

Nationalism and the Humanities in Modern Japan

Religious, Buddhist, Shinto, and Oriental Studies

HAYASHI MAKOTO

This chapter discusses the emergence of “humanistic studies” (*jimbun-gaku* 人文学)¹ in modern Japan. Rather than Shinto studies alone, the broader context of Shinto and nationalism in academic discourse will be addressed. As an academic discipline, Shinto studies were of a rather limited scope but the topic of Shinto was taken up also by other disciplines. Nationalism, on the other hand, did not necessarily go hand in hand with an interest in Shinto. As I will try to show, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the entire field of the humanities was effected by nationalism to some extent but in the process of differentiation into specific academic disciplines, each branch developed its own kind of nationalist discourse.

PERIODIZATION

The development of the humanities before World War II can be roughly divided into three periods. The first period was inspired by new contacts with Western learning in the wake of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, but it was not until 1877 that the humanities became part of an academic curriculum. The University of Tokyo was founded in this year—at the time the only university

1. The term *jimbungaku* is the Japanese standard translation of the Western concept of “the humanities” or the German *Geisteswissenschaften*. In the West, however, these latter terms have recently met with criticism for their implicit Euro- or logocentric implications. *Jimbungaku*, on the other hand, could be retranslated as “studies of human culture,” implying a concept less biased by Western humanism. [Translator’s note.]

in Japan—and included, among others, a faculty of literature. In the next years, several private and public colleges came into being, but most of them were only devoted to particular applied disciplines such as politics or law.² All in all, during this first period, humanistic studies in a Western sense were not fully developed.

The second period spans from the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) to World War I (1914–1918). In this period, growing numbers of the intellectual elite went abroad to study, and upon their return to Japan they introduced Western scholarship, thereby laying the foundations of humanistic studies proper. New imperial universities were founded in Kyoto (Kyoto University, 1897), Sendai (Tōhoku University, 1907) and Fukuoka (Kyushu University, 1911). In this period, scholarship in the humanities took on a new dimension and developed on a broad scale.

The third period lasts from the end of World War I to the end of World War II in 1945. In this period, the technical sciences, medicine, and economics were given primary importance by the state.³ In addition, we observe the founding of the first full-fledged private universities, some affiliated with religious institutions. Both state and private universities contributed to the establishment of large academic societies in all kinds of subjects. In addition, there was an increasing academic interest in Asian studies, since in these years, Japan began to invade and colonize other Asian countries.

It is no mere coincidence that the three periods of humanistic studies sketched above are framed by wars. Warfare not only accelerated the modernization of Japan as a whole, it also had a distinct impact on scholarship including the humanities. In the following, I would like to take a closer look at this impact during the latter two periods, leaving out the first period in which humanistic studies proper were not yet fully established.

THE SECOND PERIOD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMANISTIC STUDIES

The second period starts with Japan's first modern war (the Sino-Japanese War, 1894–1895) and is marked by Japan's first experiences as a coloniz-

2. Nakura 1984, p. 133.

3. Naka and Itō 1984, pp. 142–50.

ing power. After defeating China, Japan seized control of Taiwan in 1895. Japanese rule met with hostile resistance by the Taiwanese people, however, and the island remained unstable for almost twenty years. In 1910, Japan annexed Korea and turned it into a Japanese colony.

In 1894, the Japanese government also signed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, which was followed by similar treaties with other countries in 1896. These new treaties became effective in 1899 and led, among other things, to a change in the legal status of foreigners. Whereas foreign residences had previously been restricted to designated areas, foreigners were now allowed to travel and stay officially in the country, conduct business, and possess freehold property.⁴

Academic activities expanded significantly in this period, as reflected by the above mentioned founding of imperial universities in Kyoto, Tōhoku and Kyushu. What was the impact of these events on the field of the humanities? In the following, I will analyze this question by focusing on religious studies in general, Buddhist and Shinto studies, and, in addition, Oriental studies.

Religious Studies

The academic study of religions was first established in the second period, when Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治 (1873–1949) began to lecture on this subject at the University of Tokyo⁵ in 1898. In 1905 Anesaki became the first professor of the newly founded Chair of Religious Studies (*shūkyōgaku kōza*).⁶ Kyoto University followed suit, setting up a chair of religious studies in 1907 that was held by Matsumoto Bunzaburō 松本文三郎 (1869–1944), a scholar of Buddhist studies. In 1913 the famous philosopher Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945) took over this post for one year.⁷ A closer look at the his-

4. This was called “homeland cohabitation” (*naichi zakkyō* 内地雜居). Initially, many voices were raised against this policy because of fears that there would be a massive spread of Christianity due to the intrusion of foreigners into Japanese society.

5. The university’s initial name, Tōkyō Daigaku, was changed to Teikoku Daigaku 帝国大学 (Imperial University) in 1886. In 1897, when Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku became the second imperial university, the name changed again to Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku (Tokyo Imperial University; from 1897–1947).

6. Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku 1942, pp. 396–99.

7. Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku 1943, pp. 664–65.

torian of religion Anesaki Masaharu shows that he was of particular importance for the development of Japanese religious studies.⁸ In 1900, Anesaki went to Germany, where he studied indology under Paul Deussen. When he returned to Japan, he took on the newly established chair for religious studies at the University of Tokyo. Anesaki had written his doctoral dissertation on early Buddhism in India, but later turned his academic interests to Nichiren Buddhism, Christianity, religious art, and Prince Shōtoku (574–622), the ingenious statesman and early mentor of Japanese Buddhism. In 1913 he was invited to teach at Harvard University for two years, where he lectured on Japanese religion and morals. Although Anesaki had studied indology and Buddhism in the West and spoke a number of Western languages, he nevertheless chose Japanese religious history as his specific field of research. As evidenced by his invitation to Harvard, he was considered a representative of Japanese religious studies who could explain Japanese religion to a foreign audience.

