

HRHS-8450 Topics in Japanese Religions
Japanese Religious Landscape

Spring 2015, tentative syllabus

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NOTE: Assuming that there will be fewer than 4 students, this online class will be taught using voice-to-voice discussion sessions (via Skype) each week, either with the class as a whole or individually, as necessary. These lecture and discussion sessions will also be recorded (so that those who may not be able to make a certain week's session can listen to them). Students should get a Skype account, if they do not already have one, and should contact the instructor by email as soon as possible to set up an initial Skype meeting. If there are more than 4 students, we will have a combined recorded lecture/discussion plus written Moodle discussion. Please contact the instructor for further details.

Course Overview

This course explores Japanese Buddhism and *kami* worship (Shinto) through the theoretical lens of landscape. Topics will include: the influence of geography (islands, mountains, plains, oceans) on the conceptions of *kami* (gods) in early Japan; ideas about landscape and space in Japanese Buddhism; how Buddhist doctrine is “taught” through landscape art; the practical and theoretical roles of temple and shrine architecture, grounds, and gardens; pilgrimage as movement through religious space/landscape; and the continuity/discontinuity of religious practice in the modern landscape.

Student Learning Objectives

- Students will become aware of the issues involved in the category of landscape, including politics, economics and social change.
- Students will consider how categories such as “landscape,” “nature,” and even “religion” may or may not apply to Japan, and will learn about Japanese categories for defining land, geography, sacred sites, and religious traditions.
- Students will understand how pilgrimage in Japan has changed over the course of history.
- Students will understand how temples and gardens function within private and public landscapes.
- Students will be able to state the importance of the Meiji period in the complete transformation of modern Japan and its religious landscape.

Prerequisites

This class has no specific prerequisites, but it is not an introductory class. It is assumed that students have some knowledge of Japanese religion, culture, and/or language, achieved either through course work or personal experience.

Required Texts

Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912*

All other readings will be provided to students through the Moodle website.

Written Assignment

Students will write one 10–12 page paper on any topic related to the course. The topic should be chosen in consultation with the instructor. The paper will be due by the last week of class.

Grading

Class participation: 60%

Paper: 40%

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Syllabus

Part I. *Concepts and Misconceptions*

Week 1

Introductions:

Japanese Religions, Japanese Landscapes

Defining Buddhism, Shinto, and Shugendo; considering landscape, art, and nature.

Week 2

Buddhism, “Shinto,” and Shugendo

- Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods*
Introduction, 1–10.
Ch. 1 Konpira: Site of the Gods, 11–37.
- Allan Grapard, “Japan’s Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji (*shinbutsu bunri*) and a Case Study: Tōnomine,” *History of Religions* 23/3 (1984): 240–65.

Week 3

Defining Landscape and Sacred Space

- Allan Grapard, “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions,” *History of Religions* 20/3: 195–221.
- John Nelson, “Toward an Ideology of Sacred Space,” in *Enduring Identities: The Guise of Shinto in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 53–86.
- Sonoda Minoru, “Shinto and the Natural Environment,” in *Shinto in History*, 32–46.

Part II. *Landscape and Religion in Early and Medieval Japan*

Week 4

Early Conceptions of Landscape: Life and Death, *Kami* and Buddhas

- Donald Philippi, *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968): 47–90.
- Max Moermann, “Emplacements,” chapter two of *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 42–91.

See also:

Michiko Aoki, *Records of Wind and Earth: A Translation of Fudoki with Introduction and Commentaries* (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1997), especially the introduction and the *Hitachi no Kuni Fudoki* and *Harima no Kuni Fudoki*.

