



## Book Reviews

Krämer, Hans Martin

*Shimaji Mokurai and the Reconception of Religion and the Secular in Modern Japan*

Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. 235 pp.

Hans Krämer's book *Shimaji Mokurai and the Reconception of Religion and the Secular in Modern Japan* is an original piece of intellectual history that offers a well-argued reconsideration of the legacy of indigenous knowledge in the modern establishment of the Japanese term *shūkyō* 宗教 as the translation for the Western idea of "religion." Krämer significantly questions the emphasis on the Japanese "importation" of Western knowledge in developing the separation of religion and politics by focusing on the most representative figure traditionally associated with such debate, the Jōdo Shinshū priest Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1839-1911). The book makes an important contribution to the lively debate on the formation of the modern concept of religion in Japan, particularly complementing recent works on the influence of international relations and politics under the Meiji government on this process.

Research in Japanese religions has witnessed an increasing number of publications dedicated to the critical reflection on the definition of the concept of religion in modern Japan. This critical approach has been enriched by a shift in focus in the study of Japanese intellectual history of the Meiji period, from a view of passive Asian reception of Western cultural projections—Orientalism—to the active role of Asian agents in appropriating and reconceiving such concepts, as well as by a more careful consideration of the legacy of indigenous knowledge in the process of cultural translation. Krämer is particularly in dialogue with two of the most recent publications in this field: Trent Maxey's *The "Greatest Problem"* (2014) and Jason Josephson's *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (2012).

Krämer's book intervenes in the debate on the construction of the modern idea of religion in Japan in a number of important ways. It provides a genealogy of the Japanese concepts of "religion" and "secular" with the analysis of a longer chronological frame than those based on a sharp dichotomy between modern and pre-modern associated with the Meiji restoration. The term "reconception" in the title of the book reveals the importance for Krämer of considering the legacy of prior indigenous knowledge in the process of translating and redeploying Western concepts. This approach shifts the focus from the importation of Western ideas, more central in the work of scholars such as Isomae Jun'ichi (2003), and Josephson. In addition, Krämer shows how Shimaji's definition of Buddhism as a religion (*shūkyō*) can also shed light on the efforts of historians to identify the secular

and secularization in Japanese history. This point develops Timothy Fitzgerald's reflection on the reciprocally constructed nature of the secular-religion binary in Japan (2000) and problematizes Talal Asad's critique of "secularism" as a Western project imposed on non-Western cultures (2003).

What is probably the most original contribution of the book, though, is its conceptual history of the term *jikyō* 治教, which Krämer translates as "civic teaching" and identifies as the actual opposite term against which the concept of *shūkyō* ("sectarian teaching") was defined in Meiji Japan. Instead of falling prey to the temptation of finding immediate correspondences with Western terms, Krämer follows the Japanese genealogy of the complementary opposites *shūkyō-jikyō* from the Tokugawa to the Meiji periods, revealing how limited the influence of Western notions was on the definition of the two terms.

The choice of Shimaji Mokurai as the focus of the book perfectly suits the tripartite dynamic Krämer uses to describe the process of the conceptualization of religion in modern Japan. The three elements that combine in his analysis are: the indigenous intellectual tradition, the influence of Western knowledge about religion, and the political concerns at both the local and national levels involved with these two intellectual sources. Shimaji embodies all three elements: his pre-Meiji Buddhist education implies the analysis of indigenous knowledge to understand the meaning of the terms he uses; his travel to Europe in the wake of the Iwakura mission (1872) explains the presence in his later works of ideas and approaches he borrows from the Western debate on religion; his acquaintance with Meiji reformers coming from the same region as him and his later involvement in the debate on national religious policies call for a consideration of the political dimension of terminological choices.

After a dense introduction in which he spells out his theoretical framework and also gives a short biographical sketch of Shimaji, Krämer dedicates the first chapter to an analysis of the Japanese terms associated with religion in Tokugawa Japan. He considers correspondences with three essential meanings he identifies in the modern European development of the concept of religion: "Religions as systems of belief and worship; religion as a universal human characteristic; and religion as a sphere of social action separated from the secular" (16-17). Despite the reference to European ideas on religion, in this chapter Krämer shows a remarkable ability to position himself on the Asian side of the conceptualization process (23). During the Tokugawa period, there were a number of terms that in one way or another can be associated with religion. The introduction of Christianity in the sixteenth century was decisive for a reconsideration of such terminology directly linked with political concerns. The *terauke* system of household affiliation to local Buddhist temples, imposed to control the population by opposing Buddhism to the "deviating sect" of Christianity, facilitated the extension of the term *shū* (宗 sect) to indicate religious groups. However, the terminology for religion was not fixed yet at the end of the Tokugawa period.

Chapters two and three deal with the legacy of this indigenous tradition within the Meiji debate on religion, and form the backbone of Krämer's argument, by showing how the reconceptualization of this legacy was prompted by the political concerns related to the privileged status of Shintō. The political concerns that motivated Shimaji's intervention in the debate was the promulgation by the Meiji government of the "Three Standards of Instruction" (1872), which associated the preservation of the nation with concepts close to Shintō. Shimaji's *Critique* of this declaration, Krämer's translation of which appears in the appendix (145-155), is seen as a key document for the definition of the modern concept of religion: he defines Buddhism as a *shūkyō*, the only one in Japan that could truly oppose the spread of Christianity, whereas Shintō's characteristics are used to deny its own religious nature. Krämer stresses here how Shimaji used the term *shūkyō* to carve out space for Buddhism separate from the public sphere as defined in the three standards. However, he critiques attempts to identify Shimaji as the champion of religious freedom in Japan, as Shimaji's aim was to defend Buddhism from further persecution, and in order to achieve such purpose, collaboration with politics was necessary.

In chapter three, Krämer clarifies the definition of the term *shūkyō* through a genealogical analysis of its opposite *jikyō*. Four meanings of the term are identified within its development from the early Tokugawa period: At first the term simply indicated the art of governing in Confucian literature; then the late Mito school in the early nineteenth century refocused it on the worship of the Japanese *kami*; thirdly, the religious policy of the early Meiji government placed *jikyō* among the duties of the emperor and associated it with Shintō; finally, Shimaji and other contemporaneous intellectuals opposed it to *shūkyō*.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the final element of Krämer's tripartite analysis: the contribution of Western knowledge to the definition of religion. Here Krämer presents the two main Western interlocutors of Shimaji during his stay in Europe: the French orientalist Léon de Rosny and the German liberal preacher Emil Lisko. The identification of the latter, unknown to previous scholarship, must be counted among the merits of Krämer's book, even though the finding in Lisko's works of a mention of his meeting with the Japanese priest would have made Krämer's evidence for such identification stronger. The influence of these European sources of knowledge on religion is identified in Shimaji's later reflection, but it had limited impact on his translation of religion as *shūkyō*, confirming Krämer's call for an analysis of indigenous sources.

In chapter 5 Krämer offers a genealogy of yet another essential term that co-originated with the modern idea of religion: the secular. He combines the consideration of modern translators of Western ideas of the secular, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi and Maruyama Masao, with pre-modern concepts such as the Buddhist coexistence of law of the Buddha and law of the king, as well as the more specific Shin-Buddhist doctrine of the two transcendent-immanent truths. The

intriguing conclusion reached in this chapter is that Maruyama Masao and Tsuji Zennosuke's identification of a secularization process within Japanese history was possible only thanks to Shimaji's definition of Buddhism as the Japanese religion. This analysis stresses Asian agency and the legacy of indigenous tradition not only in the case of the conceptualization of religion, but also of the secular.

In the conclusion, Krämer restates how the formation of the modern concept of religion in Japan was not a one-way transfer of knowledge from the West. In addition, he shows how a consideration developed for modern Europe by many historians of religion applies also to Japan: the conceptualization of the opposite religion-secular allowed the first concept to survive within modernity.

Krämer's book represents a significant contribution to the post-colonial critique of concepts previously considered universal, and a well-argued reconsideration of Asian agency and indigenous knowledge. He has not simply called for a restatement of the role of Asian agents and local ideas in the formation of modern categories, but made such agency clear by bringing into view their legacy through the genealogy of concepts that have roots in pre-Meiji Japan.

