



DIJ Forum

In its series of public lectures, the German Institute for Japanese Studies will present on

Thursday, 01 April 2004

Prof. Dr. Michael Pye, (University of Marburg)

Japanese Pilgrimage: Shinto Variations on a Buddhist Theme

The Buddhist pilgrimages associated with Shikoku (88 stations) and Saikoku (33 stations) are very well known and indeed continue to be very fashionable. Their success has led to the setting up of many other linked visits to Buddhist temples, connected with Fudo-son or with Yakushi-nyorai, or even to a historical patriarch like Honen Shonin. The popular Seven Gods of Fortune also attract visitors all over the country to their own local *o-meguri* (circulatory pilgrimage), which is expected to bring good luck. These often include Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in one single circuit. In this lecture, however, particular attention will be paid to some little known *Shinto* pilgrimages which are also based on the principle of circulation (*meguri*), that is, of repeated acts of *o-mairi* at shrines which are somehow related. But how are these to be interpreted? To answer this question, a brief introduction will be given into the wider patterns of contemporary Japanese religion, giving particular emphasis to the analytical concepts of "primal religion" and "transaction". On this basis it is possible to appraise the different ways in which Buddhist meaning and Shinto meaning can emerge from the general pattern of primal religion.

Michael Pye is Professor of the Study of Religions at Marburg University, Germany. He studied at Cambridge University (England) and later received a Ph.D. from Leeds University (England) in the field of Buddhist Studies. His further research covers various aspects of East and South-East Asian religions, with special reference to contemporary Japan, where he has lived for several years. His publications include *The Study of Kanji* (Tokyo (Hokuseido) 1971,1984), *Skillful Means, A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism* (London (Duckworth) 1978, 2nd ed. London (Routledge) 2003), *Emerging from Meditation (Tominaga Nakamoto)* (London and Honolulu 1990) and *O-meguri, Pilgerfahrt in Japan* (Marburg 1987).

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on **Thursday, 1 April 2004 at 6.30 p.m.** at the DIJ. Admission is free, but please register by 30 March with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.