

MEDIEVAL JAPANESE CONSTRUCTIONS OF PEACE AND LIBERTY: MUEN, KUGAI AND RAKU, SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES¹

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The main text upon which these notes are based (Muen, kugai, raku) was first published as a chapter in a book of essentially the same name in 1978. When the revised edition of the work was published in 1996, voluminous notes were added as an appendix, as a way for Amino to reply to his critics. The present article consists of three notes, one on raku, one on kugai and one comparing the three raku, kugai and muen with the idea of “liberty” (Amino’s preferred translation for the Japanese term jiyū). To recapitulate the main text (whose translation appeared in IJAS 4:1), all three terms, originally Buddhist, were used as secular concepts in medieval times to denote people and places outside the control of the political authority. All were characterized by certain “freedoms” or “liberties”, but such connotations disappeared in the course of the seventeenth century with the unification of the country.

The Term *Raku*²

The word *jūroku* 十樂 (literally, “ten joys”³) had achieved everyday usage by the beginning of the thirteenth century, as evidenced by the phrase “the term *jūroku*” used in a letter dated Genkyū 2 (1205) 9.19 by the Buddhist priest Jōben (Kōben) of the temple Jingoji.⁴ Its usage gradually broadened, and by the sixteenth century, towards the end of the Sengoku (Civil War) period, we find it appearing in phrases such *rakuzatsudan* 樂雑談 (miscellaneous discussions of *raku*) and *rakui* 樂居 (*raku* existence)⁵ and as a pun (*rakugaki* 樂書) on *rakugaki* 落書 (literally “fallen writing,” or graffiti).⁶ By the early modern period (seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries), *raku* had become one element in a large

1 A translation of the Supplementary Notes to Chapter Eleven (pp. 290–304) of *Zohō Muen, kugai, raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*, Heibonsha Raiburarii 150, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1996. The English translation appears here with the permission of Machiko Amino and the publisher.

2 Ed. note. Numbered 13, with reference to p. 120 in the original text. See Part One (IJAS 4:1), p. 11, note 25.

3 Ed. note. This term appeared in Genshin’s *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials Concerning Pure Land Rebirth), referring to ten joys or blessings attained by the *nenbutsu* practitioner.

4 *Jingoji monjo*. Ed. note. This priest is better known as Myōe Shōnin (1173–1232); he was closely associated first with the temple Jingoji and later with Kōzanji.

5 *Daizenji monjo*.

6 *Hōzōin monjo*.

number of compound terms; the term *raku* market, for example, had spawned “*raku* buying” and “*raku* selling,” and the expression “*raku* time” (*raku no toki*) was used to indicate when a conventional market became a *raku* market.⁷ Such examples were very common. Decrees concerning *raku* markets dating from the medieval period clearly indicate that they were free from various regulations and restrictions and thus represented what might in modern times be termed a state of “liberty” (*jiyū* 自由) or “spontaneity” (*shizen* 自然). This seems to me to be the best interpretation of *raku* in the sense it appears in *raku* market. The *Vocabulario da Lingoa de Iapam Nippo jisho*, a Japanese to Portuguese dictionary published in Nagasaki by the Society of Jesus in 1603, understands “*raku*” as meaning “pleasure” or “enjoyment” and interprets the phrase *rakuasobi* 楽遊び as “self-indulgent play.”

With regard to the term *muen*, Ueda Nobuhiro has made a study on its meaning in the early medieval period. In response, I have already presented my views in a supplementary essay in the present volume and will not take up the question further here.

The Term *Kugai*⁸

Moriaki Araki asserts in an essay in *Nenpō chūseishi kenkyū* that “the term *kugai* 公界 was a medieval transformation of the ancient homonym *kugai* 公廨,⁹ because the latter equated the first character *ku* (“public”) with “government office,” the medieval term *kugai* had many meanings, with the *ku* in particular being used in many ways.” He mentions that he explains this further in more detail in another essay entitled “*Kugai = kugai, zuii, muenjo*” 公廨 = 公界, 随意, 無縁所. Since I have not had the opportunity to study his argument as presented there, I will add further comments with regard to the term *kugai* here.