Krämer's general argument is clearly and concisely presented. Even in the association of pre-Meiji terminology with Western meanings of the modern concept of religion, which could easily lead to teleological interpretations, he adheres to a "historical semantics" approach and shows a careful consideration of the concepts, such as when he distinguishes the intensional and extensional dimensions of meaning (39-41).

Whereas Krämer consistently includes the relevant political concerns in his understanding of the conceptualization of religion, what in my opinion might have enriched the book is more reference to the social changes that affected and were affected by the change in terminology. Krämer states that the "attention to terminology is no idle, nominalists exercise" (43), and that the conceptual changes he analyzes concern discourses on religion more than practices, which were more continuous with pre-modern Japan (143). He also mentions one interesting case of popular literature from the Tokugawa period that reveals a possible reception of such concepts in everyday language (27-28), on which more details could have been given. An analysis of the impact of the conceptualization process beyond the intellectual, religious and political elites of Meiji Japan could enrich the current focus on modernity of the research in Japanese religion.

Nevertheless, these observations are not meant to question the validity of Krämer's argument, which he consistently defines within the field of intellectual history. *Shimaji Mokurai and the Reconception of Religion and the Secular in Modern Japan* represents an enriching reading for those interested in the intellectual and political history of modern Japan, as well as an important step forward in the theoretical debate on secularization and modernity for students and scholars not only of Japanese, but of all religions.

### References

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Paride Stortini  
The University of Chicago

Barbara R. Ambros  
*Women in Japanese Religions*  
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Using Using chronology as the warp and themes such as nuns, marriage, sexuality, pollution, politics, and agency as the weft, Barbara R. Ambros has woven an excellent tapestry that includes an introduction to the history of women in Japanese religions and expands to discuss their roles within religion, and the ways in which women are perceived. *Women in Japanese Religions* successfully discusses the changing social, economic and political conditions from prehistory to the early 21st century. It has nine chapters: The Prehistorical Japanese Archipelago: Fertility Cults and Shaman Queens; Ancient Japanese Mythology: Female Divinities and Immortals; The Introduction of Buddhism: Nuns, Lay Patrons, and Popular Devotion; The Heian Period: Women in Buddhism and Court Rituals; The Medieval Period: Buddhist Reform Movements and the Demonization of Femininity; The Edo Period: Confucianism, Nativism, and Popular Religion; Imperial Japan: Good Wives and Wise Mothers; The Postwar Period: Nostalgia, Religion, and the Reinvention of Femininity; and The Lost Decades: Gender and Religion in Flux.

Generally, each chapter begins with a summary of the legal status of women in terms of marriage, divorce, and heritage. Then it introduces a significant text of the age and tradition under examination like the *Kojiki* (古事記 Records on Ancient Matters), the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀 The Chronicles of Japan), the *Engishiki* (延喜式 Regulations and Rites of the Engi Era), the *Shōmangyō* (勝鬘經 Queen Śrīmālā Sutra),

the *Hokkekyō* (法華經 Lotus Sutra), the *Ketsubonkyō* (血盆經 Blood Pool [or Bowl] Sutra) and *Onna Daigaku* (女大学 Great Learning for Women). The texts are analyzed from Ambros' perspective, attention being paid to their effects on the ways in which women were perceived. These analyses are combined with portraits of prominent female figures and discussions of the nun's place within this milieu. Finally, women's agency under the given conditions is a repeatedly argued for and remains a central component of Ambros' project. Thus we are told how women adherents of Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, new or new-new religions have found comfort and been active in keeping up the very doctrines that so clearly assign or, more often, have been interpreted to assign their gender a socially and morally inferior position. For instance, the Kumano *bikuni* (比丘尼 nuns) used the *Blood Pool Sutra* in their street sermons to persuade (other) women of the salvific merits of worshipping this text which is based on the premise that women are condemned to a hell of blood, produced by their own menstruation or parturition blood during their lifetime, because the blood has polluted the environment of the earth deity along with the food and water of holy people.

(Hetero-)sexual abstinence was a universal condition for women with a religious function; the priestess Himiko is said to have ruled with the attendance of a thousand women and one man; the royal high priestesses of Ise and Kamo Shrines went through long periods of celibacy, and nuns, whether Buddhist or Christian, were celibate for life. Indeed, as Ambros writes in the introduction, by compiling the information from "all" ages, interesting trends become clear.

The reviewer has used Dr. Ambros' *Women in Japanese Religions* as the course book for an introduction to religions in Japan and can conclude it is very useful. It is short, focused and covers mostly what students should take away from this kind of survey class. By including 21 "Questions discussions" and a list of "Further Reading" the author and publisher explicitly invite the reader to delve into more in-depth studies.

The thread made up of core texts, outlined above, is a helpful guide, for the texts are all easily accessible in English translations and relatively short. This makes it possible to require students to read them and study Ambros' method of analysis. With students' interest in the Japanese language this creates an opportunity for discussions on translation and interpretations as well. The Devadatta chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, for example, gets much attention in the book, because it includes the story about the Dragon King's daughter, who in an instant became a male and then a Buddha. Ambros outlines and returns to this phenomenon called *henjōnanshi* 變成男子. She argues how the story historically has been used as an illustration of the Buddhist concept called the Five Obstacles of women, one of which is that a woman cannot become a Buddha. Thus the sutra chapter has reinforced a misogynic worldview with roots also in the Confucian idea of a woman's Three Obediences: to her father, husband and son. The story is easy to remember and its didactic point so temptingly clear. Ambros' attention to pedagogy is evident in her emphasis

that although the *Lotus Sutra* was known and influential in the Nara period (712-784), the Devadatta Chapter was only included in the Lotus Sutra after 800. On the other hand, while she seeks to clarify the text's effect on women's lives and argues that the Devadatta Chapter has *mostly* been interpreted the misogynistic fashion, Ambros might well have made it clear that other interpretations existed. Ryūichi Abé (2015) has demonstrated how the standard Japanese interpretation is at variance with the leading Chinese Buddhist priests as well as with some of their Japanese colleagues. Of course, as Abé's article and Ambros' book came out simultaneously, Ambros could not have consulted Abé 2015 before the publication. However one of her sources, Michiko Yusa's "Women Rocking the Boat", quotes the founder of Sōtō Zen, Dōgen, as follows:

What is so special about being born a man? The sky [*kokū* 虚空] is the sky, the four elements are the four elements, and the five *skandhas* are the five *skandhas*. The same is true for a woman. Those who attain enlightenment attain enlightenment. Do not make an issue of whether the person enlightened is a man or a woman. This is the most wondrous law of the Buddhist path. (Dōgen 1239, (「礼拝得髓」) [The importance of finding a true teacher]; Masutani Fumio 増谷文雄『現代語 訳 正法眼蔵』 [A translation into modern Japanese, *The Treasure of the Dharma Eye*] (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1976), 1: 101–34), 117 cf. Yusa 2009, 160).

Including a reference to this would not have detracted from the general position of Japanese Buddhists, but it might have given the reader reason to pause and ask why the Buddhist establishment, including Dōgen's Sōtō Zen school, has preferred the negative view on women over Dōgen's interpretation.

One of the books' several stimulating discussions focuses on the *fujinkai* 婦人会 that almost all religious groups established after the Meiji restoration. Usually translated as the "women's group," Ambros emphatic rendering of the word as *married women's group* is warranted in the historical context. The term clearly reflects the gender values of the catch phrase and paradigm of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japan "Good Wife, Wise Mother," which left no room for the unmarried adult woman. Practically all the religions of that age elevated the phrase to doctrinal status. This was also true of new religions founded by women who were otherwise critical of the Imperial State, such as Omoto and Tenri-kyō. Women married to Buddhist temple priests were a special group among married women, for the celibacy was still a formal rule for priests of most Buddhist denominations. So although in the modern age the majority of temple priests marry, their spouses have had virtually no status from the Buddhist organizations' point of view. Things are changing thanks to networking across denominations, and sometimes with inspiration from the parallel situation of "the pastor's wife" in many Christian countries.

