

MEDIEVAL JAPANESE CONSTRUCTIONS OF PEACE AND LIBERTY: MUEN, KUGAI, AND RAKU¹

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The terms muen, kugai, and raku appear in medieval documents and invoke the idea of places which exist outside the reach of the secular power, such as shrines, temples, bridges and markets. They can also be extended to refer to people who are without worldly ties. Such places highlight the limitations that applied to political authority in medieval Japan, and they were characterized by such “freedoms” as limitations on the right of entry, exemptions from rents, taxes and corvée labor, rights of free passage, asylum from conflict and the civil law, non-recognition of serfdom or slavery, non-application of collective punishment, and authority based on seniority. The terms themselves defy clear individual definition. All three can be traced to Buddhist texts, though they were appropriated in the medieval period to secular use. Muen refers to being “unattached” (that is, without karmic ties), kugai to the realm of temples (the abodes of those who have cut secular ties), and raku to the ideal realm (or “paradise”). Though these terms were associated with liberty in the medieval period, they lost their positive connotations once the country was unified at the end of the sixteenth century.

INTRODUCTION

During the Sengoku (Civil War) period (1467–1568), the terms *muen* 無縁, *kugai* 公界, and *raku* 楽 all acquired stable definitions. As I have already demonstrated,² they all indicate a certain fundamental character concerning places and persons (or groups of persons)

- 1 A translation of Chapter Eleven (pp. 110–24) of *Zōho Muen, kugai, raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*. Heibonsha Raiburarii 150. Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1996 (first published 1978). The English translation appears here with the permission of Machiko Amino and the publisher. It is intended that a translation of the Supplementary Notes to this chapter (pp. 290–305), where Amino answered specific points brought up by critics, will appear in a subsequent issue of *IJAS*. The translation of *jiyū* using the English word “liberty” was Professor Amino’s own preference.
- 2 Ed. note: Amino discussed *muen* (places where ties with the secular authority were severed) and *muensho* (*muen* places) through examples in Chapters Three (sanctuary temples: Shōjōin), Four (temples permitted alms-seeking: Zenshōji), Five (temples and markets: Amidadera in Kyoto) and Six (temples and rights of non-entry); *kugai* (“public space”) in Chapters Six and Seven; and *raku* (in terms of “free” markets) in Chapter Ten. He stated specifically that “there is absolutely no room for doubt that the words *muen*, *kugai* and *raku* are expressions of the same principle” (p. 108). Below, the reference to Amino with no date refers to *Zōho Muen, kugai, raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*.

that had severed secular ties, whether in terms of associations between lord and vassal, of family relationships, or other worldly connections. They gave rise, as a matter of course, to a number of characteristic features which I summarize below, drawing on the work of Shizuo Katsumata and other scholars.

Limitations on the Right of Entry (*fu'nyūken* 不入権)

The third article of the regulations issued by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) in Eiroku 10 (1567) for the “*raku* market” in Kanō (Mino province) stated: “Anyone without clear reason is forbidden entry.”³ A similar article appeared in regulations governing Kanamori in the grounds of Zenryūji (Ōmi province), and the *raku* market in Ogino (Sagami province) on land that had been confirmed on the Hōjō clan of Odawara. This characteristic was shared, furthermore, with the *muen* places and *kugai* places that I have already discussed.⁴

Exemptions from Land Rents (*jishi* 地子) and Labor Services (*shoyaku* 諸役)

As Katsumata has shown, one characteristic of *raku* markets was their exemption from various rents, taxes and labor services.⁵ *Muen* places on the lands controlled by the Imagawa clan were similarly exempt: exemptions from rents on “dwellings within the temple gate” and from the “various forms of labor to the temple” were guaranteed by the clan.⁶ In Hakata too, the exemptions applied.⁷ This characteristic applies broadly to *kugai* and *muen* places, as well as to the people associated with them. However, purveyors supplying the court with daily necessities in exchange for tax and labor service exemptions (*kugonin* 供御人) from Kuwana who had previously presented oysters to the court continued to do so into the Sengoku period.⁸ Similarly, we should keep in mind that foundry workers whom Sengoku daimyō exempted from various labor services also paid tribute to the imperial court. This kind of tribute was thus intrinsically different from the taxes and rents paid to landlords. (Exemptions were, of course, limited to those taxes and labor services that the Sengoku daimyō controlled.) We can find examples of *muen* and *kugai* persons who continued to pay tribute to the Court, in the person of the emperor (*tennō*) throughout the Sengoku period and into the Edo period. Although this kind of relationship between the emperor and *muen/kugai* places and persons might have become weaker over time, it certainly cannot be ignored.