When I first wrote the present chapter I was unaware of the existence of a pertinent and extremely interesting essay by Shigeru Satō.¹⁰ Satō makes use of a broad range of sources, including the *Esopo no Fabulas* (Aesop’s fables), published by the Jesuit Mission Press at Amakusa College in 1593, in which we find the statement: “*Kugai* judgements or the handling of secrets and suchlike are not seen as being appropriate . . .”. With this as a starting point, he examines a number of dictionaries and other sources related to early Christianity in Japan, such as the *Dictionarium Latino Lusitanicum, ac Iaponicum* (*Raponichi jiten* 羅葡日辞典, Amakusa 1595), *Lexicon Latino-Iaponicum* (*Ranichi jiten* 羅日辞典, Amakusa 1595), *Vocabulario de Lingoa do Iapo* (*Nippo jisho* 日葡辞書, Nagasaki 1603–1604), the French translation of the *Dictionarium* (*Nichifutsu jiten* 日仏辞典, Pages, Paris 1862–1868) and *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* (*Nihon daibunten* 日本大文典, Nagasaki, 1604–1608) in which *kugai* is used to relation to “secret” – that is, “public” in contrast to “private,” and he makes it very clear that it means “the condition of being seen by the eyes of all.”

7 Ed. note. A “free” or non-monopolistic market not restricted to particular guilds or merchants’ groups; these had been instituted by Sengoku daimyo to attract merchants to the towns under their jurisdiction.

8 Ed. note. Numbered 14, with reference to p. 121 in the original text. See Part One (*IJAS* 4:1), p. 12, note 28.

9 Tr. note. Here, the character used for *gai* is different; in the first compound it means “world” 界 and in the second it means “government office” 廨.

10 Satō 1962.

In the *Bukkyō daijii* (Dictionary of Buddhism) edited by Ryūkoku University, Satō goes even further back in time and writes: “*Kugai*. A term meaning commonly held, used in Zen temples. Also pronounced *kuwa*. Meaning the boundary of a common road, it developed out of a term referring to the centre of a well-field.” Focusing on this meaning, he hunts through Dōgen’s *Eihei shingi* 永平清規 and *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 and finds examples of usage such as “a public space for Buddhist practice and worship,” “publicly held, commonly held,” and “a place commonly used by the general populace.” He concludes that “This term probably originated in Zen temples but gradually lost its specific meaning in this sense, and became a commonly used term.”

This is the same conclusion that I reached in the main text of *Muen*, *kugai*, *raku*, that during the Kamakura period the use of *kugai* was limited to Zen temples. For example, an entry dated Hōji 2 (1248) 12.21 in the *Eiheiji kuin kishiki* 永平寺庫院規式 states: “Item: *Kugai* rice should not be used to purchase winter cakes”; “Item: *Kugai* rice must not be lent to any person”; “Item: *Kugai* rice must not be used to purchase firewood or charcoal,” and the like.¹¹ In these cases, *kugai* clearly means “publicly held” or “commonly held.”

The *Zengaku daijiten* (Dictionary of Zen) also presents the definition: “The boundary of what is commonly held. A place that is used by the general populace, or an object so used.” It also presents the Buddhist definition of “The actualized Buddha nature permeating all the ten directions of the world,” and defines “*kugai* causality” as “causality that includes not the least part of the personal mind.” This makes it clear that the term *kugai* signifies the embodiment of the Buddha mind in the world (the “*gai*” of *kugai*), and a complete “openness” (the “*ku*” of *kugai*) or commonality. Since however these works make no mention of *kugai* in relation to a word meaning the centre of a well-field (see the above-mentioned *Bukkyō daijii*) we must leave that point for later consideration.