While Japanese history, literature, or folklore studies tended to adopt a more nationalistic perspective, scholars of religion did not contribute directly to the emerging national self-esteem. The field of religious studies originated in the West and was introduced to Japan as a discipline based on Western logic and Western concepts. Those Japanese scholars who turned to the study of religion were therefore Western-oriented. They clearly differed from other scholars in the field of the humanities in that they used “religion” as a new concept derived from Western thinking.

In addition to this role in academic discourse, scholars of religious studies at the University of Tokyo also fulfilled a number of practical political tasks related to the antagonisms of Sect Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity at that time. Holding an equal distance to each of them, religious studies provided a place where proponents of these faiths could meet. In 1912, for instance, Tokonami Takejirō 床次竹二郎 (1867–1935), who was then the vice-minister of the Home Ministry, sought Anesaki’s help in establishing an ecumenical forum of representatives from Sect Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity, referred to as Sankyō Kaidō 三教会同 (Assembly of Three Religions). Tokonami created this assembly in order to mobilize religious spe-

8. A detailed biography of Anesaki has been compiled by Isomae and Fukazawa 2002, pp. 30–109. See also Isomae Jun’ichi’s chapter in this volume, pp. 34–35.

cialists for “national education” (*kokumin kyōka* 国民教化). Members of the Sankyō Kaidō were expected to serve the state as teachers and models of moral behavior strengthening national integration “in the spirit of autonomous self-government” (*chihōjichi no seishin* 地方自治の精神) and to “overcome the deleterious trends of the time by restoring the health of society” (*jidai fūchō no kenzenka* 時代風潮の健全化).⁹

Buddhist Studies

The beginnings of Buddhist studies as an academic discipline can be traced back to 1879, when the scholar and Sōtō monk Hara Tanzan 原坦山 (1819–1892) lectured on Buddhist texts at the University of Tokyo. Other similar lectures followed, although a chair of Buddhist studies had not yet been founded. In 1899, Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945), the “father of modern Buddhist studies” in Japan, became a professor of linguistics at the University of Tokyo and two years later, assumed the chair of Sanskrit studies. Takakusu received his first religious education at Futsū Kyōkō (the later Ryūkoku University) in Kyoto, studied Sanskrit under Max Müller (1823–1900) in England, and was one of the first to introduce Western research on Sanskrit and Pali to a Japanese audience. Other students of Müller were Nanjō Bun'yū 南条文雄 (1849–1927) and Kasahara Kenju 笠原研寿 (1852–1883), who both edited critical editions and bibliographies of Buddhist classics. In modern Japan, Indian and Buddhist studies were thus launched by students of Müller. Therefore, Müller’s influence could be felt stronger in Japanese Buddhist studies than in his proper field of research, religious studies. Under Anesaki, the two fields were still part of the same discipline, but in time Buddhist studies gradually became a separate subject.

Shinto Studies

The term “Shinto studies” (*shintōgaku* 神道学) is said to have been first coined in Japan in 1917. Thus, in a strict sense, Shinto studies per se did not exist in the second period. Nevertheless, research on Shinto was done under different labels. One place to carry out such research was the Institute for Imperial Classics (Kōten Kōkyūjo 皇典講究所), a college for Shinto priests founded in 1882. The same year also saw the foundation of a college

9. Yi 1992, pp. 123–27.

for Shinto priests at the imperial shrines of Ise, the Jingū Kōgakkan 神宮皇学館.¹⁰ In addition to providing training and education for priests, these schools had some academic research on their agenda. Research on Japanese history, literature, and law was pursued especially at Kokugakuin 国学院, originally a branch school of the Institute for Imperial Classics founded in 1890.¹¹

At the beginning of the second period, Shinto shrine priests started a movement to restore the Department of Shrine Deities (Jingikan 神祇官)¹², which was also a protest against the government's financial and organizational cutbacks at that time. With the exception of the imperial shrines at Ise, the government had reduced financial support for Shinto shrines to such an extent that the average Shinto priest was seriously threatened by poverty. Moreover, shrines had been put together with Buddhist temples under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Shrines and Temples (Shaji Kyoku 社寺局). The protesting priests achieved their goals to some extent in 1900, when the Bureau of Shrines and Temples was divided into two: One responsible for supervising "religious" institutions, and the other, the Bureau of Shrines (Jinja Kyoku 神社局), devoted exclusively to the administration of Shinto shrines. The establishment of this office is generally regarded as the inception of institutional "State Shinto."¹³ From then on, Shrines were officially regarded as "nonreligious" sites of national rites. The entire populace was expected to participate in this national cult, irrespective of their individual religious beliefs.¹⁴

10. Kōgakkan Daigaku 1972, pp. 21–28.

11. Kokugakuin Daigaku 1970, pp. 107–29.

12. The Department of Shrine Deities had been established as a major governmental office in the Nara period, but later went into decline. At the time of the Meiji Restoration it was reinstituted as the leading government office, but soon reduced to the level of a ministry (Jingishō 神祇省, "Ministry of Shrine Deities"). Subsequently, it was incorporated into other ministries and effectively abolished in 1872. [Translator's note.]

