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INVISIBLE HIBUTSU (HIDDEN BUDDHA)
AND VISIBLE ICON

Already since the end of last century, living images and recently performativity have been urgently discussed in the research of art history¹. Also there is a related interest in the topic of art of agency in anthropology² and the affordance in psychology and the discussion of materiality and objects in archeology and religious studies³. Also the invisibility⁴ or visibility⁵ which is related to the idea of exhibition and museum⁶ has been often researched. And the discussion has now widened to include the idols, doubles, colored sculptures, wax sculptures and even dolls and puppets⁷ and the idea of presence is again under scrutiny versus the idea of representation⁸. Furthermore the image itself has been discussed and an attempt has been made to return it to the primordial idea of the ambiguity between invisible and visible⁹.

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¹ Freedberg D. *The Power of Images*, Chicago, 1989.

² Gell A. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford, 1998; *Art's Agency and Art History* / Ed. Osborne and Tanner, Blackwell, 2007.

³ Walker Bynum C. *Christian Materiality*, New York, 2011.

⁴ Belting H. *Unsichtbare Meisterwerke*, München, 1998; Kessler H. L. *Spiritual Seeing*, Pennsylvania, 2000; *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* / Ed. Giselle de Nie, Karl F. Morrison and Marco Mostert, Brepols, 2005.

⁵ Bryson N. *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, Yale, 1983; *Vision in Context* / Ed. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay, Routledge, 1996; *Visuality Before and Beyond Renaissance* / Ed. Robert Nelson, Cambridge, 2000.

⁶ Carrier D. *Museum Skepticism*, Durham, 2006.

⁷ *The Idol in the Age of Art* / Ed. Michael W. Cole and Rebecca Zorach, Ashgate, 2009; *Das Double* / Ed. Viktor I. Stoichita, Wiesbaden, 2006; *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure* / Ed. Roberta Panzanelli, Los Angeles, 2008; *Nelson V. The Secret Life of Puppets*, Harvard, 2001.

⁸ *Presence* / Ed. Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepherd, Ashgate, 2006.

⁹ Regis Dobray. *Vie et mort de l'image*, Paris, 1992. Belting H. *Bild-Anthropologie*, München, 2001.

What do these discussions mean? They are all related to the concept of the object and matter which are otherwise thought to be receptive and dead as being an active (agent) and conscious subject. And this way of thinking could be interpreted as an attempt to re-evaluate the European material culture which has especially developed since 12th century Gothic era and whose origin goes back to the idea of icon in 8th century Byzantium, as will be discussed in this paper. It has in the end its history dating back to the Mosaic laws against the human instinct of animism¹⁰. This reasoning of material culture or materialism can be said to have until now already three thousand years' pre-history and history, if the legend of Moses is taken as a historical fact in the time of Ramesses the second around 1250 B.C.

But this is a story of the West. The situation outside has no relation with this long history. It is true that the material culture is flourishing also outside the West, for example in Asia, and in this paper's case in Japan, but in a place without Judeo-Christian reasoning of materialism and icon, there are many incongruities in the phenomena to be explained. Hibutsu (secret Buddha) in Japan is one of them. From the Western point of view of materialism, it is a sculpture or a portrait painting of Buddha or some Buddhist saints which is thought to be an item of cultural and historical heritage and if it is aesthetically and technically an object of interest, it can be evaluated as a work of art, and researched by art historians and exhibited in museums. But Hibutsu is denied to be visible and to be exhibited.

Here the animistic sensibility toward matter is still apparent on the surface, not hidden in the unconsciousness. It might be a surprise even for ourselves to notice it and usually we don't admit it, as the modernization or Westernization is taken for granted. But it is easy to see it in the everyday life in Japan. Once German philosopher Karl Löwith (1897–1973) who stayed in Japan as a professor of Tohoku University in 1936–1941 wrote that the Japanese people were living on the upper floor where a series of works by Western thinkers from Plato through Heidegger are available, while on the ground floor they were thinking and feeling in a Japanese way and the European teacher is wondering where the ladder is between these two floors¹¹. Also earlier in 1911 the first most important Japanese modern writer and novelist Soseki Natsume

¹⁰ As will be shown later, here the term "animism" is used as Edward Tylor (1832–1917) wrote in his pioneer work where he used the term for the first time. He wrote that he proposed the term "animism" to investigate the deep-lying doctrine of Spiritual Beings and avoided the term "spiritualism" as it had become already the designation of a particular modern sect. So actually "animism" meant for Tylor the attitude to admit spirit or consciousness in matter. Tylor *E. B. Primitive Culture*, London, 1929 (1871), vol. I, pp. 425–426.

¹¹ Löwith *K. Yoroppa no nihirizumu* (Der europäische Nihilismus), Chikuma-Shobo, 1948, pp. 129–130. It was written and published in Japan in the journal *Siso(Idea)*, in the September, October and November issues in 1940.

(1867–1916) wrote that Japan's modernization was not spontaneous but forced from outside and developed only superficially¹².

As Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) remarked while living in Japan since 1890, Japan is a country where polytheistic Gods are still living¹³. It is not as in Europe, where Christianity has suppressed ingenious Gods and left them away in the deep forest or in the Arctic, as Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) left romantic stories¹⁴.

So the instinctive way of life which was first denied by Moses's Ten Commandments is, in Japan, not suppressed away in unconsciousness but stays intact on the surface and the living images are not rhetorically living nor as if living as in a play like with the case of the art of surrealism, but actually living.

The phenomenon of Hibutsu is a good point of departure to make research upon visibility / invisibility and unconsciousness / consciousness and death / life in matter. Hibutsu has been just an obstacle against the research of art history as the Western discipline.

The art history in Japan as the Western discipline could be said to begin with the opening of the shrine of Hibutsu (hidden Buddha) of Guze (Saviour of the Universe) Kannon in Horyu-ji Temple (fig. 1). It was opened in 1884 (or 1886) by Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) who was a professor of philosophy from Harvard University. Fenollosa was accompanied by Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzo 1863–1913) who was to become the first Japanese art historian and later the curator of Japanese art in the Boston Museum of Art. Fenollosa insisted to open the shrine with the written permission of the Japanese government, but the monks in Horyu-ji Temple were all afraid of the taboo being violated and fled away. Fenollosa and Okakura succeeded to open the shrine and uncovered the statue of the multi layered folds and at last the hidden statue appeared after a long time of seclusion. But nothing happened regarding the disaster which the monks were afraid of¹⁵.

In this instance, the statue became visible and its human shape was thought as a dead matter, not as idol which is suppose to live and have con-

¹² *Soseki Natsume*. The Enlightenment of Modern Japan // Soseki Bunmei Ronshu (Essays on Culture by Soseki), Iwanami Bunko, 1986, p. 34.

¹³ *Hearn L.* The Chief City of the Province of the Gods // Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan, 1894(reprinted in Writings from Japan, Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 39–62.).

¹⁴ *Heine H.* Elementargeister(1837) // Sämtliche Schrifften, Dritter Band, München, 1978, S. 643–703. Ibid., Die Götter in Exil(1853) // Sämtliche Schrifften, Sechster Band, München, 1985, S. 397–423.

¹⁵ This historically important incident was recorded by Fenollosa himself and by Okakura Kakuzo(Tenshin). They did the first scientific research of the works of art in Japanese old cities. *Fenollosa E. F.* Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art, London, 1912, p. 50; *Okakura Tenshin*, Nihon Bijutu Shi (History of Japanese Art), 1891(reprinted in Meiji Bungaku Zenshu, vol. 38, Chikuma Shobo, 1968, p. 168.

sciousness, but as work of art which is dead or has no consciousness. So here the magical idol became a material icon.

It is an important step in the modernization in Japan. But what was behind this destruction of the idol?¹⁶ How was the icon interpreted as a dead matter in the 8th century? What is the reasoning behind it? How is it possible to differentiate between a magical idol and material icon?

ICON, MATTER, VISIBILITY, REPRESENTATION, SENSES, INCARNATION

The idea concerning icons in eighth century Byzantium can be stated as: Because God has become matter, God has become visible and able to be represented by matter. But it also entails that God-Christ can be sensed by other senses. As Saint John says in his first letter, “we have heard it; we have seen it with our own eyes; we looked upon it, and felt it with our own hands” (1: 1–2). But after Christ’s Ascension, Christ the God can be represented only by his material portraits (icons)¹⁷. In this case, the important point is that God is not immanent in matter (as was refuted by the iconoclastic Old Testament); God can only be represented in matter (as was supported by the iconodule of the New Testament). As is asserted by the Chalcedonian dogma, in Christ, the nature of God and the nature of matter were united “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation”. And we encounter this paradox in material icons. Further we can say, with icons, a whole material culture was founded on the dogma of incarnation.