Satō then examines the usages of *kugai* as an ordinary word, based on examples from the *Taiheiki* 太平記 (c. 1370), *Sannai kōketsu* 三内口決 (c. 1570), *Renbai hiketsu shō* 連誹秘訣抄, *Mōshi shō* 毛詩抄 (Kiyohara Nobukata, 1535), *Eishōbon rokumotsu zu shō* 永正本六物図抄 (early sixteenth century), and the *kyōgen* play *Igui* 居杭. Again he demonstrates that *kugai* is the opposite of “secret,” that is, “public” in relation to “private.” The term appears in all the dictionaries dating from the late medieval to the early modern periods, and this confirms its permeation of popular culture. In dictionaries of the late early modern period, it had also come to signify “prostitute” (*yūjo* 遊女). The *Wakunkan* 倭訓栞 (Guide to Japanese Pronunciations)¹² defines *kugai* as “the pronunciation of 公界, which can also be written 公廨. A rice field that has devolved entirely to private use. *Kugai* (公廨) is where the various official uses [of the land] have been squeezed out . . .” Like Araki’s definition, this brings both of the character compounds together, and for the moment I would like to leave the question open.

Satō points out that writings of the early modern period show that the meaning of *kugai* changed from “outward facing” to “among people” and “in the world.” This change is exemplified by the statement “prostitutes/courtesans are *kugai* persons” (*yūkun wa kugai nin* 遊君はくがい人 in the *Soga ōgi hakkei* 曾我扇八景 [Chikamatsu Monzaemon, 1706] and

11 *Eiheiji monjo*.

12 Ed. note. Compiled by the Nativist scholar Tanigawa Kotosuga (1709–1776), completed and published posthumously in 1887.

keijō wa kugai mono 傾城は公界者 in the *Meido no hikyaku* 冥途の飛脚 [Chikamatsu Monzaemon, 1711]). Prostitutes became known as *kugai* persons because they had contact with many other people. The change in the choice of character to express the compound, from the standard 公界 to 苦界 (“world of suffering”) to refer to prostitutes came only after the beginning of the Meiji period in 1868. Thus Satō concludes, in a study of the origins and transformations of the term *kugai* that predated my own work by well over fifteen years, that the term *kugai* was first used in Zen temples, later became a common usage in everyday language, and was discarded at the end of the early modern period.

I would however like to add a few points. First, the original meaning of the term *kugai* could still be found in Zen temples even after the Northern and Southern Courts period of the fourteenth century. For example, in an entry in the *Musō kokushi goroku shūi* 夢窓国師語錄拾遺 dated Kōei 4 (1345) 10.17, Musō (1275–1351) writes in a section entitled “Saihō ikun” 西芳遺訓 that the “[temple’s] kitchen and dining area is a *kugai* place, and must not be counted,” and so places the dining hall outside the temple proper, which includes the monks’ quarters.¹³ Again, a passage from a section entitled *Ryōhanshintai no koto* 両班進退事 in the *Shozan jōjō hōshiki* 諸山条々法式 refers to “the exclusion of persons with chronic illnesses, who should withdraw themselves from the *kugai* examination [place],” which seems to indicate that *kugai* here is some kind of facility within a Zen temple.¹⁴ There is also an entry dated Entoku 3 (1491) 11.19 in the *Onryō kennichi roku* 蔭涼軒日録 has a passage that reads, “on the coming seventh day, the work group” will “be asked to do the *kugai*,” which is similar to the previous passage except that in this case the *kugai* is contrasted to places for the monks, and is closer to the examples that Satō presents for the secular world.

Second, early examples of *kugai* that contrast “public” and “private,” as seen in the *Taiheiki*, can be found in documents such as the *Myōōji monjo* 妙応寺文書. A petition dated Shitoku 1 (1384) 9.19 signed by Shami Kōmyō and seventeen others says “the taking of life is forbidden in this village, except in cases of night attacks, theft, and battle; this is whether it be an enemy or a *kugai* person.”¹⁵ Later, we find an item dated Meiō 4 (1495) 2.2 in the *Harutomi shukuneki* 晴富宿禰記 which says “There is nothing that shall be left private, but rather shall be recorded as belonging to *kugai*.” Numerous other examples like these can be found.

Third, Satō sees the change in the use of Chinese characters to express *kugai*, from those that read “public world” to those that read “world of suffering” as occurring in the Meiji period, but the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (Shōgakukan) gives an example, a passage that reads “the night view of the brothels does not look like a world of suffering,” which comes from a *senryū* collection called the *Yanagidaru* 柳多留.¹⁶ This makes it clear that this change had already come into being by the late Edo period.