13. Sakamoto 1994, pp. 305–11.

14. See Kate Wildman Nakai's chapter for a detailed discussion of this process.

Oriental Studies

In 1894, the year that also witnessed the beginning of Japan's first war against China, "Oriental history" (*tōyōshi* 東洋史)¹⁵ was introduced as a new subject in middle school education following a proposal by Naka Michiyo 那珂通世 (1851–1908), a scholar of East Asian history who was also active as a teacher in secondary education. A number of textbooks on Oriental history for middle schools appeared in rapid succession. Oriental history was established as an academic subject at the University of Tokyo in 1910, with a focus on Chinese studies.¹⁶ Due to its roots in Western scholarship, Oriental studies differed greatly from the traditional "Chinese learning" (*kangaku* 漢学). The founder of Japanese Oriental studies, Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉 (1865–1942), for instance, regarded the idealized emperors of Chinese antiquity such as Yao, Shun, or Yu as fictional and rejected the idea that they were actual historical personages. This was a great shock for traditional scholars of Chinese learning, who revered these figures as saints. Compared to the latter's natural respect towards China, the Oriental scholars' iconoclastic approach resulted in the relativization of Chinese culture by Western scientific methods.¹⁷ The shift from traditional Chinese learning to Oriental studies was therefore a change from veneration to relativization. Oriental scholars who had been trained in Western scholarship and Western languages revisited Chinese history and Chinese philosophy from a Western angle. In addition, the Japanese victory over China in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 was an important turning point that led to a shift of the Sinocentric geopolitical view of Asia to a perspective that placed Japan at Asia's center. Oriental studies stood in the vanguard of this movement. The decline of Sinocentrism be-

15. The term *tōyō* 東洋 is usually translated as "Orient" and is often used in contradistinction to *seiyō* 西洋, "Occident" or "the West." However, the Western conception of the Orient places the Oriental heartlands in the Islamic countries of the "Middle East," whereas in Japanese the term *tōyō* refers to the "Far East," i.e. East Asia, or even more specifically, to Chinese culture. Ironically, the terms *tōyō* and *seiyō* are of Chinese origin and refer to the (barbarian) countries to the east and west of China. Thus, in Chinese *tōyō* would include Japan but not China. On the other hand, Japan is sometimes excluded from *tōyō* in the modern Japanese conception of the term. [Translator's note.]

16. Ogura 1974, pp. 36–38.

17. Goi 1976, pp. 102–104.

gan of course much earlier and increased notably at the time of the “Opium War,” 1840–1842.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

World War I aroused a keen interest in economics and the natural sciences in Japanese political circles. In 1918, the so-called University Law (*daigaku-rei* 大学令) changed the academic system dramatically. The imperial universities founded faculties and institutes of natural sciences and economics, and new facilities were built, above all, for the natural sciences and medicine. Private colleges were given the right to become regular universities. As a result, graduates from these private schools were granted the same status as graduates from imperial universities.¹⁸ Subjects that fell under the faculty of literature no longer had the same privileged position they had formerly held. However, although this might imply that studies related to religion were no longer considered useful, this was not the case. This period also saw the increasing attraction to Socialism and Marxism among students. The government reacted to this development with alarm. Several officials held the opinion that religious specialists could make a positive contribution to moral betterment and national education. One of these was Okada Ryōhei 岡田良平 (1864–1934), minister of education at the time of the enactment of the new University Law, who planned to establish a research institute and a second chair for religious studies at the University of Tokyo in addition to that of Anesaki. For some time, the plan even included the establishment of four more chairs for religious studies, but a change of government led to the abortion of this idea. However, two years later a chair was established in Shinto studies (1920) and six years after this, three chairs in Indian studies (1926), a development that in the end can be seen as the fulfillment of Okada’s plans.¹⁹

Religious Studies

Religious studies experienced great changes in this period, at both a scholarly level and an institutional level. With regard to scientific methodology,

18. Naka and Itō 1984, pp. 150–51.

19. Hayashi 2008a, p. 81.

we should mention the applied fieldwork carried out by students of Anesaki, including Uno Enkū 宇野円空 (1885–1949), Furuno Kiyoto 古野清人 (1899–1979), Sugiura Ken'ichi 杉浦健一 (1905–1954), and Tanase Jōji 棚瀬襄爾 (1910–1964). Another scholar who combined religious studies with ethnology was Akamatsu Chijō 赤松智城 (1886–1960), who had graduated from Kyoto University. Thus, a new generation of scholars of religion took a particular interest in ethnology and sociology. They studied the ethnological theories of James Frazer, Edward Tylor, Robert Marrett, and Wilhelm Schmidt, as well as the sociology of Emile Durkheim, introduced them to larger circles in Japan, and eventually carried out ethnological studies of their own. In other words, the founding fathers of Japanese ethnology all began their research within the area of religious studies. Given the contemporary focus in Western ethnology on questions of an “ur-religion” or the origin of religion, it was actually quite natural that Japanese scholars of religion turned to ethnology.²⁰

In contrast to Anesaki, who emphasized the emotional and irrational aspects of religion, scholars like Uno regarded religion primarily as a social phenomenon and turned their attention to collective religion rather than individual beliefs. In their fieldwork they focused on various Asian indigenous religions: Uno studied rice cults in Malaysia; Akamatsu, who held a position at Keijō University in Seoul, did fieldwork on shamanism in Korea and Manchuria; Furuno investigated aborigines from the highlands of Taiwan (Takasago-zoku 高砂族); and Sugiura and Tanase did research in Southeast Asia. The range of these ethnological studies clearly reflected the expansion of Japanese colonialism. At the same time, government officials too began to regard these studies with growing interest.

