Special Issue: *Shinbutsu Shūgō* and Modernity

Editorial Objective

The policy of "separating kami and buddhas" (*shinbutsu bunri*) put into force by the Meiji government is one of the major "events" in the religious history of Japan. This "separation of kami and buddhas" has thus been the focus of much important research in religious and historical studies since the end of World War II. Strangely enough, however, even though this "separation" has received much attention, the prior situation and basic questions such as what, exactly, was involved in the "amalgamation of kami and buddhas" (or "Shinto-Buddhist syncretism"; *shinbutsu shūgō*), what was the role of this syncretism in the history of Japanese culture, and why did the people and the government reject this syncretistic tendency in the attempt to modernize in the late 19th century, have been left unexamined. In this special issue we take up the phenomena of "amalgamation" rather than "separation" of kami and buddhas in Japan, and focus on rethinking the conception and history of religion in light of "modernity" in Japan since the time of the Meiji period.

We would like to emphasize four points in order to place the topic of the "amalgamation of kami and buddhas" into perspective, and make it the focus of discussion. The first point concerns the position of this amalgamation in the religious culture of Japan. Kuroda Toshio, for example, does not perceive this amalgamation as simply a syncretism of "Shinto" and "Buddhism," but as a Japanese development of Mahāyāna Buddhism (or "exoteric Buddhism"; *kenmitsu bukkyō*). A simple explanation in terms of syncretism does not adequately explain this amalgamation but, to be honest, there are few alternatives. The second point involves the historical problems associated with the development of this amalgamation as a positive way of thinking. It is tempting to view the "separation of kami and buddhas" as a new policy promulgated by the Meiji government, but in fact there were already aspects of this "separation" in the Edo period. The rejection of this amalgamation was thus a political phenomenon with a long history, and it is possible to see the policy of the Meiji government as the final step in this process. In this sense, it is necessary to relativize the "amalgamation" and "separation" of kami and buddhas beyond its political context. The third point is to identify the main subject of the

"amalgamation of kami and buddhas." The discussion of the "separation" has so far tended to focus on the "amalgamation of kami and buddhas" as the religious situation of the common people which was forcibly reformed by the state. The theory of "amalgamation of kami and buddhas," however, was not just a way of thinking among the common people, but was a Buddhist theory. The theoretical basis for "separating the kami and buddhas," that is "National Learning" (*kokugaku*), was a way of thinking that developed not among the elite class, but among the "middle class" (upper-class farmers and lower-class bushi). It is thus important to avoid the simplistic identification of this "amalgamation" with the way of thinking of the "common people" (*minshū shisō*).

The fourth point concerns the question why the Meiji government (or, the modern Japanese state) had to reject this "amalgamation of kami and buddhas." Often this "separation" has been discussed as a symbolic ideology of the modern Japanese state, and associated with the establishment of the modern emperor (Tennō) system. As we pointed out above, however, movements to separate the kami and buddhas are found already in the Edo period, and the tendency to have an aversion to this amalgamation is a modern way of thinking popular among the intellectual elite. But why did these intellectuals want so much to distance themselves from the tendency of amalgamation? By pursuing this question we can go beyond the limited boundaries of perceiving the historical phenomena of the "amalgamation/separation" of kami and buddhas as merely a part of the modern Emperor system, and can relativize the historical phenomena of "amalgamation" from the perspective of the modernity of Japan.

By focusing on these four points, it is possible to rethink the concept of "modernity" in the religious culture and history of Japan. More than 130 years have passed since the establishment of the modern system in Japan. Among people in general, however, aspirations toward the phenomena of the "amalgamation of kami and buddhas" remains unabated. These phenomena can still be easily observed in everyday culture. The way of thinking that was to be rejected by modernity by "separating the kami and buddhas" is still alive and well. The aspirations for and involvement in "amalgamation" continue, despite its rejection at the state level. Unless this issue is faced and discussed, the study of religion in Japan will remain alienated from the daily life of the people, and end up irrelevant and without a basis in reality.

Historical Background of the Formation of the Kami-Buddhist Amalgamation Paradigm

SATŌ Hiroo

What happened when Buddhism arrived in Japan, and met the Japanese kami (deities in Japan)? How did the two relate to each other, and what changes occurred in religious thought and practice? These problems have been addressed by many scholars, not only from a purely historical perspective, but also as a starting point for reflection on the adaptation of foreign cultural elements in Japan.

However, the premise of a bipolar divine realm, containing only kami and Buddhist divinities, and the exclusive focus on the different kinds of rapprochement and conflict between the two, has placed severe methodological restrictions on the study of the subject. As a result, many questions have remained unasked.

First of all, while the conventional method has been useful in exploring the diachronical development of amalgamation, it has clear limitations when we take a synchronical perspective. Even more fundamentally, one has to raise the question to what extent the assumed dichotomy of kami versus Buddhist divinities was in any way important, or even recognized in pre-modem Japan.