But this idea of the visibility of God in matter is a peculiar idea, as it is founded upon the paradoxical idea of incarnation which is beyond our rea-

¹⁶ Sometimes this change from the cult object to museum piece is interpreted as iconoclasm. But it is a change from idol to icon, so should be named idoloclasm in its purest sense and it is the conquest of animism. And to be exhibited is the character of icon par excellence, as the testimony of the visible God, as will be discussed later.

¹⁷ The recent publication by Bissera Pentcheva refers to this idea that God in Christ can be perceived by all senses. *Pentcheva B. V. The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*, Pennsylvania, 2010. The reason why God’s visibility has been the main topic of discussion is that until recently there has been no way of representation for other senses than visibility. And God’s visibility in Christ has affirmed the positive meaning of material life. This is why visibility has been thought superior among all senses from the beginning of Greek culture. As Friedrich Nietzsche remarked, the figurative art (visibility) is of Apollonian as contrasted to the nonfigurative art of music of Dionysian (*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Band I, Hanser, München, 1954, S. 21). Visibility is the sense which makes the world material, rational and understandable without chaotic agnosticism. So it could be said that we need it in order to live in a positive way in this material world. To think about the sacred space which concerns all senses and even beyond senses is to return to the foundation of Western material culture based on the superiority of the visibility in Greek Antiquity and revived by the idea of window by Leon Battista Alberti who interprets the picture as an open window (*una finestra aperta onde si possa vedere l’historia*). *Alberti L. B. La Pittura*, traduzione di Lodovico Domenichi (Venezia, 1547), p. 15.

soning (1 Cor. 2:9). By this idea, which accomplished the Old Testament prohibition of thinking of matter as living, the instinctive notion of the living (inspired) matter was repressed in the West until Sigmund Freud rediscovered it. But outside the West, there are still a lot of examples of living matter which were lost in the West.

A Hidden Buddha (the sacred sculpture or painting of Buddhist deities which is kept hidden) is one of them and the most prominent example for the idea of sacredness in general. Hidden Buddhas are invisible as they are kept in seclusion and in darkness, and they do not only “seem” to be living, but are living in the literal sense for the people who think they are living.

For this study, recent Western researches on Hidden Buddhas will be consulted, but it is fruitful to see Hidden Buddhas in comparison with the explicitly visible Western material culture since Byzantium and definitely since the Renaissance Age. Also it is to be noted that the reason why the sacred is invisible has relation with the spirit and the consciousness, which denies to be treated in the objective way of science.

INVISIBLE HIBUTSU

The Hibutsu (Hidden Buddha) is an instructive topic, which presents an alternative approach to Western thinking upon sacred space. In Japan, even now in the modern era, there are a lot of “Hidden Buddhas” called “Hibutsu” in Japanese (statues or paintings), which have not yet become subjects of historical art research. They are kept in temples, but are not to be displayed, or displayed only once within a certain period, i.e. once in three years or ten years or sixty years or never.

In recent years, there are often occasions to exhibit Hidden Buddhas in museums and temples, especially because of the 1300 years’ centenary of Nara city in 2010. But even in these cases, they sometimes do not show their photos. The information leaflet of the exhibition of the Mii-dera treasures in 2008 showed on the reverse side an explanation of details of the exhibition, but there was no photo of the Hidden Buddha which was the main piece of the exhibition (fig. 2)¹⁸. Why were they reluctant to show it? The superficial interpretation that to keep it hidden is to stimulate the curiosity of people is too vulgar and also ignorant of the cultural background. Not to show these Buddhas has a deeper religious meaning.

¹⁸ This Hidden Buddha is a 9th century painting of Fudo-Myoo (Acalanatha) known as “Ki (Yellow) Fudo” and was already researched scientifically by art historians and published in a monographical book with the extensive detailed photos and X ray and ultra red ray photos. *Noriaki Ajima*. Hibutsu Fudo-Myoo Gazo, Asahi Shinbun-Sha, 2001. It is thought to be painted according to the visionary experience of the Buddhist master Enchin (814–891) in 838 and was exhibited for the first time since about 20 years ago.

Among Hidden Buddhas, some are never to be shown and they are called “Absolutely Hidden Buddhas (Zettai Hibutsu)”. Among them there are three famous Zettai Hibutsu. One in Zenko-ji Temple in Nagano, the second in Nigatsu-Do Temple in Nara, and the third in Senso-ji Temple in Tokyo. They are never to be viewed. Even the priest of the highest hierarchy does not dare to see their own Hidden Buddha. The Buddha statue in Zenko-ji Temple is said to be the first statue of Buddha which was brought from Paekche (Baekje, 18 BCE — 660 CE) in 552 (or 538) as a gift of King Song of Paekche, when Buddhism was introduced into Japan. Note that it is almost contemporary with the rediscovery of Mandyion in 544. This statue was brought to Nagano in the present place in 642. Since 654, by edict of Emperor Kotoku (596–654), it has been an Absolutely Hidden Buddha. The record of its last opening for veneration was in 1702. From the 13th century, even its copy called Maedachi, which means, “Standing in Front (of the Hidden Buddha)” became itself a Hidden Buddha and could be seen only once in six years when it is open for viewing for two months¹⁹. The year 2009 was the year to open the shrine and from 5. May until the end of June, and six million 730 thousand people visited it.

In addition, the 88 Buddhas along the pilgrimage route in Shikoku Island are in general all Hidden Buddhas. There was a big album published in 2002 which was dedicated to these Buddhas, among which 47 of the 88 Hidden Buddhas were photographed, and 28 Hidden Buddhas gave photos of their substitute Maedachi or here named Maebutsu (Buddha in front)²⁰. So even now in the age of proliferating images, we cannot obtain any image of these thirteen Buddhas.

In Zenko-ji, its Buddhist image, hidden and invisible, is connected with specific rites in sacred space. The “Tainai Meguri” rite may be regarded as one of them and can be found in many other temples, but the Zenko-ji Temple presents a characteristic example. Under the main altar which contains the Absolutely Hidden Buddha, there is a subterranean passage going around the miraculous image above, where the pilgrims must move in complete darkness and at the end touch the key of the shrine precisely under the altar (presumably to receive good fortune) and then return back to the light outside. The movement through darkness to light is to be understood symbolically as a new spiritual birth. Therefore it is called “Tainai Meguri (Going around in the womb)”. Zenko-ji has an “Eternal Fire” (a lantern) which is

¹⁹ The legend and the history of the Hidden Buddha in Zenko-ji, which is supposed to be actually the Amida triad statues, see *McCallum D. F. Zenkoji and Its Icon: A Study in Medieval Japanese Religious Art*, Princeton, 1994, p. 38ff. Especially for its popular beliefs, see *Shigeru Gorai. Zenko-ji Mairi (Pilgrimage to Zenko-ji Temple)*, Heibonsha, 1988.

²⁰ *Sakurai Megumu* (photos). *Shikoku Henro Hibutsu Junrei (Pilgrimage Route in Shikoku Island for Hidden Buddhas)*, NHK Publishing, 2002.

said to have burned since its construction in 644, two years after Honda Yoshimitsu (Zenko) brought the Buddha figures from Naniwa (Osaka), where they had been abandoned by the anti-Buddhist family Mononobe. This fire is, of course, not to light up the space, but to intensify the darkness.

Invisibility and darkness are the characteristics of sacredness and sacred space in Japan. In Enryaku-ji on Hiei-zan mountain near Kyoto, which is the center of Tendai Esoteric Buddhism, the central shrine is half under the ground and very dark in its sanctuary. Here also a pair of lanterns (called Eternal Fire) has been burning from the year 788 in its center on both sides of the small shrine, which also contains an Absolutely Hidden Buddha. This Buddha statue is said to have been hewn by the founder of the Tendai sect Saicho (766–864) himself from sacred wood in the same year. A very rare photo was taken on the 1200 years' anniversary of the foundation of the Tendai sect in 2005. And of course it is still inaccessible to art historians.

Why are Hibutsu hidden and invisible? There are a number of studies of Hibutsu (Hidden Buddhas), especially by Motohiro Yoritomi (1945–) and Fabio Rambelli (1963–)²¹. But recently art historian Shiro Ito (1945–) points out that Hibutsu is only a phenomenon in Japan and does not exist in other Buddhist cultures and he deplores it not having been researched and explained yet²². Takako Fujisawa researches the phenomenon of Hibutsu historically and notes that the term Hibutsu can only be found in documents from the Edo period, and also notes that this phenomenon can be traced back to late 9th century. She tries to interpret Hibutsu and notes several characteristics. She writes that Hidden Buddhas are mainly Kannon-Bodhisattvas (especially Juichi-Men Kannon, which means Kannon crowned with 11 heads) and they have magical power for worldly benefit (health, money, love, peace and so on). Kannon has an actual relation with people and speak to them as if they are living. Hibutsu are, according to her, inspirited and their power has no relation to which form they have, because it is not important to see them, but to hear them talk²³. But she does not give any clear explanation as to the reason for their invisibility, although some hints already exist in her description of the Hidden Buddhas that they talk.

