

Regarding the Standing Manjusri of Chûgûji – Buddhist Precepts and the Kasuga Faith

By MASUDA, Masafumi

The Standing Manjusri of Chûgûji, Nara (on deposit at Tokyo National Museum) is a rare example of a sculpture made out of paper. The sutra texts and volumes that were originally the sculpture's basic structure were removed during Shôwa period restoration work and today are preserved separately. Based on the inscriptions in those texts, this sculpture was commissioned by Shinnyo (1211-?) and made at Chûgûji in 1269. This paper is a reexamination of those items removed from the sculpture and in reference to the state of affairs at Chûgûji at the time and the life and actions of Shinnyo, considers the sculpture's doctrinal background. The article further notes that this sculpture is of the standing Manjusri with five topknots iconography, not described in Buddhist ritual guidelines, and considers similar examples dating from the Kamakura period.

First, the article considers a sutra scroll fragment with an ink inscription stating "Chûgûji hongyô nari" 中宮寺本經也 among the materials enclosed in this sculpture. The term *hongyô*, literally main sutra, is thought to mean that the contents of this fragment were the basis for the doctrine and religious beliefs of Chûgûji at the time. This fragment has been previously introduced as part of the *Daihannyakyô* (Prajmaparamita sutra, 大般若經), but this article compares its text with other sutras and clarifies that it is actually a section of the *Bonmôkyô* (Brahmajala sutra, 梵網經). A further comparison between this fragment and a copy of the *Bonmôkyô* in the Daitôkyû Memorial Library indicates that it is highly likely that both the fragment and the Daitôkyû Memorial Library version were printed from the same woodblocks. Further, both are known to have been based on the *Bonmôkyô* connected to Shôtoku Taishi. Thus this fragment can be considered an extremely important printed scroll fragment for Chûgûji, a temple traditionally said to have been founded by Shôtoku Taishi.

Examination of the sculpture's iconography focuses

on the standing Manjusri with five topknots form. Earlier research identified this iconography form as the Honji-butsu form of a Shinto deity as used in the old capital Nara. While it is hard to believe that there was absolutely no iconographic influence on this sculpture made in Nara, we can discern this sculpture's iconographic characteristics. In this process I examined the Shinto beliefs of the sculpture's commissioner Shinnyo, and confirmed that he believed in the Kasuga deity as the protector of the Buddhist precepts and of the Five Kasuga Shrines. It seems that Shinnyo was particularly a follower of Wakamiya, and thus offer the interpretation that this sculpture was made as a Honji-butsu Buddhist equivalent image of Kasuga Wakamiya.

Regarding the Manjusri faith in the Kamakura period Nara revival of the Buddhist precepts, there has been a considerable amount of earlier research done on the Saidaiji school Buddhist precepts with their wealth of extant historical documents and related sculptural and pictorial works. However, conversely, we must also note the important presence of Tôshôdaiji. Tôshôdaiji flourished in the Nara period as the central location for the Buddhist precepts as transmitted by Ganjin (688-763). Then after a period of interruption in the Heian period, the priests of Kôfukuji planned a revival of these precepts. Because Kôfukuji and Kasuga Taisha were seen as equivalents at the time, the Tôshôdaiji Buddhist precepts also incorporated elements of the Kasuga faith. And naturally there was a close interchange of personnel and doctrine between the Saidaiji school and Tôshôdaiji. And yet, while the two temple groups were mutually connected from that period onwards, they were religious groups moving in different directions. When we consider that fact, we can see that this sculpture is an important example of Tôshôdaiji school Buddhist precepts that closely incorporated elements of the Kasuga faith.

(translated by Martha J. McClintock)

Mother-of-pearl and Royal Prerogative: Connotations in Pre-Modern and Modern Thai Decorative Arts

By TAKATA, Tomohito

Thailand experienced a period in which mother-of-pearl decorative arts flourished as they were used for offerings to Buddhist temples and as utensils in the royal household. The production dates of some of these mother-of-pearl decorative works are known, with the oldest dated examples produced around the middle of the 18th century. These early works are large in scale, namely temple doors adorned with mother-of-pearl. We can surmise that earlier works of this type existed, given the massive scale and expertise shown in known works,

but those earlier works have yet to be identified. There has previously been no detailed explanation of how these mother-of-pearl decorative arts changed from the time of their inception.