Having discussed some of the general cross-chapter features let me turn to the organization of an individual chapter: Chapter 8 "The Postwar Period: Nostalgia,

Religion, and the Reinvention of Femininity.”

The occupation forces helped realize some of the goals of the women’s liberation movement. One example is the constitution revision of 1946 that abolished the household system by which the [male] household head held all legal rights and gave both genders equal rights and agency. However, “[o]n the whole, women in postwar religious organizations tended to be more socially and politically conservative than were secular feminists, who often belonged to the political left” (135). Partners in marriage, too, were made equals by law, but opposition to the idea continued and still continues – examples could be found in 2016. The slogan “Good Wife Wise Mother” survived Japan’s defeat with the emphasis shifted towards *mother*, as the more important role of the woman at home. Ambros notes that, “Religious organizations ranging from the Association of Shinto Shrines to Buddhist denominations to new religious and Buddhist lay movements used the concept of good wife and wise mother to formulate policies regarding the roles and rights of women within their institutions” (136).

The author lays bare the postwar development of issues that emerged in the Meiji era, such as the status of Sōto zen nuns and of temple wives, and the role of the *fujinkai* (婦人会 or *married women’s groups* in Ambros’ translation). In addition, the Shinto wedding is explained in greater detail and the concomitant gender values discussed. New religions prospered and multiplied in the postwar years, and special attention is paid to Tenshō Kōtai Jingūkyō and its founder, a woman called Kitamura Sayo (1900-1967). When she preached in the streets, she spoke, dressed and acted rough like a man to suit her harsh critique of prewar politics and other religions while claiming her behavior was “the work of the divinity inside her” (144). She understood herself to be the exemplary daughter-in-law, who obeyed her mother-in-law despite her severe treatment, and a wise mother too in the upbringing of her son. Similarly, the lay-Buddhist Reiyūkai group encouraged women “to embrace their roles as housewives and stay-at-home mothers” (145). Though accepting the paradigmatic inferiority of women, the group argued this gave women greater spiritual powers for healing and ability of communication with the ancestral spirits (cf. 146). Sōka Gakkai, the most influential new religion of all, also upheld the conservative ideals of women, and, at the same time, relied on its *fujinkai* for many organizational tasks. New-new religions did not deviate from the pattern outlined above. In Mahikari, for instance, “women are believed to be especially susceptible to sexual karma (*shikijō innen* 色情因縁) [...] thought to manifest itself through spirit possessions” (148). Finally, Ambros introduces and outlines the various positions in the discussion of *mizuko kuyō* 水子供養, memorial rites for the stillborn, aborted fetuses and children who died in infancy.

Ambros repeatedly argues how women maneuver within the “inferior status” frame and gain much power. Buddhist nuns and temple wives are sometimes exponents of critique and reforms of the systems, but rarely have they revolted against the paradigm.

In other books on religions in Japan, the issue of Yasukuni Shrine invariably comes up in connection with the postwar period, but not here. This is in line with Ambros' clear focus on selected themes, and so the reader must apply the values explained and exemplified in the book to the Yasukuni Shrine debate on her or his own. One could bring in, for instance, the court cases Christian wives of deceased servicemen have filed against the state for inviting the spirits of their husbands to Yasukuni Shrine. *Tennōsei* 天皇制, emperor worship, was another war-related issue under much scrutiny and criticism in the postwar decades. Like war responsibility the issue had the attention of religious women, too.

Ambros' claim of a dichotomy between religious conservatives and secular "left leaning" ideals is true as a tendency, but, of course, not an exhaustive description of the situation. Among the famous Christian socialist women from the 1960s~1980s was the leader of the Japan Socialist Party and catholic DOI Takako (1928-2014), leader of Japan Socialist Party, for instance.

All in all, *Women in Japanese Religions* works well as a course book for an introduction to Japanese Religions. Many facts are not included, presumably because they would not have furthered the understanding of the book's themes. Thus it is for the instructor to introduce details on doctrines, the political economy on the macro level or some of the famous men in Japanese religions.

It is a personal bias of mine to dwell, perhaps too much, on the role of Christianity in Japan, wherefore I find Ambros' coverage to be almost less than the bare minimum, but, on the hand, her ¾ of a page devoted to pre-Tokugawa Christianity focuses on a short description of the Jesuits' categorization of women and the conversion of a Buddhist nun to Christianity as told in *Myōtei mondō* 妙貞問答 (The Myōtei dialogue 1605), an important text by Fucan Fabian (or Fukansai Habian). This can easily lead into a fruitful discussion in class.

In short, I find Barbara R. Ambros has made a survey with well-chosen examples that, in her own words, "is a corrective to the typically male-focused introductions" and that stimulates the reader's interest in the subject matter.

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Christian M. Hermansen  
Kwansei Gakuin University

Kiri Paramore  
*Japanese Confucianism – A Cultural History*  
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To write a history of 1300 years of Confucianism in Japan is an ambitious project. But it is a worthwhile project. Although there is a good amount of literature on Japanese Confucian authors in Western languages by now, nobody has given a comprehensive presentation of Japanese Confucianism so far. Kiri Paramore's book "Japanese Confucianism" is, therefore, a very welcome publication to fill this gap. And it is certainly not merely a gap-filler: Paramore provides an intriguing narrative of Confucianism's development in Japan from the early chronicles until the very present. His book, moreover, not only differs from earlier works on Japanese Confucianism by taking its entire history into account, but also by deviating from the common practice to display Confucianism as a bulk of authors and texts. Paramore approaches Confucianism as a set of concrete practices and institutions that significantly changed in the course of history and that are better able to show Confucianism's impact on Japanese society than the ideas and arguments of singular authors. Paramore's approach is innovative and situates Confucianism nicely in Japan's political and social culture.

One great challenge of writing a history of Japanese Confucianism consists in showing the continuities of Confucian phenomena without presupposing homogeneity; and in displaying Confucianism's diversity without losing sight of its internal connectedness. Paramore answers this challenge with a mixed strategy of chronological and thematic order. The themes that he chooses are the different roles that Confucianism played in Japanese history and he dedicates one chapter to each of them:

1. Confucianism as cultural capital.
2. Confucianism as religion.
3. Confucianism as public sphere.
4. Confucianism as knowledge.
5. Confucianism as liberalism.
6. Confucianism as fascism.
7. Confucianism as taboo.

The first chapter coincides with the early period of Confucianism in Japan from approximately 700-1600 CE. The sixth chapter deals with Confucianism from the Meiji period until WWII; and the seventh chapter covers the post-war period until the present. The majority of the book is thus dedicated to the Edo period and it is only here that Paramore distinguishes between different roles that Confucianism plays simultaneously. Although a bit rough, this scheme seems justified given the extraordinary significance that Confucianism had in Japan's early modern period.

Not all of the book's chapters are of the same quality. Chapters 4, 6 and 7 are particularly convincing, so little critique is needed. The remaining chapters all contain some minor or major problems that I would like to discuss in this review. But let me start with the introduction: The first ten pages of the book stress the necessity of understanding Confucianism in a new way. Paramore's focus on practices and institutions is an important supplement to the existing scientific literature, but the depiction of this approach in the introduction is overcharged. Especially in his list of "challenging" characterizations of Confucianism, Paramore expresses claims that he is not able to substantiate in the rest of his book; he does not have much to say, for example, about Confucianism being ultra-individualistic or relativistic in the following chapters. And he does not convince his readers that, generally, "the more religiously Confucianism was manifested, the greater its wider social impact" or that "Confucianism was most popular in Japan when politically critical." The introduction's strong verdicts actually seem to undermine Paramore's emphasis on the multiple manifestations of Confucianism.

The first chapter about the first 900 years of Confucianism in Japan is a little disappointing. This period is underrepresented in the study of Japanese Confucianism and one would have hoped for a first thorough treatment. Paramore's main point is, however, that Confucianism did not really reach deep into Japanese society in this period and only served as some kind of cultural capital for the social elite. This assumption is convincing, but uncontroversial. Paramore also denies Confucianism's influence on the intellectual history of the Nara and early Heian periods, however, and this is certainly more controversial. Abe Ryūichi has argued, for example, that emperors Kōnin 光仁, Kanmu 桓武, Saga 嵯峨, Junna 淳和 and Ninmyō 仁明 all actively promoted Confucianism and that Buddhist authors like Kūkai 空海 had to establish their teachings against this Confucian dominance (Abe 1999: 21-23 and 80-83). Although this claim of Abe and others might be false or exaggerated, Paramore should have addressed these voices directly and have provided evidence for his own position. One of the few primary sources that he cites is Kūkai's text *Sangōshiki*. He only offers an idiosyncratic interpretation of that text, however, and does not give an explanation of why Kūkai found it at all necessary to argue against Confucianism in this and other works.