On the institutional level, chairs of religious studies were established at the imperial universities of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Tōhoku. Many colleges affiliated to Buddhist or Christian groups—colleges that had been promoted to university status under the new University Law—also founded chairs for religious studies. In 1930, scholars from the imperial universities as well as from private religious universities formed the Japanese Association for Religious Studies (Nihon Shūkyō Gakkai), which became a collective umbrella organization. Already in 1924, a Japanese Colloquium on Religion (Nihon Shūkyō Konwakai 日本宗教懇話会) had been formed in order to stage an

20. Chōn 2008, pp. 118–24.

international conference on world religions. When these attempts failed, a Japanese Conference on Religions (Nihon Shūkyō Taikai 日本宗教大会) was held in its stead in 1928, commemorating at the same time the enthronement rites for Emperor Shōwa. At this conference, several political measures were univocally approved, including the fight against Communism, the support of the League of Nations, and a reversal of the prohibition of religious education. Anesaki and many other scholars of religion put all of their efforts into the organization of this conference.²¹ While important figures from the Buddhist, Christian, and Sect Shinto communities made an appearance at the conference, scholars of religion from the universities did all the work. As in the case of the Sankyō Kaidō mentioned above, the fact that members of the three religious communities got into contact, met at certain places, and initiated common projects was due to the efforts of scholars from the University of Tokyo.

Buddhist Studies

Similar to religious studies, the imperial universities of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Tōhoku established chairs of Buddhist studies as well. In addition, Buddhist studies became a necessity for private Buddhist universities that had gained official recognition by the Ministry of Education. Until that time, the education of Buddhist clerics had consisted of the subjects “fundamental teaching” (*shūjō* 宗乗) and “additional teachings” (*yojō* 余乗), i.e., the primary doctrine of each school and the doctrines of other schools. Since this did not comply with the form of an academic discipline, the traditional curriculum was now augmented with Western-style philological research on Sanskrit and Pali texts. In other words, Japanese Buddhist studies came to be characterized by a combination of traditional studies of the (Chinese) Buddhist canon and methods of philological investigation introduced from the West.²² This resulted in huge editorial projects such as the *Nihon daizōkyō*, the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, and the *Nanden daizōkyō* producing critical editions of canonical texts.²³ Hatani Ryōtai 羽溪了諦 (1883–1974), professor for Bud-

21. Nihon Shūkyō Konwakai 1928; Hayashi 2008b, p. 168.

22. Hayashi 2002, pp. 35–43.

23. The fifty-one volumes of the *Nihon daizōkyō* were edited by Nakano Tatsue et al. from 1914–1921. The one hundred volumes of the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, generally known as the Taishō Canon, were edited by Takakusu Junjirō et al. from

dhist studies at Kyoto University, remembered this period in the following words:

It goes without saying that during the Meiji period, the scholarly circles in our country imported Occidental scholarship from all directions and imitated it in any manner they could. Only we Buddhist scholars, who were familiar with difficult Chinese Buddhist texts, were able to present new material to the learned circles in America and Europe. We did not only publish original research, we also made the Sanskrit Buddhist texts transmitted to our country known to the public, introduced Western Buddhist scholars to the Buddhism of Japan, and contributed by no small means to their benefit. We therefore represented the pride of Meiji scholarship.²⁴

While Hatani refers to the Meiji period in these recollections, the editions of the Buddhist canon were actually published from the Taishō period (1912–1926) onward. It was in this period, therefore, that the strengths of Japanese Buddhist studies made themselves truly visible. As we will see below, the confidence of Buddhist scholars like Hatani in being better than Western scholars at mastering Chinese texts was also typical for Japanese Orientalists.

Shinto Studies

The first chair for Shinto studies was established in 1920 at the University of Tokyo, and the scholars Katō Genchi 加藤玄智 (1873–1965), Miyaji Naokazu 宮地直一 (1886–1949), and Tanaka Yoshitō 田中義能 (1872–1946) were granted teaching positions. In 1933, a chair for Shinto history, sponsored by Shinto priests from Kyoto, was established at Kyoto University.²⁵ It was included in the faculty of Japanese history and employed a number of lecturers, including Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875–1962), Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953), and Harada Toshiaki 原田敏明 (1893–1983). In contrast to Jingū Kōgakkai at Ise or Kokugakuin University, which regarded the

1924–1934. The *Nanden daizōkyō* (Canon of Southern Buddhism) was edited again by Takakusu and others from 1935–1941.

24. Hatani 1971, p. 41.

25. Hayashi 2005, p. 68.

training of Shinto priests as a crucial aspect of their mission, the institutes at Tokyo University and Kyoto University emphasized academic research and strove to gain wider recognition for the significance of Shinto among the general populace. According to Isomae Jun'ichi, "Shinto studies or Shinto study groups tried to unify research on Shinto, which hitherto had been carried out independently within the fields of philosophy, Japanese history, or religious studies. In order to do so, however, they had to establish Shinto as a worthwhile object of study."²⁶ Thus, the imperial universities of Tokyo and Kyoto were expected to present a meaningful explanation of Shinto for the general public that went beyond the traditional learning and liturgical training of Shinto priests.