This article clarifies one part of the art historical and technical changes that occurred in Thai mother-of-pearl decorative arts, a subject that has previously been almost completely unexamined. In this process I have established a group of benchmark works whose production dates are

known, discussed the mother-of-pearl doors thought to have been made in the royal workshops, and considered a chronological ordering and division based on the details and changes seen in the motif and design style and in the expressive methods used. Further considering that these doors closely linked to the royal court may reflect on the historical context of the courtly art being produced during each respective period, I would like to clarify the historical meaning of these changes in mother-of-pearl doors.

An examination of the motifs, expressive methods and techniques used clarified that changes in Thai mother-of-pearl doors can be largely divided into three periods, and the characteristics of each period. The motifs change from imagery in the *Traibhumikatha* showing the Buddhist worldview to those based on the *Ramakien* epic tale which states the religious basis for royal authority, and finally to Western style methods of showing “symbols” and “emblems” of royal authority.

Stylistically, during the first period there was a right/left symmetrical, planar, quiet expression. The second period shows a bold introduction of painterly expression, and some energetic expression. The third period returns to a stiff composition and a revival of the symmetrical forms seen in

the first period.

Technically, thick shell, lacquer ground mother-of-pearl was used across the three periods, with designs made up of small shell fragments. During the second period several new expressive techniques were introduced, such as sprinkled tiny shell flakes, large shell fragments and fine line carving. These methods allowed the creation of painterly expression that we can surmise occurred thanks to contact with non-Thai mother-of-pearl work.

The royal family dedicated the majority of these mother-of-pearl of decorative arts, such as the mother-of-pearl temple doors discussed above, to temples, and thus we can see how these works were greatly influenced by the court's contact with foreign culture over time and the political needs of the day.

This study focused on the mother-of-pearl doors that were an aspect of court culture, as it examined the changes in those doors over time and their meaning. My hope is that this report will form the basis for future studies on Thai mother-of-pearl decorative arts and their beginnings, techniques and will also advance research on other forms of mother-of-pearl works.

(translated by Martha J. McClintock)

Changes in Korean Painting: A Process of Complications and Searching

By INABA (FUJIMURA), Mai

Contemporary Korean painting is an art form that continues on from traditional painting in Korea. Its contents, style and name have gone through a long period of complexities and discoveries. Traditional Joseon period painting was included in the East Asian Art section of the Korean Fine Art Exhibitions organized as government-sponsored exhibitions during Japan's period of colonization of Korea. It was further transformed by absorbing elements of Western painting methods and Nihonga style. After independence, there was a drive to build a national arts form. Korean painting was re-examined as part of that process of self-identity. Practitioners of ink painting sought Joseon period literati painting as their model, while painting with colors was considered to be heavily influenced by Japan and thus was shunned by the Korean domestic art world of the day. From the latter half of the 1950s onwards, the Informal style that had swept through the art world extended into the realm of ink painting. By the 1960s, young painters who had graduated from Seoul National University began to fully develop a form of abstract painting in ink. While the 1970s saw the wholesale burgeoning of Dansaekhwa, or monochrome painting, there was also a traditional painting boom, which led to a heightened interest in Korean painting, particularly ink painting. Conversely, some artists shunned traditional materials such as paper, brushes and ink and instead turned to previously unused materials, as they sought new forms of abstract expression that boldly extended into the realm of contemporary art. The 1980s marked a

major turning point in Korean painting. First, regardless of the fact that it had been heralded since the 1950s and had not been the subject of many critical opinions, the term Korean painting (韓国画) came to be publicly used in exhibitions and art textbooks. A search for new directions in ink painting emerged primarily amongst Hongik University graduates, while Park Saeng-Kwang with his nationalist themes emerged and finally revived the coloristic painting that had long been seen as too closely tied to Japan. The influence of postmodernism took hold fully from the 1990s onwards, with diversification of content and forms, and artists challenging themselves not only in painting but also through installations and mixed media works. Through these efforts they tested the connections between traditional styles and contemporary topics, further broadening the expression of Korean painting.

Korean painting has undergone various tremors, from shedding Japanese influence to the establishment of nationalistic art, and the competing forms of East Asian painting and Korean painting, traditional and contemporary, abstract and representational, and ink painting vs. painting with colors. Through all this, Korean artists continually sought an answer to the question, what is Korean painting? The answers to this half-century long debate about Korean painting must be found in the future by discerning new ways of breaking free, of reciprocity and positioning itself uniquely within East Asian art.