The second chapter deals with Confucianism as religion. Paramore argues that Confucianism's success in the Edo period was mainly due to its religious character. He thereby distances himself from classical theories such as the one of Maruyama Masao 丸山真男 according to which Confucianism succeeded *as a theory of political legitimation* (reviewer's emphasis) that was appropriated by the newly established Tokugawa shogunate (Maruyama 1974: 3-18). Many historians have criticized Maruyama's theory since then. They pointed to the shogunate's reservation in their promotion of Confucianism; highlighted the difficulties that Confucianism faced in the first decades of the Edo period; and they emphasized the religious character

of Confucianism. Paramore fills this last objection with life by elaborating on the practices that Confucians adopted in early modern Japan. This is a convincing qualification of Maruyama's one-sided depiction of Confucianism as political philosophy. I find it misleading, however, to call all these practices indiscriminately 'religious practices.' Zhu Xi 朱子, who adopted elements from Chan meditative practice, already stressed – correctly, I believe – that his practices are very different from Buddhist practices. Kumazawa Banzan's 熊沢蕃山 moral self-cultivation, on the other hand, significantly differs both from Buddhist meditation and from Zhu Xi's investigation of things. The martial arts practice *jujitsu* 柔術, discussed in the following chapter, again seems to be very different in character. The importance of such meditative, moral, physical and other practices in Confucianism was often underestimated and it is Paramore's merit to bring them to the fore. The category of 'religion' seems too narrow for them, however, and actually obscures their similarity to Confucian practices advocated by Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 and others that are not regarded as religious practices by Paramore himself.

These considerations point in my eyes to a more general problem of the book; the individual chapters present Confucianism in a number of different roles which could be used to carve out Confucianism's diversity. Paramore employs the chapters' labels, however, to reject common conceptions of what he calls "mainstream historical writing." This strong revisionary approach makes a reduction of Confucianism's diversity necessary and rather leads to an undifferentiated picture. This tension in the book's structure can also be seen in the third chapter. This chapter presents a rich picture of the pedagogical practices and educational institutions of early modern Confucianism. Paramore argues convincingly that these practices had a strong influence on all kinds of literary production in Japan. Here again it seems forced, however, to interpret these practices as the Confucian creation of a Habermasian public sphere. Increased literacy, book-print, and urbanization certainly led to new forms of public interaction in Japan's urban centers. These interactions cannot simply be labeled 'Confucian,' however, and it is still an open question in how far they had any influence on politics and governance. 'Liberalism' is in my eyes an even more unfortunate label for the Confucian impact on Japan's early modern society. In his fifth chapter Paramore shows clearly that Confucianism cannot simply be seen as an ideology defending the political status quo, but can become a very painful sting in the flesh of self-complacent rulers. Paramore quotes the Confucian critique of selfish governance, its idea of a common benefit and the similarity of the Confucian ideal of order to the Western ideal of 'rechtsstaat.' None of these ideas is intrinsically connected to freedom and liberalism, however. In Western intellectual history these different ideas are found together at some point, but it may be a peculiarity of Confucian societies that whereas they stress order, benevolent rule and maybe even some degree of public participation, they do not embrace liberal values. To-ch'öl Sin's study of modern Confucian societies,

according to which these societies endorse democracy but reject liberalism, points into that direction (Sin 2012). It thus seems to me that Paramore's attempt to fit the results of the middle chapters of his book into a framework of fixed provocative labels obscures some of his most important insights.

Returning to the merits of Paramore's book, the chapters about the Edo period are most convincing in arguing against the interpretation of early modern Confucianism along the lines of school categorizations. Paramore presents clear evidence for the Confucian influence on National Learning as well as for the interactions between Confucianism and Dutch Learning, although these schools are usually categorized as Confucianism's rivals. He also clarifies how Confucian institutions of knowledge led to a modernization of society and were a key factor in Japan's rapid transformations after the Meiji restoration. In the later chapters Paramore does not lose energy in arguing against what he believes to be common misconceptions, but tells a complex and illuminating story of Confucianism's ups and downs in the modern period. He depicts how Confucianism's role changed from motor of modernization to symbol of conservatism, from there to Anti-Western polemics and, consequently, to fascist ideology. The involvement of Confucianism in Japan's ultra-nationalism finally led to its disappearance after the Second World War. Paramore shows that Confucianism was not referred to anymore, not even by its earlier supporters, and that it only found a place in contemporary society in the isolated sphere of academic study. Throughout the whole book Paramore compares the developments in Japan to Confucianism's fate in China. The epilogue gives an overview of this comparison and ends with some stimulating hypotheses about the differences between these two Confucian societies. All in all, Paramore has produced an intriguing study of Confucianism's long history in Japan. Especially if read together with books that focus on Confucian ideas – such as Watanabe Hiroshi's recent study of Japanese political thought (Watanabe 2012) – Paramore's book provides a comprehensive and balanced impression of Japanese Confucianism.

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Paulus Kaufmann

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

Shijō Chie 四條知恵

*Urakami no genbaku no katari: Nagai Takashi kara Rōma kyōkō e* 浦上の原爆の語り: 永井隆からローマ教皇へ (The Narration of the Atomic Bomb in Urakami: From Nagai Takashi to the Pope).  
Tokyo: Miraisha, 2015, 234 pp.

Since the 1946 publication of John Hersey's *Hiroshima in the New Yorker*, the narration of the events of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has spawned a literature which has marked the bombings as a rupture in culture or 'a hole in human history' (Zwigenberg 2014: 17; Hersey 1946). Individual survivors and outside writers have sought to fill this hole ever since. Within A-bomb literature, there is a fragility to claims of 'referential truth' in both historiographic writing and literature (Treat 1995: xiv). Still, without a voice, it is not possible to identify the rupture, let alone how to fill the hole. The Catholic presence at Ground Zero in Nagasaki is the inheritor of a long history in Japan, but the voice of its people is enigmatic in the midst of atomic literature. The surviving members of the Catholic *shūdan* (cult) of Urakami avoided the narration of their experiences of the atomic bomb for a long period of time and their unique perspective has been obscured as a result.

Researcher Shijō Chie published *Urakami no genbaku no katari* in 2015, and by a methodology of history and narration (*rekishi to katari* 歴史と語り) has divulged the seldom heard 'narrative' of the A-bomb in Urakami, a northern suburb of Nagasaki. By uncovering the Catholic voice, Shijō's publication stands to be a useful tool for historians of Japan and for a wider audience of readers of non-fiction (8-9). Shijō's contribution is considerable to the local history of the Nagasaki and wider Kyushu region. Her book will also be of great interest if or when it is translated into English for the wider international audience of atomic literature readers. The narration of a 'rupture' in culture by the Janapo-Christian group ensconced in the irradiated rubble is illuminative. The telling of the bomb has historically been skewed towards the first city bombed, Hiroshima, but this re-framing shines the spotlight on Nagasaki, with its contextual background as an originally Christian city.

Drawing attention to the location at Ground Zero, Nagasaki, of the largest Catholic community in Japan, the author vigorously sums up the damages of the bombing for the Christians of Urakami as follows:

The losses of the Urakami Catholics included their homes, fields, most of their neighbours, friends ... sometimes even their schools and workplaces; and as well the church which was the centre of their faith practise and the vehicle of social organisation in their region. Due to such an absurd violence, in an utterly shattered society, the people had no choice but to live on entirely by their own efforts. For the Catholic believers and the Catholic cult (church) the *hansai-setsu* or 'burnt offering

philosophy' was to give atomic death meaning by pointing to a reason for hope in life, albeit in the midst of a fractured society (Reviewer's translation, 191).

