Women's Folk Studies Society of Japan), which continues to publish the journal *Josei to keiken* 女性と経験 (Women and Experience) today.

Segawa was born into a samurai family from a southern domain. Her family was on the decline, her ancestors having fought against the shogunate in the lead up to the Meiji Restoration. Without working men present at home, she learned how to earn a wage to help support her family from a young age. As a result of this upbringing, she came to take a great interest in the working women of mountain and fishing villages (OKADA 2012, 36). In her portrayal of the women of these rural areas, however, Segawa sentimentally described them as "healthy and wise"—an ideal type constructed in her time—in contrast with the wives of salaried men in the cities (HASEGAWA 2013, 31). In short, her writings leave the impression that she found the women (and their lifestyles) of villages to be superior to women in the cities. The ethnographer Tsuru Rieko 鶴理恵子, who takes a feminist stance and has argued for the need to address gender, points out that "while Japanese folk studies has been applauded as a liberal field for its early investigation of women," the image of women from mountain and fishing villages has been constructed out of a "bias of them as strong and hard-working" (TSURU 2013, 15–16). Nevertheless, neither Segawa nor Tsuru questioned why women were absent from village meetings and shrine committees that they themselves attended. Furthermore, neither reflected on why *nenbutsu* 念仏 and child-protecting sororities (*koyasu kō* 子安講) were comprised of only women (TSURU 2013, 16). In short, when it comes to research on women, even if a female scholar conducts her research from a so-called woman's perspective, it is difficult to erase the fixed image of women that has been depicted within folk

studies. This misperception ultimately ends up obscuring the marginalization and imbalance of gender issues that exist in the real world.

The volume *Onna no me de miru minzokugaku* 女の眼で見る民俗学 (Folk Studies Through the Eyes of Women), edited by Nakamura Hiroko 中村ひろ子 and others, was published in 1999. Its aim was to “reexamine the field of women’s folk studies through the lens of gender,” as co-editor MIYATA Noboru (1999, 216) put it. Nevertheless, the first chapter, titled “Onna ni naru” (Becoming a Woman), begins with female coming-of-age rituals before introducing the themes of marriage, childbirth, raising children, women’s finances, homemaking, and death as the main issues in the book—in other words, content no different from previous research on women in Japanese folk studies. The volume does contain discussions on issues of gender like asymmetry between men and women, but in its concluding remarks (*kaidai* 解題), Miyata describes its inception in the following light:

To some extent, there have been various attempts in folk studies to clarify the cultural significance of women’s lived experiences. Yet most women, especially young mothers, are unaware of these studies. Why not then create a field of folk studies with illuminating significance that is conducted by female ethnologists through their own eyes? (MIYATA 1999, 225)

In other words, the volume broaches the subject of gender in the study of women in order to present “women, especially young mothers,” with research that carries “illuminating significance,” by locking in fixed themes such as marriage, childbirth, and raising children. In that statement, one finds no sense of awareness in regard to the power relations between scholar and non-scholar or the possibility of women’s exploitation by other women (KAWAHASHI and KUROKI 2004, 42).

Moreover, the image of the “deeply devout woman,” with hands fervently clasped in prayer before the kami and buddhas, is entrenched in the study of folk religion (KOBAYASHI 2016, 48). Mark Rowe, an anthropologist of contemporary Japanese Buddhism, has noted that scholars tend to portray male priests as “innovative and outward-looking,” whereas studies of female priests “attempt to mark what makes them distinct, [focusing] narrowly on faith” (ROWE 2017, 97).

The issues raised above demonstrate the need to introduce gender perspective into folk studies and its methodology within the study of folk religion. Yet even as awareness of the necessity of gender perspective grows among other scholarly fields, it seems that many scholars in our field remain largely unaware.⁶

6. In the volume *Nihon shūkyōshi no kiwādo: Kindai shugi o koete* 日本宗教史のキーワード：近代主義を超えて (Keiō Gishuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2018), co-editor KIKUCHI Akira (2018,

One can only hope that they increasingly recognize, as KAWAHASHI (2019b, 18) urges, “the need to cultivate relationships that do not exploit or oppress others.”

The Necessity for Conscious Changes Among Scholars and Practitioners

Taking the case of female practitioners in the ascetic rituals of mountain devotion, this article has outlined the need for gender perspective in the study of folk religion. In similar language, NAGAOKA Takashi (2018, 137) ended his review of *Shūkyō to jendā no poritikusu: Feminisuto jinruigaku no manazashi* (The Politics of Religion and Gender: The Feminist Gaze, 2016) with the following appeal: “In the wake of this book, do we continue reproducing an androcentric image as if nothing ever happened, or do we respond to its charge by embarking on a new way of conceptualizing religion? This is the question that all scholars of religion—including me—now face.” One can only hope that scholars increasingly come to grips with how issues of gender relate to themselves.