13 *Dai Nihon shiryō*, Section 6, No. 9, p. 375.

14 *Chūsei hōsei shiryōshū*, vol. 2, *Muromachi bakufuhō tsuikahō*, Order No. 134 dated Eitoku 1 (1381) 12.12.

15 *Gifu ken shi, shiryō hen, kodai chūsei* 1.

16 Ed. note. This anthology ultimately totalled 167 volumes. The first volumes were published by Karai Hachiemon (1718–1790), and publication continued down to the mid-nineteenth century by other *senryū* poets.

Satō's essay was first brought to my attention by Mitsunobu Ōtsuka, in his book *Kirishitanban Esopu no haburasu shichū* キリシタン版エソポのハブラス私注, where Ōtsuka introduces and expands Satō's ideas about *kugai* in a supplemental note. Ōtsuka sees the original meaning of the term as that used in Zen temples, "the public world, thus publicly or commonly held [property]," and places importance on the fact that the Chinese character read as *ku* in *kugai* is used in contrast to "private" (*shi* 私). He interprets this *ku* as meaning "an aspect of being 'in the world' or 'among persons.'" In addition, he states, "what is public [*ku* of *kugai*] must of course be 'fair' or 'impartial' (*kōsei* 公正); this is not something which should be hidden but should rather be obviously apparent." Ōtsuka presents several appropriate examples to show this, and additionally gives examples where *kugai* means "liberty," rather than being directly related to the idea of "fair and impartial." Two such instances are "Lu Zhonglian did not serve anybody but was rather a *kugai* person; as for us, we are servants . . ." (*Shikishō* 史記抄¹⁷), and "dwarfs have no master, rather they are called small *kugai* persons . . ." (*Gyokujinshō*¹⁸). He also asserts that "in the early modern period, prostitutes too were called *kugai* persons."¹⁹

Of course it goes without saying that diviners, Noh actors, and the like were *kugai* persons (*kugai mono*) or considered part of *kugai* groups (*kugai shū*). *Kugai* groups in particular overlapped with "being without worldly ties" (*muen* 無縁). The *kugai* of *kugai* temples had the connotation of public contrasted with private, in the sense that there were no special patrons who supported those temples. Thus such temples were in actuality places of *muen*. In addition, when *kugai* was used to refer to "leagues" (*ikki* 一揆), self-governing cities, and independent villages (*sō* 惣), it had, at least in the formative period, a meaning of public that was emphatically contrasted to the private.

Kugai had by now lost all trace of its original Buddhist meaning, but it certainly continued to possess an absolute quality regarding the "public" and "commonly held" that the word signified. Those in power, who had already established themselves, did not use this term, but without any doubt it continued to live on for a very long time among commoners.

The Terms *Muen*, *Kugai*, *Raku*, *Jiyū* (Liberty)²⁰

Araki sharply criticized my approach in his essay in the *Nenpō chūseishi kenkyū* cited above, saying I had used a "theoretical rhetoric" in my discussion of *muen*, *kugai* and *raku* by asserting that "*muen* is *kugai*, and *kugai* is *raku*." However, as I have written in the main text (see *IJAS* 4:1, pp. 1–13) as well as in other places, I think that each of these terms has its own distinct original meaning. With time, each developed a meaning beyond its original Buddhist significance and became used with a multiplicity of meanings in the secular world. I emphasized that from the Sengoku period to the beginning of the early modern period, that is, from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, they expressed at times

17 Ed. note. A commentary published in 1477 on the Chinese work *Shiji* (Records of the Historian) by Tōgen Zuisen (1430–1489), a Zen monk.

18 Ed. note. A commentary in 55 volumes on a dictionary of Chinese, written by Ikō Myōan, 1480–1567.

19 Ōtsuka 1983, pp. 98–99.

20 Ed. note. Numbered 15, with reference to p. 123 in the original text. See Part One (*IJAS* 4:1), p. 12, note 30.

the same thing, and so had overlapping meanings. If one were to illustrate this graphically, I would wholeheartedly endorse Araki's suggestion that they would resemble three overlapping Venn diagrams. Consequently, it is possible to say that from the beginning there was nothing of substance to this criticism.