3 Ed. note. Cited by Katsumata in Katsumata 1977. Discussed by Amino, pp. 106–07.

4 Ed. note. Amino cites the temples Zenshōji (Suō province) and Unkōji (Owari province) as examples of such *muen* places (pp. 42–47) and Enoshima, Ganzōji (Echizen province) and Chōrakuji (Kōzuke province) as examples of *kugai* places (pp. 67–69). *Muen* temples were those supported by the funds raised from *kanjin* campaigns and small donations, rather than by land-holdings.

5 Ed. note. Katsumata 1977; discussed by Amino pp. 107–08.

6 Ed. note. Amino cites, among other places, Kuonji, Taisekiji, Myōrenji and Zuioan (p. 61).

7 Ed. note. *Sadame Chikuzen no kuni Hakata no tsu*, Item 2. Amino, pp. 88–89.

8 Ed. note. Amino cites a record of Hōji 2 (1248) attesting to this activity (p. 102). See also Amino 1979.

Guaranteed Rights of Freedom of Passage

Persons such as those living in the temples of Zenshōji (Suō province) and Unkōji (Owari province), in the self-governing city of Hakata, and at the Kanō marketplace (Mino province) were, as residents of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places, guaranteed the right of free passage.⁹ (In the case of the Sengoku daimyō, free passage was guaranteed on their domains.) In addition, as Katsumata has pointed out, Oda Nobunaga asserted, in the third article of the Regulations issued in Tenbun 18 (1549) for eight villages associated with Atsuta Shrine in the province of Owari:

As has been established through precedent [within the confines of Atsuta] Shrine, inspections are not to be conducted on [persons whether of] different provinces or the province [of Owari]; [whether] enemies or friends; [whether] the retainers of warriors or the elderly, children, or women; [neither are inspections to be conducted] of the goods they carry. In addition, persons who are entering or leaving the shrine are not to be harassed while on the roadway.¹⁰

When the Imagawa clan made the market called Rokusai-ichi at the shrine of Fuji Ōmiya (Suruga province) into a *raku* market in Eiroku 9 (1566), an order was issued that said, “It is forbidden [to impose charges] on sacred land, bridges, or at barriers, or [to impose] new duties”; Katsumata used this evidence to demonstrate persuasively that residents of *raku* markets were tax-exempt while on their travels and were socially guaranteed safe passage. He assumed that this was an extension of the tax exemption provided for the “place” (*ba* 場) of the *raku* market.¹¹ This is certainly legitimate evidence. In addition, persons who frequented and lived in *kugai* and *muen* places were themselves *kugai* and *muen* persons. Whether or not these persons had an affiliation with the place (*ba*) itself, if they were guaranteed right of passage as *muen* persons, then Katsumata’s conclusions are likely to have a very broad significance.

Furthermore, *kugai* persons included a wider group than simply priests collecting donations (*kanjin shōnin* 勧進上人), wandering fortune-tellers, iron founders, and the like. For example, in Eiroku 7 (1564), the Muromachi bakufu issued a decree signed by its collective commissioners that exempted, as purveyors to the court, fish vendors who had their base in the village of Kuritsu (Ōmi province) and members of the Kuritsu guild (*za* 座), from “various taxes and duties” and guaranteed them the special right that “they shall be without bother in their [travels] in any direction, and exempt from fees at barriers, fords, and harbors, from taxes at marketplaces, and from confiscation of property taken as collateral.”¹² Similarly, in Eiroku 6 (1563), the bakufu issued a decree to the turner Uchiki