Part of the reason for the Catholic group's reticence was that initial assistance from the Japanese government did not arrive until 1957, relates Shijō. The people lived 'by their own efforts', and rarely spoke or wrote about their experiences. The Catholic church of Urakami also wrote very little, in fact, the least about the bombing compared to any other organisation in Nagasaki (189). Consequently, the Urakami Catholic experience is the focus of comparatively little A-bomb literature and is rarely mentioned in the Western world. That after 70 years, the record of this community writing of the bombing is so scant, is an issue which Shijō directly addresses. In contrast, the Hiroshima Catholic archdiocese was a fraction of the size, yet produced many more church publications about the atomic bombings when compared to Nagasaki (190).

Shijō notes that the biggest difference found in Nagasaki when one compares the damages to the experience in the case of the bombing of Hiroshima was the disparity of damages over the quite different geographic areas of the city and amongst varying socio-economic groups of people (54). John W. Treat in his *Writing Ground Zero*, described atomic literature from Nagasaki as ostensibly distinct compared to other bomb literature. Nagasaki's historical sensitivity to social discrimination, he continues, means a greater likelihood of placing the bombing of Nagasaki in literary contexts where issues of class, racial, religious and gender differences are highlighted (Treat 1995: 302-8). Shijō evaluates instances of prejudice from local literature, to portray historic examples of the intense discrimination levelled against the Christians. Such discrimination was also felt more generally in the region of Urakami hit hardest by the bombing.

Nagasaki has been described as having two faces, the sunny face (*yu no kao* 湯の顔) of the harbour city and the shadowy face (*kage no kao* 影の顔) of Urakami, in reference to the separate geographic regions, writes Shijō (38). As a result, Christian persecution of old was often reflected in prejudices towards Urakami. After the national ban against Christianity was finally lifted a few years into the Meiji era, the Christians were disparaged by names such as *Kuro* (クロ), *Kuroshū* (クロシュウ) and *Jūmonji* (十文字), in reference to the 'cross of Christ' (40). An historic recorded retort made to an Urakami villager by a city dweller was 'Urakami is only Fukahori and pig-shit! *Urakami wa Fukahori to buta no kuso bakkashi* 浦上は深堀と豚の糞ばっかし!' (40). Christians were often identified by family names, of which some were prevalent after many years of insular and cultish existence. For example, Fukahori, Kataoka (片岡) and Tagawa (田川) were typical family names for the previously hidden Christians, of which Fukahori was identified in the above insult.

In early 2016, I met Shijō in the city of Nagasaki and discussed her book. After spending years of extensive and painstaking research in the archives in the Nagasaki

city libraries and schools, Shijō has accumulated exceptional knowledge about the Catholics of Urakami. Her intimate knowledge of wider atomic history is evident, having been born in Hiroshima city, graduating from Waseda University, and then writing her dissertation at Kyushu University in 2013 about the survivors' narratives in Urakami. Whilst working as a research fellow at the Research Centre for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, (RECNA *Nagasaki daigaku kakuheiki haizetsu kenkyu senta* 長崎大学核兵器廃絶研究センター) in Nagasaki University she published her monograph.

Subtitled her book, 'From Nagai Takashi to the Pope', Shijō apports particular importance to the *hibakusha* (被爆者, atomic bomb survivor), Dr Nagai Takashi 永井隆, as spokesperson for the Urakami Catholics in the story of the atomic bombing born out of the Catholic faith. Whilst there have been literary, religious and philosophical critiques of the historical figure of Nagai, Shijō argues that what is needed now is an historico-sociological reading (56). She appropriates two chapters to interrogate the *hansai-setsu* 燔祭説 (burnt offering theory) mentioned in the quote above and to discuss Nagai himself. The *hansai-setsu* (introduced by Takahashi Shinji 高橋眞司, Nagasaki academic) problematizes the religious interpretation which Nagai employed to understand the bombing, of the 'sacrifice' of the Christians as a 'burnt offering', using Biblical Old Testament terminology. In order to distinguish it from the 'holocaust' inflicted by the Nazi regime on the Jewish peoples, I suggest *hansai* 燔祭 is best translated as 'burnt offering' even though in Japanese literature it is commonly translated as holocaust (See Takahashi 1994: 199). 'Burnt offering' also makes more sense in terms of Nagai's intended meaning and the Old Testament language of 'sacrifice'. In Nagai's words,

In a previous era, the *hansai* involved an unblemished lamb being burnt on an altar and offered as a sacrifice to the Lord... On 'that day [of the bombing]', the fire blazed for the sake of humanity and for world peace as a huge *hansai*... and I believe that the people who died were all unblemished lambs (Reviewer's translation, 106).

Nagai's interpretation makes explicable the Catholic silences on the record, including gaps in publishing, writes Shijō (162). Inasmuch as the bombing was understood as a sacrifice required by the Catholic God, no protest could be made by the people of faith; who were expected to accept passively and move on. Shijō grapples with what she calls a 'complicated logic' of Nagai's *hansai-setsu*, giving meaning to life for the survivors, but also sublimating 'an absurd violence into the Catholic faith', intimating the damage of the bombing was due to God's providence (48). Nagai's *hansai-setsu* may partially explain the popular saying *Tkari no Hiroshima, inori no Nagasaki* (怒りの広島、祈りの長崎 The wrath of Hiroshima and the prayers of Nagasaki).

Shijō analyses the presence of a school grave at Junshin Girls' school, which has a poem of Nagai's about the *hansai* written onto it. This grave includes preserved bones and hair not dissimilar to the Catholic custom of relics of the saints, but also

refers in nationalistic tones to the girls' martyrdom for the 'fatherland' (108). Such a grave has no duplicate in schools in either Nagasaki or Hiroshima. (108). In this way, Shijō demonstrates the prominence of Nagai's *hansai* interpretation over to the discourse about the bombing in mission schools which had also absorbed some of the most terrible damages and highest death tolls of the atomic bombing.

Nagai's interpretation was subsequently critiqued and Shijō summarises these criticisms such as his perceived lack of resistance to the U.S. occupation as well as to Japanese aggression in the Pacific. Compared to the various critics of Nagai over the years including poet Yamada Kan and aforementioned Takahashi Shinji, Shijō is more circumspect and concludes that the leaders of the American Occupation created and raised up Nagai Takashi as an 'atomic saint' (99). Evidence implies that the heads of the Occupation preferred Nagai's interpretation over other survivor memoirs for a number of reasons, including the avoiding of pursuit of responsibility against the U.S. who dropped the bomb, his anti-communist sentiments and the fact that he used the word 'peace' in an abstract way (99). The prominence of Nagai's publications and his interpretation of the bombing via *hansai* therefore contributed to the reticence of others from his community to speak out.

A major thesis of the book is advanced in chapter four, that when Pope John Paul II visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1981, he transformed the community's narration of the bombing. The Pope began his Hiroshima address with the words, '戦争は人間の仕業 *sensō wa ningen no shiwaza* (War is the work of man ("humanity" in Japanese)). For the faithful, in hearing the Pope, the bomb was newly understood as definitively a product of humanity and not God. Shijō's description of the commemoration of the Pope's visit and the developments which followed is comprehensive and fascinating. The Nagasaki Catholics were powerfully affected, and began to perceive that the bomb could be protested against, rather than be thought of as the providence of God. My own research data in talking to Catholic *hibakusha* has amply backed up this understanding that the Pope's coming transformed the readiness to speak of this long time silent community from the 1980s.

Nowadays, there is precious little time remaining to speak to the survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Today, Urakami as a suburb is more socio-economically integrated into the city. There are still many Catholics who live here, although Shijō points out that those who worship at the Urakami Cathedral today are widely dispersed and more mobile. After I met Shijō, I searched out some of the remaining Christians who survived the bomb in Urakami, for my own project, in an oral history survey, which promises to reveal more about this marginalised community and their response to intense trauma. I also met a spectrum of other voices in the community, including Nagai Takashi's grandson, a nun, Kataoka, two Fukahori and a worker from the Twenty Six Martyrs Museum. Most Catholic survivors lost the majority of their close family members, and four interviewees had been orphaned by the bomb. One told me about her grandmother who was a double survivor, first exiled with her family

in the 1870s and latterly an *hibakusha* of 1945. As might be expected, the survivors spoke intimately and powerfully of their suffering, of prior and ongoing experiences of discrimination, their resilient faith, the atomic weapon used by humanity against humanity and of their hopes and fears for the future.

