

Group III

Dissemination of Information on Shinto and Japanese Culture and Research on the Current State of Shinto



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The goal of Group III is to implement the *Establishment of a National Learning Institute for the Dissemination of Research on Shinto and Japanese Culture* program from a contemporary perspective. In other words, we are advancing research on the current state of Shinto and Japanese culture and formulating concrete methods for disseminating this research abroad.

In order to accomplish these goals, we are collecting and analyzing materials and data relating to the current state of Shinto and Japanese culture, carrying out fieldwork, and also holding international symposiums. We intend to translate the findings of our research into English, and make these findings available online and in other forms of media. We hope that this will facilitate the international dissemination of our work. Specifically, we are involved in the following research projects:

1. Holding a series of international symposiums on Shinto and Japanese culture designed to promote the construction of an international research network for Japanese culture, with a specific emphasis on Shinto. We are also publishing symposium proceedings so that our work can be made known to the public.
2. Publishing an English translation of the *Shintō jiten* (originally published from Kobundo) under the name *Encyclopedia of Shinto*, and making it available to the public via the Internet and on CD-ROM. By translating this comprehensive Shinto encyclopedia into English, we are striving to facilitate the development of Shinto Studies both domestically and abroad. The Encyclopedia of Shinto translation project was funded through the COE program in 2002. In 2003 we also received additional funding as part of Kokugakuin University's COE financial assistance program.
3. Analyzing the findings of surveys concerning religion, carrying out original survey projects, and publishing the findings.

4. Collecting and analyzing a wide variety of materials and data on active Japanese religious organizations, with a specific emphasis on Shinto-based denominations. Findings are being published as academic papers.

The following is a more in-depth explanation of each one of these research projects:

Our first international symposium was held on March 15-16, 2003 at the Kokugakuin Centennial Hall and dealt with the question of “Shinto Research Abroad.” Professor Jan Van Bremen of Leiden University (Holland), Professor Helen Hardacre of Harvard University (USA), Professor Francois Mace of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (France), Professor Lee Wonbum of Dongseo University (Korea), and Professor Bernard Scheid of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria) were the invited participants. Professor Sakurai Haruo of Kōgakkan University, Professor Seki Kazutoshi of Kyushu University, Professor Tajima Tadaatsu of Tenshi College, Professor Tsushima Michihito of Kansai Gakuin University, and Professor Hayashi Makoto of Aichi Gakuin University were invited Japanese participants. Members from our research group also participated in this two-day symposium.

On March 20-21, 2003 we held a symposium addressing “Problems in Translating Shinto.” This symposium dealt with the problems and difficulties in translating specialized Shinto terms and concepts. The symposium was held in the same location as the first symposium. Associate Professor John Bentley of Northern Illinois University (USA), Associate Professor Mark McNally of the University of Hawaii (USA), Associate Professor Ann Wehmeyer of the University of Florida (USA), and Professor Francois Mace of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (France), and Professor No Song Hwan of the University of Ulsan (Korea) were invited to participate. Professor Helen Hardacre of Harvard University (USA) acted a commentator. Panel chairs included Professor Nakamaki Hirochika of the National Museum of Ethnology (session on Shinto classics, Professor Kate Wildman Nakai of Sophia University (session on (National Learning), and Inoue Nobutaka of Kokugakuin University (Summary).

Both symposiums were conducted in Japanese, with the intent of increasing interaction with and effectively creating an international network with non-Japanese scholars who are proficient in Japanese and carrying out advanced research on Shinto and Japanese culture. Furthermore, we are not only focusing on recent studies of Shinto

and Japanese culture being undertaken in the West, but are also taking into consideration similar research being done in East Asian countries as well. Professors Inoue, Kurosaki, and Havens are the main parties involved in this research.

2. The *Shintō jiten* (Encyclopedia of Shinto) was first published by Kōbundō in 1993 under the editorial supervision of Kokugakuin's Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics. By translating this encyclopedia-- the first comprehensive Shinto encyclopedia published in the post-war period--into English, we hope to improve domestic and international on Shinto. We currently plan for the entire translation process to take a total of two years. Following a subsequent editorial period, we intend to make the Encyclopedia available online and in CD-ROM format. We also intend to include a large amount of new digital graphics data and to incorporate the most up-to-date research findings in the English version of the Encyclopedia. We hope that this work will generate a great deal of interest among scholars abroad. This project was funded by the COE program budget in 2002. In 2003 we also received additional funding from Kokugakuin University. This additional funding has been of particular importance in carrying out our research. Professors Inoue, Kurosaki, and Havens are the main researchers involved in this project.

3. Creating, implementing, and analyzing highly detailed surveys designed to better understand current Japanese attitudes towards religion. Few surveys currently exist dealing with Japanese attitudes on religion. However, a recently completed seven-year-long survey that was part of a collaborative effort between the Japanese Association for Study of Religion and Society and Kokugakuin's Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics has provided particularly fruitful data. We intend to make use of this data, carry out further analysis, and, as a means of making our work known abroad, publish our findings in English. We also intend to create unique surveys, whose actual implementation will be entrusted to survey specialists, with categories for highly specific data, allowing us to obtain results that are not usually found in general surveys by newspapers and other media organizations. Professors Inoue and Ishii are primarily responsible for this research.

4. In order to better understand the current state of sect Shinto and Shinto-based New Religions, we are collecting specific information and data and carrying out fieldwork on these groups. There is currently a lack of reliable data on sect Shinto and Shinto denominations. One reason for this lack of information is that there are, comparatively

speaking, relatively few researchers working in this area. Accordingly, one of the goals in carrying out this research is to help train young scholars working in this field. Professor Inoue is primarily responsible for this research.

All of the above-mentioned research projects are closely linked with other projects at Kokugakuin's Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics. This institute is composed of comprehensive (inter-group) research projects, specialized individual projects, and other research projects. Although our researchers have been translating the Encyclopedia of Shinto, researching on sect Shinto, and publishing our research findings via the Internet for some time, we have recently included other Kokugakuin faculty members, faculty of other universities, and cooperative research members into our projects. This has helped to create a highly functional research system.

Furthermore, in order to maintain a close relationship with Group I, Professor Ogawa Naoyuki is also involved in our group. In carrying out this COE program, we have received a great deal of consideration from the members of other research groups. This has allowed for a more effective research system at the Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics.