

Book Reviews

Mikael S. Adolphson

The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha: Monastic Warriors and Sōhei in Japanese History.

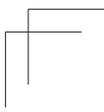
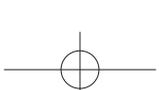
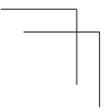
Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, 212 pp.

After having published his excellent book *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan* (2000), based on Kuroda Toshio's *kenmon* theory of the medieval power blocks of court nobles, warrior aristocracy, and shrine-temple complexes, the author now provides another important study on the related, more specific subject of monastic warriors. In the beginning Adolphson describes the terminological difficulties concerning "monastic warriors." On the one hand, certain terms may refer to different types of groups or people depending on the era, and on the other hand, a variety of terms may denote the same group. Earlier sources often use *akusō* (evil monk), whereas only later texts clearly speak of *sōhei* or "monk (priest) warriors."

In Chapter 1 "Discourses on Religious Violence and Armed Clerics," the author points out that the aim of this study is to provide first a *historical* study of monastic warriors in the late Heian and the Kamakura periods, and then a *historiographical* inquiry of "how and why monastic warriors became stereotyped as *sōhei*." (p. 6) He states that especially since the Meiji period, the emergence of monk warriors was perceived as a "decline of Buddhism," a perception in line with the harsh criticism it had endured during this period. However, as Kuroda Toshio has shown, on the one hand the term *sōhei* appears in sources only since 1715, and on the other hand, armed monks and warriors were twins born from the same social development in the Insei period (1088-1185).

In Chapter 2, the author examines the historical "Context of Monastic Violence and Warfare." In a survey and analysis of the 6th to 14th centuries, he argues that the historical circumstances account for the emergence and increase of religious violence rather than an assumed "decline of Buddhism." An overall "militarization of society" since the Insei period forms the context of monastic warfare. During this time, competition for land revenues in the provinces increased and these conflicts were more and more "solved" by ordinary warriors employed by the aristocracy or by monastic warriors of the shrine-temple complexes. A monastic force appeared in a political dispute for the first time when Kōfuku-ji monks fought in the Hōgen no ran in 1156. Apart from disputes over land, the second category of conflicts involving monastic warriors comprised disputes over succession of head priests and factional supremacy among (or within) monasteries, such as the conflicts

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between Enryaku-ji and Kōfuku-ji over the control of Kiyomizu-dera. Here, also the question as of how the temples could justify such violence is discussed. Whereas secular laws, such as the *Sōni-ryō* (Regulations for monks and nuns; Nara period), as well as sutras, such as the *Bonmo-kyō*, clearly prohibit possession and use of weapons, according to the author's rather general argument, this practice of using arms could be justified by the Heian period formula *ōbo buppō sōi* (mutual dependence of imperial law and Buddhist dharma).

In Chapter 3 "Fighting Servants of the Buddha," the author investigates the groups of people which constituted monastic forces. They belonged to the lower class of the monastic hierarchy, which included such types as the menial workers. However, because sources on lower social groups are scarce, it is difficult to judge whether they were proper monks. There are contemporary sources indicating this, such as Emperor Shirakawa's famous dictum "The flow of the Kamo River, the role of the dice, and the mountain clerics are things I cannot control" (p. 70), or Emperor Toba's edict: "Throwing away learning, they embrace weapons; they take off their monk's garments and put on armor to burn down hermitages and destroy monk dwellings." (p. 77) However, the author claims that monastic forces were mainly "warriors serving the temples." (p. 86) And he states: "When criticism of these forces appears in the sources, it seems to arise more from the particulars of the circumstances than from views about the proper relationship between monasticism and arms." (p. 86)

In Chapter 4 "The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha: Noble Monks and Monk-Commanders," the author examines the leaders of the monastic forces. Based on research by Jeffrey Mass, according to which noble leaders of local armed groups brought the warriors to the level of national politics (the Kamakura *bakufu*), Adolphson draws this conclusion: "Likewise violent elements had always been present in the monasteries and religious estates, but only when the monk-commanders emerge in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries do we see monastic forces joining the factional frays of the capital." (p. 87) The aristocratization of monastic leadership caused an increased militarization of monasteries since noble monks pursued the economic and political interests of the clans they belonged to. This matter was also criticized by aristocrats in their diaries, for example, when Fujiwara no Teika wrote: "Everybody knows that when princely monks are appointed head abbot, it leads to Enryakuji's decline. This princely monk (Sonshō) is especially fond of warriors, and when the clerics enter the capital, they are all accompanied by fellows who carry arms." (p. 109) Yet the author warns not to rely too much on such contemporary criticism when he states: "imperial princes did not initiate the increased levels of violence in the temples they oversaw. Armed men were a presence in many temples and shrines well before we can identify any monk commanders. But with the appearance of monk commanders, monastic warriors

became a force outside the religious centers themselves and grew capable of affecting political developments in general.” (p. 114)