All in all, Shijō's writing is respectful, nuanced and thoughtful. Her book paints a colourful yet incisive picture of the diversity of Japanese society post-war and the particularity of the story of the Urakami Catholics and their experiences after years of discrimination. The bombing was experienced as cultural rupture by the considerable Catholic community found in Urakami; a rupture which shattered their lives, community and is still felt today. Through this new book Catholic identity in Nagasaki and Japan and the Urakami community's distinctive memories as appraised via a prism of faith may be more succinctly investigated and appreciated.

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Gwyn McClelland  
Monash University

Helen Hardacre  
*Shinto: A History*  
Oxford University Press, 2016. 655 pp.

With its ambiguous relationship with the category of "religion" and its key role in the Japanese adaption to modernity, Shinto has long posed a challenge for religious scholars — it is a topic difficult to summarize, and harder still to characterize objectively. Helen Hardacre of Harvard University has taken up the formidable task of tying together many loose ends of research into a seamless whole, and *Shinto: A*

*History* is a result. This millennia-spanning survey of Shinto will serve not only as an introduction for a generation of students, but also as an in-depth overview of a large body of Japanese and Western research and modern primary sources. It will therefore be of use even to scholars with a background in Japanese religion, thought, or history.

In the 21st century, seeming opposites such as traditional shrine worship and individual spirituality, mysticism and worldly benefits, localism and universalism are all contained within the category of “Shinto” or the related concept of the “shrine” (*jinja*). Navigating the attempts to fit these things together, Hardacre chooses mainly to trace the institutional paths that brought shrines to their current position in Japanese society, rather attempt to encompass all shrine-related activities. Despite its size, the book is not an attempt at a complete documentation of Shinto, and the future of Shinto will not necessarily stick to its well-trodden paths, leaving much opportunity for future research.

In the initial chapters, Hardacre traces the origins of Shinto back to prehistoric animism, protohistory, ritual, myth, and the role of the kami in pre-medieval Japan. As she acknowledges, by suggesting that Shinto predates Buddhism, she is siding with the traditional definition of Shinto used by Kokugakuin University and other Shrine Shinto institutions, as opposed to the recent critiques of this definition by scholars such as Kuroda, Breen, Teeuwen, and Inoue Hiroshi. The close survey of ancient rituals, relying not merely on Kokugakuin scholarship but on a variety of Western and Eastern scholars as well as primary sources, makes it easy to agree that there was much in the ancient Japanese state which supplied the basis for medieval kami worship as well as later appeals to tradition — for example, *norito* prayers, the classical ritual bureau Jingikan, and the documented use of myths and official histories in determining the form of the state. It is indeed far too limiting to “privilege the doctrinal and conceptual aspects of Shinto at the expense of the institutional,” as Hardacre puts it. These early chapters describe the ancient Shinto institution becoming quite elaborate without ever developing a firm theology.

The chapters on medieval and early modern Shinto expand the book's scope somewhat to include a jumble of folk practices that made their way into the non-institutional spheres of modern Shinto: *dengaku* music, non-canonical kami such as the Seven Lucky Gods, the development of tourism through popular pilgrimages to famous shrines, and new religions. While covering these varied topics, Hardacre also offers the reader summaries of significant moments in premodern Shinto thought, connecting various schools of esoteric, Buddhist, and Confucian teaching. Hardacre follows the general consensus of nearly all Japanese religious scholars that Shinto movements of the Edo period, whether intellectual or popular in focus, demonstrated a common desire for salvation. The direct link drawn from the Kokugaku project to the 19th century dancing mania called *ee ja nai ka* serves to underline this point.

The chapters on Shinto and imperial Japan cover a subject crucial to ongoing scholarly debates over modernization and secularism. Hardacre sharply critiques

the persistence of universalizing anti-Shinto rhetoric in the academy, which lives on as a sort of Japanese equivalent to the long-dead *Sonderweg* theory of German historiography. In response, she offers a close reading of how Shinto rose to the highest rank of public function in the Meiji period, showing how shrines were never the sole responsibility of the state but were part of a continuous negotiation, or “partnership,” in her words, between government and society. This includes an in-depth discussion of how shrines were funded, relying on previously overlooked primary sources.

The final three chapters respectively summarize legal, ritual, and popular aspects of postwar Shinto, emphasizing how Japanese society continues to bring shrines and shrine ritual into public spaces even after the shrine system was privatized during the American Occupation. This section should provide a helpful background for recent news stories that confusingly portray public usages of Shinto as an attempt to “reinstate a wartime religion,” as it demonstrates that shrine priests have never sought to privatize access or usage of shrines, but to always seek open cooperation and engagement with all levels of society. It also demonstrates the legal ambiguity of the current status quo, where some Shinto ceremonies, including local festivals and the act of *sanspai* (shrine visiting or worship), may remain non-religious custom in the eyes of the law.

*Shinto: A History* is most successful as a historical examination of the ritual, socioeconomic, and philosophical origins of postwar Shrine Shinto as defined by Jinja Honcho, the organization that inherited overseeing of shrines from the prewar Home Ministry. The logic behind this choice is sound. Because so much of the history of Shinto is bound up with this institutionalization, this book reflects historical scholarship more closely and completely than mid-20th century popular introductions to Shinto, as well as Breen and Teeuwen’s *A New History of Shinto* (2010), which offers a few case studies with relative completeness but does not try to summarize the history of the entire institution.

Despite its detailed analysis and extensive use of prior literature, the methodology of *Shinto: A History* gives rise to a range of omissions. Because Hardacre interprets Shinto history through the two dichotomies of foreign/indigenous and private/public, one might assume that the foreign and private find a place in the narrative, but in fact, the focus is on the origins of the present-day Shinto institution, and the reader does not hear so much about what the present-day institution has deemed “private.” Although this constitutes an altogether vague range of shared interests, a “waste-basket of knowledge” with no unifying theme (Hanegraaff 2012), I will here offer some examples of “private” shrines and mythology on one hand, and beliefs and practices on the other.

“Private” shrines and mythology are frequently neglected. As Japan has thousands of local shrines and local histories, it would be impossible to weave all of them into the narrative, but the reader may not be aware exactly how much is missing. Aside from a perfunctory description of the Meiji Pantheon Dispute and a mention in a table of new religious groups, the Izumo shrines are totally ignored,

but they played a prominent role in Shinto history. As recently documented by Yijiang Zhong in *The Origins of Modern Shinto in Japan* (2016), Izumo constructed and promoted the deity Ōkuninushi as a cosmological center in the Edo period, to widespread acceptance. The Ōkuninushi cult was even endorsed by Hirata Atsutane, a fact which was whitewashed out of prewar history by Meiji period Restorationists and is not mentioned in *Shinto: A History* either. I believe that Hardacre did have awareness of this and purposefully limited her discussion of such topics to give coherence to the book's narrative, but this silence must nonetheless be noted.

"Private" beliefs and practices are given better coverage, but some subjects are omitted, such as folk shamanism, yin-yang magic, divination, popular cults such as the ground-up movement called *kōshin-machi*, or comparisons of Yamato myth with the myths of Ainu, Ryukyu, and other cultures. Hardacre, who is well-known for her classic book on Japanese new religions (Hardacre 1985), does devote considerable space to modern Shinto-linked movements with charismatic leaders. This is useful, but the category of "new religious movements" can be limiting—it might give a false sense of order to a Dionysian mess. For example, the chapter on the Edo period roots of these movements is given the misleading title "Shinto and Revelation." Such a title should take us much farther back than the Edo period, into ancient descriptions of *miko* shamanism as well as possession experiences among classical and medieval women. (Blacker 1975; Takada 1991) Instead these are missing from the text, as are most other practices we would today deem occult or folk religion. This, again, shows definite signs of being a conscious choice. At one point, *miko* are alluded to, without mentioning the word, specifically to exclude them from the narrative! (36)

In the final chapter of *Shinto: A History*, we see an increasing departure from the institutional path in the 21st century and an invention of new narratives from unusual sources. Television dramas and anime invite visitors to imagine entirely fictional worlds as they visit shrines, sometimes relying on supernatural imagery or invented "ancient" traditions such as *matsuri* and *miko*. Meanwhile, "power spot" discourse draws on universalizing "spiritual" aspects of shrines, sometimes said to be formerly excluded from shrine histories. (Horie in press) Both of these new, content-oriented takes on Shinto have drawn interest from overseas. (Rots 2015) Regardless of closeness to source material, there is a visible reliance on the "wastebasket" knowledge described above. Shrine attendance has increased exponentially in Japan since 2010, but visitors are now just as likely to rely on these sorts of innovative narratives as they are to be at all familiar with the type of traditional uses that Hardacre summarizes in the penultimate chapter.

