INTRODUCTION
# Domain Shinto in Tokugawa Japan

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This introduction combines an outline of the concept of "Domain Shinto" with a synopsis of the articles that make the Special Section. It centers on the Shinto-related "Kanbun reforms," that is, policies of an anti-Buddhist character during the 1660s in the three domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu. At the same time it makes clear that these are only the best known and most visible examples of Domain Shinto.

**Keywords**: religious reforms, shrine policies, early Tokugawa *meikun*, retrenchment of Buddhist temples, Kanbun era, anti-Buddhism

The guest editors of this Special Section have coined the term "Domain Shinto" as an umbrella concept.[1] The term signifies neither a religious school nor an intellectual movement, but rather a cluster of religious policies and ideas that were directly or indirectly related to Shinto. The concept derives from the fact that in the mid-seventeenth century, several leading daimyo implemented quite radical religious policies in their domains. Institutionally, they strengthened shrines to become independent of Buddhist supervision, while intellectually they propagated a kind of proto nativism that preceded the eighteenth-century advent of what we now call *kokugaku* 国学 (national learning or nativism). Domain Shinto policies were guided by a mix of ideological trends: a critical stance toward Buddhism, a fascination with Confucianism, and a longing for Japan's pre-Buddhist past, the "divine country" (*shinkoku* 神国), which served as a kind of retrospective utopia. As will become clear in the individual articles of this Special Section, neither Domain Shinto lords nor their intellectual tutors considered themselves "Shintoists" in the same sense as did, for example, members of the Hirata School in the nineteenth century. Domain Shinto is thus an analytical term that does not directly correspond to any Shinto designation used in the early modern period.

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1 The concept may be rendered in Japanese as *hanryō shintō* 藩領神道.

From the viewpoint of intellectual history, Domain Shinto was based on Shinto-Confucian syncretism (*shinju shūgō* 神儒習合, also known as *shinju itchi* 神儒一致, the unification of Shinto and Confucianism). While this early modern intellectual current has become the subject of intense research, its influence on practical religious policies has been largely ignored. The concept of Domain Shinto simultaneously examines intellectual and institutional history to understand how Shinto-Confucian ideals were actually implemented in the religious life of the populace. As implied by the term itself, the assumption is that certain domains, rather than the Shogunal court (*bakufu* 幕府), played a leading role in this endeavor. The fact that we do not include Confucianism in our term reflects our understanding that in the end it was "Shinto"—or rather Shinto shrines—which profited, while Confucianism remained an intellectual program for the elites with few lasting effects on common religious practice. We might even say that Confucianism served as a catalyst for a heightened awareness of Shinto as the only native "Way" of Japan, which in the long run led to a rejection of both Buddhism and Confucianism. The term "Domain Shinto" is thus intended to highlight a politico-religious trend that constituted, according to our understanding, an important yet underestimated factor in the evolution of Shinto.

### Domain Shinto's Historical Contours

The most spectacular events of Domain Shinto were preceded by a series of new religious regulations instated in 1665. First, anti-Christian inspection by Buddhist temples, generally known as the *terauke* 寺請 system, was made mandatory by the Tokugawa for the entire realm. Soon after, the *bakufu* issued new regulations for Buddhist temples and, for the first time, a Law for Shrine Priests (Shosha Negi Kannushi Hatto 諸社禰宜神主法度). The following year, three leading Tokugawa daimyo introduced religious reforms in their own domains, suggesting that these domainal reforms were a response to the novel realm-wide religious regulations put in place in 1665. The reformers, who later became known as "the three illustrious lords" (*san meikun* 三名君), were Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611–1673) of Aizu 会津, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1701) of Mito 水戸, and Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682) of Okayama 岡山. Within a few years, they reduced the Buddhist clergy in their domains by more than half and tore down shrines of uncertain pedigree, labelling them "illicit" (*inshi* 淫祠). Ikeda Mitsumasa even replaced the existing *terauke* system in his domain with *shintō-uke* 神道請, that is, certification by Shinto shrines.[2] There is a growing consensus that the common aim of these policies (hereafter the Kanbun reforms) was to conduct anti-Christian inspection without benefiting Buddhist institutions. This endeavor was supported by a strictly anti-Buddhist Shinto-Confucian ideology.