(translated by Martha J. McClintock)

A Wooden Sakyamuni Sculpture at Jōgon'in, Shiga Prefecture – The Central Worship Image at Jionji, a Temple Established by Sasaki Ujijori (1326-1370)

By TSUDA, Tetsuei

Jōgon'in, a massive Jōdo school temple in the Azuchi district of present-day Omihachiman city, Shiga prefecture, was established under the direction of Oda Nobunaga in 1576. Prior to building his castle at Azuchi, Nobunaga eradicated the Sasaki-Rokkaku family, the local clan lord of the area during the preceding Warring States period. This included the destruction of Jionji, the temple housing that family's ancestral burial ground. Nobunaga built Jōgon'in on the same site by forcibly moving main hall, major Buddhist sculpture and priests from other places to the site. As a result, it has been thought that all traces of Jionji originally located on the site had been completely and thoroughly demolished, so that none remained.

However, what has been unknown is the fact that a wooden Seiryōji style Standing Sakyamuni sculpture (figs. 5-9, h. 156.7 cm) has been handed down in the Hondō (main hall) of Jōgon'in, a temple with the above noted history. At first glance this work can be seen as dating back to the Warring States period. Conservation work was carried out on this sculpture over the course of two years, beginning in the spring of 2015, returning it to as close as possible to its original state.

This article provides research material on this sculpture. I first examine the sculptural style, and indicate that it was produced by an In School *bussshi* (sculptor) in the second

quarter of the 14th century. Next, the memorial praise statement read during the third anniversary memorial ceremony for Sasaki Ujijori (1326-1370) states that a Sakyamuni sculpture copying the central worship image in the Saga-Shakadō, Seiryōji, Kyoto was made and the sculpture placed as the central worship image in a temple with the title plaque "Jionji". The newly restored Sakyamuni sculpture is that sculpture. This praise statement notes that Jionji was a branch temple of Saidaiji in Nara. Several medieval period documents that remain at Saidaiji underscore this statement. An examination of these documents and Sasaki Ujijori's achievements indicate that Jionji was founded no earlier than 1334, and that at the latest it was fully established by 1340. This dating is in accord with the production date for this sculpture surmised on the basis of its style.

This sculpture has not previously been identified. And yet, it is now apparent that this was the central worship image of Jionji, established by the major Japanese medieval period figure Sasaki Ujijori. I have introduced this sculpture and its history here to inform the world of its existence, an image that has been handed down unknown and unrecognized at Jōgon'in.

(translated by Martha J. McClintock)

Deciphering Kuroda Seiki's Letters

By CHIKAMATSU, Koji

This article on Kuroda Seiki-related letters in the Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties collection focuses primarily on letters, postcards, telegrams and memos addressed to Kuroda, deciphers a total of 256 of these materials and includes one letter sent by Seiki's brother-in-law Hashiguchi Bunzō, and 12 items sent by his close friend Sugi Takejirō, which were written in French. Most of the deciphered texts were written in *kuzushiji* (running character script) and hence were first produced in typescript versions.

These materials were deciphered using visual image data and the photographs produced from that data. The items were grouped by the families from which they were sent, namely, the Kuroda family, the Kabayama family, the former clan lord Shimazu family, the Sugi family (Sugi Takejirō), the Hashiguchi family and the steward Shinozuka family. Each of the items was given a material number to aid in the photography process, which are noted in this article as material numbers. The material numbers and family groupings were not chronological in order, and since this would prove inconvenient for understanding their contents and use of their data, the materials were regrouped without family distinctions, and reorganized in overall chronological order. These catalogue numbers were then used to create a

comprehensive catalogue. The catalogue includes the basic data on each item, along with the major contents of the item detailed in the notes column. Given that Kuroda Seiki was a painter, those letters related to art were extracted and a catalogue made of that grouping.

Regarding the senders of the letters, a chart of data organized by sender was created, along with each family's data distribution chart and a brief genealogy of each family, with the exception of the Shinozuka family, in order to clarify their relationships with Seiki.

A list was also made of the individual data on the recipients of the letters (albeit the majority were addressed to Seiki).

The next issue of *Bijutsu Kenkyu* will introduce photographic facsimiles of letters amongst these materials that were sent by Hashiguchi Naouemon, who studied in France at the same time as Seiki, his uncle Kuroda Kiyotsuna who conveyed his understanding of Seiki's final decision to become a painter, and his close friend Sugi Takejirō who expressed his understanding of the Hakubakai and his anticipation about the new art movement.

(translated by Martha J. McClintock)