How do these "private" narratives map onto our understanding of Shinto? Some among Japan's "spiritual intellectuals" have sought to decouple shrines from the historical Shinto institution entirely, as a prescriptive solution to "return" shrines to an "ancient," non-political animism. Regardless of the worthiness or plausibility of this project, the path of the academic historian is not to propose solutions. Rather,

scholarly work makes clear the hidden connections, whether local, national, or global in scope, that underlie unexpected innovations and changes. The greatest success of *Shinto: A History* is showing us that the story of Shrine Shinto so far, even when limited to its institutional form, is already a deeply complex one with countless twists and turns requiring close attention to detail. For that reason, even as Shinto changes, I expect that this book will remain relevant for many decades.

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Avery Morrow  
The University of Tokyo

Steven Trensou

*Kiu - Hōshu - Ryū: Chūsei Shingon mikkyō no shinsō 祈雨・宝珠・龍 中世真言密教の深層* [Rainmaking, Jewels, and Dragons: The Essence of Medieval Shingon Esoteric Buddhism]

*Premiere Collection, Kyōto: Kyōto daigaku shuppankai, 2016, ISBN 978-4-8140-0019-7, 504 pp.*

Rich symbolism focused around the mythical figure of dragons and complex liturgy made rainmaking rituals amongst the most spectacular practices of Japanese

Esoteric or Tantric Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教). In early and medieval Japan, the success or failure of such ceremonies could easily make or break a monastic career. This book provides a comprehensive account of the history of this ritual tradition, which can be traced back to the Indian origins of Tantric Buddhism, in Japan, in particular in relation to the Shingon school.

Although at times complex, this book is extremely well-researched. Its main objective is to show that the dragon cult associated with the rainmaking ritual called the *Shōugyōhō* 請雨行法 can be considered the missing link between two extremely important elements of medieval Japanese Tantric Buddhism: the relic or jewel cult described in the posthumous *Testament* (*Goyuigō* 御遺告) of Kūkai (空海 774-835), which was established in the tenth century, and the cult of the Three Worthies (*Sanzon* 三尊) Fudō 不動, Aizen 愛染, and Nyoirin 如意輪 (or the Jewel), which appeared in text form only in the late thirteenth, or early fourteenth century. To this purpose, Trensou meticulously analyzes the history of the *Shōugyōhō* and its relationship to the dragon cult in the Shingon school from the late Heian to the Kamakura period. He thus demonstrates—and is probably the first to do so—how this dragon cult was linked to many important aspects of medieval Tantric Buddhism; because connections go beyond relic worship or the Three Worthies cult, Trensou's work illuminates the central place of this particular liturgical category in medieval Shingon doctrine and practice.

While some details could be discussed further, the general orientation of Trensou's demonstration goes beyond the common *doxa* of the field. His insights give a more accurate picture of the history of the Shingon school. Socio-political factors are not at the center of Trensou's focus. This book should not be mistaken for a purely historical study. Rather, it succeeds in providing a comprehensive picture of the evolution and implications of an extremely crucial ritual, on doctrinal, liturgical and symbolic levels. As such, it represents a remarkable achievement, which reflects the extensive research the author conducted in monastic libraries across Japan.

The author's admirable effort to write his book fully in Japanese must be noted. An English publication, which Trensou will surely provide later on, would have benefitted from a better diffusion. However, the general argument of this particular book, which draws from an extensive documentation of medieval religious texts, is extremely deep and specialized. As such, it would probably mostly appeal to researchers who are familiar with its issues and fluent in this language.

The book follows a chronological structure, starting with the origins of rainmaking rituals in Tantric Buddhism. The first chapter provides a brief overview of the history of such rituals in India and China and discusses the canonical sources of similar Buddhist practices in East-Asia. The second chapter tackles rituals conducted by Kūkai at the Shinsen'en 神泉苑 pond in the capital. These rituals set the most important precedent for such practices in Japan. Trensou also describes

the lesser-known ritual performance of 875, the first historically documented occurrence of this type of rite performed after Kūkai. In this period, rainmaking cults were associated with the “virtue” of the sovereign. Natural disasters, such as droughts, were understood as manifestations of a leader’s lack of virtue; rituals preventing or resolving natural disasters were judged as extremely crucial at least from the middle Heian period (pp. 58-59).

In the next chapter Trensou analyzes the origins of another rainmaking ritual of the Shingon school, the *Kujakukyōhō* 孔雀經法, which was a major rival of the *Shōugyōhō*. In fact, as we find later in the book, this ritual had the advantage of not only allowing rain to fall, but also of stopping excessive rain, while the *Shōugyōhō* only permitted the former. Here, the author assesses when this ritual was established as an independent practice. In doing so, the author challenges, with an extremely comprehensive documentation, previous claims that this happened in the tenth century.

Next is the fourth, and longest, chapter. First, we learn why the particular ritual of the *Shōugyōhō* was revered by the Shingon school, and especially by the superior (*chōja* 長者) of the Tōji 東寺 temple. In the tenth century, rainmaking practices were also conducted by monks of the Tendai school at the Enryakuji 延暦寺 temple. Nevertheless, Shingon’s expertise on this matter was vastly recognized. Here, Trensou points out why rituals at the Shinsen’en, a place close to imperial symbolism, were seen as more fitting. He explains that the ritual had ties with the idea of the virtue of the sovereign and also to the concept of “*tokusei*” 徳政 (which can be translated as “virtuous government”).

This part of the book is extremely important, as it also discusses the problem of failed rituals. The success or failure of rain rituals was quite evident. Ceremonies perceived as failures were quickly abandoned, and high-ranking monks avoided undertaking such risky endeavors, which could make or break a career. This is probably what happened to a certain Genshin (元真 ?-1008), who left the capital for Kyūshū after failing twice at rainmaking (p. 121). Importantly, the seventh chapter notes that this ritual was deemed unfit for the prestigious Ninnaji temple. After a failed *Shōugyōhō* ritual by a Hirosawa lineage monk in the mid-tenth century, its performance was probably reserved to the less revered Daigoji 醍醐寺 (p. 226) temple.

The latter part of the chapter discusses the case of Ningai (仁海 951-1046), a contemporary of Genshin, who allegedly succeeded nine times at the *Shōugyōhō*, and thus became extremely famous. Trensou doubts the plausibility of this number. He says it was an exaggeration and concludes that the correct number was probably five times at most. (This would still be the highest known for this ritual.) Trensou explains that such an exaggeration likely happened because by the twelfth century, Ningai’s unusually high advancement in the monastic hierarchy (*sōgō* 僧綱) was rationalized by his mastery of the practice most closely tied to social promotion (p. 128). This particular

association can also be observed in the case of a monk called Jinkaku (or Jingaku, 深覚 955-1043). After a series of failures, this peculiar character was disgraced. However, he entered the Shinsen'en and conducted a successful rainmaking ritual based on the *Kujakukyō*. He then became the first superior of Tōji (pp. 131-136).

