

About Hokkeji, Tokuji 2 Inscriptions 《Food Container》(Private Collection)
— As the Foundation for Research of Negoro-nuri —

By KIKUCHI, Yasuko

What is “negoro-nuri”? In general, negoro ware, or negoro, refers to sturdy vessels made by applying vermilion lacquer over a black lacquered wooden base (red lacquerware). Of these, negoro-nuri is said to have been produced by craftsmen at Negoro-dera (also known as Negoro-ji, in current-day Iwade, Wakayama Prefecture), and its only surviving relics are the two pairs of basins for Buddhist ritual use, kept at Rokujizouji in Ibaraki, a temple of the Shingon sect. It is impossible to describe the characteristics of negoro-nuri from so few examples. In addition, regardless of the presence or absence of an inscription, or the superiority of the workmanship, there are so many pieces of red lacquerware that even the definition of negoro-nuri is complicated.

In this research, I will return to the premise of negoro ware, namely red lacquerware, and explore a part of negoro-nuri by examining mainly red lacquerware whose history, location, and age can be confirmed. For that purpose, I have taken up a food container with the inscriptions “Hokkeji” and “Tokuji 2”, part of a private collection, as well as similar items, describing the details of the piece using images obtained in previous studies. As a result, I found that this item was also used to serve at a temple meal alongside other similar food containers, and is thought to be one of the utensils of Hokkeji, a temple revived by the Buddhist priest Eison (1201-1290). Negoro-dera is the head temple of the Shingi Shingon sect of Buddhism, and Hokkeji used to be a temple of the Shingon Risshu sect; the relationship between the two cannot be ignored. This result is important in that it brings us one step closer to clarifying the system of production and route of distribution of negoro-nuri, which until now has been shrouded in mystery.

Artist-Monk Chosen/Mugen/Dokucho
— Rediscovery of Painting Work and Historical Materials —

By CHINEN, Satoru

In recent years, the existence and creative activities of a Rinzai Buddhist artist-monk named Dokucho Shokyo (? – 1664) have continued to be made public. One of his long-lost masterpieces was *Chinese Starlings in Bamboo* (Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, Taman Collection), which had gone many years with its artist unknown. Before Dokucho converted to the Rinzai sect, he had been a priest of the Shingon sect; his secular name was Chosen Yokai, and his religious name was Mugen-risshi (Mugen). It was newly discovered that he had been involved in the maintenance of the fixtures at Eifuku-ji temple in Osaka. In order to grasp the true nature of the mysterious, early-modern artist-monk with three names, Chosen, Mugen, and Dokucho, this paper reintroduces *Chinese Starlings in Bamboo*, and clarifies the existence of related artworks and historical materials which have been passed down by Eifuku-ji temple.

Ganjin's Decision to Visit Japan, & His Precepts

By NAITO, Sakae

Ganjin (688-763), a high priest from Tang dynasty China, responding to the wishes of monks Fusho and Yoei, who had come from Japan in search of teachers of religious precepts, made the decision to visit Japan, and did so through his own convictions, without regard for his own life. While it goes without saying that the reason Ganjin decided to go to Japan was to teach the precepts, many researchers have maintained interest in the beliefs and thoughts behind his decision. In this paper, I will seek clues from the text of the Bodhisattva precepts which Ganjin regarded as important, known as the Brahma's Net Sutra, and consider this question. The sutra contains 58 precepts, one of which, the 6th minor precept, preaches that followers should treat with hospitality Buddhists who have traveled a long way to visit, and that they must be willing to sacrifice themselves to do so. Listening to the wishes of the Japanese monks may be considered to have been Ganjin's way of observing this precept. Also based on this precept, after arriving in Japan, Ganjin built Toshodai-ji as a hall of learning where anyone would be able to study freely. Ganjin, master of the precepts, was extremely strict in observing his own, and his actions were always in line with his precepts.