In Chapter 5 “Constructed Traditions: *Sōhei* and *Benkei*,” Adolphson proceeds from the historical study to the historiographical inquiry into the construction of the *sōhei* stereotype. The typical *sōhei* image depicts a monastic warrior with clerical clothes, a head cowl to conceal the face, clogs, and a long halberd (*naginata*). However, the author shows that such image does not derive from contemporary sources, but evolved only later from the rise of the warrior class to national prominence during the Sengoku period (1467-1573). It served as a mark to distinguish monk warriors from ordinary warriors. Again, later in the Meiji period, when Buddhism was put on the defense, the connotation of this image became negative and depicted evil, degenerate armed monks. In contrast, the famous *Benkei* (d. 1189), a monk who had become a retainer of Minamoto no Yoshitsune, later was popularly depicted according to such *sōhei* image while maintaining a positive connotation until today.

In the concluding Chapter 6, “*Sōhei*, *Benkei*, and Monastic Warriors – Historical Perspectives,” the author discusses the concept of “religious violence” and compares the phenomenon of monastic warriors in Japanese Buddhism with that of the crusaders and monastic knights in European Christianity. In conclusion he states

that the category of religious violence provides little if any help in understanding the role of religion and monastic warriors in Japanese history. Instead, a careful examination of the political, military, and ideological contexts in which such violence occurred is far more illuminating and relevant than consideration of religious violence alone. Monastic warriors acted not differently than their secular counterparts, *nor do they appear to have been motivated by a religious rhetoric* qualitatively different from other ideologies condoning violence in the Heian and Kamakura eras. In fact, *the absence of religious rhetoric* is itself of great interest, in view of our current assumptions about holy wars and crusaders. It suggests that other factors played at least as important a role as religious commitment for those fighting in the name of the Buddha. (pp. 161-162; emphasis by reviewer, see below)

Adolphson’s thorough historical research is richly illustrated by paintings and maps. It also has a useful index with names and terms written in Japanese. Apart from the numerous important quotations of primary sources, for the present reviewer information about two details is especially noteworthy. One is that the monk *Benkei* initially had started out to collect a thousand swords in order to melt them into a monastic bell by defeating warriors, but after having been subdued by Yoshitsune on the Gojō bridge in Kyoto he became his retainer. Even though such a peaceful mission did not succeed at this time, an expression like “turning swords into bells” could become a powerful slogan for Japanese Buddhist pacifists today (similar to the biblical phrase “swords into plowshares” used by the East German

peace activists, which eventually led to the fall of the Berlin wall). The other piece of interesting information is that there was no capital punishment in Heian-kyō between 810 and 1156; only thereafter was it reintroduced by the warriors. (p. 83) This noteworthy fact of Japanese history could inspire Buddhist and other activists fighting against the death penalty today in Japan and provide a historical example of almost 350 years of an “execution-free” Japan.

Finally, some critical comments should be offered without attempting to diminish the achievements of Adolphson’s excellent research, first concerning some details, and then with respect to the basic question of “religious violence.” From the perspective of religious studies, some inadequate formulations should be mentioned, such as “lay monks” (pp. xv, 44) (since monks are by definition not lay persons, “ordained lay person” is more adequate), or “mystical mountain clerics (*yama hosshi*)” (p. 75) (according to the context, “esoteric mountain monks”). There are a few typing mistakes, such as “Images of monastic sources” (p. 138; correct is “Images of monastic warriors”) and “marital traditions” (p. 141; for “martial traditions”). Unfortunately, the author has the tendency to frequently, and sometimes with overgeneralization, criticize the “Japanese scholars” for their insufficient research. It still should be kept in mind that his own work could not have been written without the tremendous amount of research by Japanese historians.