My grandfather was a member of a Kiso Ontake confraternity, and I have participated in ascetic practices at various mountains for the purpose of research, albeit not as a practitioner or inside actor. As an outsider, when I investigate “female practitioners” and conduct the act of “writing,” I always run the risk of misrepresenting or falsely portraying them in ways that essentialize and freeze their image. As someone who understands the field of mountain devotion with sufficient competency, I would like to overcome that risk with enough reflexivity in my research so that I can help to abolish the patriarchal and androcentric structures and conventions firmly rooted in mountain devotion, establish an equal playing field that includes all, and witness the blessings brought about through mountain devotion.

In order to aim for a gender inclusive realm of mountain devotion, Shugendō and other mountain-based organizations must first recognize the importance of gender perspective by conducting a reexamination of current institutional structures, mechanisms, and customs. For that to happen, it is imperative that the leadership (composed mostly of men) gains awareness of the problem. A large number of female practitioners (including teachers) are members of these

33–34) writes in his reflections on the pre-volume symposium (“Reconstructing the Image of Japanese Religious History”) that while “he has no objection to the importance of gender ... an image of Japanese religious history through the perspective of gender has yet to come forth,” and furthermore, “simply affixing the term ‘gender’ onto the existing research only inhibits real debate.” Incidentally, I was invited by the editors to write a short essay for this volume on women’s prohibition (*nyonin kinsei* 女人禁制) from sacred mountains through a gender perspective. My essay does not “affix the term ‘gender’ onto the existing research” in the way Kikuchi warns against. Gender perspective should not be viewed as an “addition” but as an indispensable theoretical framework that is a prerequisite for analysis.

organizations and the supporting Buddhist and Shinto institutions.⁷ Nevertheless, the decision-making bodies that conduct their organization's policy-making and operation are occupied almost exclusively by men. That imbalance must first be recognized in order for any form of self-scrutiny to follow. Gender perspective can lead to self-reflection for the male practitioners who belong to androcentric organizations (KAWAHASHI 2012, 42). To accomplish this, it is essential, first and foremost, to increase the ratio of female leadership who are directly involved in the policy-making and operation of these organizations.

It has further been pointed out that women hold lower ranks in Japanese religious organizations when compared to their female counterparts in other East Asian countries like Taiwan and China (REEVES 2011, 5). Women are not only placed in inferior positions within religious organizations but in Japanese society more broadly. Should it not be the duty of all practitioners in a religious organization to cultivate an environment that is not oppressive and discriminatory and treat its own female practitioners and priests as equal partners? KAWAHASHI (2019b, 15–16) notes that religious organizations have enthusiastically promoted their “support of the weak” and “cultivation of communal bonds” in light of recent popular discussion on the topic of “religion providing a public good for practitioners and social causes,” yet a deception lies in their continuing lack of unawareness about issues regarding gender status. Before the members of these organizations question why more female practitioners are not joining, they might consider taking a serious look at their organization's present conditions.

When the oracle that an *anago*'s practice is sevenfold that of an *onoko* was delivered, the teacher and followers at the site of the *oza* accepted it without hesitation. Yet why was that oracle made, and why did it distinguish between *anago* and *onoko*? Given the aging and declining number of practitioners in general, one can only hope that the members of that organization will pause to reflect on that oracle the next time a woman joins with the intention of embarking on the path.

(Translated by Caleb Carter)

7. As one example, a 2018 report from *Shūkyō nenkan* 宗教年鑑 (Almanac of Religion), edited by Japan's Agency of Cultural Affairs, reports percentages of female teachers as follows: 37 percent for Kiso Ontake Honkyō 木曾御嶽本教, 31 percent for Ontakekyō, 31 percent for the Honzan Shugen 本山修験 branch, 48 percent for the Kinpusenji Shugen 金峯山修験 branch, 31 percent for the Tendai Jimon 天台寺門 branch, 29 percent for the Shingon Daigoji 真言宗醍醐 branch, and 49 percent for the Shingon Inunaki 真言宗犬鳴 branch.

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REVIEW



Horie Norichika 堀江宗正, *Poppu supirichuariti, Media ka sareta shūkyōsei* ポップスピリチュアリティ・メディア化された宗教性 [Pop Spirituality and the Mediatization of Religiosity]

Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019. 322 pages. Hardcover, ¥2,750.
ISBN 978-4-00-061372-9.