Oriental Studies

As public and private universities and colleges expanded in the wake of the new University Law, facilities to teach Oriental studies increased as well. In 1920, several journals on history and Chinese studies were founded. In 1924, the Oriental Library (Tōyō Bunko) was opened to the public, and in 1929 part of the war reparations from China was used for the foundation of Tōhō Bunka Gakuin, an institute for Oriental studies, which became the publisher of the *Tōhō gakuho*, a journal on Oriental studies.²⁷ The above mentioned Shiratori Kurakichi taught at the University of Tokyo while Naitō Konan 内藤湖南 (1866–1934) held the chair of Oriental studies in Kyoto. Under their guidance, scholars of Oriental studies appeared in large numbers. Thus, the development of Japanese Oriental studies proceeded in the same pace as the occupation and colonization of neighboring countries such as Taiwan (1895), Korea (1910), or Manchuria (1932). In the words of Shiratori,

It seems just and fair that research on Oriental matters should be done by Oriental people. However, Western scholars have been the pioneers in the field of Oriental studies. As in politics, this has been seen as a pillaging and violating act, which we have had to endure with bitter feelings. Presently, as Asian nations became weaker and weaker and are almost on the verge of dying, it is perhaps impossible to expect the scholars in these countries to improve their

26. Isomae 2003, p. 215.

27. Ogura 1974, pp. 40–41.

scholarship. However, in a country like ours, where in contrast to other Asian nations, progress is being made in all parts of society, [...] we should combine our efforts to make up for this fault and excel, above all, in Oriental studies.²⁸

Here, Shiratori associates Western Oriental studies with the Western invasions of Asian countries, regarding Westerners as “pillagers” and “violators.” Since other Asian countries were too weak to take on the task of developing Oriental studies, he regards it as *his* duty to better Western scholars. Oriental studies should be led by Oriental people. Since the West had taken the initiative, however, Shiratori saw only one place, where Japanese scholars had a chance to recover from their setback: “There is only one place left for us. It is Manchuria and China, the place where the war is happening, the place where the war broke out, the place that must come under the custody of Japan.”²⁹ Japanese scholars were certainly effective in collecting material and undertaking fieldwork in colonized Manchuria and Korea, activities that were, according to Shiratori, motivated by the desire to expand Japanese Oriental studies and to outrival Western scholars. Listening to Shiratori it seems as if the scientific showdown between East and West and the carnage of war were taking place in the same setting. His arguments are based on the following premises: 1) the antagonism between East and West is of primary importance; 2) since, with the exception of Japan, Asian countries are weak and in decline, Japanese scholars alone are capable of doing research on Asia; and 3) Japanese Oriental studies will eventually surpass their Western counterparts. While Shiratori’s remarks pertain to an academic field, it suffices to replace the term “Oriental studies” with “the state” in order to arrive at a justification of Japanese colonial rule and occupation under the pretext that the Japanese state, in opposition to Western powers, had to save the other Asian countries from decline. Catchphrases such as the “Great East Asian Culture Sphere” (*daitōa bunkaken* 大東亜文化圏), or “Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” (*daitōa kyōeiken* 大東亜共栄圏) served as euphemisms for Japan’s colonial aggressions. The other scholars mentioned above also used and supported these catchphrases.

28. Shiratori 1970 [1901], p. 3.

29. Shiratori 1971 [1929], p. 386.

**JAPANESE HUMANITIES AND THEORIES OF COLONIZATION:
TAKAKUSU JUNJIRŌ AND UNO ENKŪ**

In the 1930s, when Japan was already preparing for the war that culminated in World War II, several scholars mentioned above engaged in debates on Japanese superiority in Asia. The buddhologist Takakusu Junjirō, for instance, wrote a book called *The Essential Philosophy of Asian Peoples* (*Ajia minzoku no chūshin shisō*, Takakusu 1936) in defense of Japanese colonization in Asia. His ideas were by no means superficial posturing influenced simply by contemporary politics; Takakusu's support of totalitarianism was rather based on his personal scientific convictions:

When we ask what China possesses after having thrown away the treasure of Confucianism, the pride of the country, we find nothing but feces left by the West. There is no way out of the country's ruin. The same is true of India. [...] While India produced the enormous treasure of the Buddha, to whom people all around the world bow their heads, Indians are not going to escape the ruin of their country because they, in the end, abandoned this treasure.³⁰

According to Takakusu, China and India themselves were to be blamed for their decline since they had abandoned the traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism, respectively. While Oriental wisdom originated in these countries, it had been neglected and fallen into decay. The only way to study Confucianism or Buddhism was to do research in Japan. Only Japanese scholars were able to recount and convey Oriental wisdom. In other words, those in charge of representing Oriental wisdom were Oriental or Buddhist scholars like Takakusu himself. We can readily see that Takakusu's arguments take on a form quite similar to that of Shiratori. This likeness seems to have arisen from a common position shared by scholars of Buddhist, Indian, and Oriental studies.

As already mentioned, Uno Enkū, a professor of religious studies at the University of Tokyo was the teacher of numerous pioneers of ethnology in Japan. Uno, who had studied under Marcel Mauss in France, not only familiarized

30. Takakusu 1936, pp. 376–77.

his students with German, French, and British ethnology and sociology, he also conducted his own fieldwork in Malaysia. Using theories of ethnology, he insisted that Japan shared a basic agricultural culture with Southeast Asian countries distinct from China:

If we look at Japanese folk culture from an ethnological perspective, its various forms and structures seem to derive from what recent theories would call an agrarian culture sphere. With regard to religion, such agricultural culture spheres typically place great importance on the dead and on ancestor worship. Thus, our country, which called itself the “Land of Abundant Reeds and Ears of Rice” (Toyo-ashihara-mizuho no kuni) and was based on agriculture, exhibited several material and spiritual characteristics of an agrarian culture sphere, and even had a matriarchal social system. At the level of religion, several facts attest to ancestor worship having been directed at female ancestors, the *miōya*. However, due to the ensuing intense contact with Chinese culture and philosophy, many elements of ancestor worship were reinterpreted in terms of Confucian morality. Ancestor worship therefore changed and was directed to ancestors in the male line, this being typical for the continental cultural sphere of cattle breeders who emphasized patrilinearity. As has been repeated several times, however, ancestor worship in our country did not originally derive from China. There is a much older view of the ancestors with its own forms, ideals, and corresponding cults. These are not the spirits of the ancestors as Western scholars imagine them to be, and their worship was not merely derived from the fear of their spells. Rather, these ancestors were considered people living together with the present Japanese populace, working for and supporting their ethnic communities.³¹