One of the most important subjects of this book is the issue of “religious violence.” Already in Chapter 1, the author takes it up by referring to the “events of 9/11” (2001). He does not mention the (geographically and religiously closer) Aum incident in 1995 which had already triggered a lively discussion of “religious violence” in Japan and internationally. As summarized above, in the final Chapter 6 the author questions the adequacy of this term by arguing first that monastic warriors were fighting for the same reasons as other warriors did (e.g., maintaining or gaining landed estates), and second that (apart from the *ōbō sōi* theory) there was virtually no attempt to (“ideologically”) justify violence for religious reasons. His first argument is, of course, striking, since the economic, social and political factors leading to violence were for monastic and other forms of warfare more or less the same. This would raise the question of a need for an assumed separate category of “religious violence.” As for the author’s second thesis, however, one has to consider that it still makes a difference whether the agent of violence is a religious organization based on a teaching of non-violence (therefore risking a contradiction between theory and practice), or “secular” groups or institutions (such as warrior clans or state authorities) which do not have such claims. The author does not investigate contemporary Buddhist texts which in fact try to tackle the contradictions between Buddhist teaching and actual violent practice. In my view, here appear the limitations of historians who confine themselves to non-religious sources, thereby reaching wrong conclusions. Vice versa, the same methodological shortcomings can be observed in religious and Buddhological studies which neglect

social, political and economic contexts of religious phenomena or texts and therefore cannot fully clarify the subject matter. (For two examples, see my reviews in *Japanese Religions* 27 (1): 105-110; and 113-117.) Such a persistent situation calls for interdisciplinary cooperation which enables the understanding of complex realities by transcending the artificial boundaries of perception set by modern academic disciplines.

Moreover, even if the agent of violence is not a religious person or organization but ordinary warriors, religious elements played a role in “secular” warfare as well. The author does not mention it, but during the historical period treated in his book, the Minamoto clan first adopted Hachiman as their *uji kami* (clan deity) and then enshrined him in the Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu in Kamakura as the protective deity of the *bakufu*. Subsequently, many warriors adopted Hachiman also as their *uji kami* and called for his help in battles when shouting “Namu Hachiman Bosatsu,” the war cry of the *bushi* in the Kamakura period. This phenomenon poses another case of “religious violence.” We agree completely with the author stating that there is no strict division between the secular and the religious, but to suggest that the term “religious violence” is not adequate is the wrong conclusion. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the historical context and factors, the author considerably contributes to get a clearer focus on the complex problem called “religious violence.” Leaving aside the critique above, the present reviewer considers the two historical studies by Adolphson, *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha* as well as *The Gates of Power*, as very important also for religious and Buddhological studies.

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Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (eds.).
Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice.
Oxford University Press, 2008, 337 pp.

The latest collection of essays in the Oxford University Press series on Zen Buddhism is *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice*. This follows earlier offerings, all edited by Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright, including *The Kōan* (2000), *The Zen Canon* (2004), and *Zen Classics* (2005). The series has thus far provided readers with the work of a number of eminent scholars in the field of Zen Studies, and *Zen Ritual* is no exception, including essays (in addition to those by the editors) from T. Griffith Foulk, Taigen Dan Leighton, Paula K. R. Arai, and William M. Bodiford, among others. All the essays are of high quality and take on a variety of important issues concerning the role of ritual in both historical and contemporary Zen practice. Unlike the earlier collections however, *Zen Ritual*

is mainly concerned with debunking many prevalent notions about the tradition, particularly the common assumption that Zen practice is inherently iconoclastic, reveling in a kind of rebellious anti-traditionalism. Such imaginings of Zen have often been embraced by twentieth century Westerners in order to legitimize their own misgivings about the inheritance of theistic traditions, while practitioners and scholars in the East have been in many ways happy to indulge these fantasies. But is ritual discipline, central to the practice of Zen (as the contributors of this volume insist), necessarily antithetical to iconoclasm, or might the latter only become possible through the former?

Zen Ritual begins with an introduction by Dale S. Wright, and includes nine additional essays, each from different writers, all concerned with distinct topics. There are no thematic groupings of essays in the text and none of the contributors are responding to or dialoguing with any of the other included works; each paper is essentially an independent piece. Allowing for a certain level of debate or problematizing of questions concerning the meaning of ritual practice may have opened more possibilities for further critical evaluation. However the breadth of work included in this single volume coupled with the high level of scholarship provide a much needed resource on the topic and present as well a number of possible methodologies for examining Zen ritual including historiography, phenomenology, ethnography and hermeneutics.