SINCE THE publication of Jeremy CARRETTE and Richard KING's *Selling Spirituality* (2004), the academic study of spirituality has grown to become an independent subfield within the study of religion, leading to a proliferation of research on the topic. Studies by scholars such as SHIMAZONO Susumu (2004) and Ioannis GAITANIDIS (2020) reveal how the global phenomenon of spirituality manifests in Japan by exploring intersections with New Religions, Christianity, and capitalism. These studies share a common recognition of the significance of studying spirituality as a distinct phenomenon, with its own sets of traits and trajectories. Building on this idea, Horie Norichika's monograph offers a fresh perspective on the topic by focusing on popular media.

The title of the book also serves as the keyword for the monograph. Horie uses the term “pop spirituality” to analyze public figures and popular ideas that have been featured in the media as a way to explore how the phenomenon is understood and received by the mass public. Particular focus is given to Ehara Hiroyuki 江原啓之 (b. 1964), a key figure in the popularization of spirituality in Japan. Horie's analysis reveals how Ehara positioned himself and his ideas of spirituality as something outside of religion yet borrowing elements from it. By examining Ehara's books and his conversations with his guests when he appeared on television, Horie presents Ehara's popularity as a case study to demonstrate a particular form of “pop” spirituality. Unlike HORIE's previous work (2011), which focused on individual experiences, this book provides a comprehensive overview of spirituality as featured in the media and popular discourse.

The first chapter is dedicated to the etymology of “spirituality.” By tracing the origin of the word “spirit” to the “Holy Spirit” in Christianity, examining how the term is employed in psychology, and observing the developments of how the term is discussed in Japanese scholarship, Horie reveals how the term *supirichuariti*

スピリチュアリテイ absorbs different influences from Christianity, psychology, the New Age movement, and traditional ideas on spirit (*rei* 霊).

In chapter 2, Horie discusses the public reception of “religion” after the sarin gas attack perpetrated by Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教 in 1995 and how this played a role in the development of spirituality as a movement in Japan. After the Aum incident, the public’s view of religion and religious organizations became increasingly negative. The mass media continuously attacked religious organizations such as new religions as they were considered dangerous cults. Aware of this social tension, spiritual practitioners realized the need to distance and differentiate themselves from these negative views on religion. This idea directly ties into chapter 3 where Horie introduces one of the main subjects of the book, Ehara Hiroyuki. Horie discusses how Ehara popularized the term *supirichuaru* スピリチュアル by referring to himself as a *supirichuaru kaunserā* スピリチュアルカウンセラー instead of a *reinōsha* 霊能者, a common term for psychic. By creating this persona of a life counselor, Horie argues that Ehara is distancing himself from not only traditional religious organizations, but religious cults like Aum. The irony is that Ehara himself shares a strong connection to religion since he borrows elements from other religions such as Christianity upon developing his ideas on spirituality. Horie’s analysis of Ehara continues in chapter 4, where he discusses Ehara’s appearances in various media, including magazine articles, books, and television shows. By going through specific sections of three television shows as case studies, Horie observes how Ehara skillfully utilizes different media for different purposes to construct his image in the media. Printed media such as magazines and books are employed to convey his ideas on spiritualism and the “spiritual truth” (*reitekishinri* 霊の真理) while audiovisual media are used to demonstrate concepts and his powers.

In chapter 5, Horie discusses various opposition movements against the popularity of so-called occult shows, eventually leading to Ehara’s retreat from the television industry. One of the first critiques came from The National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales who were concerned that the spiritual elements in these shows might lead to harmful practices referred to as “spiritual business practice” (*reikanshōhō* 霊感商法). The lawyers sent out a letter demanding that the content of these shows be reconsidered. Other issues regarding the content of Ehara’s television shows subsequently surfaced, leading to public distrust of these occult shows. This eventually resulted in the decline of television shows featuring supernatural activities, dragging Ehara’s popularity down with it.

In chapter 6, the focus shifts to contemporary views on reincarnation and how perspectives on life and death have been influenced by the shift from “religion” to “spirituality.” Horie examines views on reincarnation in Buddhism and folklore and compares them to contemporary views in Japan featured in one of Ehara’s television shows. A significant part of the chapter is also devoted to discussing the influences of Brian Weiss’s “past life regression” that involves hypnosis to recover past life memories as part of a spiritual experience.