According to Uno, the basic ethnic culture in Southeast Asia was agrarian and comprised worship towards maternal divinities and ancestors. Although elements from Indian and Chinese cultures were superimposed onto this basic culture, these are merely superficial phenomena. When such elements are sifted out, one arrives at the basic culture, and the similarities and connections between the various ethnic groups of “Asia” become apparent. This

31. Uno 1936, pp. 49–50.

theory of a basic cultural sphere reduces the influences of India and China to surface phenomena that do not penetrate to the fundamental cultural core. The significance of Indian and Chinese cultures is thus relativized, the basic culture being regarded as the older, more pervasive, and more vital element. According to Uno's theory, belief in female ancestor deities is a characteristic of the original agrarian culture sphere that can be found in Japanese Shinto and ancestor worship as well as in Southeast Asia as a whole. While the outline of Uno's concept is indebted to Wilhelm Schmidt's *Kulturkreislehre*,³² Uno asserts that the living realities of these ethnic cultures cannot be grasped by Western concepts such as "ancestor spirits," "animism," or "primitive religion."

The fact that Japan belongs to this ethnic cultural sphere of Southeast Asia leads Uno to postulate "an affinity that [we Japanese] feel at the bottoms of our hearts. [...] On the basis of this brotherliness, Japan of today has shouldered the mission to become the leader of these peoples."³³ In other words, the Japanese are predestined to become the leaders of the people in South Asia due to their brotherly feelings. In this sense, Uno too was a defender of the "Great East Asian Culture Sphere."

Thus, Uno appears to share the nationalist discourse of Orientalists, including that of buddhologists like Takakusu, but his views differ from theirs in one decisive aspect. In the eyes of the Orientalists, Japanese leadership was legitimized by the fact that Japan was the only Asian country that had not endured the experience of colonization, and that it had successfully managed to become a modern nation. As the leader of Asia, Japan would now represent Asia in its confrontation with the West. According to this view, Japan had to pass a double elimination process. First it surpassed China and India to become the leader of Asia. At the same time, Japanese scholars of Oriental studies proved to be the only ones capable of transmitting the Eastern wisdoms of Buddhism and Confucianism. In a second step, Orientalists would have to fight against the modern civilization of the West using Oriental wisdom as their weapon. The first struggle was a fight among Asian countries for supremacy and modernity; the second struggle was a fight with the West for Eastern spiritual culture. This ambivalence corresponds to the

32. Schmidt (1868–1956) postulated an *Urkultur* that split up into three basic cultural circles: agrarian planters, totemistic hunters, and nomadic kettle breeders. The agrarian circle is marked by matriarchy, similar to Uno's conceptions.

33. Uno 1942, p. 28.

duality inherent in Japan's modernization. While Japan appears as the most Westernized nation when compared to other Asian countries, it still regards itself as the representative of Asia when compared to the West.

In Uno's theory of basic cultures, on the other hand, there is no double elimination process nor is the issue about winning or losing at all. Uno emphasizes the significance of a basic culture below the surface culture, which makes it necessary for the Japanese to acknowledge their affiliation to the Southeast Asian cultural sphere. This region, which had earlier been colonized by Western powers, was now occupied by Japan. In Uno's opinion, in contrast to the Western colonizers, a basic culture linked these countries and the Japanese, which included cultural similarities as well as feelings of solidarity. For Uno, Japan could take over the leadership of Southeast Asia only under the condition that it came to accept its kinship bonds with these ethnic cultures.

Thus, although neither the Japanese Orientalists nor ethnologists questioned their country's hegemonic ambitions, their theoretical frameworks justifying these ambitions were fundamentally different. For the Orientalists, Japanese supremacy was grounded on modernization and war, whereas ethnologists emphasized the recognition of cultural affinities.

CONCLUSION: TWO FORMS OF NATIONALISM

From the time of the Sino-Japanese War to the end of World War II, Japan was an imperial state that possessed colonies. Imperial Japan had to deal with a number of ethnic groups and later, with a number of puppet states. In this period, the humanities were intimately connected to this colonial rule and developed in tandem with it. This was most obvious in the case of Oriental studies, but religious studies, Shinto studies, and Buddhist studies all seem to have been directly influenced by Japanese colonialism as well. Religious studies produced a number of ethnologists, whose fieldwork in Korea, Manchuria, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia offered firsthand reports about these countries. Shinto and Buddhist studies were originally directed to the training of clerics, but as soon as they were established as academic disciplines in the imperial universities the general populace became their intended audience and they took on the task of extolling the uniqueness of Shinto and the superiority of Japanese (Mahāyāna) Buddhism, respectively. The Shinto

studies program at Tokyo University, for instance, never educated priests, but rather attempted to provide a meaningful conception of Shinto in the context of State Shinto.³⁴ Religious studies was not only a hub for other academic disciplines, it also played a political role by providing common ground for concerted actions between Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian groups. Before the war, scholars of Shinto and religious studies were mostly interested in matters within Japan, but later they also became engaged in assimilation politics in Korea or Taiwan.