We must not lose sight of the fact that there was a large divine realm that was not so easily categorized. It is hardly possible to understand the world-view and mentality of the medieval Japanese as long as we fail to take this basic fact into account. With a methodology that posits a simple distinction between kami and buddhas, one can never hope to make sense of the medieval divine realm. To supplement the findings arrived at with more traditional methods, in this paper I have attempted to open up another perspective.

Shinbutsu Shūgō and Polythetic Class

SHIRAKAWA Takuma

The policy of separating Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) that was forced at the beginning of Meiji period has drastically changed the Japanese religious environment. The former state could be described as *shinbutsu shūgō* (Shinto-Buddhist syncretism), but this description contains considerable difficulty. The reason may lie in a difference of recognition concerning both terms. The former (*Separation*) is based upon modern and "scientific" recognition (monothetic classification), but the latter (*Syncretization*) may be based on a different recognition. The anthropologist Rodney Needham proposed the term "polythetic classification." Could we understand *shinbutsu shūgō* (Syncretization) as polythetic classes? We examine the historical categories of *ji-sha* (temple-shrine complex) and *ken-mitsu* (exoteric and esoteric complex) which the historian Kuroda Toshio proposed, as polythetic classes. Finally we point out that both categories consist of polythetic classes, and are still influencial among various religious folk practices.

La filiation de la fusion shintô-bouddhique

Anne BOUCHY

L'existence actuelle de cultes bien vivants dans lesquels fusionnent croyances et pratiques shintô-bouddhiques pose de nombreuses questions à l'ethnologue. Cet article prend quelques-unes d'entre elles pour point de départ : Quelle est la nécessité de telles configurations dans l'univers religieux contemporain? Quelles dynamiques de continuité ont donc traversé la rupture faite par l'autoritaire « séparation » qui, à Meiji, visait à dissocier non seulement les éléments religieux décrétés « autochtones » et « étrangers », mais aussi les faits de croyance et les rites? Les données de terrain, notamment celles qui concernent le shugendô et les spécialistes des oracles, permettent de mettre en lumière les stratégies d'évitement, d'occultation et de négociation qui ont sous-tendu certains axes de continuité. Par ailleurs, les cultes composites, dans lesquels les entités shintô-bouddhiques s'entremêlent et sont globalement conçues comme des *kami*, se laissent appréhender comme des dispositifs de mémoire, essentiels pour l'insertion des individus et des groupes dans la société. Cette approche menée dans le cadre particulier de la société japonaise voudrait contribuer à la réflexion plus générale sur une question d'une actualité brûlante en ce XXIe siècle commençant : celle des tensions entre, d'un côté, les mouvements et les politiques religieuses autoritaires, et, de l'autre, les réactions et les moyens déployés par les populations locales et les individus pour entretenir la conscience de leur identité.

The Possibilities of *Shinbutsu Shūgō*

Buddhist Studies and the Modern Era

SHIMODA Masahiro

The movement to "separate buddhas and kami" (*shinbutsu bunri*), which is the counter side to the "amalgamation of buddhas and kami" (*shinbutsu shūgō*), is a reflection of the whole of Japanese history and the construction of a State with centralized power from the early modern to the modern era in Japan. The Meiji Restoration and its surrounding ethos, which provided the basis for the persecution and transformation of Buddhism, led to a transformation in the structure of power and the systemization of various fields of knowledge. The way of thinking of the economic systems, the development of National Learning, and the compilation of a history of a single country, came together to form the ideal of the Meiji state, which attempted to "demythologize" Buddhism while at the same time bringing to completion a new mythology created by the government. When we gaze at the future while analyzing this structure as a whole, it becomes necessary to construct a new Buddhist Studies with a hermeneutics that is based on the world of daily life.

The Mythological World and Bodhisattvas

Clues in Motoori Norinaga's Statements about "Magokoro" (真心)

KANNO Kakumyō

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the path traversed by Buddhism, and what form it has taken root in Japan's mythological world.

Most of the past studies about the phenomenon of *shinbutsu shūgō* (combination of kami cults and Buddhism) have laid emphasis on the doctrine or the system, and few have researched the matters concerned with the minds of its believers. This paper will study what this combination of kami and buddha has meant at the deepest level of the human spirit, namely, the relation of consciousness and existence.

The ideal persons introduced in Japanese myths are people who are associated with kami. Their common characteristics are intense emotions (corresponding to the ability to write waka poems) and a strong hold on life (=a fear of death). Motoori Norinaga described these characteristics with the concept of "magokoro."

Buddhism appeared to Japanese as contributing ideas that could reinterpret the internal aspects of mythological persons with its new wisdom, make the understanding deeper, and complement other aspects. These perceptions toward Buddhism seem to have helped to establish it in Japan as a religion indispensable to the sprits of kami-worship.

