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Article Contributors and Summaries

Slaying the Serpent: Comparative Mythological Perspectives on Susanoo's Dragon Fight

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In the "Slaying of the Great Eight-Headed Serpent," one of the most iconographic episodes in Japanese myth, the god Susanoo rescues a maiden from a dragon and marries her. Comparing the Japanese narrative with international dragon-slayer tales, this essay draws attention to the dragon's close connection to water and iron. It argues that myths have to be adapted to new circumstances in order to remain relevant to the group that transmits them. In the myth of Susanoo's dragon fight, as related in the ancient chronicles *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, these repeated adaptations are still visible as various layers of meaning. The essay illuminates some of these layers and connects them to cultural techniques such as wet-rice cultivation or metallurgy. This approach makes it possible to trace the evolution of the myth, which found its culmination in the written versions of the early eighth century.

Chinese Poetry in Hiragana: *Kana-shi* in Thought and Practice

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In the Edo period there was a type of poetry called *kana-shi*. In terms of form and style it was modeled on Chinese poetry (*kanshi*) yet written with a mixture of hiragana and kanji. It can be thought of as a literary form that occupied the space in between *haikai* and Chinese poetry. *Kana-shi* was frequently composed in the early eighteenth century by Morikawa Kyoriku, Kagami Shikō, and other disciples and associates of Matsuo Bashō, and it took shape amid rising nationalist sentiment and an accompanying decline in the status of Chinese poetry and prose. Influenced by the mood of this intellectual environment, *kana-shi* seems to have emerged as an ambitious literary form that, while modeled on Chinese poetry, sought to reconstruct it as Japanese. This essay considers these

and related issues through analyses of specific poems. It also introduces several related poetic styles that developed in the same time period, arguing that *kanashi* was a precursor of famous works like Yosa Buson's "Mourning the Old Sage Hokuju" as well as the new-form poetry (*shintaishi*) of the Meiji period.

Yamato-e: Illuminating a Concept through Historiographical Analysis

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Yamato-e is a familiar but confounding concept in Japanese art history. Meaning simply "Japanese pictures," the term is widely understood as much more. Scholars use it to refer to an alleged genre that includes pictorial artworks featuring Japanese subject matter and a distinct style most often characterized as soft, colorful, and independent from outside influences (especially Chinese). This paper analyzes the twentieth-century historiography of *yamato-e* in terms of semantics, parameters, and narrative histories as established by various Japanese scholars, explains why our current definition of *yamato-e* is problematic, and examines how the concept of *yamato-e* reveals more about scholarly concerns of the early twentieth century than a specific painting style or type.

Dharma Devices, Non-Hermeneutical Libraries, and Robot-Monks: Prayer Machines in Japanese Buddhism

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This article explores the little-known subject of the presence, in the Japanese Buddhist tradition, of machines (understood here as special tools, instruments, and various mechanical devices) used for the production and proliferation of prayers and prayer-related activities. Following a description of representative examples from various historical periods and ritual contexts (the *shakuhachi* flute as performed by adepts of the Fuke Zen sect, prayer wheels and rotating sutra repositories, Tokugawa period automata, and, more recently, robot-monks and virtual [online] ritual services), the article discusses the status of those devices within the Buddhist cultural system and the conceptual challenge that they pose to issues of individual agency, religious practice, and, ultimately, soteriology.

Futanari, Between and Beyond: From Male Shamans to Hermaphrodites in *The Illustrated Scroll of Illnesses*

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In ancient and medieval Japan, female shamans had the task of divining messages from the gods. Yet there were also male shamans (*otoko miko*) who donned female clothing. The "Futanari" section of *Yamai no sōshi* (The Illustrated Scroll of Illnesses) depicts one such figure: an intersex (*futanari*) soothsayer. The scroll is thought to have been completed in the late twelfth century, around the zenith of Emperor Goshirakawa's cultural influence. It was Goshirakawa who compiled the collection of *imayō* (popular songs) entitled *Ryōjin hishō* (Songs to Make the Dust Dance on the Beams), which includes songs that ridicule male shamans for belonging to the marginal cultures of the eastern hinterlands and the emerging warrior class. This same mocking gaze is cast upon the intersex soothsayer by the figures in the scene and potentially by the contemporaneous reader/viewer for "Futanari." By focusing on representations of male shamans, as well as Buddhist teachings that informed the treatment of intersex figures, this essay explores the basis of the multiple meanings of "Futanari" and *futanari*.

Illuminating the Sacred Presence of Hasedera's Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara

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The Buddhist mountain-temple of Hasedera (Nara Prefecture) is famous for its miraculous icon, Hase Kannon, a monumental image of Jūichimen Kannon (Sk. Ekādaśamukha, the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara). This essay focuses on the origins of the Hase Kannon statue as narrated in *Hasedera engi emaki* (Illustrated Scrolls of the Accounts of Hasedera) and argues that the creators of the text carefully constructed the sacred aura of the image by highlighting the extraordinary qualities of the material used to make the icon and its stone pedestal. To enhance the sacred nature of the image, the writer(s) used the idea that non-sentient beings could reach enlightenment, and created a story in which the log seems to follow the various steps required before its transformation into a Kannon image. Moreover, the stone pedestal where the icon stands was believed to be connected to real and imaginary Buddhist sacred sites.

Underground Buddhism: The Subterranean Landscape of the Ise Shrines

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This article analyzes the history of Buddhist practice by priests of the Ise Shrines, traditionally presented as the paradigmatic site of an indigenous religion untouched by Buddhism. It challenges modern claims of an exclusive tradition with archeological evidence for the Buddhist aspirations of Ise's sacerdotal lineages and the material record of the objects and individuals responsible for the construction of Ise as a Buddhist site. By focusing on the material objects and ritual acts created by collaborative networks of institutional groups that have been conventionally assumed to be rivals, the article argues that the ritual practices and material culture produced by and for the priestly lineages of the Ise Shrines established a sustaining relationship between the gods and the buddhas and lay the necessary substructure for later Buddhist developments at the Ise Shrines.

REVIEW

Tansen Sen. *India, China, and the World: A Connected History*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

BOOK REVIEW BY JAMES ROBSON

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KYUSHU AND ASIA

Report on the 2017 Inscription of "Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region" as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

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This report sketches the World Heritage story of Okinoshima, a remote island off the coast of northern Kyushu, and Munakata Grand Shrine (a triad of shrines that include a site on Okinoshima). The discovery of eighty thousand artifacts (collectively designated a "National Treasure" today) found on the island in twentieth-century archaeological excavations and a reference in the eighth-century chronicles *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* have catapulted the island to global fame, inspiring grand narratives about Japan's origins and premodern polity. Okinoshima and Munakata Grand Shrine have also drawn critical attention in the context of the World Heritage bid, first over the shrine's policy of banning women from the island, and second over the Japanese government's nationalistic presentation of Okinoshima that diminishes the transregional significance of the island's identity and material culture.