To help explain the different means that scholars from the different areas of the humanities used to fulfill their roles in the context of Japanese imperialism/colonialism, I would like to propose the terms “Orientalistic nationalism”³⁵ and “ethnologicistic nationalism.” The first term describes the ideological attitude found in Oriental studies. By “Orientalistic nationalism,” I refer to the ideological expedient of replacing the traditional sinocentric viewpoint with the perception of Japan as the center, a view that subsequently led to the notion of the “Great East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” This “Orientalistic nationalism” could also be found in Buddhist studies with respect to India. This kind of nationalism typically consisted of premises such as the following:

1. A new geopolitical consciousness of Asia with Japan replacing China as the center. In order to achieve this goal, after the Sino-Japanese War the subject Oriental studies was established in middle schools and, later, at the university level.³⁶ During this period, Western languages replaced Chinese as the language of the educated in Japan. Oriental studies introduced the notion that the role of Asia’s leading nation had shifted from China to Japan.
2. Spiritual leadership in all matters pertaining to Asia. Since the other Asian nations had been robbed of their languages, they were no longer able to explain their culture, their history, or their religion. Thus, it was

34. On this topic, see also Isomae Jun’ichi’s chapter in this volume. For the education of shrine priests, see Endo Jun’s chapter, pp. 166–67.

35. Since this term is derived from Japanese Oriental studies, i.e., Japanese sinology, it has different connotations than Edward Said’s famous concept of “Orientalism” (Said 1979). Structurally, however, both concepts hold many parallels in common.

36. Hamashita 2004, pp. 232–39.

Japan's duty to take over this discourse. The wisdom inherent in Oriental culture, history, and religion could only be conveyed by the Japanese.

3. Opposition between Western materialism and Eastern spiritualism. As the leader of Asia, Japan had to convince the West of the depth of Asian wisdom and culture.

In contrast to these premises, Uno's view can be called an "ethnologicistic nationalism." It was based on the conviction that the Japanese shared a basic culture with the ethnic peoples of Southeast Asia and were therefore tied to them by feelings of closeness and brotherliness, a relationship that could never be comprehended by Westerners. Since Southeast Asia had been colonized by the West, it was Japan's duty to expel the Western powers and rule these countries. Compared to the two-sided logic of "Orientalistic nationalism," "ethnologicistic nationalism" consisted in a rather homogeneous self-awareness. Quite similar thoughts can be found in the folklorist theories of Yanagita Kunio, who was also convinced that it was possible to rediscover the fundamental layers of ancient beliefs if the surface influence of foreign culture was removed.

Both Orientalistic and ethnologicistic nationalism originated in the relationship between Japan and its neighboring countries. The former was directed at China and the nations surrounding China, adopting the latter's traditional hegemonic pretensions by putting Japan in its place. The latter constructed an intimate relationship between Southeast Asia and Japan on the basis of their common cultural sphere. Since World War II, with Japan having lost all its colonies and being reduced to a country of only a few islands, nationalism in Japan has acquired a unilateral perspective. Prior to the war, however, a number of peoples and countries were under Japanese rule, which necessitated a theoretical framework explaining their relationship to Japan. In this respect, "Orientalistic nationalism" offered such a framework with regard to China and its neighboring countries, while "ethnologicistic nationalism" played a similar function with regard to Japan's relation to Southeast Asia. As both aspects became superfluous after the war, Oriental studies and ethnology no longer defined themselves based on nationalistic ideologies, but limited themselves strictly to academic activities. Nationalism has become a unilateral phenomenon, and Japan's perception of itself as a colonial power has fallen into oblivion.

Let me add a last word on Shrine Shinto after the war. When the system of State Shinto was officially dissolved by the so-called Shinto Directive of December 1945, Shinto faced an existential crisis. The Allied Forces, however, decided that Shinto might continue to exist if it purged itself of all nationalistic elements and became a religion for individual believers. In order to prove that Shinto had originally been a religion in this sense, the Shinto world turned to scholars of religion and folklore studies for help. Kishimoto Hideo 岸本英夫 (1903–1964), a scholar of religious studies, and the folklorist Yanagita Kunio were invited to Kokugakuin University to explain their respective views on the relation of religion and Shinto. Thus, after the war Shinto studies quickly converged with religious studies.³⁷ Scholars of religion attested to the religious nature of Shinto, and folklorists like Yanagita and Orikuchi Shinobu passionately argued that Shinto was originally derived from common folk beliefs. Orikuchi created the neologism “Shinto religion” (*shintō shūkyō*), which became a catchphrase in the folklorist discourse on Shinto. Thus, the end of World War II marked not only the abolition of State Shinto but also the change of Shrine Shinto from a “nonreligion” to a “religion.” It is important to keep in mind that scholars of religion and folklore studies appeared as skillful defenders of “Shinto as a religion” only after Japan’s defeat in World War II.

37. Hayashi 2008a, pp. 85–86.

REFERENCES

Chōn 2008

Chōn Kyōngsu 全京秀. “‘Shūkyō jinruigaku’ to ‘shūkyō minzokugaku’ no seiritsu katei—Akamatsu no rekishiteki igi ni tsuite no hikaku kentō” 「宗教人類学」と「宗教民族学」の成立過程—赤松智城の学史的意義についての比較検討. *Kikan Nihon shisōshi* 72 (2008), pp. 107–29.

Goi 1976

Goi Naohiro 五井直弘. *Kindai Nihon to tōyōgaku* 近代日本と東洋学. Tōkyō: Aoki Shoten, 1976.

Hatani 1971

Hatani Ryōtai 羽溪了諦. *Hatani Ryōtai hakushi beiju shukuga ki'nen bukkyō ronsetsu henshū* 羽溪了諦博士米寿祝賀記念仏教論説選集. Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1971.

Hamashita 2004

Hamashita Takeshi 濱下武志. “Nisshin sensō to tō-Ajia—‘sensō’ no ronri/sensōkōshō/ rekishikijutsu” 日清戦争と東アジア—「戦争」の論理・戦後交渉・歴史記述. In *Ajia no teikokukokka* アジアの帝国国家 (*Nihon no rekishi* 日本の歴史 23), ed. Okaze Hideo 小風秀雄. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.

Hayashi 2000

Hayashi Makoto 林淳. “Kindai Nihon ni okeru shūkyōgaku to bukkyōgaku—daigakuseido no mondai to shite” 近代日本における宗教学と仏教学—大学制度の問題として. *Shūkyōkenkyū* 333 (2000), pp. 29–53.

Hayashi 2005

Hayashi Makoto 林淳. “Bunkashigaku to minzokugaku” 文化史学と民俗学. In *Yanagita Kunio kenkyū ronshū* 柳田国男研究論集, vol. 4, ed. Yanagita Kunio no kai 柳田国男の会, pp. 63–73. Tokyo: Iwata Shoten, 2005.

Hayashi 2008a

Hayashi Makoto 林淳. “Shūkyōkei daigaku to shūkyōgaku” 宗教系大学と宗教学. *Kikan Nihon shisōshi* 72 (2008), pp. 71–88.

Hayashi 2008b

Hayashi Makoto 林淳. “Marx-shugi to shūkyō kigen-ron” マルクス主義と宗教起源論. In *Marx-shugi to iu keiken* マルクス主義という経験, ed. Isomae Jun'ichi and Harry Harootunian, pp. 157–91. Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2008.

Isomae and Fukazawa 2002

Isomae Jun'ichi 磯前順一 and Fukazawa Hidetaka 深澤英隆. *Kinnen Nihon no chishikijin to shūkyō—Anesaki Masaharu no kiseki* 近代日本の知識人と宗教—姉崎正治の軌跡. Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2002.

Isomae 2003

Isomae Jun'ichi 磯前順一. *Kindai Nihon no shūkyō gensetsu to sono keifu—shūkyū, kokka, shintō* 近代日本の宗教言説とその系譜—宗教・国家・神道. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002. Kokugakuin Daigaku 1970
Kokugakuin Daigaku 国学大学, ed. *Kokugakuin daigaku hachijūgō-nen shi* 国学院大学八十五年史. Tokyo: Kokugakuin Daigaku, 1970.

Kōgakkan Daigaku 1972

Kōgakkan Daigaku 皇学館大学, ed. *Sōritsu kyūjū-nen saikō jū-nen Kōgakkan daigaku shi* 創立九十年再興十年皇学館大学史. Ise: Kōgakkan Daigaku, 1972.

Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku 1943

Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku 京都帝国大学, ed. *Kyōto teikoku daigaku shi* 京都帝国大学史. Kyoto: Kyōto Teikoku Daigaku, 1943.

Nakura 1984

Nakura Eisaburō 名倉英三郎, ed. *Nihon kyōiku shi* 日本教育史. Tokyo: Yachiyo Shuppan, 1984.

Naka and Itō 1984

Naka Arata 仲新 and Itō Toshiyuki 伊藤敏行, ed. *Nihon kindai kyōiku shōshi* 日本近代教育小史. Tokyo: Fukumura Shuppan, 1984.

Nihon Shūkyō Konwakai 1928

Nihon Shūkyō Konwakai 日本宗教懇話会, ed. *Gotaiten ki'nen Nihon shūkyō taikai kiyō* 御大典記念日本宗教大会紀要. Tokyo: Nihon Shūkyō Konwakai, 1928.

Ogura 1974

Ogura Yoshihito 小倉芳彦. *Ware ryūmon ni ari—tōyō shigaku/chūgoku/watakushi* 吾レ龍門ニ在リ矣—東洋史学・中国・私. Tokyo: Ryūkei Shosha, 1974.

Said 1979

Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Sakamoto 1994

Sakamoto Koremaru 阪本是丸. *Kokka shintō keisei katei no kenkyū* 国家神道形成過程の研究. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994.

Shiratori 1970

Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉. *Ajia shiron* アジア史論, vol. 1. *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集 8. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970. (Originally published as “Jūteki ga Kan-minzoku no ue ni oyobashita eikyō” 戎狄が漢民族の上に及ぼした影響 in *Tōyō tetsugaku*, 1901.)

Shiratori 1971

Shiratori Kurakichi 白鳥庫吉. *Shiratori Kurakichi zenshū* 白鳥庫吉全集, vol. 10. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971. (Originally published as “Gotō-haku no

gakumonjō no kōseki” 後藤伯の学問上の功績 in *Warera no shireru Gotō Shinpei-haku*, ed. Tōyō Kyōkai, 1929.)

Takakusu 1936

Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎. *Ajia minzoku no chūshin shisō* アジア民族の中心思想. Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan, 1926.

Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku 1942

Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku 東京帝国大学, ed. *Tōkyō teikoku daigaku gakujutsu daikan—sōsetsu bungakubu* 東京帝国大学学術大観—総説 文学部. Tokyo: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku, 1942.

Uno 1936

Uno Enkū 宇野円空. *Kokka to shūkyōteki seikaku* 国家の宗教的性格. Tokyo: Nihon Bunka Kyōkai, 1936.

Yi 1992

Yi Wōnpōm 李元範. “Nichiro sensō-go no shūkyō seisaku to Tenri-kyō—‘sankyō kaidō’ seisaku o megutte” 日露戦争後の宗教政策と天理教—「三教会同」政策をめぐって. *Shūkyō kenkyū* 294 (1992), pp. 121–40.