Dale Wright's Introduction prepares the reader for the main purposes of both the individual essays and the volume as a whole—to dispel many of the all too common misconceptions about Zen practice, starting with its dependence on ritual. Wright illustrates the facts of the matter by describing what any visitor to a Japanese (or American) monastery would experience during a weekend retreat. His own experiences at Eihei-ji, for example, included a long list of instructional expectations for how he should act during almost every moment of his stay, so that “virtually all life in a Zen monastery is predetermined, scripted and taken out of the domain of human choice.” (p. 3) Although Wright recognizes that one can find rhetorical criticisms concerning attachments to “external forms” throughout the textual records of Zen, all the historical evidence suggests that East Asian monasteries always functioned with strict adherence to ritual. Even the numerous examples of antinomian antics displayed by both Zen masters and their students often have a stylized structure, a kind of role-playing “anti-ritual ritual.” (p. 5) Wright identifies Protestantism and Romanticism for the lack of importance attributed to ritual among the early American appropriators of Zen, like the Beat writers of the 1950s and 1960s. Each of the subsequent essays in the volume is mainly aimed at revealing a number of additional misconceptions.

The first essay of the collection, by T. Griffith Foulk, provides the reader with a detailed, foundational examination of the problems that have been associated with the study of ritual in Zen Buddhism by tracing the historical establishment of Zen

schools in Japan and the more recent exportation of Zen from Japanese apologists. Foulk argues that Meiji and Taishō scholars packaged Zen for a modern audience, emphasizing the recorded stories of Tang-era Chan masters (often depicted as freely functioning outside the established norms of Buddhist discipline and belief) while failing to recognize how Zen had functioned in Japanese society for centuries as a merit-making institution offering funeral and memorial services for ancestral spirits. The realities on the ground contradicted the common notion propagated by Japanese scholars like D. T. Suzuki that a kind of pure Tang-era Chan limited to seated meditation, debate and manual labor had somehow by the Song period degenerated in China into a superstitious form of practice corrupted by its dependence on state sponsorship and polluted by its mixture with other schools of Buddhism like Tiantai and Pure Land. Echoed by a number of other writers in this volume, Foulk emphasizes that there was never a distinct sect of Chan Buddhism in the Chinese monastic systems and that the sectarian division of Zen from other schools of Buddhism was particular to Japanese institutional frameworks.

The final section of Foulk's essay provides detailed descriptions of contemporary Japanese Zen rituals, including the morning service, meal-time rituals, sutra chanting, annual observances, and funeral practices. One of the main strengths of this volume overall is that it includes descriptions of a diverse array of rituals. In addition to those in the first chapter, Mario Poceski traces the Chan tradition of the Abbot's ascending the Dharma Hall to preach, Paula K. Arai includes examples of rituals performed by contemporary Sōtō nuns, and David E. Riggs examines the historical origins and practice of Sōtō style *kinhin* (walking meditation).

Poceski continues the theme established by Wright and Foulk: Tang-era Chan abbots like Fayen and Yunmen "do not quite fit the popular mold of a novel type of religious radicals or counter cultural heroes bent on subverting the status quo" (p. 97). Because of their dependence on imperial patronage, these patriarchs celebrated for their iconoclastic wisdom in canonical hagiographies were in reality ecclesiastical elites whose careers ultimately depended on maintaining the status quo by satisfying the expectations of both monastic and lay audiences. Poceski concludes that the recorded sermons were "one sided depictions of what in all likelihood were contrived performances." (p. 98) The sermons became even more stylized through subsequent dynasties of Chinese history, so that by the late Ming and early Qing abbots were often simply imitating the performances recorded in the transmission texts to the extent that the literati began accusing them of offering little more than staged theater.

The historical dependence between East Asian monastic institutions and court politics is taken up by Albert Welter and Michel Mohr, both offering essays concerned with rituals designed to protect and glorify the emperor. Mohr provides a clear account of both the historical and mythological origins of these Japanese practices. Welter's main purpose is to "challenge the individualistic presuppositions

that characterize many contemporary interpretations of Zen monastic training,” namely our assumptions that Zen is a system of practice primarily aimed at the attainment of *satori* (p. 114). Welter asserts that this was not the case in the medieval world, and Eisai’s *Promoting Zen for Protecting the Country* (*Kōzen gokokuron*), clearly demonstrates the priorities of the newly emerging Rinzai School, namely competing with the already established Tendai and Shingon institutions. Eisai distinguished his form of Buddhist training in the strict monastic codes of its practitioners and the empowering efficacy of the rituals they performed for the continued rule of the Japanese emperor. Such a claim was rooted in the Confucianist high esteem for proper performance of ritual. The influence of Confucianism on the practices of East Asian Buddhism is emphasized in a number of the essays included in *Zen Ritual*, exhibiting a noticeable shift from prevalent earlier associations made between Chan and Taoism by scholars throughout the twentieth century. This shift parallels the repeated denial of iconoclasm found here along with the assertion of strict institutional codes of conduct.

Paula K. R Arai provides the lone chapter on women and Zen, revealing a strikingly intimate exploration of the contemporary practices of Sōtō nuns through the author’s years of ethnographic research. Arai shows how these women have laid claim to Dōgen’s assertion that all existents are Buddha nature in a thoroughly concrete and transformative way, affirming their legitimacy as equal partners in the monastic community. Their empowerment over the past century has been embodied in the performance of their own rituals, including the *Anan Kōshiki* and the *Jizō Nagashi*, described for the reader in this chapter. Arai affirms the common theme of this collection by stating, “the iconoclastic image and antiritual rhetoric generated about the Zen Buddhist tradition has deflected attention away from the roles of ritual practices in Zen Buddhist lives.” (p. 192) Yet one could argue as well that the performed activities of these nuns are both ritualized and iconoclastic because they result from a creative and self-empowered reimagining of the roles women can play within a tradition of patriarchs.

There are two chapters in *Zen Ritual* concerned with Dōgen Studies, written by Steven Heine and Taigen Dan Leighton. Heine takes on the historical questions related to Dōgen’s establishment of a Chinese style monastic system in Japan. The main purpose of the chapter is to respond to prevalent misconceptions that Dōgen’s move to Eihei-ji in the middle of his career resulted from his desire to replicate the ritual structure of Mt. T’ien-t’ung [Tiantong], the residence of his beloved Chinese teacher Ju-ching [Rujing]. Heine reveals a number of problems with this view, including the very recent construction of a Dōgen shrine at T’ien-t’ung built to popularize the connection and to attract Japanese tourists, the differences between Dōgen’s precept system and those of Song China, the greater isolation of Eihei-ji in comparison to T’ien-t’ung, and Dōgen’s strategic use of Ju-ching’s name in order to promote his own brand of monastic practice. Heine turns to a systems approach

found in the recent work of Ishii Seijun to evaluate the institutional differences between the two establishments, uncovering a number of important “geo-ritual” contrasts.

Leighton, on the other hand, focuses on Dōgen’s teachings about the practice of *zazen*, often understood as a non-ritual aimed at awakening among contemporary practitioners. Citing a number of examples from *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, as well as writings from the *Eihei kōroku* and the *Eihei shingi*, Leighton argues that for Dōgen even *zazen* functions primarily as an enactment ritual where the practitioner takes on the activity of a Buddha, thus embodying the oneness of practice-realization.

The last chapter of the collection by William M. Bodiford is the only essay that offers an example of contemporary American Zen ritual. Performed for the first time in 2004 at the Great Vow Monastery in Clatskanie, Oregon, the Dharma Heritage Ceremony was introduced in order to officially recognize a commonality in Dharma transmission among the various Sōtō institutions in North America. Bodiford spends most of the chapter explaining the East Asian structures of traditional Dharma transmission, showing its grounding in Confucian familial relationships and tracing the complexities and inconsistencies of its institutional workings in the history of the Sōtō school. This allows him to conclude by raising some interesting comparative questions concerning the ways in which North American practices of Dharma transmission might contrast with East Asia.

Zen Ritual along with previous volumes in the Oxford University Press series on Zen Buddhism is a necessary addition to the library of any serious scholar of the tradition as well as valuable reading for undergraduate and graduate courses on the history of Zen Buddhism, varieties of religious ritual, or the cultural practices of East Asia. One major question worth raising in response to the text is the implied assumption that recognizing the importance of ritual in Zen somehow negates possibilities of spontaneity and iconoclasm. Certainly there are many examples in the traditional textual records, which, at the very least, suggest a *value* attached to exhibiting an independence from traditional expectations, even if one is inclined to question the authenticity of this independence. Iconoclasm may only be made possible in fact by first giving oneself over to strict ritual forms. By embodying traditional meanings and values through the disciplines of ritual practice one comes to gain ownership and mastery of the tradition and can then offer creative and surprising new expressions of its meaning. Is Chan practice grounded in the spontaneity of Taoism or in the ritualism of Confucianism or possibly in both?