Chapters 7 and 8 follow the phenomenon of power spots (*pawā supotto* パワー スポット). Horie observes that there are two types of clashing discourse that exist surrounding power spots: New Age-like spirituality, which is more concerned with personal spiritual growth, and Shinto-like spirituality which is focused on restoring “ancient” tradition. Before the first decade of the twenty-first century, the phenomenon of power spots in Japan was heavily influenced by the New Age movement with the idea that various sacred sites from around the world are part of a larger system connecting the earth with the universe. After this time, however, power spots became closely connected to Shinto shrines with benefits (*goriyaku* ご利益) at the center of the phenomenon. Ehara Hiroyuki makes his comeback in the chapter as Horie discusses the influences of Ehara’s book, *Supirichuaru sankuchuari* スピリチュアルサンクチュアリ (Spiritual Sanctuary), on the authenticity of power spots. Through his book, Ehara suggests that the authentic way to visit a shrine is to be grateful to the gods, implying that the benefit-focused activities so far are misguided. Shinto’s strong connection and opinions from figures such as Ehara further ignited responses from nationalistic organizations such as the National Association of Shrines (Jinja Honchō 神社本庁). Horie also explores blogs by people with personal experiences going to power spots. By identifying specific words on these blog entries, Horie argues that while on the surface, visits to power spots are motivated by this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku* 現世利益), what people feel at the sites are feelings of tranquility, peace, and power.

In the final chapter, Horie takes a sharp turn by focusing on popular culture such as anime. In an attempt to understand the rising popularity of magic (*majutsu* 魔術), Horie utilizes Google and social media such as Twitter and Mixi to examine how users engage with words such as *majutsu* and *supirichuaru*. One of the focal points of the chapter is how awareness and the popularity of magic-related themes reveal that religious knowledge has become widely available. The publication of specific encyclopedias (for example, Sakamoto Masayuki 坂本雅之, *Gēmu shinario no tame no miritarī jiten: Shite okitai guntai, heiki, oyakusoku* 110 ゲームシナリオのためのミリタリー事典—知っておきたい軍隊・兵器・お約束 110 (Tokyo: SB Creative, 2019), and large social events such as Comike allow fans and creators to contribute to the creation of a database that continues to be updated. This chapter raises some interesting questions about the production and dissemination of religious vocabularies and the role of popular culture in the process.

Horie’s work provides a comprehensive examination of over twenty years of the historical development of the spirituality movement in Japan. While previous scholarship such as that by Shimazono has traced the trajectories of the phenomenon, Horie’s main contribution to the topic is his meticulous analysis of Ehara. Ehara is often mentioned in works discussing spirituality, but Horie is the first to genuinely examine this pivotal figure. Horie’s analysis of how Ehara employed different forms of media to construct his image reveals the critical relationship between media and spirituality. Furthermore, television shows, blog entries, and social media posts are

not typical primary sources in religious studies, but Horie has successfully employed these sources to explore the various manifestations of spirituality in popular media. Horie's careful attention to the subject matter is an important contribution for those interested in the representations of spirituality in the media.

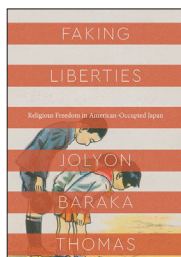
Considering the book's encompassing approach to spirituality, it could have benefited from a discussion on the economic aspects of the phenomenon. Much scholarship has discussed the importance of economics in religions. Ioannis Gaitanidis, for example, has demonstrated how "spiritual therapists" employ vocabularies similar to the ones used by Ehara to participate in a "spiritual market" filled with similar competitors. One of these practitioners even considers Ehara a positive role model who guides people without seeking materialistic wealth as some of his predecessors did (GAITANIDIS 2012). This reveals that Ehara was aware of the negative labels attached to some of these spiritual practitioners, especially concerning the commercial aspect of their practice. Horie briefly mentions the issue with The National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales. Further contextualization of these "spiritual sales" and how Ehara views this issue would add an additional layer to understanding spirituality in Japan. Since commercialization was a significant factor in the so-called "spiritual boom," some discussion on this would have enriched the book and provided readers with a better understanding of Ehara's relationship with the media. This minor suggestion aside, Horie's scrupulous portrait of Ehara Hiroyuki reveals new avenues for future research in spirituality and will prove to be a useful resource for scholars of religion and Japan alike.

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REVIEW



Jolyon Baraka Thomas, *Faking Liberties: Religious Freedom in American-Occupied Japan*

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 336 pages. Paperback, \$32.50. ISBN 978-0-226-61882-1.

FREEDOM AND democracy are not all they are cracked up to be. This and the issue of state-sponsored deception are at the heart of Jolyon Baraka Thomas's *Faking Liberties: Religious Freedom in American-Occupied Japan*, a book certain to receive an enthusiastic reception, not only because it addresses a topic of such renown but also because it says what so many people have come to feel in recent decades: *America is not the land of the free*. In *Faking Liberties*, Thomas claims to have found yet another example where American "freedom" does not live up to the hype, and this in the most unlikely of places—the introduction of religious freedom to Japan during the Allied Occupation following World War II. *Faking Liberties* is a direct attack on the "official story" that has traditionally described a repressive Japanese regime that in defeat subsequently attained increased religious liberty through American efforts. Thomas argues that, long before the arrival of the Allied Forces, Japan had cultivated its own culture of religious freedom and that this historical truth was obscured by the U.S. invention of "State Shinto" and the enshrinement of American "theology" in the form of human rights—most notably, "religious freedom." The idea that Japan was a vibrant non-Western secularist state with its own robust sense of religious freedom prior to Western intervention is certain to resonate with both liberals in the West and conservatives in Japan.

