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Kindai Bukkyō kyōdan to goeika 近代仏教教団とご詠歌 (Modern Buddhist institutions and *Goeika*).

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For some time now, scholars active in the Japanese-language academic community have been proclaiming that research on modern Buddhism is thriving (Klautau 2014; Ōmi 2014: 3-4). The considerable number of edited volumes, conferences, and government-funded research projects on the topic that have appeared in recent years speak to the veracity of this claim. However, beneath the surface, one can detect a growing sense of unease that this momentum has begun to slow: new young researchers – who appeared on the scene like “shooting stars” (Hayashi 2014: 19) in the past – have not grabbed the reins to lead research on modern Buddhism to new heights, leading some to wonder whether the past decade will go down in the annals of history as the heyday of the field.

One of the central reasons for the field’s flourishing has been what could be described as a “methodological self-awareness and willingness to critically scrutinize previous scholarship” (Auerback 2014: 23). The feeling of possibility and broader vantage points that arise from a meta-approach that historicizes previously-taken-for-granted understandings has attracted to the modern Buddhism party senior scholars from fields spanning from ancient Japanese Buddhist history to text-based research on Indian Buddhism. Yet, as Ōmi Toshihiro notes, this approach has not necessarily entailed an expansion of research topics (2014: 8). Put negatively, the field is spinning its wheels in traditional modern Buddhism themes, and scholarship that moves beyond the intellectual Buddhist endeavors of cosmopolitan elites is sorely needed if the field is to reach a new level that ensures its strength and continuity.

This brings us to the book at hand, Shinbori Kanno’s *Kindai Bukkyō kyōdan to goeika*. Covering a religious musical practice that is located at the intersection of Buddhist institutions, elites, and various levels of the laity, it offers an interdisciplinary path forward for scholars in the field of modern Buddhism. Below, I will provide a summary of its content, focusing on topics of interest to scholars of

religion in Japan, and then offer some brief concluding remarks.

Goeika is “a type of religious music in Japan that has Buddhism-related lyrics with melodies added that are similar to *minyō* [folk songs] and so on. *Goeika* singers, who are primarily common lay Buddhist believers, sing them during pilgrimages such as the Shikoku Pilgrimage and Buddhist ceremonies such as funerals” (9). The objective of Shinbori’s monograph, which focuses on the Yamato, Kongō, and Mitsugon *goeika* schools, is to, “focusing on the circumstances surrounding the splitting-off from the Yamato school...of the various schools transmitted by Buddhist religious institutions and their subsequent formation, make clear the process through which the religious music *goeika* was passed down as part of religious institutions’ proselytization activities as well as the transformations in the form of transmission in this process” (10). To do so, the author draws from her own participant-observation fieldwork in the three aforementioned *goeika* schools, interviews with people involved in teaching and learning *goeika*, and collected texts, recordings, and so on held by these people as well as *goeika* organizations.

Chapter 1, “The Formation Process of *Goeika* Schools,” details how the Yamato, Kongō, and Mitsugon schools came into existence. The Yamato-kō (*kō* means “religious organization,” see below for details) was founded by Yamasaki Chikumatsu (1885-1926) in 1921, the Kongō-kō in 1926 by the Mt. Kōya Shingon sect institution after the Yamato school spread inside the sect, and the Mitsugon school’s Henjō-kō in 1931 by Asahi Jun’ei, the superintendent priest of the Shingon sect’s Chizan branch. After their formation, all schools created and published standard repertoires, crafted their own styles of musical notation, developed level systems that involve examinations on lyrics, melody, rhythm, and so on, and held performance competitions. Unlike the Yamato school, the Kongō and Mitsugon schools released recordings of their songs, and created books explaining their music. Of the three schools, the Kongō was and still is the strongest; in 1931 it had 160 branches and 165,616 members compared to the mere 10,000 members the Yamato school could lay claim to. The Mitsugon school, on the other hand, rapidly grew after its founding to include approximately 25,000 members by 1936; however it lost strength during the war and it only has 8,000 members today. Chapter 1 concludes by drawing from the work of Nishimura Matsunosuke on the Edo period *natori seido* to argue that the level systems were one of the primary causes of the rapid growth of the *goeika* organizations.

Chapter 2, “Buddhist Organizations and *Goeika*: The Process of Becoming Proselytizing Music,” is divided into two sections. The first discusses the relationship of Buddhist institutions and *goeika* transmission by focusing on *goeika kō* (usually defined as “organizations comprised of [religious] companions that worship gods and buddhas” [87]). While unlike the Kongō-kō and Henjō-kō, the Yamato-kō was not formed under the leadership of established Buddhist organizations, it did aim to convert people to Buddhism, and its activities were

supported by the various Buddhist sects. Shinbōri argues that such relationships were cultivated so the head of the Yamato-kō (*kōshū*) could have a dharma name and thereby be recognized as a person leading an organization that was religious in nature, and that these connections enabled it to establish itself in local communities and develop as a Buddhist organization by receiving resources and fostering connections with the headquarters of sects. The Kongō-kō, on the other hand, was created by the Mt. Kōya Shingon sect, which incorporated *goeika* into proselytizing activities. This meant its branches were located in temples across the country and therefore closely connected to the sect's headquarters, enabling it to spread rapidly. The Mitsugon school's Henjō-kō had a similar relationship with the Shingon sect Chizan branch headquarters; however, unlike the Kongō school, all instructors were Chizan priests, leading to strong control over it by branch headquarters.