9 Ed. note. Refer to Amino, pp. 42–49 for Zenshōji and Unkōji, pp. 87–89 for Hakata, and pp. 106–07 for Kanō.

10 Original textual reference. Contained in Okuno 1969.

11 Ed. note. Katsumata 1977.

12 Original footnote 1. *Kyōto daigaku bungakubu shozō monjo*.

Kotarō, who provided the court with various items that stated: “In his travels to and from other provinces, he need not acquiesce to the stated demands of barriers and fords.”¹³

During the Sengoku period too, the right of traveling *kugai* persons to come and go freely among the various provinces was socially recognized. What is important to note about many of these persons is that they were descended from the purveyors to the court in the early medieval period. The continuation of oyster purveyors supplying the court, which we noted above, is also related to this, and if we broaden our perspective, the origin of the right of free passage and the origins of the principles of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* may be seen to reach back to the early medieval period. In addition, when seen from this perspective, the legitimacy of Katsumata’s argument becomes all the more persuasive. Katsumata has also conclusively demonstrated that it was from the Sengoku period (and perhaps from the Muromachi period), when traveling “artisans” (*geinōmin* 芸能民, see below) and *kugai* persons became increasingly attached to a particular “place” (*ba*), that the right of free passage took the form of being guaranteed in terms of the “place”.

Peaceful Territories, Groups of “Peace”

Places such as Enoshima (Sagami province) and the free city of Sakai that were *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places were “peaceful territories” (*heiwa ryōiki* 平和領域) where “there was no hatred between enemies and allies” and “the circumstances of enemies and friends were to be ignored.” As Katsumata has pointed out, according to the regulations effective within the boundaries of Atsuta Shrine quoted above, “persons from one’s home or other provinces, enemies and friends” were “not to be harassed.” Oda Nobunaga’s regulations governing the marketplace in front of the gate of the temple Chōenji in Amagasaki (Settsu province) identically stated that “enemies are not to be singled out.”¹⁴ Furthermore, “those with an art” (*geinōmin*) – understood broadly to include not simply merchants and craftsmen, but also the itinerant, charismatic religious figures called *sanmai hijiri* 三昧聖, fundraising priests (*kanjin shōnin* 勧進上人), mendicant Zen priests, *yamabushi* 山伏 (religious persons connected with sacred mountains), practitioners of linked poetry (*rengashi* 連歌師), tea masters, and itinerant female entertainers called *katsurame* 桂女,¹⁵ were all emissaries of peace and constituted “peaceful” groups. Crimes that arose from secular conflicts – battles, vendettas, arguments, murder, assault, piracy by land or sea – and even legal disputes were not allowed within these groups. As a consequence, they were not subject to various kinds of subpoenas, and criminals could find sanctuary within them. As Katsumata has shown, exactly the same principle was at work at Ogino (Musashi province), where, “when there is a *raku* market, no matter where people have come from, absolutely no arguments are to be allowed,”¹⁶ and in the temple precincts of Shōtokuji (Owari province),

13 Original footnote 2. *Rokuroshi monjo*.

14 Original footnote 3. *Chōenji monjo*.

15 Ed. note. These had their origins in shamanic women from the Katsura area of Kyoto, who both performed exorcisms and purifications and who provided the court with the *ayu* fish from the Katsura river. See Amino p. 73 and Amino 1973.

16 Original footnote 4. *Shinpen Bushū komonjo*, Vol. 1.

where “those who come and go from this temple on market days, whether they be from this province or another, whether of one’s clan or of high rank or not they are not to be despised, and no trouble or disputes are allowed.”¹⁷ As a consequence, as Katsumata has also shown, it was possible for Oda Nobunaga and his rival Saitō Dōsan (1494–1556) to meet at Shōtokuji, a fact which clearly demonstrates that *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places had the character of “peace territories.” This characteristic virtually disappeared during the Edo period except in places such as brothels and gambling parlors, though it may have survived in other inconspicuous places.

“Liberation” from Private Ties of Bondage

Numerous documents make it clear that in *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places, the private relations of lord and vassal and private bondage were not enforced. For example, it was stated that in the *raku* market at Kanō (Mino province) that “although persons may be hereditary servants they are not to be punished”; in Enoshima (Sagami province) that “as for the taking of another person as one’s lord, this is to be terminated”; and in Seishōin (Wakasa province) that “as for those who are taken to have another as their lord, or who are pursued for the sake of punishment, it is strictly commanded that they are to be given safe haven.” In addition, Katsumata cites the examples of Matsuzaka (Ise province) where “the practice of refusing lodgings for servants is to be ended”; Hakata, where “within this harbor, the practice of having various servants in one’s household is forbidden”; and the precincts of Atsuta Shrine, within which it was forbidden to investigate or interrogate servants. As a consequence, warriors who had servants were not allowed to reside in *kugai* places, and so such places became sanctuaries for serfs, bondsmen and cultivators who had fled their land. The examples that Hisashi Fujiki points out concerning peasants who fled their lands to enter cities, towns, and lodgings can be understood quite naturally in this context.¹⁸

A similar situation existed for persons as well as for places. *Kugai* persons and those who came and went from *kugai* places were those who did not accept the protection of any lord or master, and so were free from the private relationship of bondage and vassalage. During the Sengoku period, the actions of those who adamantly refused to allow themselves to be put in a relationship with a lord or master were socially recognized and supported.

The Disappearance of Relationships Based on Borrowing and Lending

The borrowing of cash and of rice in *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places was abolished, as evidenced in numerous places such as the Kanō *raku* market (Mino province) and the temple Zenshōji (Suo province). Katsumata also gives as evidence the third article from the regulations governing the *raku* market in Kanamori (Ōmi province): “Previously

17 Original footnote 5. *Shōtokuji monjo*.

18 Original footnote 6. Fujiki 1974.

unpaid rents and outstanding loans of rice and cash are not to be the subject to repayment [at this place]”; the second article from the regulations governing the castle town of Miki (Harima): “Outstanding loans of cash and rice and unpaid rents that date from before the seventeenth day of the first month of the year Tenshō 8 [1580] are allowed [to go unpaid]”; and the regulations governing the Rokusai market in Ogino (Musashi province), the new market in Matsuyama, and Shinjuku in Takahagi, among others, which all specified that “borrowed cash and rice are not to be pursued.” It went without saying that there was a prohibition on the various forms of strictly enforced loans found in other places. Based on the same principle, *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places were exempt from debt-abrogation decrees (*tokusei* 徳政). These included *muen* places such as the temples of Seishōin (Wakasa province), Zenshōji (Suo province), and Ryūtanji and Hōkōji (Tōtomi province), and the cities of Hakata, Tondabayashi, and Matsuzaka. In addition, we can add the many examples from Haruko Wakita’s meticulous research.¹⁹ It is not possible to think of these as individual cases of exemptions from debt-abrogation decrees; rather they should be regarded as belonging to a special category. Most importantly, it must be kept in mind that the cases refer not only to “places,” but, as Wakita has made clear, to persons as well, such as iron founders from Wakasa and ritualists of the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine at Ōyamasaki, who were exempt from debt-abrogation decrees. Furthermore, just as the merchants of the Kuritsu guild were forbidden from being made the subject of strictly enforced loans, groups of *kugai* persons had similar attributes to temples and cities [that were considered *kugai* places].

Because *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places had these attributes, commerce was maintained there on the basis of equality, and financial activities such as those deriving from the small monetary offerings made to temples and other sources of finance were socially guaranteed. Wakita considers that underpinning such commercial and financial guarantees were the “customary practices of the Way of the merchant” (*shōnindō no kojitsu* 商人道の故実), which operate according to “the theory of private ownership,” and she emphasizes that therefore “social order is established on the theory of private ownership.” There is no doubt that this indeed is the end result, but as I have previously stated, the theory tends to overlook the principle of *muen*, which supported these activities.²⁰ If one tries to explain all of these phenomena through the “theory of private ownership” then it is no longer possible to understand in a single theory the numerous other qualities that characterize free cities and *muen* places. Furthermore, even the “customary practices of the Way of the merchant” cannot be fully understood if examined only from the perspective of the theory of private ownership. If we accept the theory of “private ownership” (*shiyū* 私有) and “ownership” (*yūshu* 有主) in such a fundamental way, then it seems to me that we are led to a view of history which equates historical “progress” with the development, and entrenchment within society, of private ownership alone, and which implies that theories of “non-possession” (*mushoyū* 無所有) and “non-ownership” (*mushu* 無主) are backward, and should be surmounted.

19 Original footnote 7. See Wakita 1976.

20 Ed. note. Amino, p. 47.

However if we switch perspectives, and along with Katsumata accept the principle of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* as a starting point, it not only becomes possible to understand their distinguishing features as a single principle which is consistently expressed in various decrees and regulations, but it also makes it possible to see things much more broadly. For example, if we examine the leagues that formed to oppose government debt-abrogation decrees (*tokusei ikki* 徳政一揆) from the principle of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku*, and local forms of debt-abrogation that occurred during the Muromachi period, it is possible to see them in a completely new way. There is a close relationship between the *muen* and *kugai* qualities possessed by the leagues (*ikki*) and the orientation of debt-abrogation itself to the realm of *muen*.

The Disavowal of Collective Punishment

Article 6 of the regulations for the harbor of Hakata states that “in cases of arson, the person [responsible] shall be punished,” while Article 3 of the regulations for Matsuzaka says “quarrels and arguments are strictly forbidden, and the master of a [defaulting] borrower is not to be considered responsible for the crime, while in the case of travelers and similar persons, only the person [responsible] shall be found at fault.” Article 11 of the same regulations states, “in case of fire, the master of the arsonist will not be considered responsible for the crime, and [only] the person responsible for the fire will be banished.” These regulations make it clear that the system of collective punishment that dominated the secular world at the time did not apply to *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places and persons. Article 5 of Oda Nobunaga’s regulations concerning Azuchi’s *raku* market states that “in the case of fire, the master of the person who caused the fire is not to be considered responsible for the crime, but the person who set the fire will be punished, their person to be banished, depending on the degree of responsibility,” and Article 6 of the same document says “if the masters of criminals, [defaulting] borrowers and similar types have no knowledge of the circumstances, it should not be argued that they should be considered responsible for the crimes [of the latter]. Rather, the criminals themselves will be punished for their crimes.” As Katsumata explains in detail, these examples attest to the special character of such places and groups of persons.

Organizations of Elders and Youths

A form of organization based on the principle of seniority is found in undeveloped societies, and it also characterizes *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places and people. In the medieval period, seniority was calculated not only according to simple chronological age, but also according to the “artistry” (*geinō*) of a particular place or group. For example, among merchants “wealth” was the determinant.

At the same time, there existed a consistent principle of equality in groups of elders and youths. It is well known that the groups of elders (*kaigōshu* 会合衆 or *sanjūrokuninshu* 三十六人衆) who managed the organizations governing cities gathered for monthly functions and probably used a majority principle when making close decisions. Governing bodies known as *hyōjōshū* 評定衆 or *zenji no isshū* 禪寺の一衆 managed “ancient places” such

as the Zen temple of Kōmyōji in Ise, considered to be a *muen* place, and it is very likely that other *muen* places and *kugai* temples had management bodies with fundamentally the same organization.²¹ The guilds of the early medieval period, which were similarly organized based on seniority, may be seen as the direct ancestor of the system of governance based on seniority found in *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places during the Sengoku period. Its deepest roots, however, go back to organizational principles based on equality found in undeveloped society. This deep-rooted power became increasingly self-aware and has maintained itself down to the present.



I have attempted above to describe the special characteristics of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places and people. If, however, they were all to manifest themselves in a society, it would be an astonishingly ideal world, with rules forbidding secular authorities from intruding into one's space, an exemption from taxes and duties, the guarantee of free passage, and the freedom from private bondage and from obligations of borrowing and lending. There, people would live peacefully in a state of mutual equality, outside the conflicts and wars of the secular world. This would indeed be a utopian community.²²

Times were difficult during the Sengoku period and the period of unification under Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), and no such utopia existed. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the secular authorities gradually exerted their power over *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* places and groups of persons, narrowing their scope, and placed them in legal frameworks that confined them to restricted areas; these pressures caused various contradictions to occur within these places and groups. Over and above this, one section was severed completely from the system and made the object of discrimination. Death from starvation and exposure was the reality for those who lived in the realm of liberty. Yet at the same time, we know as an undeniable historical fact that Sakai was a place of liberty and peace, as the astonished reports of Catholic missionaries make clear. A powerful will to create a utopia characterized by the attributes I have described strove desperately to resist the unfettered penetration of the principle of ownership and mastery, and to survive the strength of the authorities who based their power upon those principles. There is absolutely no uncertainty about the fact that people of the time referred to such places as *raku* and *kugai*.

As I have already explained,²³ *raku* derives from the Buddhist term *jūroku* (ten delights [of the Pure Land]), which can be found in Genshin's *Essentials of Salvation* (Ōjōyōshū 往生要集), describing the ten kinds of joy that can be found in Amida's western paradise. The ten *raku* were paradise itself, the joy of the ideal realm. During the early medieval period, *raku* was sometimes used as a component of place-names for small taxable units of land

21 Original footnote 8. *Kōmyōji komonjo*.

22 Original footnote 9. Whether or not such a "place" ever existed, we find here an expression of the Japanese inclination towards the kind of utopia imagined by the Chinese, whose essence was the same as that of the Japanese *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku*.

23 Ed. note. Amino, Chapter Ten.

which were increasingly in private possession, such as Jūrakumyō and Ichirakumyō, but it did not yet have the same meaning as it came to have later.²⁴ However, toward the end of the Sengoku period, the term was used widely and consciously to signify the realization of the ideal world to which people aspired. It was exactly this hope that motivated people to take part in sectarian uprisings (*Ikkō ikki* 一向一揆).²⁵

Like *jūroku*, the word *kugai* is a Buddhist term, believed to be derived from a word used in Chinese Zen temples. It appears in Japan in works such as the *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 (Eye Treasury of the True Law) of Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253), who refers to it in the phrase “seated meditation (*zazen* 座禪) in the Monks’ Hall (*undō* 雲堂) and the Buddha Hall (*kugai* 公界),”²⁶ and Mugaku Sogen 無学祖元 (1226–1286) used the expression “Engaku *kugai*” to refer to his temple, Engakuji.²⁷ It is clear then that *kugai* was a term used to refer to a Zen temple. It has been said that *kugai* refers simply to a space used by the general public in a temple, as opposed to that used by priests; for example, the expression *kugai jōdō* 公界上堂 signified periodic formal sermons held in Buddhist temples. However, a document written by the regent Kujō Michiie 九条道家 (1193–1252) in Kenchō 2 (1250), concerning Tōfukuji, the Zen temple in Kyoto that he built, refers to “one hundred *kugai* persons,” who were Zen priests, including the abbot (*chōrō* 長老) and a number of stewards (*chiji* 知事), belonging to the temple. Clearly, *kugai* here designates a place where religious training is undertaken by people who have cut their ties with the secular world. The term continued to be used inside Zen temples during the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392), but in volume nineteen of the *Taiheiki* 太平記, we find the words, “Reminiscence is a private matter; the way of the bow and arrow is a matter of the public world (*kugai*).” Based on this, we know that by the last decades of the fourteenth century, *kugai* had also come to mean “public” and “secular” in contrast to “private.” Nevertheless, it could not have been coincidental that the “way” related to the “artistry” (*geinō*) of the bow and arrow was referred to as a matter of *kugai* (that is, the public world). By the Muromachi period, the term *kugai* was being used positively and consciously in the sense of “secular” and “public,” as can be seen in the *kyōgen* play *Igui*, where we find the expression “*kugai* person.” This meaning remained in use into the Sengoku and Unification periods. Compared with the word *raku*, *kugai* seems redolent of the self-reliant Zen sect and its strong determination to cut off all private ties with the world, and therefore seems very appropriate for expressing

24 Original footnote 10. Hattori 1978 points out that not only is *jūroku* used widely in place names, as shown in Yanagita 1936, but that it also appears equally widely as a personal name (Jūrakubō, Jūroku Hōshi) and in the names of *shōen*. Hattori shows that the Jūroku-fuden (fields) on Nagashima-shō (Hizen province) was exempt from taxes, while on Ōi-shō (Mino province) it was the name of an itinerant agricultural laborer (*mōto*). He says because these fields were the core of those developed by the proprietor, *jūroku* signifies a certain type of freedom. Itinerant agricultural laborers were a floating population, so it is not strange to find *jūroku* used in connection with them.

25 Ed. note. Amino provides a supplemental note here (No. 13), which can be found in Amino, p. 290. The translation will appear at a later date.

26 Original footnote 11. *Shōbōgenzō*. Ed. note. The expression can be found in the 49th chapter, *Sanjūshichihon bodai bunpō*.

27 Original footnote 12. *Engakuji monjo*. Ed. note. Mugaku Sogen was the Chinese Rinzaï Zen priest Wuxue Zuyuan, who arrived in Japan in 1279 and was the founding priest of Engakuji in Kamakura.

the resolution to resist utterly any power that opposes the intention to establish a utopian community.²⁸

Nevertheless, *kugai* can also suggest a sense of solitude, as expressed in the phrase *kugai ōrainin* 公界往来人 (a person who is free to come and go). Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi seemed to like this usage, and included it in their ordinances and regulations. Indeed, it provides a foil for the species of leniency which *raku* seems to embody. *Muen* in turn gives even a greater sense of aloneness than *kugai*, maybe because this too was originally a Buddhist term meaning “not produced by causes or conditions,” in other words, lacking karmic ties. “*Muen* compassion,” for example, refers to the compassionate mind of the Buddha, which brings all beings to liberation equally, without asking anything about the one being saved.²⁹ Here too we can discern a kind of ideal realm, and so, this word, like *raku* and *kugai*, came to refer to a certain kind of place or person. It has, however, always been far more widely used than the other two, and had numerous meanings, appearing for instance in expressions such as *hindō muen* 貧道無縁 (a priest [lacking merit] and being without ties to the world) and *muen hinin* 無縁非人 (non-person without ties to the world). From the early medieval period it acquired a rather dark image, associated with poverty, starvation, and marginality, and even by the Sengoku period, it had not acquired as positive a connotation as *kugai* and *raku*.

These Buddhist terms, which seem to have welled up from the depths of the everyday lives of the Japanese, expressing a fundamental desire for the ideals of liberty, equality and peace, also show how Buddhism has become popularized in Japan and been made into something distinctly Japanese. The traditions of democracy in Greece and Rome combined with the traditions of Christianity became ever more deeply rooted during the medieval period in Europe, underpinned by the primitive vitality of the Germanic peoples. The ideas of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* lack the systematic clarity and force of those of liberty, equality and peace in western Europe. Yet at the same time, we must realize that basic ideas about being without a lord or master and being without property (which underlie *muen*) that flowed through the veins of the Japanese since primitive times are expressions of an aware and positive “Japaneseness.”

During the period of Unification and the Edo period, however, *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku* quickly lost their positive associations. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi took the essence out of *raku* and it lost most of its life force; *kugai* came to be written with the character for “painful” (苦, *ku*) rather than for “public” (公 *ku*); while *muen* became associated with the dark and lonely world of the *muenbotoke* 無縁仏, the unclaimed or unidentified dead.³⁰

As I have frequently stated, these ideas certainly lived through the Edo period in a basic form at the foundation of the lives of the common people, but we also must ask why this was so. To answer this question, we must return to the period that might be considered the well-spring of ideas about *muen*, that is, the early medieval period (the Kamakura and

28 Ed. note. Amino provides a supplemental note here (No. 14), which can be found in Amino, pp. 290–96. The translation will appear at a later date.

29 Original note. Refer to Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*.

30 Ed. note. Amino provides a supplemental note here (No. 15), which can be found in Amino, pp. 296–305. The translation will appear at a later date.

Northern and Southern Courts periods), as a way of tracking the origins of the historical facts we have been discussing. During this time, we can find only the buds of the ideas of *muen*, *kugai*, and *raku*. Therefore I will, in the chapters to come, discuss in greater detail and depth each of the eight characteristics described above.

Translated by William Johnston

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