Written in an erudite prose that is one part academic technician and one part justice warrior, *Faking Liberties* puts the United States on trial as a bellicose military power with its own self-serving "religious" agenda while empathizing with a secularist Japan that possessed its own vigorous legal and social debates over religious freedom—indeed, its *own* democratic religious freedom. This is no easy feat, given that—as Thomas recognizes—wartime Japan was known for coercive and repressive religious policies backed by the violent mechanisms (legal and illegal) designed to preserve and protect the ambiguously religious rites, practices, and beliefs of the

imperial system. But what if repressive acts of violence in the name of empirically unverified beliefs could be redefined so as to serve as the defining characteristic of democratic rule? Thomas argues that this is precisely how to understand religious freedom. In order to do this, Thomas purposes a “constructivist” model of secular-ity that sets aside the character of particular empirically unverifiable claims (this is too essentialist) and that is uninterested in the emancipatory or repressive consequences of actions or policies derived from such claims (this is too functionalist). *Faking Liberties* argues that all secular states retain a monopoly over the capacity to discriminate between “religion” and “not-religion” and over the means to “maintain public order” and therefore acts of violent repression or coercion “should not be understood as violations of religious freedom ... but rather as one outcome of the combination of the state’s capacity to discriminate between ‘religion’ and ‘not-religion’ and its monopoly on maintaining public order” (46). *Faking Liberties*, in short, introduces a concept of “religious freedom” perfectly harmonized with the rhetoric and power of the Japanese state—if the state is within its right to act, then there can be no conceivable violation of religious freedom, no matter the consequences or rationale for the decision.

The first step in demonstrating the existence of the vibrant democratic religious freedom of pre-Occupation Japan begins with the establishment of the “Meiji constitutional regime”—“the legal and political system that was established with the implementation of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1890 and disestablished at the onset of the Allied Occupation” (25). It is a widely recognized and little disputed historical fact that the Meiji constitution contained a provision for religious freedom. Thomas discusses this period as one of intense debate where an entire cast of historical figures reinvented religious freedom “over and over and over again.” However, despite paying lip service to the “fraught” and “anxious” character of Japanese secularity and its “multiple religious freedoms,” Thomas argues that Japanese religious freedom was “finalized” in 1884, “formalized” in the 1889 drafting of the Meiji Constitution, and remained a largely unaltered framework until 1945 (24). *Faking Liberties* ultimately formulates a *unified* Meiji constitutional regime that projects the normativity of Japanese religious freedom from the late nineteenth-century into the mid-twentieth. Paradoxically, Thomas’s portrayal of religious freedom contains little of the *anxiety* such entanglements should engender; rather, it is a portrait of *stability*—a neologism that jettisons familiar historical terminology (for example, Taisho democracy, Showa militarization, and so on) that better articulates the massive changes of the period in order to embrace a monolithic (normative) “religious freedom” in the form of state prerogatives that employ the legal terminology “freedom of religion” and “public order.”

Thomas seems to be aware of the fact that discussing democratic freedom of religion as an aspect of unilateral acts of state law enforcement—especially when those laws are designed to protect the unquestionable divinity of the sovereign—might give more than one reader pause. In response, *Faking Liberties* suggests that debates

regarding religious freedom were “democratic processes of free speech, protest, and parliamentary procedure” carried out under a Buddhist “majoritarian” rule that was entirely comfortable with the secular character of the Shinto-derived aspects of the Japanese state. Not only is it unclear how the debates of a handful of Buddhist and political elites constitute a “majority,” it is also impossible to discern the difference between discussing and debating religious freedom on the one hand, and religious freedom itself on the other. Thomas, himself, largely equates the two. Furthermore, Thomas’s assertion that Buddhists had little interest in or concern for state formulations of Shinto as it was “beneath their notice” (51) is simply historically inaccurate—as any cursory assessment of the relevant literature will reveal. Buddhists were eager to limit the political influence of Shinto and polemics clearly figured into their strategies. The boisterousness of a handful of Buddhist elites serves as flimsy evidence for Thomas’s claims of “majoritarian rule” and the manufactured silence of those same elites does little to prove a lack of interest in Shinto-state relationships on the behalf of Buddhists and still less to prove—as Thomas claims—Shinto had no national function during this time.