I would like to add here some remarks with regard to the term *jiyū* 自由 (“liberty”) as it existed during the Sengoku Period. Numerous points have been made concerning the meanings of *jiyū*, and because I have written about that subject at length elsewhere,²¹ I will not repeat here what I wrote there. During the Sengoku Period there are examples in which this term was used with an exclusively negative connotation, meaning to act according to one's personal desires, going against current mores and rules of the social order. Yet, as examples of the term *fujiyū* 不自由 (lack of liberty) clearly demonstrate, there were also cases where this term had positive connotations as well.

Mitsunobu Ōtsuka has already given us numerous examples of this from documents related both to the Zen sect and to early Christianity in Japan.²² For instance the above-mentioned translation of *Aesop's Fables* includes the sentences “I have no master. I am at liberty”; “As a servant, I am at liberty to express myself, though I do so with respect”; and “As a local vassal (*hikan* 被官) there are many things that I must suffer, such as when villagers come to me and ask for time off, and [I have to decide] whether to give them their liberty . . .” In these cases, the word “liberty” is used in the sense of a slave being released and gaining liberty, and so has a meaning that is almost exactly what it has today. A later version of the *Fables*, printed in Kyoto in 1639 using movable Japanese type called *kanazōshi* (*Kokatsuji hon Isopo monogatari* 古活字本伊層保物語) uses the word with three different meanings, according to Ōtsuka: “i. to be permitted to inherit a household; ii. to put a person at liberty; iii. to become solitary.” Ōtsuka emphasizes the third meaning, and cites the definition of “solitary” (*hitorimi* 独身) in the *Vocabulario de Lingoa do Iapo* (*Nippo jisho* 日葡辞書, Nagasaki 1603–1604), which reads: “To be without a place of residence, to be without anybody who can provide assistance.” Based on this, he wrote: “One must wonder if it was the personal idea of the translator of *Aesop's Fables* to equate the meaning of ‘to gain one's liberty’ with ‘to become solitary.’” This “solitary person” (*hitorimi*) is indeed none other than a “person of *muen*” and a “person who comes and goes from *kugai*,” and at this point it is possible to say that the meaning of “liberty” overlaps the meaning of these terms, and it is possible to see the origins of how in modern times the word “liberty” (*jiyū*) has gained the meaning it has as a word in translations. As Ōtsuka has written, “To gain one's liberty’ meant being released from a constrained status, and this was the expression of a particularly Christian idea.” The word *jiyū* subsequently failed to become part of standard usage and continued throughout the early modern period to have a negative connotation. Nevertheless, though *jiyū*, unlike the terms *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku*, failed to become integrated as part of the cultural system, it eventually came to be used to translate the word “freedom.”

The terms *muen*, *kugai* and *raku*, however, had overlapping meanings for a certain period of time and became integrated into a particular system, and as a consequence each had a fate significantly different from that of *jiyū*. As I have written in the main text, *muen*

21 Amino 1986

22 Ōtsuka 1983, pp. 109–12.

not only became common usage but during the Edo Period in certain regions it also became the name of a class of persons. I noted in a discussion with Abe Kin'ya²³ that Ariga Kizaemon reported the existence, during the Edo Period, of four classes of persons in what is now the township of Oaza Nagasaki (Iemuro Nishigata village, Oshima district Yamaguchi Prefecture): *jizamurai* 地侍, *honbyakusho* 本百姓, *maoto hyakusho* 門男百姓, and *muen* 無縁, and that “as persons from a different place, the *muen* were more or less looked down upon.”²⁴ Shūichi Yasuzawa mentions *muen* as one of the categories for population censuses “there were *hyakusho* 百姓 (peasants), *chōnin* 町人 (townspeople), *yamabushi* 山伏 (mountain priests), *miko* 神子 (performers of shrine rituals), *shanin* 社人 (shrine workers), *shukke* 出家 (Buddhist priests), *ni* 尼 (Buddhist nuns), *muen*, *kojiki* 乞食 (beggars), *eta* 穢多 (outcastes), *zatō* 座当 (blind persons), and *senjo* 占女 (female fortune tellers).” Thus *muen* were distinguished from beggars and outcastes, but they were very similar all the same and broadly speaking were all probably subject to discrimination. According to the *Kaitei sōgō Nihon minzoku goi*, landless peasants, the so-called “water-drinking peasants” (*mizunomi hyakusho* 水呑百姓) in Shimonami village, Kitauwa district, Ehime Prefecture, were considered *muen*. In Uwajima domain too, under the *jitsubo* 地坪 (land measurement) system used for field distribution, “those who received absolutely no [fields for cultivation] were called *muen*”; and in contrast to the independent peasant farmers (*honbyakusho*) who held a stake in the village, other peasants were described as belonging to either the *inkyō* group or the *muen* group.²⁵ In Nishi Awami too, the *muen* were “those of other places who held no arable land,” and they are said to have had a difficult time making a living.²⁶