Week 5

Landscape, Gods, and Power

- Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods*
Ch. 2 Of Gods and Rulers
Ch. 3 Konpira, Kongōbō, and the Establishment of the Tokugawa Order

Week 6

Buddhism's Impact on Japanese Landscape: Re-defining and Inscribing Landscape

- Sem Vermeersch, “Buddhism as a Cure for the Land,” in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert Buswell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 76–85.
- Allan Grapard, “The Textualized Mountain—Enmountained Text: The *Lotus Sutra* in Kunisaki,” in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, ed. George Tanabe and Willa Jane Tanabe (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 159–189.
- Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, “The Kami-Worshipping Tradition: Kasuga,” in *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 142–162.

Part III. *Movement through Landscapes*

Week 7

Mountains and Gender

- Bernard Faure, “Crossing the Line,” in *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity and Gender* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 219–249.

- Ikumi Kaminishi, “Deciphering Mountain Worship,” in *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoji Storytelling in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 165–192.

See also:

Paul Swanson, “*Shugendō* and the Yoshino-Kumano Pilgrimage: An Example of Mountain Pilgrimage,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36/1: 55–84.

Week 8

Pilgrimage and Travel in Edo-period and Modern Japan

- Constantine Vaporis, “Travel as Recreation,” in *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994): 217–254.
- Thal, Ch. 8, The Reverence Association
- Ian Reader, “Making Landscapes: Geography, Symbol, Legend, and Traces,” in *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 39–74.

See also:

Karen Smyers, “Inari Pilgrimage: Following One’s Path on the Mountain,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 24/3–4: 427–52. Available online at the journal’s website.

Week 9

Spring Break

Please read Thal, Ch. 4 God of the Market,
and Ch. 5 Culture of the Gods

Part IV. *Art, Gardens, and Temple Spaces*

Week 10

Art and Gardens: Criticism of 20th Century Trends

- Charles Lachmann, “Art,” in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 37–55.
- Shoji Yamada, *Shots in the Dark: Japan, Zen, and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009):
Ch. 5 Are Rock Gardens Really Pretty?, 105–183. [Optional]
Ch.6 Looking at the Mirror’s Reflection, 185–242.

Week 11

Japanese Gardens: What Kind of Religious Landscape?

- Rolf Stein, *The World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990):
Ch. 1 Trees, Stones, and Landscapes in Containers, 5–48. [Optional]
Ch. 2 Survey of Themes, 49–113.
- Marc Keane, *Japanese Garden Design* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Publishing Co., 1996), 21–112.
- Online sources

Part V. *The Destruction and Remolding of Japanese Religious Landscape*

Week 12 Destruction

- Inoue Takami, “The Interaction between Buddhist and Shinto Traditions at Suwa Shrine,” in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, ed. by Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli (New York: RoutledgeCurzon: 2003): 287–312.
- Thal, Ch. 6 From Kōpira to Kōtohirā
- Optional: Thal, Ch. 7 For the State and Its Teachings

See also:

John Breen, “Ideologues, Bureaucrats and Priests: On ‘Shinto’ and ‘Buddhism’ in Early Meiji Japan,” in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000): 230–51.

Week 13 Shinto as Japanese “Non-Religious” Landscape

- Nitta Hitoshi, “Shinto as a ‘Non-religion’: The Origins and Development of an Idea,” in *Shinto in History*, 252–71.
- Thal, Ch. 9 A Shrine without Religion
Ch. 11 Public Good, Private Gain
- Optional: Thal, Ch. 10 The Crucible of War

Week 14 Re-Imaging the Gods: Inventing Religion and Disbelief

- Jason Ananda Josephson, “When Buddhism Became a ‘Religion’: Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33/1 (2006): 143–168. Available from the journal’s website.
- Thal, Ch. 12 Remobilizing the God
Ch. 13 The Many Faces of Kōtohirā

Week 15

Country God, City God—and Internet God?

- Thal, Epilogue: Konpira, Then and Now
- Ian Reader and George J. Tanabe, Jr., *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 50–60, 201–233
- Online sources

See also:

Nicola Liscutin, “Mapping the Sacred Body: Shinto versus Popular Beliefs at Mt. Iwake in Tsugaru,” in *Shinto in History*, 186–204.

Papers due by the last week of class.