Thomas makes “the potentially counterintuitive claim that the draconian legislation and law enforcement of the early Shōwa era was largely democratic insofar as it was characterized by free speech, parliamentary procedure, surveys of popular opinion, and respect for the rule of law” (107). Perhaps more than any other portion of the book, this chapter embodies Thomas’s tendency to speak power to truth by legitimatizing the propaganda of state officials and political elites. Elite political and sectarian figures such as Chikazumi Jōkan 近角常観 (1870–1941) and Andō Masazumi 安藤正純 (1876–1955) are depicted as representative of the ongoing democracy of the Meiji constitutional regime, and the day-to-day suppression, enforced acts of worship, and persecution of civilians based on their religious beliefs are characterized as the workings of a normative secularist system imbued with democratic religious freedom. The textualism that characterizes Thomas’s approach renders context and intent largely invisible and serves to affirm and amplify elite voices.

Here, among other things, Thomas works to rescue the “oft-vilified” Religious Organizations Law of 1939 as just one example of continued religious freedom (123). Thomas insists that this law gave religious groups the “opportunity” to register with the Ministry of Education, receive legal recognition, and reap the benefits. The Minister of Education, Araki Sadao 荒木貞夫 (1877–1966), even “stressed that the drafters had taken pains to not infringe on the fundamental constitutional right to religious freedom in the slightest” (123). Thomas takes Araki, who was involved in the successful assassination of one prime minister and a failed attempt at another (just another legal democratic procedure?), at his word. And this despite the fact that while under his tenure the Ministry of Education came to edit, censor, and essentially coauthor the doctrine of religious groups to ensure their compatibility with state enforced beliefs in the divinity of the emperor and worship at Shinto

shrines. This even resulted in the Ministry of Education rewriting the First Commandment of the Catholic Church for that express purpose.

Thomas mentions only one individual who “dismissed” religious freedom, Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口常三郎 (1871–1944) of Sōka Gakkai 創価学会 renown. Makiguchi died in prison and, in failing to put his arguments in the language of his oppressors, Thomas declares him a “champion of Buddhist exclusivism with no need for such legal niceties” (128). Targeted for urging others to engage in acts that might draw the inviolable divinity of the Japanese emperor into question, Makiguchi does not invoke the language of religious freedom (that is, Japan’s normative secular constitution)—for which Thomas brands him a religious zealot who received the punishment he deserved for endangering “lawful peace and order.” Thomas claims to be drawing off the work of Tisa WENGER (2017), but where is the discussion of Tisa Wenger’s “religious freedom talk” so frequently mentioned when it is needed most? For Wenger, systems of power determine who can appeal to religious freedom and for what purposes, but for both Thomas and the elites the Meiji constitutional regime power begets “freedom” and “freedom” belongs exclusively to those in power who possess a monopoly on its articulation and enforcement.

Thomas’s study of the “normative religious freedom” of the Meiji constitutional regime is systematically compared to only one other government—namely, the military government of the Allied Occupation. Part two of *Faking Liberties* paints the two governments as similar in a number of ways—both governments communicated with transsectarian religious groups, both had educational programs, and both had made empirically unverifiable claims. Thomas’s claims of functional similarity hardly provide the kind of specificity necessary to determine the actual level of similarity, but they do beg the question—what does it mean for Japanese “democracy” if it is functionally comparable to an undemocratic foreign military government? It is, however, not Thomas’s intention to reveal the undemocratic character of the Meiji constitutional regime but rather to follow up on his “initial instinct” to expose “a nefarious plot to smuggle Christianity into Japan through the language of religious freedom” (180). In his extensive archival work, however, Thomas fails to find evidence of such a plan on behalf of the Allied Forces. In fact, Occupation officials worked to ensure a place at the table for the Japanese and their interests and fought off attempts by advocates who sought to promote Christian privilege—even when those advocates were their superiors. Even so, Thomas remained vigilant and ultimately succeeds in his attempt to uncover a different nefarious undertaking—one where the United States conspired to dismantle a normative, free secularist state and unjustly indoctrinate the Japanese population with American “theology” in the form of “a desire for religious freedom”—in the absence of Christian missionary efforts, Thomas settles for a plot to import “Protestant-style” religious freedom at the expense of “Shintō-style secularity” (193).