While we regard the three *meikun* as the prototypical agents of Domain Shinto, there existed predecessors, contemporaries, and successors who shared their Shinto-Confucian ideals. Even if these figures did not realize these ideals in the same radical way, they all put great efforts into revitalizing long-forgotten shrines of antiquity within their domains. As detailed in Inoue Tomokatsu's contribution to this Special Section, these new efforts in shrine restoration can be traced back to Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川義直 (1601–1650) of Owari

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2 Some authors also use the term *shinshoku-uke* 神職請 for certification by Shinto shrines. Both terms can be found in Edo-period sources. We have decided to follow the authority of Okayama specialist Taniguchi Sumio 谷口澄夫 (1913–2001), who preferred *shintō-uke.*

尾張 domain, working from the 1620s onward in collaboration with the scholar Hayashi Razan 林羅山 (1583–1657). This cooperation between a scholar and a daimyo seems to have become a model for shrine revivals by later generations of the Tokugawa extended family and their vassals, including the aforementioned *meikun*. According to Inoue, Yoshinao's shrine restoration program, starting in the 1630s, and its ideological justification by Razan should be regarded as an initial manifestation of Domain Shinto.

The three *meikun*, as well as others, shared Yoshinao's theoretical and practical interest in Confucianism. They established new centers of learning within their domains and attracted leading Confucian intellectuals as tutors. Some of these Confucian tutors were even given leading positions in domain administrations. Naturally, traditional vassals and the local Buddhist clergy harbored secret, unspoken objections to this Confucianization. The daimyo, on the other hand, looked for allies in the world of Shinto to strengthen their Confucian program.

Within their own families, the *meikun* broke away from the traditional Buddhist monopoly on funerals and ancestor cults, replacing these with Confucian substitutes. While Okayama and Mito took their rites from neo-Confucian traditions, Aizu adopted a new mix of Confucian and Yoshida Shinto 吉田神道 ritualism. As argued by Bernhard Scheid in his contribution to this Special Section, the choice was not a question of principal orientation toward either Shinto or Confucianism, but rather a question of availability. Both Confucian and Shinto ancestor rites required specialists, of whom there were very few. As also detailed in Scheid's article, the Tokugawa daimyo had surprisingly little contact with the Shinto authorities at the imperial court, in particular with the Yoshida 吉田 family, who were at that time the highest authority in Shinto matters. While the Yoshida interfered in the ranking of local shrines, they were reluctant to share their most secret traditions with the warrior nobility.

In 1687, a *bakufu* decree forced the abandonment of some of the most radical Domain Shinto reforms, such as *shintō-uke* in Okayama. By that time, two of the *meikun*, Hoshina Masayuki and Ikeda Mitsumasa, had already passed away. And two years later, the youngest, Tokugawa Mitsukuni, handed over leadership of his domain to a successor. After this, interest in Shinto by key figures of the Tokugawa elite seems to have cooled. Shinto-inspired daimyo reemerged only in the nineteenth century, for instance in the guise of Mito's Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–1860). Nonetheless, the reforms initiated by the Domain Shinto lords of the seventeenth century had set new norms and precedents. While most shrines of the medieval and early modern period were run either by Buddhist monks (*shasō* 社僧) or village officials, Domain Shinto created a new demand for ordained Shinto priests. This initiated a slow but steady increase in the status and self-esteem of non-Buddhist shrine personnel, as shown by Stefan Köck and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia in their contributions to this Special Section.

**Previous Research on Domain Shinto**
Research on Domain Shinto-related phenomena can be traced back to Tsuji Zennosuke 辻 善之助 (1877–1955), who was the first to point to the seventeenth century "retrenchment of Buddhist temples" (*jiin seiri* 寺院整理) by Tokugawa Mitsukuni, Hoshina Masayuki,

and Ikeda Mitsumasa.[3] Japanese studies on these figures are now abundant, including biographies and local histories of their domains.[4] At the level of intellectual history, studies on Hayashi Razan, Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 (1619–1691), Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1619–1682) and Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (1616–1695) have evidenced the efforts by these intellectuals to combine Confucian ideas with Shinto mythology. Yet in all these cases, studies of individual figures or localities prevail over attempts to arrive at a comprehensive picture.[5] Notable exceptions include the work of Tamamuro Fumio 圭室文雄, the doyen of early modern religious history in Japan, who has published widely on both local and general aspects of Tokugawa religion from a socialhistorical perspective. Tamamuro also devoted much attention to the Kanbun 寛文 (1661–1673) reforms in Mito, Okayama, and Aizu.[6] More recently, Inoue Tomokatsu 井上智勝 has established himself as a leading authority on questions of early Tokugawa Shinto.[7] Among other topics, he has done a great deal of research on the revival of so-called *shikinaisha* 式内社 shrines in the seventeenth century. As explained in Inoue's own contribution to this Special Section, the question of when, how, and why *shikinaisha* shrines attracted attention in Tokugawa Japan is intimately related to the Kanbun reforms and should therefore be included in the conception of Domain Shinto.

As regards studies in Western languages, monographs on phenomena related to Domain Shinto are virtually nonexistent and specialist articles are few and far between.[8] Nevertheless, there exists a kind of standard narrative about Shinto-related reforms in the three domains of Okayama, Mito, and Aizu during the Kanbun era. Herman Ooms' *Tokugawa Ideology* (1985) may be regarded as the *locus classicus* in this respect. Based on research by Tamamuro Fumio, Ooms summarizes the Kanbun reforms in one paragraph, concluding that the three daimyo in question opposed the official line of Tokugawa religious policies, since they "implemented strong anti-Buddhist policies," and yet at the same time "they achieved what the bakufu wanted," namely anti-Christian certification, even if they charged Shinto shrines with this task.[9]

In his study of early modern and modern Shinto, Klaus Antoni stresses the "separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) during the Kanbun era" in the three *meikun* domains, mentioning in passing the restoration of Izumo Taisha 出雲大社 during that period. Similar to Ooms, Antoni maintains that "the *terauke* system was temporarily disabled in influential *han* like Okayama."[10] Moreover, he regards the Kanbun reforms as "interesting

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3  Tsuji 1961. The translation "retrenchment" for Tsuji's *seiri* 整理 in the sense of reduction plus consolidation follows Namlin Hur.

4  For the former, see for instance Taniguchi 1964; Taniguchi 1995 for Okayama; Tamamuro 1968; Tamamuro 2003 for Mito; and Aizu Wakamatsu-shi 2001 for Aizu. For the latter, there is Nagoya 1986 and Suzuki 2006 for Tokugawa Mitsukuni; Taniguchi 1961 and Kurachi 2012 for Ikeda Mitsumasa; and Koike 2017 for Hoshina Masayuki.

5  For recent Western attempts toward a more integrated approach, see Bowring 2017; McMullen 2020.

6  See Tamamuro 1968 for Mito, Tamamuro 1991 and Tamamuro 1996 for Okayama, and Tamamuro 1977 for a general overview.

7  Inoue 2005; Inoue 2008; Inoue 2009; Inoue 2013; Inoue 2017; Inoue 2021.

8  Notable exceptions are Natalie Kouamé, who devoted a monograph to the destruction of religious institutions in Mito (Kouamé 2005); and James McMullen's recent monograph on the worship of Confucius, including the case of Ikeda Mitsumasa (McMullen 2020). Relevant articles include Bodart-Bailey 1993, Antoni 1997, Scheid 2002, and Scheid 2003; see also Köck et al. 2021.

9  Ooms 1985, pp. 192–193, based on Tamamuro 1971.

10  Antoni 1998, p. 66.

counter movements" to the Law for Shrine Priests of 1665, which confirmed Yoshida authority in Shinto matters.[11]

A more detailed account is found in Nam-lin Hur's monograph on the *terauke* system. Hur points out differences among the domains in question, arguing that certification by shrines was only conducted in Okayama, where it turned out to be "a short-lived political experiment."[12] Hur regards the Kanbun reforms as ultimately futile attempts to conduct anti-Christian certification without unwanted benefits for the Buddhist clergy. In doing so, he draws a difference between the proclaimed aim of Tokugawa religious control—the suppression of Christianity—and the necessity to put this control into the hands of Buddhists—the only religious institution with a tightly organized clergy capable of conducting such a task. Thus, the anti-Buddhist stance of the Kanbun reformers did not result in opposition to religious control *per se*, but rather in attempts to optimize religious control without Buddhist interference. Hur does not go into any details, however, when it comes to the question of whether the development of Shinto as such was influenced by the Kanbun reforms.

