

Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds. *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

Reviewed by Scott P. O'Bryan, University of Alabama

A decade-long fascination with the culture and experience of modernity in early twentieth-century Japan shows little indication of abating among today's scholars of history, literature, and art—and rightly so. Intense focus on the emergence of modern cultural forms and practices during the interwar era is in part a response to what the time advertised about itself. Certainly readers of Elise K. Tipton's and John Clark's *Being Modern in Japan* will be left with little doubt either about the frequency with which contemporary commentators declared *modanizumu* and *bunka* the signs of the time, nor about the intensity of contention over the meaning of those terms. But interest today in what seems the rise of modern culture during the interwar years remains strong also because, even after scholars have carefully dethroned our more simplistic notions about the flowering of Taishō democracy and the like, the era still seems in part a time of promise, politically perhaps, but also culturally. Our views of the period retain a lingering nostalgia for the changes in daily life and mass culture of the time that seemed to offer the possibility of new liberating forms of subjectivity and cultural expression.

Tipton, known best for her work on the *Tokkō* (Special Higher Police) of the 1930s and 1940s, and Clark, the author and editor of several important volumes on Asian art and modernity, are to be lauded for bringing together a diverse group of scholars in *Being Modern in Japan* to explore the variety of ways in which Japanese labored to understand cultural and social change in the years roughly bounded by the First World War and the beginning of Japan's second war in China. The editors have included the works of specialists in the history of art, design, literature, and society in an effort to define precisely "what being modern meant in Japan" (p. 8) during the period from the 1910s to the 1930s. The book is a collection of eleven essays drawn from a symposium held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia in 1998. It is a worthy volume that well illuminates the broad array of domains in which questions of modernity and its cultural modes mattered to Japanese of the time.

While a few of the chapters are somewhat uneven in style and message, many are extremely good. The very strongest do a careful job of revealing how the meanings of the economic, social, and cultural transformations so trumpeted at the time—individualism, urbanization, mass consumption, and so on—were in part shaped by the ways changing modes of representation were employed to interpret those new developments. Gennifer Weisenfeld’s intelligent essay, for example, on the transformation of artisanal design into a professional artistic field traces the establishment of *shōgyō bijutsu* (commercial art) through the career of Hamada Masuji. As chief editor of the multi-volume *Gendai shōgyō bijutsu zenshū* (*The Complete Commercial Artist*), Hamada played a critical role in codifying the specialized knowledge of the modern designer and putting art to commercial use in the marketplace. Creating demand for commercial art among retailers and such giants of the emerging consumer packaged-goods and pharmaceutical industries as Lion, Kao, Shiseido and Hoshi, Hamada “paved the way,” as Weisenfeld felicitously writes, “for both a commercialization of aesthetics and an aestheticization of commerce” (p. 77).

Jordan Sand offers similarly sensitive analysis in his chapter on competing attempts by architects and social reformers during the Taishō period to define *bunka jūtaku* (culture houses) as the appropriate forms of dwelling for the modern age. Taking the “Culture Village” model house show at Ueno Park of 1922 as his starting point, Sand skillfully demonstrates that architects and others responded to the emerging idea of mass markets by the “rendering visible” (p. 103) of dwellings in a variety of physical and discursive ways that contributed to their aestheticization and, in essence, one surmises, their commodification. His point that the “cultured life” was highly contested terrain is by itself little surprising, but Sand extends this idea significantly to suggest that the much touted rise of mass markets during the Taishō years might best be understood less in terms of markets for actual cultural goods and more in terms of newly competitive and fragmented markets for polemical contests about what the cultured life really meant and about appropriate social prescriptions for achieving it.

Sandra Wilson’s instructive essay, “The Past in the Present,” examines the function of wars in constructing what she calls a “pedigree” of Japanese modernity that by the 1920s and 1930s rested in large part on “a perceived capacity to go to war and a willingness to use war as a political instrument” (p. 170). As Wilson demonstrates, the standard narratives of modernity by

the 1930s drew on the entire range of Japanese conflicts from the time of the Meiji Restoration to provide evidence of modern Japan's national power, territorial coherence, spiritual unity, and international equality with world powers. While focusing on the "dominant narrative" of Japan's wars as modernity, Wilson is also careful to show the ambiguities and mutability of such modern orthodoxies. Her essay is particularly illuminating where she shows how private and less heroic memories were often the most compelling competitors to official versions of wars past.