Thomas claims that in order to achieve their goals of “conversion,” the United States needed to lie—that is, they needed people to believe that the Japanese were

not already free. In order to liberate an already religiously free Japan, Thomas argues that Occupation officials constructed the category of “State Shintō” during the first few months of the Occupation to serve as a foil for the religious freedom the occupiers were instructed to establish (144). This argument has one major flaw. Occupation officials did not invent the term “State Shinto.” The term had been in use for nearly two decades as part of imperfect but not entirely insincere attempts to explain the relationship between Shinto and the state by observers, scholars, and religionists in both Japan and the West alongside other terms such as “National Shinto” and various forms of “Mikadoism” that also attempted to articulate the same phenomenon. Here one will be disappointed to see that Thomas does not take “State Shinto talk” as seriously as he does “religious freedom talk.” Instead, with an irony that at times borders on hypocrisy, readers are warned to endeavor to ensure that their own theoretical paradigms do not contribute to the rationalization of violence. If “State Shinto” is too lethal a term, what should we call it when the state obliges citizens to formally and publicly demonstrate a commitment to the divinity of the Japanese emperor who rules as a living kami, or rot in jail to avoid potentially contributing to acts of unjust violence against such legally sanctioned arrangements? Thomas has already provided his answer in chapter 4—calling it “religious freedom.”

It is not until chapter 7 that Thomas offers a comparison of the freedom of religion as it was delineated in the Meiji constitution and as it is outlined in the new constitution. Other than the continued claim that Japan had possessed religious freedom all along, Thomas details what is a fairly standard understanding of the expansion of religious rights in Japan—there is a more thorough division of religion and state, greater acceptance of minority groups, a separation of religion and education, and an expansion of freedom to include the freedom from coercion. Many of these are common features of religious freedom with a somewhat longer history of practice in Europe and North America. France adopted such a position in the 1905 law on the Separation of the Churches and the State, as did Germany in the 1919 Weimar constitution at the exact same time Japanese “secularity” began to appear less and less normative in its attitude toward religion (and, as a consequence, politics). *Faking Liberties*, however, includes no such comparison to these or other countries.

Instead, Thomas argues that the Occupation marks the historical moment where religious freedom transformed from “a wartime propaganda catchphrase ... into reality” (222). Here, Thomas means not only the moment freedom of religion became a human right but the very moment where the idea of human rights first appeared. The grandiose character of this claim is not verified with any historical account of human rights, and the work it does in *Faking Liberties* is much more immediate—it is designed to preserve Thomas’s claim that the Meiji constitutional period is one of religious freedom. Thomas uses the unsubstantiated claim that “religion-as-human-right” is fundamentally different to the lesser (but equal?) freedom

of the Meiji constitutional period, which was merely a civil right. The implication here is that pre-Occupation religious freedom was normative in that, given the historical and cultural horizons, freedom of religion could only be articulated as a civil right—that is, a byproduct of the state monopoly over coercion and the right to determine what is and is not religion. In contrast, religion-as-human-right articulates a “transition when rights of privileges that were previously understood as civil liberties or customary rights acquired a new stature antecedent to citizenship (becoming innate) and transcending the regulatory purview of the state (becoming universal)” (197). In defining the difference between conceptions of religious freedom in the Meiji period and those of the new constitution, Thomas inadvertently undoes his own argument for Japan’s normativity. Freedom of religion first came to Japan as a tool for international diplomacy and was utilized to guarantee certain civil liberties that states could not otherwise be trusted to provide. As such, from the point of its very introduction, freedom of religion precedes and transcends citizenship and state-controlled “civil liberties.” Although he does not employ this definition of secularity himself for the majority of the book, Thomas states that “the Japanese case perfectly exemplifies” Hussein Ali AGRAMA’s (2012) point that “what best characterizes secularism is not a separation between religion and politics, and not simply state regulation of religion, but an ongoing, deepening entanglement in the *question* of religion and politics, for the purpose of identifying and securing fundamental liberal rights and freedoms” (27, in the book under review). But if, as Thomas asserts, the Meiji constitutional regime marks an era where “religious freedom” was defined by the state monopoly to determine what is or is not religion that was thoroughly protected through the use of coercive force that *precluded certain questions which could not be asked*, is this still normative secularity and democratic religious freedom? By suddenly claiming that the religious freedom under the Meiji constitutional regime guaranteed fewer protections and was largely state orientated, hasn’t Thomas simply affirmed the traditional account of the modern history of religious freedom in Japan? One gets the feeling that we have largely received old wine in new ideological skins.