My research on the Edo period is still insufficient, and so I would like to pursue this at a later date, but in the case of *raku*, it seems that in addition to the ordinary meanings of “happy” and “without difficulty,” the word also clearly was used as a term for villages subject to discrimination. According to a report by Kikutarō Takashimizu, “the *eta* [outcastes] in Uzen and Ugo were generally called the *raku*.”²⁷ In Tsuruoka and Akita in northern Japan, *raku* referred to persons connected with the leather craft, but also denoted the singing of celebratory songs and the distribution of amulets for deities of the fields, according to Sugae Masumi 菅江真澄 (1754?–1829).²⁸ The *Sōgō Nihon minzoku goi* also cites this example, and mentions that the term *raku* can also be found in Sugae's *Susuki no ideyu* すすきのいでゆ and *Yuki no michinoku* 雪の道奥.²⁹ Tomohiko Harada also writes that in the castle town of Kubota (now Akita), “the *eta* neighborhood was also called the *kawara* neighborhood, and it was here” that the “*raku*” resided.³⁰ I have seen pictorial maps dating from the Edo period of the area around Lake Biwa where there are villages called *raku*,

23 Amino and Abe 1994.

24 Ariga 1966.

25 Wakamori ed. 1962.

26 Wakamori ed. 1961.

27 Takashimizu 1915.

28 This reference was pointed out to me by Susumu Ishii.

29 Tr. note. *Raku* is written as 楽久 in the former and as 良久 in the latter.

30 Harada 1981.

which makes me speculate that the term *raku* found in northern Japan might well have entered there from the west of the country.

If so, this must have happened a fair amount of time ago. A number of entries in the *Umezu Masakage nikki*³¹ mention *raku*: “The *raku* from the harbour came back to this place and cleaned the jail” (Genna 4 [1618] 9.7); “Going south from the *raku* neighbourhood, we wanted to visit upon the foot soldier’s southern residences” (Kan’ei 6 [1629] 6.18); “Those called *raku* came and took care of the jail, and when they were nearly finished they reported to the jail elders” (Kan’ei 8 [1631] 2.16); “There was one who had broken out of jail, and a *raku* was then used to call Kojika no Hachizō” (Kan’ei 8 [1631] 5.3); “In previous years there were those from the jail who had finished this, and those were the *raku*” (Kan’ei 8 [1631] 9.18); and “There was a person named Itsumi from the jail who finished today, and he was a *raku* jail guard” (Kan’ei 9 [1632] 5.15). These *raku* were clearly connected with the later *raku* in northern Japan. It is apparent from the Diary that the *raku* who had lived in Dozaki harbour moved to Kubota (Akita) where they built their own village and worked exclusively in the jail there, but nothing is known about what other types of work they pursued.³² How *raku* gained this new meaning is not clear at this point, but it seems safe to conclude that it was a transformation from the meaning that overlapped with *muen* and *kugai*. As I noted previously, during the late Edo period, the ideogram for the first syllable of *kugai* was changed from the one for “public” to the one for “suffering” or “painful,” and all three terms shared a similar fate in that their meanings overlapped to some extent, though as we have seen *kugai* took a somewhat different form during the Edo period.