In their *New History of Shinto*, John Breen and Mark Teeuwen essentially repeat received findings about the Kanbun reforms. Like Antoni, they point to the Law for Shrine Priests of 1665, but according to their interpretation, the acknowledgment of Yoshida Shinto in this important legal document actually paved the way for the Kanbun reforms. Consequently, their depiction evokes the impression that Yoshida Shinto was the driving force behind the religious policies of the three *meikun*.[13]

In Helen Hardacre's 2017 monograph on the history of Shinto, a whole chapter is devoted to Shinto in the early Edo period.[14] While she mentions the Kanbun reforms in passing, Hardacre puts her emphasis on ideas and teachings. She traces a gradual evolution from medieval Yoshida Shinto to the Shinto-Confucian concepts of Hayashi Razan, Yoshikawa Koretaru, and Yamazaki Ansai. In essence, Hardacre regards the incorporation of Shinto into Confucianism as a tool used by Confucian intellectuals to naturalize Confucianism and make it attractive for rulers. However, "[t]his expedient use of Shinto was not central to Confucians' ongoing work."[15] All in all, Hardacre sees the seventeenth-century trend of identifying Shinto with Confucianism as an intellectual dead end with no significant consequences for later developments in Shinto.

While not necessarily at variance with our understanding of Domain Shinto, standard depictions of the Kanbun reforms in Western secondary sources suffer from several simplifications that deserve closer examination. In our view, common shortcomings include the following points:

- With the exception of Hur, standard narratives tend to ignore differences between the domains in question, in particular regarding the question of whether all *terauke* temples were replaced by shrines, or only a few.

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11  Antoni 1998, p. 65.
12  Hur 2007, p. 94.
13  "In several domains, Aizu in the north, Mito in the east, and Okayama in the west of Japan, Yoshida authority was established virtually overnight" (Breen and Teeuwen 2010, p. 54).
14  Hardacre 2017, chapter 9.
15  Hardacre 2017, p. 249.

- The anti-Buddhist rhetoric of the Kanbun reformers is sometimes interpreted as a criticism of *bakufu* religious policies. This renders the daimyo in question as rebels or opponents of the Tokugawa government, rebels who were ultimately forced to abandon their reforms.[16] Again, a closer look at local details reveals great differences between the respective domain lords in this respect.

- There is hardly any attempt to relate the Kanbun reforms to other religious developments in the seventeenth century, such as the systematic revival of ancient shrines or the search for non-Buddhist ancestor cults. While both of these phenomena occurred in the three domains in question, they were also found to a lesser or greater degree in other domains as well. Prominent examples include the separation of Shinto and Buddhism in Izumo and Ise, which also reached a peak during the Kanbun period.

- In contrast to the common understanding, the relationship between Kanbun reformers and Yoshida Shinto was ambivalent and indirect. The propagation of Shinto as the original "Way" of Japan that had to be restored at all levels of society was part of the Shinto-Confucian agenda. Yoshida Shinto certainly prepared this discourse, but was not directly engaged in spreading it, let alone in putting it into practice. Rather, the Yoshida house remained a passive beneficiary from the Confucian interest in Shinto, at least in the seventeenth century.

- The impact of the Kanbun reforms at the grassroots level, such as on religious practice in villages, has remained a largely unexplored field.

Attempts to overcome these deficiencies in the field of early modern Shinto history can be found in our edited volume *Religion, Power, and the Rise of Shinto in Early Modern Japan*, which also contains a first introduction to Domain Shinto by Bernhard Scheid.[17] The concept is further developed in chapters by Mark Teeuwen, Stefan Köck, and Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia.[18] Inoue Tomokatsu analyzes what may be termed the ideology of Domain Shinto under the label of "Shinto as Quasi-Confucianism."[19] The present Special Section continues the discussion of Domain Shinto initiated by this volume.