Others essays in the volume also make valuable contributions, including John Clark's chapter exploring the ways in which changing reprographic technologies and graphic styles gave rise to new kinds of modern visual spaces, Omuka Toshiharu's examination of correspondence columns in art magazines as a lens on the formation of audiences for modern art, and Elise Tipton's treatment of new urban cafés as a discursive site for anxious contention among social critics over perceived cultural decline. In another chapter, Kashiwagi Hiroshi writes about attempts to apply concepts of rationalization and efficiency to interior design. He seems in places, however, too easily to assert a direct translation of representations in the media to real experience or attitudes, a problem that Barbara Hamill Sato might have considered as well in her otherwise fascinating piece on mass magazines and middle-class women readers.

The writing in parts of the volume might have benefited from further sharpening. The prose in the introductory essay by Tipton and Clark, in particular, makes it a bit difficult to follow the train of the arguments and summaries there. Readers might also find themselves wishing that the introduction went further in defining the relationship as the editors understand it between ideas of Westernization, modernization, modernism and modernity that were often unreflexively conflated by commentators themselves at the time and frequently continue to be by scholars and journalists alike today.

Being Modern joins a growing body of important research, represented by works ranging from editor Sharon A. Minichiello's *Japan's Competing Modernities* to Stephen Vlastos's edited volume, *The Mirror of Modernity*, and Harry D. Harootunian's *History's Disquiet*, on the relation in Japan between a variety of modernisms and the lived experiences of modernity. Taken together, the essays in *Being Modern* well document the complex relationships between the texts produced by various literate arbiters of modern taste and experience; official state policies; changing modes and technologies of representation in print, image, and design; the images of

alternative modern subjectivities embraced by reading and viewing publics; and daily life. Much of the putative rise of individualism and consumerism in the early twentieth century remained more image than reality for most Japanese until after the end of the Second World War. Yet *Being Modern* and like-minded studies help reveal the hopes and anxieties that modern change prompted among Japanese during the years in which these developments first suggested themselves. Ample illustrations throughout the volume provide important support to the essays. The strongest pieces would make suitable reading for upper level undergraduate courses as well as graduate courses concerned with issues of culture, modernity, and the twentieth century.

NHK International. *A Bilingual Guide to the Japanese Economy*.
(Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001), pp. 345.

Reviewed by Kiyoshi Kawahito

Despite a considerable interest in Japanese economy and business management, as well as a sizable increase in the number of non-Japanese experts in the field, publication of English-language publications on the subject suitable as general textbooks has been very limited in the last ten years. A major reason seems to be that the country's economy and business practices have been undergoing rapid and significant changes in many areas since the collapse of the "bubble" at the beginning of the 1990s. Potential textbook authors have been unable to keep abreast of important developments in all relevant areas to come up with a wide range of topics that does not become obsolete quickly.

The paucity of the availability of such textbooks in turn has made it difficult for typical U.S. universities, where students are expected to buy only one or two required books, to offer an effective introductory course on the subject. The instructor cannot compel students to purchase several specialized books (on economic history, industrial structure, labor market, finance and banking, international trade and investment, government policies, business management, social and cultural framework, and the like), in lieu of one general book or two. On the other hand, compiling an up-to-date reading list and making the literature available in the library for the students would be a cumbersome task. The latest book by the NHK International, *A Bilingual Guide To The Japanese Economy*, is a welcome addition from the above perspective. It has several good features, although it is far

from an ideal textbook.

In the first place, the book, which is divided into four parts (Part I “Japanese-style Management,” Part II “The Working World,” Part III “Postwar Government Economic Policy,” and Part IV “The Japanese Economy and International Society”), covers numerous economic, business, and social topics in 45 chapters. For example, Part I covers elements of Japanese business culture, including executive salaries, quality control activities, research and development, high technology application, lifetime employment, seniority system, manpower development, labor unions, keiretsu, cross-share holding, market share consciousness, and corporate restructuring. Similarly, Part III deals with key topics in the economic development of Japan since 1945, such as the role of MITI, export promotion, technological buildup, financial industry crisis, service industry expansion, regulations and deregulations, industrial concentration, social capital, and consumer welfare.

Secondly, the book covers not only the traditional norms of Japanese economy and business but also notable changes that took place in the 1990s up to year 2000. The original version of the book published in 1995 was based on the texts of a serialized Radio Japan broadcast from April 1993 to March 1994. The broadcast was a major economic project of the NHK Overseas Broadcasting Department, which collaborated closely with the Economic Research Department of the Daiwa Institute of Research. The current edition was published in 2001, with some consulting assistance from the Mainichi Newspaper, adding new topics, updating and revising discussions in the earlier edition, and incorporating latest data. The new topics include trade

restriction and trade liberalization, appreciation of the yen, overseas production, international economic assistance, deregulation, aging population, government reforms, private sector restructuring, and the like.