²¹ The essay in Buddhist study by Motohiro Yoritomi should be mentioned first. Fabio Rambelli researches the Hibutsu from the point of view of semiology. *Yoritomi Motohiro*. The World of Hibutsu // Hibutsu, Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1991, pp. 74–120. *Rambelli F.* Secret Buddhas: The Limits of Buddhist Representation // Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 57, No. 3 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 271–307.

²² Shiro Ito, in the text for the magazine Ichikojinn with the special topic for the Buddhist statues in Kyoto, November, 2009, p. 39.

²³ *Fujisawa Takako*. What is Secret Buddha? // Nihon no Hibutsu (Secret Buddhas in Japan), Heibonsha, 2002, pp. 114–119

LIVING IMAGES WITH CONSCIOUSNESS

It is art historians in the West who point to the character of Buddhist images theoretically and explicitly as living images and not as works of art²⁴. Bernard Faure writes “Buddhist icons are, in a manner alive, and not simply dead representations”²⁵. And he also writes they are “something quite different from a simple representation”²⁶. Here the term “icon” is meant to designate the painting or sculpture for religious usage in general and has nothing to do with the historical definition of icon in Byzantine theology as will be shown later in this paper. Also he writes concerning the portraits of the Zen priests that they are not merely “realistic”, but real²⁷. Hiroo Sato (1953–) writes in connection with the idea of Honji-Suijaku that, according to this idea, Buddhist priests and Buddhist statues have both become visible expressions of the invisible Buddha and they are ontologically the same²⁸. So Buddhist statues can be said to be living in the same way as the Buddhist priests are living. Or it is better to say that there is no distinction between living and not-living. But the first Japanese art historian who

²⁴ Recently it is more frequently remarked than before in Japan that Buddhist images are not works of art. I can cite here one example written by Akira Masaki (1953–) who is one of the most important researchers of Esoteric Buddhism. He writes in his book concerning recently very popular exhibitions of the Buddhist statues in museums: “We should stop to see Buddha statues as Aesthetic enjoyment, or bluntly to say, to stop to see it as an object. To see them is from the outset wrong. They are not works of art. They are to pray to”. *Masaki Akira*. *The Mysteries of Buddha Images*, Kodansha, Tokyo, 2010, p. 259. This tendency might be because of the post-modern tendency to return to the traditional animistic attitude toward matter. The most important critique for this kind of anti-Western remarks about Buddhist art, which denies the Western concept of art to be applied to the Buddhist images was Katsuichiro Kamei (1907–1966). In the early post-war years, he often wrote that the Buddha images are Buddha themselves and they are not to be viewed, but rather to be prayed to. He wrote in his most popular book as follows: To see Buddha statues as works of art from a stylistic point of view is a mistaken idea. Buddha statues are not sculptures. They are just Buddha. To talk about Buddha statues is to talk about Buddha itself, and it is a difficult task to talk. In it, not only the spirit of Buddha, but also the spirits of the ancient people is present. In order to understand the spirit who made, consecrated and prayed to them, the only thing we can do is to bow and pray in front of them as our ancestors did. *Kamei Katsuichiro*. *Yamato Koji Hubutsu Shi* (Nature and Seasons of the Ancient Temples in Yamato, Shincho-Bunko, 1953, p. 182.

²⁵ *Faure B.* The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze // *Critical Inquiry* 24, spring 1998, p. 768–769.

²⁶ *Idem.* *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Princeton, 1996, p. 237.

²⁷ *Idem.* *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton, 1991, p. 170.

²⁸ *Sato Hiroo.* *Kishomon no seishinshi* (The History of the Idea of the Prayer Text), Kodansha, 2006. Also for the idea of Honji Suijaku and its interpretation in Western perspective, see *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a combinatorial paradigm* / Ed. Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, Routledge, 2003.

interpreted Buddhist statues for the first time not as representations of Buddhist deities in the Western sense, but as a living matter which is sacred in itself was Tadashi Inoue (1929–). He named this phenomenon as Reiboku-Kegen-Butsu (appearing Buddha in inspirited wood)²⁹. And Yoko Yamamoto (1955–) has recently added a new interpretation following Tadashi Inoue's contribution. She writes that the sacred woods were transformed from animistic deities to Buddhist deities by having been sculpted in the form of Buddhist deities³⁰. So all Buddhist statues are sacred in themselves and can be said to be living, and there are Buddhist statues especially named as living bodies (Shojin). These Shojin Buddhas have become Hibutsu (secret Buddhas)³¹.

Therefore Hibutsu are Buddhist images par excellence or the most spectacular example of Buddhist images. They are not "sculptures" in the Western sense. They are living. This is not in a rhetorical sense, but literally and actually living³².

Alternatively it might be better to say that they are thought to have consciousness³³. Conscious beings are not to be seen or exhibited. Fabio Rambelli cites the text compiled by Saisho in 1499 and interprets its content as saying that Buddhas (icons) have a spirit, and should not be soiled (by easy contact) and he explains this invisibility as necessary in order to avoid pollution³⁴. But we need further explanation as to why visibility entails pollution. We can exhibit animals, but we cannot exhibit human beings as it is a violation. It is because to gaze at them means to make them objects and possess them. This notion appears to be universal. Roland Barthes (1915–80) wrote that photography transformed subject into object³⁵ and Susan Sontag (1933–2004) also writes of

²⁹ Inoue Tadashi. *Shinbutsu-Shugo no Seishin to Zokei* (The Meaning of the Idea of Shinbutsu-Shugo (Accomplishment of Gods by Buddha) and its Outcome in Figurative Art) // *Zusetsu Nihon no Bukkyo*, vol. 6, Shinchosha, 1991, pp. 50–120.

³⁰ Yamamoto Yoko. *Tataru Misogi to Zobutsu Jigyo* (Cursing Materials and the Making of Buddhist Sculptures from Them: On the Legends of the Woods of Buddhist Statues) // *Bulletin of Meisei University. Department of Japanese and Comparative Literature, College of Japanese Culture*, 15, 2007, pp. 73–83. Oku Takeo. *Controlling Miraculous Efficacy* // *Bijutsu Forum* 21, Vol. 22, 2010, pp. 37–40.

³¹ Oku Takeo. *Shojin Butsuzo ron* (An Essay upon Buddha of the Living Body) // *Koza Nihon Bijutushi* (Studies in the history of Japanese Art), vol. 4, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 2005, pp. 293–322.

³² The idea of living image might show the same recent interest with the idea of affordance defined by James J. Gibson in psychology and the art of agency by Alfred Gell in anthropology.

³³ Sharf R. H. *The Rhetoric of Idolatry* // *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* / Ed. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, Stanford, 2001, pp. 10–11. Robert H. Sharf would be the first person to go further to mention the consciousness in Buddhist images.

³⁴ Rambelli F. *op.cit* (21), p. 277.

³⁵ "La Photographie transformait le sujet en objet" in Barthes R. *La chambre claire: Notes sur la photographie*, 1980, p. 29 (Japanese edition, Misuzu Shobo, Tokyo, 1985, p. 22).

photography as a way of possession³⁶. But it is better to cite here a much older Coptic text about visibility in general from the fifth or sixth century which warned women not to show off when going to church and told its flock, with a word “What the eye sees it appropriates”³⁷. Living (conscious) beings are not to be possessed. Just one glimpse is enough to get to know that they exist.

Jizo Bodhisattvas are the most popular Buddhist images in Japan (fig. 3). We find them quite often standing along the way. They are all individual Buddhas. Certainly nobody in Japan thinks they are representations of one original prototype Jizo Bodhisattva. Perhaps this notion is reinforced by the fact that Buddhist deities are not historical beings, but even the historical Buddha himself is interpreted as a universal deity in Mahayana Buddhism. They are not representations, but all living (inspired) by themselves and people feel these deities refuse to be photographed. They are not representations of deities, but deities themselves. To put it in another way, they are not representations, but doubles (simulacra).

These images of Buddha are living (inspired and conscious). There is no distinction between Buddha and its image. So sometimes it happens that in the temples or shrines from where deities and portraits are loaned for exhibitions, people perform a ritual to draw their spirit out of the material before they are to be exhibited in a museum. Then it becomes possible to exhibit them as works of art. This practice is often performed before an exhibition, although museum curators are already sufficiently Western-minded to feel suspicious about the efficiency of such a pre-modern ritual³⁸.

Portrait sculptures or paintings are also considered as living. These years the repairs of the whole construction of the tremendous building in the Higashi-Hongan-ji Temple in Kyoto are under way, and scheduled to be finished (2003–2010). The function of this building is to house the portrait (in this case, a sitting wooden sculpture) of the founder of the Buddhist sect (Jodo-shinshu), the priest Sinran (1173–1263). The portrait is called a “Venerable Shadow (Go-ei or Mi-ei)” and the shrine is called a “House of Venerable Shadow (Goei-do or Miei-do)”. Before the beginning of the repairs, this Go-ei was transferred to the neighboring building in a solemn ceremony, as if a living person, while many passionate believers were moved to tears by their very rare meeting with the Go-ei.

³⁶ *Sontag S.* On Photography, New York, 1977, pp. 155–156. Also, *Olin M.* Gaze // Critical Terms for Art History / Ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Schiff, Chicago, 1996, p. 216.

³⁷ *Frank G.* The Pilgrim’s Gaze in the Age before Icons // *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance* / Ed. Robert S. Nelson, Cambridge, 2000, p. 107. This text was traditionally attributed to the Coptic Saint Shenoute (348–465/6). *Pseudo-Shenoute.* On Christian Behaviour // *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptorum Coptici* / tr. K. H. Kuhn, Tomus 30, XL, 5, Louvain, 1960, p. 55.

³⁸ Fabio Rambelli describes this custom in detail. *Rambelli Fabio*, op.cit (21), p. 285.

I cite here one more (supposedly actually living) example among many from Zentsu-ji in Shikoku Island, where Kobo-daishi (Kukai 774–835) was born. Kobo-Daishi Kukai was the founder of another sect of esoteric Buddhism (Shingon Esoteric Buddhism). In this temple there is also a Mieido (a House of the Venerable Shadow) where the portrait painting of Kobo-Daishi is kept. This is said to be a self-portrait of Kobo-Daishi. Before he left for China, he climbed into the branches of a pine tree above a pond where, looking at his face mirrored in the pond, he made a portrait of himself which he left for his mother as a memory. This pine tree has already withered, but its trunk is kept near the pond. Later this portrait was named by Emperor Tsuchimikado (1196–1231) as a blinking portrait (Mehiki-Taishi-Zo) as it was said to have blinked when the emperor viewed it in 1209³⁹. This portrait is also a Hidden Buddha and is to be viewed only once in fifty years. The next time will be in 2035. Of course, there is no photo, but we have a photo of the copy from the Muromachi-period (15th century) (fig. 4).

The idea that Buddhist images are living is taken for granted among people in Japan where not only Buddhist statues, but also every material can be living (conscious). One prominent example is the doll cult in Japan. The doll cult has been popular in Japan, and in this post-modern world, this cult is becoming even stronger. We Japanese cannot get rid of dolls as just matter. As a result, dolls are given funerals called Ningyo-Kuyo (Doll Funeral). The most famous place for Ningyo-Kuyo is the Awashima Shrine in Kada near Wakayama city. This shrine is a legendary old temple of the indigenous Shinto religion founded by Empress Jingu (170–269) and Emperor Nintoku (257–399) from the early third century. Dolls are waiting to be cremated (fig. 5). People bring dolls which they cannot throw out, and pay a donation to the temple (a cremation fee is charged). On a sign, it is written not to leave dolls without permission. However it is not written not to take them. For we Japanese, it is unthinkable to take these dolls and sell them to an antique shop. We are scared and dare not even touch them, because we feel they are living. The cremation kiln also seems to us comparable to a crematorium for human beings. I needed courage to take photos of these dolls. To take photos seems to be blasphemy. Doll funerals can be seen in many places. In Tokyo, the Meiji Jingu Shrine is a very new institution which was constructed after modernization. It is the biggest Shinto Shrine in Tokyo, located in the center of Tokyo near Shinjuku. They call this funeral at the Meiji Shrine the “Farewell to Dolls Festival”.

³⁹ At that time, the emperor Tsuchimikado was only 13 years old. So in this case, naïve sensibility of a child would have caused him to see the painted portrait blink, although what people in the past believed to happen should be always respected.

At any rate Japanese people cannot simply get rid of things. This is true not only for dolls, but for many other things as well — such as needles for sewing which housewives have used for a certain period. There are also funerals for photos and cameras⁴⁰. From the pre-modern era, there is an expression that things acquire a spirit (become inspirited) when they become one hundred years old. These possessing spirits are called Tsukumo-Gami (fig. 6). Japanese people do not like old things. They like fresh and new things, as they are scared of old things inhabited by spirits. The idea of the protection of historical heritage is far from our indigenous idea.

SACRED EMPTY SPACE

Here one extraordinary example could be cited. It does not concern to important cultural heritage or works of art, but is a destruction of history and also shows how animistic ideas stay in the ordinary life of Japanese people. Sarachi is this example. When people sell and buy ground in Japan, they always get rid of everything old which is left from the people who were living in that place. They make the ground completely void (fig. 7). Sarachi is the word for this kind of ground. “Sara” means in Japanese “new” and in the same time “again”. This “Vacant Lot” is also in English written “Cleared Land for New Purposes” and it points to the future construction anew on the place. People make the ground cleared and empty to sell and when it is bought by somebody, this new owner will use this ground for a new purpose. So it also has positive meaning to begin from nothing. It should be made empty without any vestiges of the former owner. Otherwise nobody will buy it. But why? It could be explained culturally or even from the religious point of view.

This Japanese custom destroys not only the standing house but also the trees and all other memories which make the history of the family to whom they belonged. Next to this void, we can see in the neighbor ground an old house and old trees which have grown together with the people living there. The now empty space should have looked the same as its neighbor. But all memory was wiped out here. This is a negation of material memory and iconoclastic. It can be said to be vandalism.

It is said sometimes that there can be a practical reason for this vandalism. They say that Japanese houses are made mainly by wood. Because wood does not stay long, they build houses and demolish them very often. But it does not seem to be so simple.

Here it reminds of the now famous cultural custom called Shikinen-Sento which has been practiced since prehistorical time. In the most impor-

⁴⁰ Upon this memorial service for inanimate objects, see *Rambelli F.* Objects, Rituals, Tradition: Memorial Services (Kuyo) for Inanimate Objects // *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism*, Stanford, 2007, pp. 211–258.

tant Shinto Shrine in Ise which has relation with the Emperor's ancestor Deity Amaterasu, the shrine buildings are regularly rebuilt every twenty years with new wooden materials repeating the same form of architecture. So there are always two spaces of the same dimension, one is occupied by the shrine and the other is empty for twenty years waiting its turn to be occupied by the shrine (fig. 8). The other empty space is called Kodenchi which means "old sacred place". This custom has already over one thousand and three hundred years' history as the first documented rebuilding was from the year 690 in the era of the empress Jito (645–703). Not only the building of the temple, but also all utensils' for liturgy in the temple, which are wooden or of textile or iron and other metals decorated with precious stones are made anew.

So in the centuries' old rituals and in the everyday life, new and fresh things are evaluated, but behind it there can also be seen an avoidance of the spirits. They don't like things to be haunted by spirits of Tsukumo-Gami. So before the thing will be possessed by spirits, they are to get rid of these things⁴¹. This can also be seen as the reason for the new ground being sold completely void as Sarachi.

But this Sarachi moves us somehow. The contrast between the space of complete void and the time honored old house beside it, shows the mortality and vulnerability of human life. But this empty space itself is full of awe. It can also be said to be beautiful. This sensation should be explained. It might be said to have something absolute in it. Without any material and human vestige, it could denote something invisible and absolute.

Roland Barthes (1915–1980) wrote after his Japan trip about the Imperial Palace in the center of Tokyo that "la crête basse, forme visible de l'invisibilité, cache le rien sacré"⁴². In front of the entrance by double bridges, there is a curiously empty space called Kokyo-Mae-Hiroba (Open Space in front of the Imperial Palace). It is in the middle of the metropolis Tokyo. It is an empty space in front of the Imperial Palace (fig. 9). This space has no practical function.

Takeshi Hara (1962–), who wrote a book dedicated to this empty Kokyo-Mae-Hiroba, noticed the same negative atmosphere in this empty place in front of the Imperial Palace as with the empty space in Ise Shrine⁴³. Why did Roland Barthes feel sacredness in it? Is it a delight of nothingness? There is no affordance in the matter. No life, no consciousness, but is it full of delight?

⁴¹ But once things are haunted by spirits, people feel awe and don't dare to even touch them. So Japanese temples which are old enough to be possessed by spirits are kept cautiously as a sacred place.

⁴² Roland Barthes, *L'Empire des signes*, Flammarion, 1970, p. 46.

⁴³ Hara Takeshi. *Kokyo-Mae-Hiroba*, Chikuma Gaguei Bunko, 2007 (originally published in 2003), p. 232.

This iconoclastic delight in ourselves was also noticed by Ango Sakaguchi (1906–1955) facing the destruction of Tokyo by American air raids. He wrote that although for American soldiers it seemed that deserted Japanese people were exhausted and at a loss, their procession was not of a kind of exhaustion and loss, but of rich fullness and marvelous weight and they are naïve children of the destiny⁴⁴. He named this attitude toward life “Naki ni shikazaru no Seishin (the idea that it is better to have nothing)”, and he found the same spirit also in Japanese traditional art form of garden and tea ceremony⁴⁵. He wrote this essay to refute the idea which was expressed by the German architect Bruno Taut (1880–1938) who stayed in Japan 1933–1936. Bruno Taut has contrasted the Japanese simple taste against the western rich materialism. But Sakaguchi has denied both of them as having a positive attitude towards matter. And he said the idea of nothing can lead to a simple and frugal taste and in the same time to gorgeous luxury. So there can be born no idea of art from it.

These iconoclastic ideas which are manifested in empty spaces and the people's attitude in front of the destruction of the material culture can be explained by the animistic idea of thinking of matter as being haunted by spirits. They scare of haunting spirits or anima or consciousness in the matter, so they get rid of them together with the matter. And perhaps in this void they confront the invisible absolute. This conclusion is contrary to the usually accepted idea about Japanese polytheism. But taking into consideration that Japanese people do not mind and are even ignorant to which God they pray in temples and they just pray to some transcendental, then they could be said to be monotheist. Perhaps therefore they feel freedom and even delight in front of nothing. In the contemporary Japan, the situation does not change as can be shown by the examples of Sarachi. It might be said that it would not change unless Moses would appear in Japan in future to lead people to Exodus from animism, as since Exodus there has been a categorical refusal from above of the existence of spirits in matter.

REFUSAL OF LIFE OR CONSCIOUSNESS IN MATTER BY JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY

Animated or, perhaps more precisely, inspirited matter is what Judeo-Christianity refuted from the beginning of legendary Moses. Egypt was a land where matter was inhabited by spirits. Living material, material viewed as living (conscious) should be one of the definitions of an idol, and I suppose it is the most important one. Plutarch deplored that even among Greeks

⁴⁴ *Sakaguchi Ango*. Daraku-Ron (On Decadence, 1946) // Complete Works, vol. 14, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1990, p. 518.

⁴⁵ *Idem*. Nihon Bunka Sikan (Private view upon Japanese Culture, 1942) // Complete Works, vol. 14, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1990, p. 372.

there are some who have not learned nor habituated themselves to speak of the bronze, the painted, and the stone effigies as statues of the gods, but rather call them (just) gods. And he adds that the great majority of Egyptians made offering to the animals themselves and treated them as gods⁴⁶. An idol does not represent something behind it, it means rather that it has no prototype and is living by itself and has consciousness. It is not only animated but also inspirited⁴⁷. Moses and the Old Testament prophets vehemently attacked this notion of thinking of manufactured figures as living by themselves. Suffice it to cite from Psalm 115:4–7 which says “their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, nostrils, but cannot smell; with their hands they cannot feel, with their feet they cannot walk, and no sound comes from their throats”.

The reason for the second Commandment and the prohibition of graven images is that people tended to think of these images as living (conscious) and pray to them. So it was desirable not to make them from the outset. The expression that idols are just dead matter is repeatedly found in many places in the Old Testament. On this presupposition, the icon theory of the 8th century stated that these dead materials have become vehicles to represent God, because God has become man (matter), so he has become visible and can be represented by a portrait (icon). So the idea that the materials (icons) themselves are not living and are just dead materials is a prerequisite for icon theory. St. John of Damascus also writes that, “it (the image of the human being) does not live, nor does it think, or give utterance, or feel, or move its members”⁴⁸. And St. Theodore the Studite repeats the same expression “For it is perhaps wood, or paint, or gold, or silver, or some one of the various materials which are mentioned”⁴⁹.

The important distinction between “latreia” and “proskynesis” by John of Damascus and incorporated into the act of the 2nd Nicaean Council is also to make distinction between God and matter. John of Damascus wrote, “I do not venerate matter (ὕλη), I venerate the fashioner of matter, who become matter for my sake”⁵⁰. So the icon is dead matter and not living (con-

⁴⁶ *Plutarch*. *Moralia*, 379C-D // The Loeb Classical Library, vol. V, 1936, p. 164–165.

⁴⁷ *Eastmond A.* Between Icon and Idol: The uncertainty of imperial images // *Icon and Word: the Power of Images in Byzantium* / Ed. Eastmond and James, Ashgate, 2003, p. 76. *Pentcheva Bissera V.* *Icon and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, Pennsylvania, 2006, p.149.

⁴⁸ *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* / Ed. Bonifatius Kotter, III, 16, Berlin, 1975, S. 125; *St John of Damascus*. Three Treatises on the Divine Images / tr. Louth, New York, 2003, p. 95.

⁴⁹ *Antirrheticus S. Theodori Studitae*, I, 11, PG, 99, 341c; St. Theodore the Studite, *On the Holy Icons* / tr. Roth, New York, 1981, p. 32.

⁵⁰ *Op. cit* (48) / Ed. Kotter, II, 14, S. 105; tr. Louth, p. 70.

scious). Therefore it is possible to see and exhibit it, and it can be a museum piece in the future in our age theoretically⁵¹. According to the Old Testament, there is no possibility to think that the object returns the gaze at all⁵². This instinctive sensibility is simply repressed by Mosaic laws.

TRANSCENDENCE VERSUS INSTINCT

In the study of Hibutsu in Zenko-ji Temple, Donald McCallum writes of its character as living image, and says that “the desire to worship a living icon” is “very deeply rooted in human psychology”⁵³. But as Bernard Faure writes, the notion of animated Buddhist icons has been repressed as a result of the modern and Western values of aestheticization, desacralization, and secularization⁵⁴.

How then do we distinguish dead icons from living idols? As Robert H. Sharf puts it concerning Buddhist images, “The charge of idolatry presupposes a clarity concerning the nature of sentience, consciousness, and embodiment. Yet such clarity continues to elude us”. Sharf concludes that the phenomenon of idolatry is always, and necessarily, in the eye of the beholder⁵⁵. It means it is our attitude which decides whether it is an idol and living (conscious) or an icon and matter. All images can be idols and living (conscious) according to the attitude of the people who are in front of them. Therefore the phenomenon of idolatry is within us and cannot be a subject of positivist research.

There are some Buddhist texts which show this situation. One is a text by Chinese Esho (648–714) written as an annotation to the text translated by Genjo (620–664) which says: “the wood has no spirit. But why does it utter voice?” Then it gives the answer that sincerity of prayer and strength of wish

⁵¹ Charles Barber explicitly describes icon as a work of art and artifact. *Barber Ch.* Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm, Princeton, 2002, p. 11.

⁵² In Hindu India, people go for “Darsan” at the deities and the visibility seems to be important to their relation with material Buddhas, but Darsan means that the deity sees the worshipper as well, as in the Hindu understanding the deity is present in the image. *Eck D. L.* Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India, New York, 1981 (1998), pp. 6–7. This “Darsan” can be interpreted as “gaze” in accord with Jacques Lacan’s theory. Gaze in Lacan’s usage denotes the surrealistic visibility which makes matter as if alive. *Jacques Lacan.* Of the Gaze as Object Petit a // The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis / Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, New York, 1978 (Japanese edition, Iwanami Shoten, 2000); *Hatt M., Klonk Ch.* Art History: A Critical Introduction to its methods, Manchester, 2006, p. 189.

⁵³ *McCallum D. F.*, op. cit (19), p. 182.

⁵⁴ *Faure B.*, op. cit (25), 1998, p. 769.

⁵⁵ *Sharf R. H.*, op. cit (33), pp. 11–12. Fabio Rambelli also notes upon the Buddhist internal ambivalence toward objects. *Rambelli F.*, op.cit(40), p. 3.

make miracles work⁵⁶. Another text is by Myoe (1173–1232) the famous Buddhist priest of the 12th century Japan, which Bernard Faure cites and which says: “When you think about an object carved from wood or drawn in a picture as if it were a living being, then it is a living being.”⁵⁷ Both texts assert that it is people who make the dead matter alive. Myoe knows for sure that the object is just wood or picture, but he says, if people see it as living, then it is living. There is no repression which refutes here life or consciousness in matter. One more Japanese priest after Myoe, who is one of the most important Zen priests, Muso-Soseki (1275–1351), writes in his dialogue that nature (mountains and rivers) is neither good nor bad, it is human mind which can be good or bad⁵⁸. So we decide whether this or that is an icon or an idol. Nothing is decided in advance. It can be living or just a dead matter according to us⁵⁹. This agnosticism or the sole consciousness doctrine (Yuishiki Ron) which was established in the 4th century would have been in Buddha’s mind when he attained Enlightenment.

And this ambiguous idea could be the only way to ground the idea of Buddhist statues as objects of art and let these statues be exhibited in museums, but also at the same time, it could give the reason for thinking of them as living and letting them be kept invisible. So at last we find the reason by which we are qualified to treat them as matter.

By contrast, the text by Saint Paul could be cited from the Letter to the Romans (14:14): “Nothing is impure in itself; only, if anyone considers something impure, then for him it is impure.” Saint Paul also admits the pos-

⁵⁶ Juichimen Shinju Shinkyō Giso (A Commentary to the Sutra for Kannon Bodhisattva with eleven heads) // Taishō Shinshū Daizokyo (New Complete Sutras edited in Taishō Era), Vol. 39, p. 1010. Ryusaku Nagaoka (1960–) cites this famous and important text among art historians, but he interprets this text as that wood itself will not become living, Buddha behind the statue makes it living, and he treats Buddhist statues just as matter. This interpretation follows the example of the idea of Byzantine icon and the Western idea of representation. It is as if there was such reasoning in Japan at that time. *Nagaoka Ryusaku*. *Nihon no Butsuzō*, Chuōkō Shinshō, 2009, p. 259. Also another prominent researcher about the meaning of Buddhist statues, Takeo Oku (1964–) interprets the making of the Buddhist statues as a rationalizing activity to make magical and living character void in the material. This interpretation is also an attempt to make the Buddhist case as a parallel with Western idea of icons. *Oku Takeo*. *Controlling Miraculous Efficacy / Bijutsu Forum* 21, Vol. 22, 2010, pp. 37–40. But clearly there has been no such persistent ideology in Buddhism as there exists in the case of Christianity, codified in Church Council in Nicaea in 787 following the reasoning of Old Testaments and other foregoing Church Councils.

⁵⁷ *Faure B.* *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Princeton, 1996, p. 259. Myoe-Shōnin Shū, Iwanami Bunko, 1981, p. 211.

⁵⁸ Muchū Mondo, Iwanami-Bunko, 1983, p. 134.

⁵⁹ These examples also show that they knew that these are just dead matter. Even in the first compilation of Buddhist legends called *Nihon-Ryōi-Ki* (Strange Stories of Spirit in Japan) which was compiled around 800, this materialistic attitude can be found in many places of the stories. It is self evident. Otherwise it is by definition that there could be no miracle.

sibility of seeing life or consciousness in matter, but he denies this other possibility as impure. This denial has no foundation, but is by God's commandment. He just follows the Old Testament laws from which not a letter, not a dot, will disappear (Matthew 5:18).

In the West, this idea of the transcendental prohibition can be found also in the story of the mechanical doll by E.T.A. Hoffmann "The Sandman" (1815/16). In this Clara tells her fiancé Nathanael, who becomes enamoured of a girl which is actually a mechanical doll, as follows: "it seems to me that all that was fearsome and terrible of which you speak, existed only in your own self, and that the real true outer world had but little to do with it."⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) uses this novel as an explanation of the uncanny. According to Freud's text "Uncanny" (1919), "the uncanny (*unheimlich*) is something which is secretly familiar (*heimlich-heimisch*), which has undergone repression and then returned from it"⁶¹. And he adds "Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have *surmounted* these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation"⁶². It can be interpreted here that the idea of a living matter or simply animism is the secretly familiar feeling. It was repressed by the Old Testament and we no longer believe in animism as we have surmounted it, but we are not sure of our new beliefs regarding dead matter. Old beliefs of animism still exist within us and when they return, we feel the uncanny.

This primitive sensibility of the uncanny is also noticed by Wilhelm Worringer (1881–1965) in his representative work "Abstraction and Empathy (Abstraktion und Einfühlung)" in 1908. He writes that the instinct of human beings is not world-piety, but horror (Der Instinkt des Menschen aber ist nicht Weltfrömmigkeit, sondern Furcht)⁶³.

Although for Sigmund Freud, this instinct is always in us human beings, Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) citing Plutarch's dictum "Great Pan is dead"⁶⁴, wrote that the "distance" created by the Renaissance deprived antiquity of its realness. He continued, "the classical world ceased to be both a possession and a menace. <...> The Renaissance came to realize that Pan is dead. <...> The classical past was looked upon, for the first time, as a totality cut off from the present; and, therefore as an ideal to be longed for instead of a reality to be both utilized and feared"⁶⁵.

⁶⁰ Hoffmann E.T.A. Der Sandmann // Werke, Zweiter Band, Insel, Frankfurt am Main, 1967, S. 15.

⁶¹ Freud Sigmund. Das Unheimliche // Gesammelte Werke, XII, Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, S. 259.

⁶² Ibid., S. 262.

⁶³ Worringer W. Abstraktion und Einfühlung, München, 1948, S. 140.

⁶⁴ Plutarch, op. cit. (46), 419C, pp. 400–401.

⁶⁵ Panofsky E. Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art, New York, 1972 (1944), p. 112–113.

The same interpretation was made by Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji (1889–1960) much earlier in 1918. In his article “Guzo-Saiko (The Revival of Idols)”, he wrote that in the Renaissance, the obsolete Gods of Antiquity were revived again, not as Gods, but as works of art⁶⁶.

Jean-Pierre Vernant (1917–2007) held a similar view concerning the change in Greek Antiquity. Vernant distinguishes eidolon, kolossos and eikon, and speaks of a rupture which occurred in fifth and fourth century B.C., after which the image (eikon) took the place of double or substitute (eidolon)⁶⁷.

Hans Belting (born 1935), although questioning the rupture between eidolon and eikon and instead supposes that eikon was there from the beginning, also remarks concerning the contrast between image and picture that image can be invisible and defy reification, and that, in contrast with picture which is of matter, image is not a subject for art history, but for anthropology⁶⁸. But this notion of supposing a picture to be just dead matter is presupposition forced by the Old Testament. For the primitive mind, a picture itself, which is of matter can be alive, and have consciousness. And this is still true outside the West even in this cyber 21st century, just as Sigmund Freud asserted the insurmountable primitive sensibility in human beings.

It is in accordance with Sigmund Freud that Hideo Kobayashi (1902–1983), who was one of the most influential writers in modern Japan, wrote in 1940 in a compact way that the aesthetic experience has always something of cultic character and all art lovers are idolaters. He continues “Christianity had struggles against idols, but Buddhism did not. As the former had to make distinction between *incarnated God and idol*, but the latter thought all are included in the absolute cosmos as in the philosophy of Veda and later in Buddhism. Buddhism did not care even about humanity, so it did not care about idols. Therefore in Buddhism, there was no struggle against idols and hence arises the Buddhist attitude that it does not matter whether there are idols or not”⁶⁹. So there are many such living images in Japan without prohibition.

⁶⁶ Watsuji Tetsuro. Guzo-Saiko Jogen (The Introduction to the book “the Revival of Idols”, 1918) // Watsuji Tetsuro Kanso Shu (The Essays of Watsuji Tetsuro), Kodansha-Bungei-Bunko, 2007, pp. 206–216, especially 210. Watsuji should have borrowed this idea from somebody else in Germany who also has inspired Panofsky for this idea.

⁶⁷ Vernant J.-P. The Figuration of the Invisible and the Psychological Category of the Double: The Kolossos // Myth and Thought among the Greeks, New York, 2006, pp. 321–332. *Idem*. From the “Presentification” of the Invisible to the Imitation of Appearance // *idib.*, pp. 333–349.

⁶⁸ Belting H. Toward an Anthropology of the Image // Anthropologies of Art / Ed. Mariët Westermann, Yale, 2005, p. 42, 44–45.

⁶⁹ Kobayashi Hideo. Guzo-Suhai Idolatry, 1950 // Complete Works in 14 volumes and two supplementary volumes, vol. 9, Shincho-sha, 2001, pp. 403–413, especially 408–409.

Here are some spectacular examples of the living images which counter the rational and scientific conception of matter as being without consciousness. Buddhism does not care about it, as there is no distinction between idol and icon, as it changes according to the attitude of the person who confronts it. But this logic is not scientific, i.d. not the same for everybody. How should these living images be interpreted from Judeo-Christian point of view?

GOD WORKS, NOT MATTER: LATREIA AND PROSKYNESIS

They are embarrassing examples and they are to be elucidated. In 2008 through 2009 in Japan, there was the exhibition of paintings by Makishima Nyokyu (1892–1975). He was baptized as an Orthodox Christian and painted Orthodox icons, but at the same time he painted Buddhist images. This practice can be compared with the works by Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947). A strange phenomenon is apparent concerning the Buddhist images made by Makishima Nyokyu. Among his works, two pictures are said to make a cracking noise when they wish to (figs. 10, 11). They are not only, presumably, animated but also have consciousness. They are not “as if” living, but “actually” living. Are they idols? But if we see Makishima’s Buddhist living images just as matter without consciousness and see their life of making cracking noise as coming from God, then they can be interpreted as miraculous icons. Miraculous icons in general should be interpreted like this. Miracles can only work by God, and it is through matter, not by matter itself as the famous dictum of Saint Basil repeated in the act of the 2nd Nicaean Council indicates in the opposite direction from human beings toward God: the prayer toward icons goes to the prototype.

Studies upon the idol, i.e. living images, are now proliferating. It seems people in the West are reaffirming that the idea of icon (i.e. representation) is a result of Jewish-Christian reasoning in the 8th century on the presupposition of Mosaic Law regarding the prohibition of the idea of living images. To see the Living God through dead matter, which itself is not God, is the idea of representation grounded in God’s incarnation as dead matter⁷⁰. Søren Kierkegaard wrote in “Either/Or” that the idea of representation was introduced into the world by Christianity⁷¹. It is also significant that the idea of absolute and relative worship in Kierkegaard’s *Concluding*

⁷⁰ Marie-José Mondzain writes that it is a fundamental error to confuse the incarnation with materialization and that “became flesh” is not equivalent to “became matter”. But this attempt to rationalize the unconceivable mystery of the relation between matter and God which was formulated in the council of Chalcedon in 451. *Mondzain Marie-José. Image, Icon, Economy: The Byzantine Origins of the Contemporary Imaginary*, Stanford, 2005 (1996), p. 94.

⁷¹ *Kierkegaard Søren. Either/Or, part I / Ed. Hong, Princeton, 1987, p. 64.*

Unscientific Postscript has the same reasoning as John Damascene's idea of *latreia* and *proskynesis*⁷². And this antithesis of the earnest absolute worship and the play of relative worship can be cited from Plato⁷³ through Huizinga (1872–1945)'s *Homo Ludens*⁷⁴ and the surrealism of Andre Breton (1896–1966)⁷⁵ to Martin Buber (1878–1965)'s contrast between You and It⁷⁶ and Walter Benjamin (1892–1940)'s original and copy⁷⁷. Both are, as the Chalcedon Council says, distinctly different (truly God and truly man), but are united without confusion, without change, without division, without separation⁷⁸.

⁷² *Idem*. Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, vol. I / Ed. Hong, Princeton, 1992, p. 407. Recently Clemena Antonova cites Kierkegaard for the first time concerning the paradoxical unity of the transcendental and the immanent in icons. *Antonova C.* Space, Time, and Presence in the Icon: Seeing the World with the Eyes of God, Ashgate, 2010, p. 65. But Kierkegaard is worth citing not for this specific idea, but for the idea of relative worship for this material world.

⁷³ *Plato*, *Laws*, Book VII, 802C // The Loeb Classical Library, 1926, pp. 52–53. Here Athenian stranger asserts that a man ought to be in serious earnest about serious things, and not about trifles; and that the object really worthy of all serious and blessed effort is God.

⁷⁴ *Huizinga J.* *Homo Ludens: Vom Ursprung der Kultur im Spiel* (1938), Rowohlt, 1956. But Huizinga remarks that in unserm Begriff Spiel löst sich die Unterscheidung von Glauben und Verstellung auf. *Ibid.* S. 32.

⁷⁵ *Breton Andre.* *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924) // *Manifestes du surréalisme*, Gallimard, 1994, p. 52. "L'esprit qui plonge dans le surréalisme revit avec exaltation la meilleure part de son enfance. ...que je tiens pour le plus fécond qui existe".

⁷⁶ *Buber M.* *Ich und Du* (1923), Heidelberg, 1979. "Die Welt ist dem Menschen zwiefältig nach seiner zwiefältigen Haltungen. Das Grundwort Ich-Du kann nur mit dem ganzen Wesen gesprochen werden. Das Grundwort Ich-Es kann nie mit dem ganzen Wesen gesprochen werden" (S. 9). "Ohne Es kann der Mensch nicht leben. Aber wer mit ihm allein lebt, ist nicht der Mensch" (S. 44).

⁷⁷ *Benjamin W.* *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Zweite Fassung (1936) // *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII, 1, Surkamp, 1991, S. 350–384. Benjamin's case is an antithesis between Kultwert (ernst) and Ausstellungswert (play) and also remarked as Ernst / Spiel, Strenge / Unverbindlichkeit (S. 359) and Andacht / Unterhaltung, Sammlung / Zerstreuung (S. 380).

⁷⁸ *Davis L. D.* *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325–787): Their History and theology*, Minnesota, 1990, p. 186.

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НЕВИДИМЫЙ ХИБУЦУ (СКРЫТЫЙ БУДДА)
И ВИДИМАЯ ИКОНА

Хибуцу, скрытый, или тайный, Будда, — поучительная тема, демонстрирующая отличие японских идей от западных представлений о сакральном пространстве. В Японии даже в наши дни существует множество «скрытых Будд» (статуй или живописных произведений), которые не стали предметом исследования историков искусства. Они хранятся в храмах и выставляются для обзора только в определенные периоды, т. е. раз в три года или раз в десять или даже в шестьдесят лет. Некоторые из них вообще никогда не предстают перед зрителями, такие объекты называют «Совершенно скрытый Будда» (Дзеттай Хибуцу). Самый знаменитый из совершенно скрытых Будд находится в храме Дзенкодзи в Нагано. 88 Будд вдоль паломнической дороги на острове Шикоку — все являются скрытыми Буддами. Адекватным поведением в отношении таких изображений Будды считается не смотреть на них, только поклоняться и молиться.

Буддистские образы, скрытые и невидимые, связаны с особыми обрядами в сакральном пространстве. Обряд «Тай Наи Мегури» широко распространен по всей Японии, хотя и не стал самым важным. В храме Дзенкодзи под главным алтарем, где находится Совершенно скрытый Будда, есть подземный туннель, идущий вокруг чудотворного образа, расположенного над ним. Паломники продвигаются по нему в полной темноте и прикасаются к ключу от святилища, подвешенному точно под алтарем (считается, что это приносит удачу), а затем возвращаются на свет. Движение в темноте к свету символически означает духовное перерождение — поэтому обряд называют «Тай Наи Мегури» (пройти вокруг в чреве).

В Японии невидимость и темнота — характеристики святости и сакрального места. В храмовом комплексе Энриякудзи на горе Хейдзан неподалеку от Киото, являющемся центром эзотерического буддизма Тендай, главное святилище находится наполовину под землей, там очень темно. Пара фонарей (их называют Вечным Огнем) горят там непрерывно с IX в., по обеим сторонам от маленького алтаря, в котором хранится Скрытый Будда.

Характерно, что в японском традиционном искусстве вплоть до нового времени боги и императоры зачастую изображались невидимыми или с особым образом закрытыми лицами.

В чем причина их невидимости? Они считались «живыми» образами. Не представителями божеств, а самими божествами. Смотреть на них означало сделать их простыми объектами, обладать ими. Живым образом обладать нельзя. Достаточно мимолетного взгляда, чтобы ощутить их присутствие. В таком случае рудиментарная и примитивная форма образа может стать наилучшей. Поэтому буддистские образы в Японии не были предметами искусства, они в принципе не могут превратиться в музейные объекты. Так что когда их выставляют в музеях, совершается особый ритуал, призванный удалить дух из материала. После этого можно демонстрировать их наравне с другими рукотворными экспонатами. Такая практика весьма популярна в японских храмах.