**Contributions to the Special Section**

Bernhard Scheid further develops this introduction by addressing the usefulness and scope of the term Domain Shinto. Scheid starts with the *terauke* system and the question of how anti-Christian religious inspection was related to Domain Shinto. He goes on to qualify the alleged influence of Yoshida Shinto on Domain Shinto, demonstrating that this influence was only indirect and that the common term for Yoshida Shinto, *yuiitsu shintō* 唯一神道, did not always signify the teaching of the Yoshida. In the renovation project of Izumo Shrine, for instance, *yuiitsu shintō* referred to a Domain Shinto project completely independent of Yoshida Shinto. Scheid finally discusses the quest for ritual autonomy as a consistent feature of the various forms of Domain Shinto. According to Scheid, it is this aspect that led to conflicts between agents of Domain Shinto and the *bakuhan* power structure.

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16  See the interpretation by Beatrice Bodart-Bailey analyzed in Scheid's contribution to this Special Section.

17  Köck et al. 2021.

18  Teeuwen 2021, arriving at slightly different conclusions than in the summary in Breen and Teeuwen 2010; Köck 2021; Pickl-Kolaczia 2021.

19  Inoue 2021.

Inoue Tomokatsu presents another broad picture of Domain Shinto, starting with the restoration of ancient shrines initiated by Tokugawa Yoshinao in the 1630s. According to Inoue, these measures should be regarded as the starting point of Domain Shinto, since they were grounded in the same ideology that we find at work in the Kanbun era. Inoue goes on to present lesser-known examples before and during the Kanbun years that also fit into this ideological pattern. He insists that Shinto and Confucianism were indeed regarded as identical and of equal value at that time, which also explains the simultaneous interest in Shinto and Confucian ritualism. In conclusion, Inoue proposes defining the end of Domain Shinto as the time when this ideology no longer inspired religious reforms, that is, the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Stefan Köck deals with Shinto-related reforms in Okayama from the mid- to late seventeenth century, focusing in particular on religious certification via Shinto shrines (*shintō-uke*), the most radical of all Domain Shinto measures. Using a wide range of detailed sources, he demonstrates the relationship between the domain-wide *shintō-uke* in Okayama and the radical retrenchment of Buddhist temples there. In contrast to received scholarship, this article points out continuities between the religious policies of Mitsumasa up to 1672 and the subsequent regime of Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714). While Tsunamasa abandoned Mitsumasa's system of mandatory *shintō-uke* for the common populace, a functional differentiation between Buddhist and Shinto clerics persisted, exemplified in mandatory *shintō-uke* for shrine priests, even at the village level. This sheds a completely new light on Okayama as a pioneer region in terms of priestly professionalization at village shrines.

Brigitte Pickl-Kolaczia examines Domain Shinto's impact on the popular religion in Mito. Through a case study of the village of Noguchi 野口 in the center of Mito domain, she shows that the impact of Tokugawa Mitsukuni's measures on the population's religious practice was in fact quite slow. While the number of Mito's tutelary shrines almost tripled and the number of temples was reduced by more than half between 1666 and 1700, these measures did not always immediately affect the daily religious life of every village. In particular, in villages that already had a tutelary shrine, such as Noguchi, Mitsukuni's policy to separate shrines from Buddhist supervision was slow to take root. It seems, however, that from the late eighteenth century onward, this plan gained new momentum. Pickl-Kolaczia demonstrates that Noguchi's tutelary shrine was at the center of a network going far beyond the village itself, and that changes in shrine policies were connected to changes in the social structure of Noguchi and its neighboring villages.

Taken together, the contributions to this Special Section map out what we call Domain Shinto by relating it to the already well known Kanbun reforms of the 1660s in the following ways: first, we trace the intellectual and institutional background of the reforms back to the generation before the actual reformers indicating that the reforms in Okayama, Mito, and Aizu were part of a larger trend; second, we analyze the reforms themselves including their local variations, their cross-domain effects, and their differences from the prevailing religious policy of the Tokugawa *bakufu*; and third, we discuss the long-term successes and failures of the reforms. By bringing all of this together under the expression "Domain Shinto," we are creating a designation for experimental religious policies outside the political mainstream of Japan's seventeenth century. The term Domain Shinto should prove useful here in assessing the significance of the respective experiments for further developments in the history of Japanese religion.

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