Other attractive features include the book's availability in paperback, use of a Q&A (question-and-answer) style presentation of the content, and incorporation of quizzes as discussion openers. These features make the book interesting and easy to read. In addition, for those who are eager to learn Japanese-English or English-Japanese translation of economic and business literature, this book should be a treasure; the same content is presented in Japanese and in English side by side, although the translation work is poor at times.

On the negative side, it should be pointed out that this book alone is not adequate even for any introductory course on Japanese economy and business, in terms of thoroughness in topical coverage and in updated information. For example, the book almost totally leaves out the discussion of the impact of the country's geography, history, religion, philosophy, education, language, politics, and the like on its economic structure and business practices. It contains little updating on such crucial topics as lifetime employment, seniority wage, and keiretsu, despite conspicuous changes that have taken place in recent years.

The deficiency should be dealt with by additional purchase of such annual publications as the *Japan Economic Almanac* by the Nikkei Weekly of the Nihon Keizai Shimbun and the *Japan: An International Comparison* by the Keizai Koho Center, if the students can afford to, particularly the former. Some internet sources, including the home pages of the JETRO and the Keidanren, can also be used as supplement.

Book Reviews

Ian Reader, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan: The Case of Aum Shinrikyo*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

Reviewed by Daniel A. Metraux

Monday, March 20, 1995 was a beautiful clear spring day when five members of the small religious sect Aum Shinrikyo conducted chemical warfare on the Tokyo subway system using sarin gas. It was the first postwar example of mass terrorism directed indiscriminately against a helpless public. Like the 11 September 2001 terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Aum's alleged goal had been to kill thousands of people, but fortunately the ineptitude of Aum's scientists reduced the toll to twelve dead and several thousand injured. After the attack Japanese scholars and the media engaged in considerable soul-searching to determine why and how such shocking violence could occur in Japan, a nation well known for its safety and orderly ways.

The leading scholars on Aum are Professors Shimazono Susumu of Tokyo University and Ian Reader of the Lancaster University (UK); one should address all of their books and articles on the sect to get an in-depth view of how Aum evolved into a murderous organization that vowed to destroy the world around it for its own good. Reader's *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan* is perhaps the best work by a Western scholar on the process that led to Aum's violent outburst.

Reader presents a superb overview of Aum Shinrikyo's short infamous history in Japan in his book, *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan*. When Asahara Shoko (birth name: Matsumoto Chizuo) founded Aum in the early 1980's, there was little to distinguish it from many of the so-called "new religions" (*shinshin shukyo*) that emerged in the 1970's and 1980's, but by the late 1980's and certainly by the early 1990's, it had veered off in a direction of its own. Reader presents the following overview of Aum history:

"When Asahara Shoko first set up his yoga group in 1984, the group he established had not set its aims on causing mayhem or mass murder, and its interests appear to have been primarily located in yoga, spiritual development, and the attainment of psychic powers. Even when, from around 1985, its leader began to have visions of a sacred mission, Aum's orientation remained

optimistic and its incipient message of salvation affirmed spiritual transformation rather than the destruction and violence that became paramount in later Aum teachings and actions. Within that optimistic vision, however, there were latently violent images of a sacred war, which over the years became transformed into real conflict as Aum's view of the future turned dark and catastrophic. This change was conditioned by the gap between Aum's expectations and aspirations on the one hand and the realities of its experience on the other. Asahara visualized his movement and himself in grand, messianic terms; however, its growth did not match these cosmic expectations while the public response to his message was, at the very least, indifferent. The contrast between expectations and realities demanded explanations and influenced Aum's view of the world at large. As a result, Aum became more withdrawn and introverted, turning away from the optimism of world salvation, creating an internal religious hierarchy which progressively elevated the status and power of its guru and his followers, and embracing catastrophic visions of the future, at first internally with the beatings administered to disciples and later with murders carried out to silence opponents. This path of violence was not so much a planned development as it was a process in which Aum reacted to events in ways that sought to bolster Asahara's authority in the face of setbacks. Such responses caused Aum to amend its doctrines in the light of these changing circumstances and to assume ever more confrontational postures" (pp. 231-32).

Aum, like other 1970's and 1980's new religions, appealed to a wide variety of younger Japanese, young professionals, and middle-aged women who were disillusioned with or felt uncomfortable in Japan's highly materialistic society during an economic boom period. Although some members were both educated and young, Aum also attracted a number of working class and older members as well. Aum membership defied simple categorization.