The second part of Chapter 2 explores the relationship of *goeika* and proselytizing, focusing on the differences in the proselytizing activities of the Mt. Kōya Shingon sect and the Jōdo Shin sect. According to Shinbōri, during the Edo period (1600-1867), unlike the latter which had worked to establish an economic basis by acquiring parishioner households through proselytization, the former had largely ignored the populace due to its strength and stability, and therefore it was at a disadvantage after the challenges to Buddhist organizations that accompanied the Meiji Restoration in 1868. This meant that its proselytization activities often mimicked those of the Shin sect, and it did not find its own method until the advent of the *daishi-shugi* (return to Kūkai) movement in the 1920s. Shinbōri details how Mt. Kōya Shingon incorporated *goeika* into the *daishi-shugi*-influenced 1934 Kūkai *goonki* (memorial) event because they thought as a "traditional" form of music connected to Kūkai, familiar to the populace, and – unlike *shōmyō* (Buddhist chants) – easy to understand, it would be an effective way to spark people's interest in Buddhism. Their efforts were successful, with the *goonki goeika* performances receiving coverage throughout the media.

In Chapter 3, "The Reconstruction of *Goeika* by Buddhist Organizations: From Folk to Buddhist Music," Shinbōri details in three sections how Buddhist organizations constructed *goeika* as religious music. The first section discusses how, up until the 1920s, *goeika* had a negative image that stemmed from its singing by marginalized people engaging in both religious and non-religious begging on the Shikoku Pilgrimage. In response, *goeika* leaders asserted that *goeika* actually formed part of a scripturally-based practice of religious begging. Furthermore, secular music such as *minyō* and jazz was popular and frequently broadcast on the radio during this time, and the sectarian institutions associated with the Kongō and Mitsugon schools worked to differentiate *goeika* from them by asserting that it was Buddhist music sung out of faith. The second portion of the chapter presents detailed treatment of the re-organization of the level systems in the *goeika* organizations, which in the Kongō and Mitsugon schools provided opportunities for high-ranking

individuals to play a role in proselytization as well as lay people to engage in what came to be seen as religious practice. Shinbōri argues that this restructuring “was an important step to establish *goeika* as religious practice” (137). Finally, the third part of the chapter explores the invention of *goeika* tradition and the formation of the concept of *seichō* (a school’s norms for orthodox or “correct” singing) through an analysis of musical notation and music theory. The former was “improved” by drawing from *shōmyō* notation, and the latter was similarly developed while drawing from not Western music but *shōmyō* and Japanese folk music theory, partially out of a desire to present it as “traditional Japanese” music. Notation and theory provided a written basis for and thereby influenced the emergence of the concept of *seichō*, which was further shaped by exclusions and purifications aimed at making *goeika* a modern type of music equal to that found in the West. Shinbōri concludes the chapter by noting that another reason that Western musical notation was not adopted in *goeika* was that it posed difficulties for communicating some of *goeika*’s musical characteristics.

Chapter 4, “Transmitting *Seichō*: Sheet Music and Oral Transmission,” begins by posing the following questions: “How can changing sheet music and oral transmission be seen as transmitting *seichō*? How can the transmission of *seichō* and individual self-expression co-exist?” (170). To answer these questions, Shinbōri details how those transmitting *goeika* in the Mitsugon school demonstrate individuality and are aware of it in the transmission process by exploring changes in sheet music and oral transmission, as well as the relationship of these changes to *seichō*. After providing an overview of the various positions and types of people involved in transmitting – a concept in which she includes both teaching and learning – *goeika*, Shinbōri focuses on transformations in the sheet music of the *Tsuichō wasan* (Mourning Hymn), focusing on how they related to increases and decreases in the amount of information provided during oral transmission. Based on a case study of a *shihan* instructor council meeting regarding which pentatonic scale should be used for the melody in the *Tsuichō wasan*, she argues that amidst discussions over “correctness” in *goeika*, “in each *shihan*’s awareness the ‘proper’ way of singing *goeika* – in other words ‘*seichō*’ – is reconstructed,” and based on this “new ‘*seichō*’ the old sheet music and oral transmission are changed.” Shinbōri then shifts to a methodologically self-aware transcription-based analysis of variations in personal expression – specifically microtonal ornamentations – seen in recordings of *shihan* instructors’ *goeika* performances, seeking to understand how those involved in the transmission of *goeika* are aware of individual expression in musical performance. She shows how *shihan* instructors redefined *vis-à-vis seichō* the orthodoxy of types of microtonal ornamentation, thereby revising rules of individual expression, and argues that “in the *seichō* of *goeika*, it is not the case that a single performance always based on a digital interpretation emerges; for every performer or every performance diverse interpretations are born, thus individuality can also

be expressed in standard performances that sing *seichō*" (228). Chapter 4 ends with a two-part conclusion. The first uses the work of Walter Ong to argue that while *goeika* may at first glance appear to be a written culture due to its use of sheet music, it also contains strong oral component as evidenced by the emphasis on the voices of *goeika* transmitters in the creation of sheet music. The second part discusses the concept of *arigatasa* that is used to express the aesthetic value of *goeika* and evaluate individual expression – including not only voice quality and musical content but also the religious feeling – in performance.

As Shinbōri notes herself, this book is valuable in that it differs from previous research in two ways. Unlike previous scholarship on *goeika*, she focuses its musical side and form of transmission. Furthermore, her move beyond the Shin sect – a favorite recurring topic in modern Buddhism research – to include the Shingon sect and focus on “culture” is markedly different from most research in modern Buddhism. In this way, this monograph serves as an important departure from the field’s status quo, and offers a certainly fruitful path forward for the field of modern Buddhism.

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