In the literature of the early modern period, *kugai* was used to mean “the public face” and “in the world,”³³ and at some point this usage made its way to the Ryūkyū Islands, as Moriaki Araki has pointed out.³⁴ He finds the Okinawan expression “*kugei no kuwatsuchii*” to be identical to the phrase *kugai no kakkei* 公界の活計 found in Article 94 of the *Ketsujō-ke hatto*; here *kugai* meant a party in which the lord met with people from the community and offered generous amounts to drink, and *kugai no kakkei* signified the expenses so incurred. It is significant that *ku* 公 is used here in contrast to “private” or “personal” (*shi* 私) and clearly has the meaning of “in the world” or “among people.” The *Okinawago jiten* also translates this as “social interactions, meetings with people” and it is possible to believe that this kind of gathering of large numbers of persons may have had the character of asylum.³⁵ Here we can see the term *kugai* gaining yet another level of significance.

Araki has also pointed out that the word *annya* in the Ryūkyū dialect, which means the same as the Japanese term *angya* 行脚 (to travel on foot), was transmitted there via the puppet theater, spread by puppeteers from Honshū, Kyūshū and Shikoku; he thus emphasized that “interactions between Japan and the Ryūkyū Islands were far more robust than have been previously thought.” I am of exactly the same opinion, and it is possible to

31 The diary of Umezu Masakage (1581–1633).

32 This was pointed out to me by Keiji Yamaguchi.

33 See Satō 1962.

34 Araki n.d.

35 See Amino and Abe 1986 and *Okinawago jiten*.

think that such performers, including women, played a major role in these interactions, as evidenced by the use of the syllabic script *hiragana* in the ordinances of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, a fact clearly shown by Araki.³⁶ However even if we consider that the term *kugai no kakkei* reached the Ryūkyū kingdom from around the late medieval period, since both words appear in the literature of the early modern period, it is necessary to look broadly at the period during which they became widespread.

In actuality, *kugai* was used widely throughout the Japanese archipelago until recent times. Tsuneichi Miyamoto has noted examples from farm villages in southwest Japan in which householders call public work *kugai* with regard to service provided for the maintenance of the village commune (*kyōdōtai* 共同体).³⁷ He writes: “The term *kugai*, meaning ‘public,’ was used widely in the area from the mountains of central Japan to the Kantō, northeast, and Kinki regions. Death was called ‘to have cut the *kugai*.’ That was because death meant that one’s public service was cut off.”³⁸ *Kugai* was indeed related to the public world, He continued: “The duty of making *kugai* one’s primary obligation (*giri* 義理) meant that a person subjected himself to the order it implied; in other words, it meant that one must not be remiss in one’s obligations.”³⁹ In western Toyama prefecture, public exchanges of goods and services were called *kugai*, and in Kyūnohe district in Iwate prefecture, significantly it meant socially accepted obligations but not those between relatives.⁴⁰ The *Ryūkyū no kuni yurai ki* (vol. 2) mentions “a *kugai* place in the Shichō district of Naha” under the entry “Omise” (親見世). Iha Fuyū has already noted with regard to *omise* that the placement of the honorific “o” before the word for “shop” (*mise*) meant “government office.” He points out that “*kugai* place” was a new name for the *kuramoto* or *kura* (storehouse) “where the commonly held goods belonging to the deities or the clan were held.”⁴¹ Furthermore, he points out that “when *kugai* is used according to its original meaning it has the significance of a *kugai* place, or place for general public use.” In the language of the Ryūkyū Islands, *kugei* came to mean “to invite persons, to have a party,” and was used “in the same way as the ancient term *makiyo*, a place for commonly held parties.”⁴² Araki, like Iha, considers *kugai* to be a public office, but does not present any basis for this conclusion. In all likelihood, it was based on the interpretation found in the *Wakunkan*, where *omise* is defined as a government office. But it is also possible to think that *kugai* as a place for community eating and drinking in the presence of the ancient deities that Iha mentions is indeed its original meaning.