The Acceptance of Buddhism and the Formation of *Jingi* Worship in Ancient Japan

The Origin of Japanese Syncretism

MITSUHASHI Tadashi

Shintoism has been mixed with Buddhism, and on the other hand quarantined from Buddhism. This coexistance of mixture and isolation is the most striking characteristic phenomenon of Japanese syncretism. This situation was established along with the process to form *jingi* worship by the ancient Japanese government. When Buddhism was first brought into Japan, it was accepted as representing foreign gods, which were worshiped the same way as the Japanese gods in the Tumulus period; that is, entrusting the worship of certain gods to a particular lineage, and by building poles. *Jingi* worship was formed after Tomb-rituals had been discontinued, and at that time the government had already accepted Buddhism. Therefore Shintoism originally was in a position superior to that of Buddhism, and not mixed with it completely.

Crucial Factors of the Separation of Shinto and Buddhism

SATŌ Masato

The conception of the separation of Shinto and Buddhism is recognized as early as in *Nihon shoki*. The scandal of Usa Hachimangū Takusen by Dōkyō (which occurred in the era of Shōtoku Tennō, when the idea of the harmony of Shinto with Buddhism had reached its peak), caused a crisis of royal authority, which in turn prompted the separation of the two. As the result the separation was institutionalized in the Chōtei Saishi, and especially in the Tennō Saishi, which are rituals included in the *Jōgan-shiki* of the 9th century. After the middle of the Heian Period, this separation spread widely to regions other than just religious ceremonies, although the harmony of Shinto and Buddhism had also developed vigorously.

The belief that the genealogy verifies that the Tennō blood descends from Amaterasu Ōmikami forms the religious ground for the "raison d'etre" of Tennō and the nobles, and this concept is embodied in the rites of the Tennō Saishi. Thus, if the matters and affairs connected with Buddhism were allowed to be part of the Saishi, it means that the view of monarch sovereignty in terms of Buddhism is accepted officially. This is exactly where the crucial factor of the separation of Shinto and Buddhism lies. It is considered that the institutionalization of the separation in the 9th century was influenced strongly by the awareness that Buddhism had deeply infiltrated into the Court, and by the idea that Japan is the "land of the gods," which had been enhanced by the sense of crisis related to foreign threats.

The separation of Shinto and Buddhism was not confined only to Tennō Saishi, however. It had penetrated deeply into the society of the nobles, and furthermore, it had taken its root as a norm in the society of the common class people. This became the basis on which the Shinto of today is formalized.

Changes in the Theory of Syncretic Faith in Japan

From the Middle Ages to Early Modern Times

ITŌ Satoshi

This article traces changes in the theory of syncretic faith (*shinbutsu shūgō*) in medieval Japan. The idea of gods have evolved with the penetration of the theory of "original substances and manifest traces" (*honji suijaku*) through the Middle Ages, but the biggest change was that it came to be thought that gods were in our hearts. It was thought that *honji suijaku* meant that Buddha appeared as inner gods, for example our essential evilness was considered to appear symbolically as the body of a snake. This indicates that Medieval Shinto was a positive faith offering relief from sin. However, the idea of inner evil gradually recedes in the latter period of the Middle Ages, and this leads to the foundation of early modern Shinto.

Self-Portraits of Modern Buddhism

MORI Kazuya

The apologetics of Buddhism brought about against anti-Buddhism is usually given only a negative evaluation, but as a "self-portrait" of Buddhism it can be given positive significance as a sort of Buddhist apologetics. A common feature of Buddhism in Japan in early modern and modern times was relations with the Emperor. Relations with the Emperor and Buddhism are explained by the history of Buddhism faith held by the successive Emperors themselves, and it is explained by a country and ties with Buddhism that the Emperor governs. Buddhism in modern times served the Emperor, and the Meiji government used this for the unification of the nation. Buddhism, Shinto, and Christianity did not mutually fuse in the modern period, and each was tied to the Emperor individually. Thus was built the religious system of modern times in Japan.

A Look Back at Buddhist Priests Tending Shrines in the Edo Period

Case Study of the Old Kanazawa Area

YOSHITANI Hiroya

This paper reflects on the way that Edo-era Shinto shrines and the Buddhist priests tending these shrines were depicted in the discourse of one native historiographer, written after the Shinto-Buddhist separation. The conventional view of the Shinto shrines located in the old Kanazawa area, which were used in our case study, suggests that few Shinto priests actually served their shrines, and that Buddhist priests and *shugen* (mountain ascetics) tended many shrines until the end of the Tokugawa regime, when, following the Meiji restoration, they became formal Shinto priests. This paper follows the discourse of the native historiographer Morita Heiji (1823-1908), who lived and wrote from the late Tokugawa period until the Meiji period.

The following two points were obtained from the case study. Firstly, Morita's discourse reveals that the anti-Buddhist sentiment among society at the time was not central to the Shinto-Buddhist separation. Secondly, while it was difficult to distinguish pure Shinto shrines from Buddhist temples in the Edo era, the more than 20 facilities used in this case study are commonly considered to have been Shinto shrines, because Morita regarded the Buddhist priests and *shugen* who had tended these facilities as Buddhist servants of Shinto shrines.