The main weakness of the essays included in the volume is that taken together there are some noticeable limits in scope. Because the title of the text is *Zen Ritual* and not “Chan Ritual” or “Son Ritual,” one could accept that all but one essay (by Poceski) is concerned primarily with Japanese practices, but five of the nine essays are studies of the Sōtō school almost exclusively. There is comparatively little focus on Rinzai, and only in Mohr’s essay do we find any discussion of the Ōbaku school.

However, having a well-researched volume now available on the subject of ritual, a subject that has been largely neglected in Zen Studies, is certainly a welcome contribution to the field.

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Nancy K. Stalker

Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburō, Oomoto, and the Rise of New Religions in Imperial Japan.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008, 265 pp.

This study treats one of the most important groups among the first generation of Japan's "new religions" based on popular Shintō. The author investigates especially the factors behind its dynamic growth, as well as the reasons for its oppressions by the state. In doing so she focuses on the great organizer Deguchi Onisaburō (1871-1948) who developed the small group founded by Deguchi Nao (1837-1918) into one of the biggest new religions of his time in Japan, with an international outreach. Following after Emily Groszos Ooms' study on the beginnings of this religion (*Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan: Deguchi Nao and Ōmotokyō*, 1993), Stalker's book provides an important introduction to the next phase for English readers.

In the Introduction, the author explains the objectives of her study. Within the context of Japan's modernization and Westernization, Oomoto successfully responded to these challenges by providing alternatives to the State's conception of Shintō (State Shintō). She identifies the following main factors for Oomoto's growth as follows: Onisaburō's "charismatic leadership, innovative use of technology and the mass media, and flexible accommodation of social concerns and cultural interests not addressed by the state or mainstream religions. These three elements constitute what I call 'charismatic entrepreneurship,' a term that suggests a combination of spiritual authority, an intuitive grasp of the religious marketplace, savvy management skills, and a propensity for risk taking." (p. 3) The author also intends "to demonstrate that Onisaburō provided an important model and legacy for new religions that followed in postwar and contemporary Japan. ... [In spite of the differences] there were also important continuities between the prewar and postwar periods." (p. 4) The author focuses more "on Oomoto practices and methods of propagation rather than its theology or teachings, though there is clearly a relationship between the two." (p. 16)

The first chapter describes Onisaburō's early life and his joining Oomoto. In Chapter 2, the author evaluates the early influence on him by neo-nativism

(*kokugaku*) as a combination of “resistance to Westernization and reassertion of traditional Japanese cultural values.” (p. 44) This kind of thinking, the author states, “opposed the imperialistic, statist nationalism represented by the modern bureaucratic state.” (p. 73)

In Chapter 3, the author treats the “spiritualism” of the Taishō period, a “rehabilitation of the irrational” (p. 77), and places it in the contemporary context of spiritualist movements worldwide which “sought to demonstrate the reality of the spirit in the face of scientific materialism.” (p. 77) In Oomoto’s case, it was the practice of “spirit pacification” (*chinkon kishin*) which became so successful on a national level that it “propelled the sect from near obscurity in the 1910s to the position of the third largest new religion, with three hundred thousand followers, by 1921 ...” (p. 80) However, after the State oppressed Oomoto allegedly for lese-majeste and violation of the Newspaper Law in 1921, *chinkon kishin* practices were tuned down. During the Taishō period the first missionaries were sent to Brazil, and initial contacts with other religious groups abroad were made.

In Chapter 4, the author treats Oomoto’s “Visual Technologies of Proselytization.” According to her analysis, “visual arts and images were a key factor in Oomoto expansion from the late 1920s ...” (p. 112) Onisaburō was not only a multitalented artist but a gifted organizer. He began to organize art exhibitions which improved Oomoto’s public image, and later led other new religions to establish museums, such as the Miho Museum. Onisaburō also started film production and distribution in Japan for proselytization purposes. Thus he became a pioneer in new cultural activities of religions. For Oomoto, art “was a device for salvation.” (p. 117) At the same time, however, it was a means to overcome modernity. According to the author, “in the face of endlessly shifting material culture imported from the West,” Oomoto art helped “finding a stable cultural identity and spiritual values.” (p. 117) On the other hand, since religious art became a commodity, religions increasingly competed with other forms of culture and recreation for modern consumers’ time and money. (p. 125)