Rainmaking thus both allowed a lowborn monk such as Ningai to rise in the social order, and an aristocrat such as Jinkaku to recover his lost status. Indeed, their rivalry for the position of superior of Tōji and prestige within the court motivated Ningai to further stress his own thaumaturgical prowess at this particular ritual. Ningai even affirmed that Kūkai received the Tōji temple on the basis of the success of rainmaking rituals. Despite his efforts, the noble-born Jinkaku was chosen as the superior of this center of the Shingon school in the capital (pp. 137-144), and Ningai had to wait for the death of his rival to attain this position. On a purely historical level, this fascinating chapter shows that while ritual successes were indeed quite revered in early medieval Japan, they could not overthrow the established aristocratic social order.

The last part of this central chapter observes the heritage of Ningai's claims. While various versions of his ritual spread in the Shingon school, his dispute with Jinkaku also gave birth to a different ritual tradition based on the *Kujakukyō* in the eleventh century (and not the tenth). At the time, this ritual tradition was linked to the dragon cult and the Shinsen'en. It was also from this period on that the superior of Tōji started regularly accomplishing state-sponsored rainmaking rituals. Trensou here sees the origin of this situation as a consequence of Ningai's discourse linking the position of leader of Tōji with rainmaking prowess. The chapter concludes by presenting the reception of Ningai's ritual, the *Shōugyōhō*, in the Ono lineage (*Ono-ryū* 小野流), and by discussing how it came to be exclusively associated with this branch of the Shingon school.

The fifth chapter discusses the progressive disappearance of this particular ritual until the thirteenth century and describes the diffusion of the diverse variations of the *Kujakukyōhō* across most of the Shingon school—especially Daigoji. The reasons for this were both practical and political. From a practical standpoint, the *Shōugyōhō* required rare items to perform. From a political standpoint, the cloistered emperor Shirakawa (白河 1053-1129) favored the *Kujakukyōhō*; moreover, the famous monk Hanjun (範俊 1038-1112) failed at it.

In chapter six, Trensou discusses the reappearance of the *Shōugyōhō* in the Kamakura period, with the efforts of the monk Shōken (勝賢 1103-1196) of Daigoji. This monk conducted the ritual called *Kujakukyō midokyō*, but the effects were very limited. He was then told to perform the *Shōugyōhō*. Arguing that the Shinsen'en was in ruin and that the tools needed were difficult to obtain he complained about this order to the cloistered emperor Go Shirakawa (後白河 1127-1192). The sovereign agreed. Instead he asked Shōken to perform the *Kujakukyōhō*. At first, Shōken rejected the opportunity, as he perceived it as exclusive to the Hirosawa

lineage (*Hirosawa-ryū* 広沢流) of the Shingon school, but he eventually obliged. In response, the leader of the Hirosawa lineage, the prince-monk Shūkaku (守覚 1150-1202), who probably wanted to limit the use of the *Kujakukyōhō* to the monks of the Ninnaji 仁和寺 temple, decided to establish the *Shōugyōhō* as the rainmaking practice of Daigoji. The Shinsen'en was thus restored, and the monks of Daigoji created a reformed version of the *Shōugyōhō* based on the dragon cult at this temple. In the reformed versions, the rules regarding the items to be used in the ritual were simplified. The "new" ritual was conducted six times after 1213. At Daigoji, it was especially linked with the dragon cult, such as the cult of Seiryō. However, this revival did not last long. The last performance of such rainmaking ceremonies occurred in 1273. Although the *Shōugyōhō* disappeared, its dragon cult continued to live on under the form of a new practice, the *Offerings to Varuṇa* (*Suiten-ku* 水天供) and Aizen rituals at the imperial palace.

In his analysis of the *Offerings to Varuṇa*, Trensou shows that, contrary to Ningai's practice, it was a composite ritual, which lacked the official component and social pressure of the late Heian period. From the thirteenth century onwards, the Shingon school lost its monopoly on rain; rather, ceremonies involved members of several schools and branches. In fact, the *Offerings* stem directly from the Shinsen'en liturgy, and it was probably born from a tentative effort by the Tendai school to break the Shingon predominance on this matter by integrating this symbolism into a preexisting practice of their own.

After the seventh chapter, which offers an overall conclusion to the first part, Trensou embarks on a doctrinal analysis of rainmaking rituals. He makes the point that the Three Worthies of Aizen, Fudō, and the Jewel were foundational to the medieval version of the *Shōugyōhō*. Section 2.1 provides an outline of this incarnation of the ritual. It traces its origins and sources and also explains how its performance entailed a precise study of medieval texts. Here Trensou stresses the central role of the Jewel and Buddha relics in this ritual, but he also demonstrates how the Kings of Knowledge Aizen and Fudō appear in it, integrating the whole practice in the doctrinal background of the negation of dualism incarnated by these two deities.

The next chapter discusses the story of the Jewel found in one of the most revered sources of medieval Shingon, the apocryphal *Testament* (*Goyuigō*) of Kūkai. This chapter shows that the story of the Jewel was probably written with rainmaking rituals in mind. While the name *Shōugyōhō* itself does not appear in the text, Trensou remarks that ties between the dragon cult, water and rain, and the Jewel in both canonical and Japanese sources constitute the doctrinal basis of this story. While a more detailed explanation of such associations would have been helpful, Trensou provides an interesting take on this issue, which expands on previous scholarship (especially Ruppert, 2000).

The third part assesses the impact of the *Shōugyōhō* on medieval Shingon

rituals. The first chapter discusses the cult of the dragon goddess Seiryō 清瀧, who was especially revered since the time of Shōkaku (勝覺 1057-1129). Trenson shows that this deity was not only the protector of Daigoji, but that the monks of this temple also saw her as an incarnation of Shingon doctrine. As such, she was not only a rainmaking deity. She participated in consecration rites, and was also linked, amongst many other things, to Jewel rituals, and to Aizen and Fudō.

The second chapter of the third part draws on Seiryō's multifaceted involvement. It tries to tie Seiryō and rainmaking rituals to the *Ritual of the Three Worthies* (*Sanzon gōgyōhō* 三尊合行法), an extremely complex and vast practice created by Monkan (文觀 1278-1357), another monk of the Shingon school, under the patronage of emperor Go Daigo (後醍醐 1288-1339). Here, Trenson makes several interesting points, especially on Murōji. He shows how the dragon cult at this temple was imported from Daigoji, in the process of its conversion to the Shingon school, and he also provides new evidence of the existence of a combined cult of the dragons of Murōji and Shinsen'en.

In his conclusion to this segment (3.3.), the author analyzes links between the figure of the dragon and subjugation rituals (*chōbuku hō* 調伏法). His take on the obscure rites of Ōsashiyō 奥砂子平 and *Byakuja* 避蛇, which appear in the *Testament*, is both helpful and interesting. Here he shows, rather convincingly, that the nucleus that would later be integrated into Monkan's ritual was already in place in the dragon cult of Daigoji.

As a whole, this is an excellent book. It provides a fascinating picture of Esoteric rituals and their impact in the early Japanese Middle Ages. It does also have some flaws, especially in its structure. The book was clearly created on the basis of several separate articles, a trait it shares with many Japanese books. Repetitions of similar content are evident (particularly in Section 2.1). As Trenson himself admits (p. 15), previous literature could have been referenced more. A more comprehensive study of the iconographic elements of rainmaking rituals in Japan would have helped provide a better overview of the symbolic implications of such practices, but this would probably go beyond the scope of the book.

The author's portrayal of the *Ritual of the Three Worthies* of Monkan also needs to be further nuanced. The political background surrounding Emperor Go Daigo was crucial in Monkan's ritual. Abe Yasurō (2013) has discussed this, and my own dissertation (2014) has analyzed it in detail. As Trenson states, Monkan's ritual does share some common doctrinal foundations with rain-making practices. However, it was a much more composite rite, which incorporated not only Shingon symbolism but also Shintō deities.

Laying aside these somewhat minor flaws, this book is an extremely erudite and precise study. Along with other recent publications (see for example Asuka (2015), Dolce (2015), Faure (2015), and also the works by Fabio Rambelli, Iyanaga Nobumi and others), it provides a new path for further anthropological analysis of rituals

and deities in ancient and medieval Japan. Due to its sheer scope and Trensou's impressive attention to detail, reading this book can be a daunting task, but it is more than worth the effort. I would especially recommend it to anyone interested in doctrinal and ritual studies.

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Gaetan Rappo  
Swiss National Science Foundation  
Harvard University