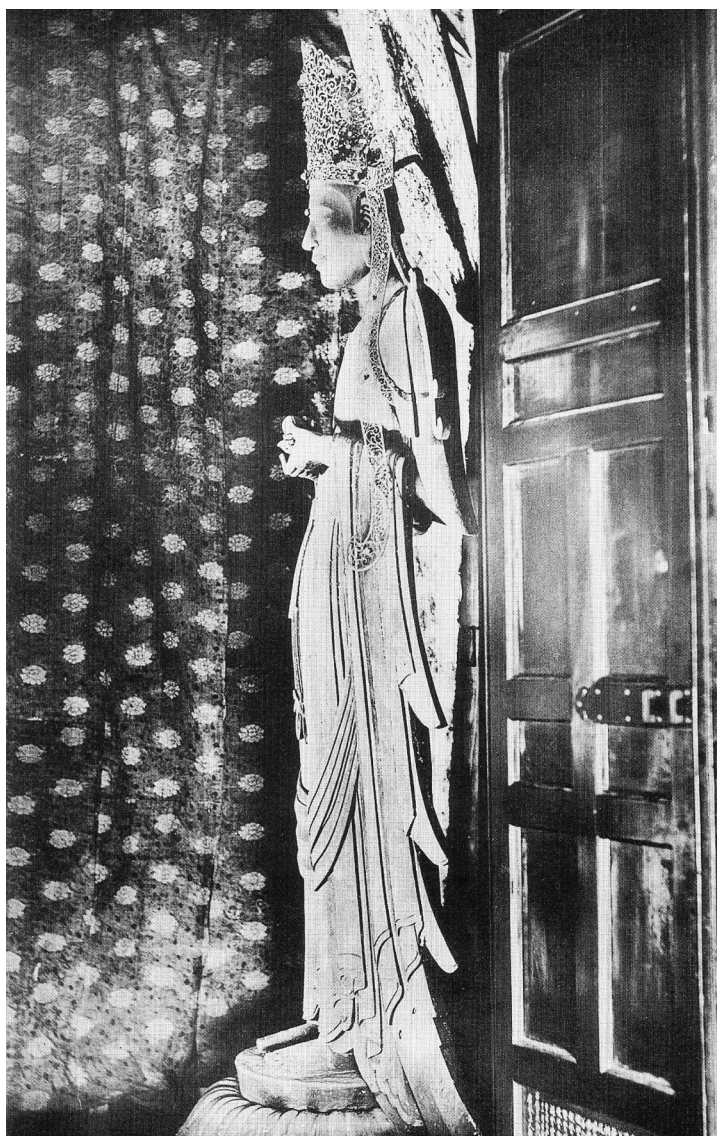
Согласно закону Моисея, материал не является живым (т. е. в нем нет духа), а теория иконопочитания с VIII в. утверждала, что мертвый материал становится инструментом, через который являет себя Бог, потому что Бог вочеловечился (обрел плоть), благодаря чему стал видимым и может быть представлен на иконе. Так что мысль, что материал (икон) сам по себе не является живым, а остается мертвой материей, является предпосылкой иконопочитания. Феодор Студит перечисляет виды такой материи, из которой делаются иконы: дерево, краски, золото, серебро и другие материалы, а Иоанн Дамаскин повторяет и уточняет: образы не являются живыми, они не думают, не произносят слова, не двигают членами.

Японский мастер Макишима Ниоку (1892–1975) писал и православные иконы, и буддистские образы. Но в его буддистских образах можно отметить некоторую странность. Поклонники его искусства утверждают, что две его работы издают звуки, напоминающие треск, что образы оживлены и могут мыслить. Они не «словно живые», а «действительно живые». В целом, образы в Японии считаются ожившими. Подобное представление о духе, скрывающемся в подобии, глубоко укоренено в человеческой психологии. И такие образы, согласно Моисею, суть идолы.

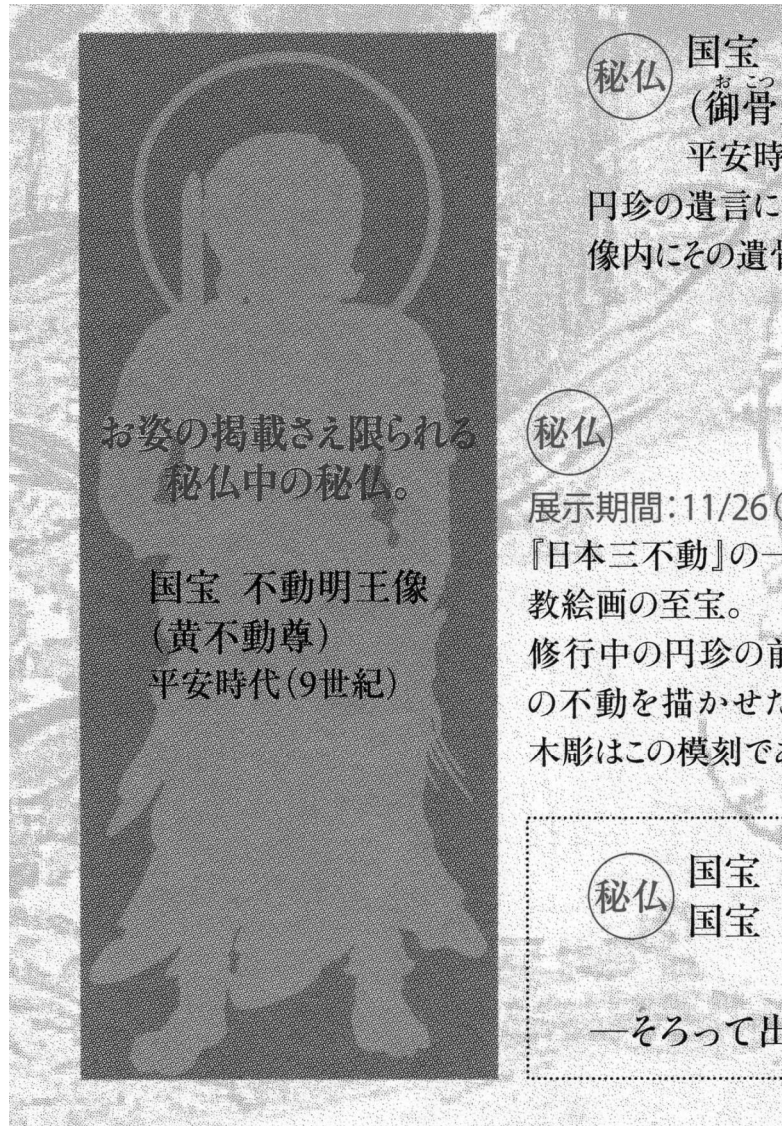
Буддистские образы в Японии впервые стали предметом изучения историками искусства в 1884 г., когда американский философ Эрнст Феноллоза (1853–1908) открыл святилище Скрытого Будды в храме Хорюдзи. С тех пор принято относиться к материальным воплощениям Будды как к иконам, применяя к ним правила Седьмого Вселенского и Тридентского соборов. Буддистские образы анализировались как произведения искусства, но не идолы. Однако феномен идолопоклонства — это образ мыслей и восприятия, а не предмет позитивистских исследований предметов искусства.

Сегодня на образы стали смотреть в контексте понятия «идол». Многие утверждают, что идея иконы — результат иудейско-христиан-

ской традиции, как писал об этом С. Кьеркегор в работе «Или/или». Человек, предстоящий перед образом, может относиться к нему как к идолу и живому образу, это всего лишь его установка. В Японии говорят: «Это слишком прекрасно, чтобы превращать это в картину», на Западе, напротив, есть поговорка: *Zum Malen schön* (это так прекрасно, что нужно запечатлеть это на картине), и в этом существенное различие в восприятии священных образов.



1. Guze-Kannon(detail). Gilded Wood. 179.9 cm.
Early 7th Century, Horyu-ji Temple, Nara Prefecture.
Photo from Kohon Teikoku Nihon Bijutsu Ryakushi
(The Short History of Imperial Japanese Art in Japanese translation)
/ Ed. Ministry of the Imperial Court, 1901



2. "Hidden Buddha among Hidden Buddhas
of which even the illustration is restricted".
Information leaflet of Exhibition of Miidera-Treasures.
2008–2009, in Osaka City Museum of Fine Art



3. Statues of Jizo Bosatsu (Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva)
in Hara, Okayama City



4. Copy of Mehiki-Taishi-Zo (Blinking Great Priest). 114.4×73.4 cm.
Muromachi-period. Zentsu-ji Temple, Zentsu-ji City, Kagawa Prefecture



5. Awashima Shrine in Kada, Wakayama City



6. Jakuchu Ito (1716–1800). Tsukumo-Gami(Spirits of Used Articles).
129.2×27.9 cm. Ink on Paper, Fukuoka Municipal Museum, Fukuoka City



7. Sarachi in Kitakata, Okayama City,
Photo by Kohei Saijo



8. Kodenchi (Old Sacred Place) in Ise Shrine, Ise City



9. Kokyo-Mae-Hiroba.
The empty space in front of the Imperial Palace, Tokyo



10. Makishima Nyokyu (1892–1975). Ryugasawa-Daibenzaiten. 1951.
Oil on canvas, 97.0×132.5 cm, Ashikaga Museum of Art (deposited), Ashikaga City



11. Makishima Nyokyu (1892–1975). Daojizai-senju-kannon bosatsu. 1964.
Oil on canvas, 193.0×129.8 cm,
Gangyo-ji Temple, Hongo, Tokyo