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[002]Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University

https://hdl.handle.net/2324/1806125

出版情報：Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University. 2, 2017-03. Kyushu University, School of Letters, Graduate School of Humanities, Faculty of Humanities
バージョン：
権利関係：

KYUSHU UNIVERSITY

Editorial Foreword

CYNTHEA J. BOGEL

Welcome to Volume 2 of *JAH-Q*. In addition to nine essays on visual culture and religious studies subjects, this volume launches two new sections that we hope to include in every issue. The *Review* section will offer book, film, exhibition, conference, and event reviews. *Kyushu and Asia* will feature a short piece or research essay on some aspect of Kyushu in the context of Asian humanities. In this issue Bryan Lowe reviews Heather Blair's original study of Mt. Kinpusen, a nuanced exploration of real and imagined space(s) on a natural monument of sacred activity; for *Kyushu and Asia* we feature a thought-provoking piece by Takeshi Shizunaga detailing Sun Yat-sen's visit to Kyushu University in 1913.

The first three essays present contemporary art and its reception by multiple publics. In the first two, Pawel Pachciarek and Elizabeth Tinsley offer considerations of celebrated Japanese contemporary artists Kusama Yayoi and Matsui Fuyuko, respectively. Sexuality, Buddhism and philosophy, self-obliteration, and the artist's self-representation are shared themes. Pachciarek scrutinizes a long history of responses to eighty-eight-year-old Kusama's artistic output, focusing on her time in New York during the 1950s and '60s. He probes connections between "her distinct meditative approach to painting" (Pachciarek) and performances that "obliterate nature and our bodies" (Kusama) to eastern and western philosophies—some of them set forth by Kusama, others suggested by the author. He contrasts with these the artist's not infrequent refutation of influence from any creed or context. Tinsley gives us a discerning study of forty-three-year-old Matsui's work, at once disturbing and beautiful, and its visual and conceptual sources. She introduces the post-WWII paintings of Itō Seiu and the aesthetics of an erotic grotesque born of modernity—and all that it entails and derails. In doing so Tinsley situates the work of Matsui both within and beyond the Buddhist decomposition works for contemplation (*kusōzu*) that are usually cited as her primary inspiration. The third essay by Anne Vincent-Goubeau on the late French émigré Chinese artist Chen Zhen also explores art, religion, and the artist's perception of worldly objects. Chen's body of work, like that of the late Montien Boonma, was deeply affected by his serious illness and by Buddhism—in Chen's case his contact with Tibet and its people. Vincent-Goubeau focuses on the artist's installations, which she sees as predicated on "the self-evidence of mundane objects."

The fourth essay takes us away from art and artistic allusion to scholarly debates about secularization

(and post secularity) in Japan and theories of secularization within and outside Japan. Ugo Dessì's critical survey of the literature highlights certain mechanisms that inform scholars' resistance to Western methodologies, the "contested, misused, and misunderstood" discourses on the secular and secularization, and the implications of new Japanese models. Placed before essays by Eva Seegers, Elisabetta Porcu, and Henny van der Veere, Dessì's serves to remind us of relationships between secular society (or differently religious societies) and Buddhism or Buddhist icons, and of emic and etic viewpoints.

Seegers' study of a four-meter-high Tibetan stupa in Germany considers the migration and globalization of Buddhism on one hand and the cultural appropriation of Asian and Buddhist symbolism on the other. Crafted in Nepal and erected and consecrated in Germany by religious experts in 2003, it stands outside a science center within a famous rhododendron park in Bremen. Seegers traces the complex transformation of the symbolically charged sacred stupa amongst considerations of the Tibetan diaspora and the inevitable if unintended reinvention of the stupa. In her study of manga created by the Japanese new religion, Tenrikyō, Porcu's essay takes up religion and its representation on home territory, for use primarily by its members. A globalized commodity, manga, supports the naturalization of the Tenrikyō's foundress, "parent" Oyasama, within Japanese society and to her devotees. The presentation of Oyasama in the manga parallels a key Tenrikyō doctrinal text and at the same time cultivates intimacy with the foundress through familiar visual and narrative manga strategies.

Van der Veere's essay also examines religious praxis in Japan with a close reading of Shingon Esoteric Buddhist ritual training seminars. Lineage seminars often use the opening line of a critical text as key: "they introduce the topics of the commentators not only as historical precedents but also in order to distinguish the general Shingon thought from other groups." Despite the fact that the seminars vary for each ritual lineage, both Western scholarship and that of Shingon priests tend to favor points of similarity in their analyses of the seminars. For an understanding of the significance to ritual and lineage praxis and history, van der Veere favors an emic methodology over an etic one in his study of the lectures.

The final two essays feature premodern visual culture. Peter Kornicki, with T.H. Barrett, offers a study of Buddhist sutras and sutra excerpts on gilded or plain metal plates from East Asia. Just as the use of the first line from a key Shingon text in van der Veere's study is understood to hold the true meaning of the whole, the textual passages on one or more metal plates serve as the embodiment of the sutra. Like the Buddhist stupa, the metal document with its text is understood as embodying the body of the Buddha. Also like the stupa, the plates sometimes travel far from their place of creation.

Radu Leca's contribution on Toyotomi Hideyoshi's late-sixteenth-century Great Buddha Hall at Hōkōji and its lost twenty-four-meter-high icon in the former capital of Kyoto uses visual archaeology to tease out the essentializing gaze of the outsider. Featured is the extant eighteenth-century drawing of the Great Buddha by Engelbert Kaempfer of the Dutch East India Company. Positing the repeated loss and replacement of the icon and hall as a "case study on cultural memory," and a hypothetical immersive phone app named Shinraku ("new capital") as the most recent stratum of "this site of remembrance," Leca skillfully weaves together reality and fiction.

Asked to establish this peer-reviewed journal, the two-person faculty of the International Master's Program (IMAP) and International Doctorate (IDOC) in Japanese Humanities have combined efforts to produce the first two volumes. My colleague and Editorial Board member Ellen Van Goethem has helped to assure a smooth process and high standards for the journal. *JAH-Q* is truly our shared pleasure. Lindsey E. DeWitt and Lisa Kochinski provided valuable assistance. Finally, we are very grateful to The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society, University of British Columbia, for financial support toward editing and production.

Please contact us about publishing your latest research or a review in following issues. The deadline for Volume 3 (March 2018) is September 1, 2017.