

HOSHINO Seiji

Editor's Foreword

WE ARE proud to present the fifth volume of *Religious Studies in Japan (RSJ)*. *RSJ* was established in 2012 as the English-language journal of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies (JARS). We have finally reached our fifth outing with this issue, and over time there have been slight changes in the character of the periodical. Accordingly, I want to take this occasion to explain a little bit about what that character is at present as well as our basic orientation.

First, the journal was founded to serve as a medium through which the members of JARS could present the fruits of their research in English. For that reason, from the very start it has accepted article submissions from the membership. The articles that appear in the journal have been peer reviewed and deemed to be of sufficient value to be published. Unfortunately, not many articles that go through this process reach publication, but in any case, I still wish to reemphasize that this journal is positioned to serve as a venue through which JARS members can put their research findings before the public eye. We expect to receive more submissions than ever from the membership.

Next, since volume 3, we have been conducting an ongoing trial to select articles from recent issues of JARS' Japanese-language journal *Shūkyō kenkyū* (Journal of Religious Studies) and translate them into English for publication in this journal. Today, these translated articles occupy an important place in *RSJ*.

There are various reasons why certain articles are selected for translation, but one reason I would like you to keep in mind is our desire to help junior

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scholars present their findings. For that reason, many of the articles that have been selected for this process have been written by comparatively junior scholars who up to now have not presented much of their work in English.

Another of our fundamental aims is to give our readers a sense of the current state of religious studies in Japan. In light of this, most of the articles that we present take up the study of religion in Japan. However, this is not to say that we are focused exclusively on religion only in Japan; recognizing the importance of this opportunity to present research in English translation, we also make a point of including articles that take up religion in other countries and regions.

For those scholars whose research focuses on Japanese religion, reading the articles in the original Japanese rather than the translations we present here would likely not be an issue. However, we believe that publishing these articles in English translation may make it possible for them to be used in undergraduate and graduate programs where students are not necessarily expected to have Japanese skills. We also hope that these articles may be read by religious studies scholars who, while not necessarily specializing in Japanese religion, will nonetheless find the arguments and a sense of the issues at hand congruent with their own interests, and thus facilitate a broader discussion.

We will maintain these basic orientations for *RSJ* in the future, and at the same time we encourage our readers to contact us if they have opinions or requests they wish to share on the direction we are taking. Working in partnership with our readers, we will continue to make every effort to create an even better journal in the years to come.

Hoshino Seiji
Editor in chief, *Religious Studies in Japan*
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