Faking Liberties bombards the reader with a remarkable number of resources and an extended cast of political, religious, and scholarly elites in an effort to “debunk”—and even reverse—the official “triumphalist” story of the Allied Occupation of Japan and the pre-Occupation realities of religious freedom. America is painted as an imperialist aggressor spreading its own “religion” through discourse of “religious freedom,” wiping out Japan’s “indigenous” secularity through “conversion” to American “human rights” and upsetting Japan’s traditional, normative state-religion relationships. Thomas has created an enthralling read that will undoubtedly continue to press Americans to continue to question the actions we carry out in the name of religious freedom and to reconsider such acts from our past. It is also just as likely to prove useful for those looking to promote nationalist agendas and circumscribe religious freedom in Japan and elsewhere. Modern concepts of religious

freedom are and always have been a product of international oversight as much as domestic debate. As such, nationalist agendas are likely to endanger religious liberties both domestically and internationally by silencing academic discourse, dismissing international appeals to principle, and targeting minorities. Written in an elegant prose that tends toward the poetic, *Faking Liberties* will no doubt appeal to a wide audience but many of its conclusions concerning religious freedom are more ideologically driven than they are factually correct. The book's epilogue is a stirring personal account devoted to *Songs of Freedom* but much of the content of *Faking Liberties* reads more like an ode to power.

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JAPANESE ASSOCIATION FOR RELIGIOUS
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RELIGIOUS STUDIES AWARD

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Isurāmu no adamu: Ningen o meguru Isurāmu shinpishugi no genryū イスラームのアダム—人間をめぐるイスラーム神秘主義の源流 [Adam in Islam: An Anthropological Approach to Sufi Thought]. Keio University Press, 2020.



Synopsis by the Author

THIS BOOK IS concerned with the ways in which Sufis have interpreted Adam through referring to the Qur'an, Hadith, and historiographies, and have produced mystical thought on human existence through their understanding of Adam. As well as in Judaism and Christianity, Adam has played a pivotal role in Islam: he is a key figure for considering humanness since Adam, the first human creature, demonstrates the essential characteristics of human beings. In order to seek the way to attain an ideal condition for human beings, Sufis weave their mystical thought mainly based on the description of Adam in the Qur'an and Hadith.

In his introduction, Sawai traces the formation of the concept of Islamic mysticism that has also been called Sufism. Western scholars gradually shifted their perspective on Sufis and at last regarded them as mystics in Islam. While Sufis historically seek a perfect level of human existence, the concept of mysticism coined by scholars aims to investigate human nature. In other words, scholars of religion came to form the concept of Islamic mysticism by dealing with Sufis as mystics and emphasizing their religious experience, as William James considers in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

The first part of the book deals with the role of Adam in the Sufi interpretation of the verse called the “primordial covenant” (*al-mīthāq*). In mythical time, God drew all other human beings from Adam and made them swear that God is their lord. Sufi theologian Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī argues for a cyclical model of life and death based on this “primordial covenant.” Aiming for unification with God, Sufis ground their anthropological thought on the story of Adam. Sawai deals with Adam in the context of the primordial covenant, life and death, the perfect man, and gender issues. The first part of Sawai’s book mainly focuses on Sufis’ interpretation of the Qur’an. Because Adam is directly created by God, Sufis regard him as the nearest existence to God.

The latter part of the book picks up the oneness of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) of Ibn ‘Arabī, one of the most prominent Sufis in the medieval era, and the thought of scholars in Ibn ‘Arabī’s school. Deriving self-disclosure of the Real from Neo-Platonic emanation theory, Ibn ‘Arabī elucidates the ontological relationship between God and human beings. Moreover, he thinks that Adam is the first perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) since God creates him with the divine presence that is expressed by the divine name. Adam as the perfect man is the ideal to which Sufis should attain. Referring to Adam and Eve, moreover, Ibn ‘Arabī stresses that man is equal to woman since both man and woman stand at the same place as wayfarers attaining to God. Muslim thinkers continuously interpret Adam as an existence evoking new understandings of human beings in Islam.

Statement from the Awards Committee

Sawai Makoto’s book is an ambitious work that explores and elucidates the philosophical anthropology of Islamic mysticism by bridging the split between the study of religion and Islamic studies. Its academic contributions can be summarized in three points.

First, Sawai critically examines the concepts of “religion,” “mysticism,” and “Islamic mysticism” by carefully reviewing previous works on them. His aspiration to connect the study of religion with that of Islamic thought should be highly appreciated.

Second, the book has a wide impact upon scholars of religion regarding the subject of philosophical anthropology. It attempts to construct the anthropology of

mysticism by presenting the analytic notion of the “Adamic myth” and approaching the fundamental question of what a human being is. This research method reflects Sawai’s academic attitude as a scholar of religion not confined to Islamic thought.

Third, the book is based upon the rigorous philological scrutiny of complex Arabic primary sources. For example, Sawai argues that the interpretation of the term *tajalli* (the self-disclosure of God) differs between early Sufis and the School of Ibn ‘Arabī. Such a finding is only possible through a scrupulous reading of Arabic texts.