In Chapter 5, the author treats Oomoto’s “paradoxical internationalism.” While maintaining its nativist belief in Japan’s unique role as savior of Asia, Oomoto began to engage in international peace activities. In 1924, Onisaburō travelled to Mongolia with a plan to reach Jerusalem in an attempt to realize a spiritual unification of the world. The term *bankyō dōkon* (many religions, the same root) expressed Oomoto’s understanding of such a project. Being critical of Japan’s militaristic expansion, Onisaburō had a vision that world peace and global justice could be reached through humanitarian and spiritual activity. Hence he founded Jinrui Aizenkai (Universal Love and Brotherhood Association, ULBA) in the later part of the 1920s and promoted Esperanto in order to facilitate international communication. Its motto became “One God, one world, one language.” (p. 144) The ULBA opposed violence and war, and subsequently it rapidly gained membership in Japan. Oomoto also

developed contacts with various new religious groups from Korea, Vietnam, China, Bulgaria and Germany. However, in the 1930s Oomoto's focus shifted again to national concerns.

Thus, in Chapter 6 the author treats Oomoto's political turn and the second suppression. The world-wide economic crisis 1929-1931 triggered patriotic activities because of discontent with government and industry. Like other religious groups, Oomoto interpreted politics through religious concepts such as *yonaoshi* (world renewal) and *tatekae* (reconstruction after demolition of the old system). (p. 173) In 1934, Onisaburō established the Shōwa Shinsei-kai and initiated a petition for the introduction of *saisei itchi* (unity of religion and politics). During this time, this group together with Oomoto itself counted about 1-3 million members. Oomoto's shift from religious activities to right-wing politics alarmed authorities. Already two months after its establishment, the Shōwa Shinsei-kai was identified by the Home Ministry as one of the fourteen most threatening groups in Japan. Being associated with the radical right wing and challenging state authority became crucial factors for the second, fierce suppression of Oomoto in 1935. Over 50,000 members were arrested and many buildings were destroyed. It was only after the war that Oomoto was rehabilitated. Onisaburō died in 1948.

In her conclusion "State, Religion and Tradition in Imperial Japan," the author summarizes some of her findings:

Popular, or lived, religion is an important resource for uncovering alternative visions of national and cultural identity that are obscured by modernizing elites. In Japan, Oomoto's conception of a religio-national community questioned state policies and challenged state authority. Using the same Shinto language that the state employed to justify its authority, Oomoto offered a subaltern view of modern identity that opposed the bureaucratic nation-state and its promotion of capitalist and imperialist development through militarist means. (p. 192)

Hence, this study provides "new perspectives on modern Japanese history and religion. They require a reexamination of assumptions about the relationships between Shinto, religion, and national identity in prewar Japan." (p. 191) The author characterizes the central subject of her study, Deguchi Onisaburō, as "the most successful charismatic entrepreneur of his day" who could "identify contemporary spiritual needs and create accessible doctrines, practices, and organizations that meet those days." (p. 193) He also enhanced important communication with the world outside Japan.

As for the methodology of this study, it should be mentioned that the author repeatedly puts certain phenomena into broad cultural context, such as the first use of films by religious groups in Japan and America, the development from art exhibitions to museums run by religious organizations, or the social, economic and political contexts of Oomoto's activities. Such contextualizations not only help to

understand these phenomena much better, but also provide new and important perspectives. For example, the author suggests viewing new religions derived from popular Shintō much more in continuity with traditional Shintō than in the context of new religions derived from Buddhism as it is usually done. Her convincing argument should stimulate future research in this field.

The author provides also many valuable illustrations from Oomoto archives. Unfortunately, the publisher does not provide Japanese characters for Japanese terms and publications. In one point only, the treatment of the relationship between religion and the arts (cf. pp. 108-109) does not seem to be satisfactory for the present reviewer. Historically, in premodern times religion was the main agent that originally created various forms of art, and only later the replacement of religious patronage by secular patronage changed the relationship between religion and art. The difference between these contexts would put Onisaburō's expression "art as the mother of religion" (p. 112), for example, in a different perspective. Nonetheless, this study is a fresh and important contribution for understanding Japanese religions and modern Japan. The reviewer considers especially her coinage of the term "charismatic entrepreneurship" not only as helpful for understanding such a man as Onisaburō, but also as very stimulating for future research on other religious leaders as well.

Martin Repp
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