Isao Sudō has informed me of the interesting fact that in the district of Matsuo in the city of Toba there is a self-governing organization that exists down to this day called *kugai*, and documents concerning it dating from 1892 have been published.⁴³ Wakamori Tarō

36 Araki 1980.

37 Miyamoto 1963, p. 189.

38 Miyamoto 1973, p. 160.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Sōgō Nihon minzoku goi.*

41 See Iha 1975a.

42 See Iha 1975b.

43 Shima chihō minzoku sōgō chōsadan 1963.

also has written about it,⁴⁴ but the most detailed report can be found in a work entitled *Shima no nenrei kaiteisei*. *Kugai* organizations are found not only in Matsuo, but also in Funazu, Kawachi, Iwakura and Shiroki and throughout the district of Kamo Gogō

In Matsuo, *kugai* is written with the ideographs for “public” 公 and “meeting” 会; this dates from 1908, when the organization’s regulations, first issued in 1892 as *Kugai yaku sadamegaki* 公界約定書, were revised.

At the age of sixteen, all male residents of Matsuo participate in a coming-of-age ceremony called *oyatori kotori* 親取り子取り, as a result of which they become formal members of the organization, which comprises three groups, *kirō* 寄老 (*toshiyori* 年寄, elders), *chūrō* 中老 (the middle aged) and *wakamono* 若者 (youths). According to the revised regulations of 1908 (*Matsuo kugai kitei* 松尾公会規定), there were to be twenty *kirō* and twenty *chūrō* determined by age order, and all the rest were classed as *wakamono*. Around 1960, the oldest man was made the leader (*fudegashira* 筆頭) and there were twelve *kirō*. The main function of the *kugai* was to organize various village festivals and ceremonies, all of which were religious, such as Obon, *raku odori* 楽舞, *kami okuri* 神送り, *mushi okuri* 虫送り, funerals, and the *dai nenbutsu* 大念仏. The *Matsuo kugai kitei* contains passages such as “those who are under the authority of this ward are to follow the director” and “those whose behaviour is incorrect will have their names removed from this group and at the same time all association with them will be discontinued.” There is no doubt that this was an organization fundamental to the support of Matsuo’s self-governance.

In addition, as I have noted in the main text, Katsu Nishiyama has shown in clear and concrete detail that during the Sengoku period there were self-governing cities that included *kugai* as underground organizations in the Ise Shima region where Matsuo is located. The modern sense of “underground” is probably an earlier meaning of *kugai*; this is probably different to the *kugai* that was at the bottom of the governing structures of “public rule” (*kōgi* 公儀) during the Edo period. Such “publicness” probably determined that the *kugai* became an organization that governed the most important rituals in the lives of the people of Matsuo for over four hundred years. It is at this point that we can see the beginnings of a popular “publicness” (公) as a characteristic of the *kugai*, and this had a particularly strong life force.

Furthermore, a point that deserves special attention in the organization of the Matsuo *kugai* was the way it maintained the arts (*geinō* 芸能) related to festivals, which I have discussed elsewhere.⁴⁵ Katsu Iwata has pointed out to me a relevant passage in the *Kodama monjo*, an item dated Keichō 13 (1608) 2.9 entitled “Bingo no kuni Eso gun shakeshū renchōkisei bun” which states “Young [shrine] priests should enjoy the arts (*gei*), and at times of *kugai*, they should ring the bell that shows respect to elders.”⁴⁶ This was written at the point when governance had been transferred from the Mōri clan to the Fukushima clan, and consequently governing authority was being strengthened. This article was one of five concerning governance of the shrine priests in the Eso district for the continuation of their festivals and priesthood. Iwata has pointed out the connection between the “young priests” and the “elders,” and interpreted the “arts” that were popular in this place

44 Wakamori 1965.

45 See Amino 1984.

46 *Kodama monjo*.

as being sacred dances (*kagura*) such as the Pure Land *kagura* and the *Kōjin mai*. He has speculated that *kugai* in this case is related to sacred rituals, and the arts associated with them. The *kugai* of Matsuo was established in exactly the way that Iwata describes. Such documents and evidence based on folklore make it clear that there is much that remains to be studied concerning the textures and contours of *kugai*.

Translated by William Johnston

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