The centerpiece of Aum has always been the personality and teachings of Asahara himself. Asahara taught that much of the misery that

we experience in life is due to the corrupt nature of the human world. Living in society means that we absorb much of its negative karma and impulses, which causes us great suffering not only in life, but in death as well. Asahara promised followers that he could intervene on their behalf by personally absorbing their bad karma and giving them in turn transcendent powers through a variety of very costly initiation ceremonies. Followers would live strong and joyful lives and would have many extraordinary powers including the ability to survive a nuclear war.

Aum attracted up to 10,000 members in Japan including about 1000-1200 *shukke-sha* (followers who renounced society and lived in Aum communes). Aum and Asahara developed an increasingly paranoid view of society. Aum isolated itself from society and began to arm itself for a possible confrontation with society in the early 1990's.

Aum's inclination towards violence increased as it continued to separate itself from mainstream society.

"Aum rapidly set itself apart, creating a spiritual hierarchy that claimed superiority over the world at large. Due to the continuing failures of its mission – or, rather, in Aum's terms, the refusal of the world to listen – its alienation from society increased, and as it did so, it constructed an alternative and self-directed view of morality. Its doctrines developed accordingly, sanctifying acts that were committed in order to protect the position and authority of its leader and to safeguard what it saw as its mission of truth. As it followed this path, Aum lost its grasp of external reality and turned inwards into a self-constructed world in which all who remained outside the movement were unworthy while those inside were transformed into sacred warriors who believed that they could kill with impunity and that in so doing, they could save those they killed. The tragedy of Aum Shinrikyo is not just that its symbolic fight against evil and for world salvation was transformed into a real and brutal fight which resulted in indiscriminate murder, but that in claiming to operate on exalted spiritual ground beyond the boundaries of normal morality, it severed all links with the spiritual base to which it aspired" (pp. 248-49).

Reader's study is especially valuable because of his frequent comparisons with other extremist religious sects including Heaven's Gate, Solar Temple, Branch Davidians and the Rajneesh and Jim Jones movements. All of these groups started off as relatively moderate and optimistic alternative religious ventures that tried to gain a significant

religious base of support. Their leaders became frustrated and angry and increasingly isolated from society when it appeared that the public was paying no heed to their ideas or pleas for support. They later became paranoiac and self-destructive when faced with major public criticism and possible desertions of many of their members. These groups finally destroyed themselves through a crescendo of violence that always achieved considerable public attention. This violence was generally directed inward against their own members who either committed mass suicide (Jonestown, Solar Temple, and Heaven's Gate) or who died when attacked by outside authorities (the Branch Davidians). Aum differed in that its final act of violence was directed at the public rather than its own members.

Reader speculates that the March 1995 subway massacre occurred when Aum leaders realized that a major police raid that would shut down their group was imminent. Aum sought one final orgasm of violence that would win it considerable public attention and blaze its name into history. "Asahara had, as a result of the subway attack, achieved a level of power, attention and influence that he could never otherwise have gained and that no postwar Japanese government has ever had. He no longer spoke to a small dedicated band of followers, but could seize the attention of a nation and, indeed, the world at large, and could influence the movements of millions of people" (p. 220).

Reader theorizes that Aum's legacy tells us far more about tendencies more common to some isolated religious movements than problems existing in contemporary Japanese society. He concludes that Aum should be studied as an extreme example of a religious organization that because of its unconventional religious characteristics comes into friction with mainstream society and, because of the friction, turns to violence. Reader's case is strengthened by his comparisons with other 1990's sects around the world whose history and destiny closely parallel that of Aum.

Reader includes a brief section portraying Aum's initially very successful but ultimately failed attempt to build a strong base in Russia. Aum's Russia venture in 1992-95 mirrors its meteoric rise and fall in Japan. Asahara and Aum attracted considerable media attention, access to several key political figures, and a rapid rise in to as many as 30,000 members in 1992 and 1993. There were also attempts to acquire Russian military weapons and technology including atomic weaponry. Aum's entry onto the Russian scene in the early 1990's coincided almost exactly with the chaos facing the region due to the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and Soviet

communism, the dominant ideology that had framed that society for over seventy years. The result was a great upsurge in interests in religious movements. Aum was only one of many religious movements that took advantage of this growing religious market, and its teachings quickly attracted an audience in a most distressed society.

Aum's connections with Japan also had some appeal. Japan in 2002 has endured a decade-long recession and is no longer the economic envy of much of the world, but in 1992 Japan was still highly regarded as a wealthy and dynamic nation. The fact that Aum is a Japanese organization enhanced its appeal and it is possible that some Russians felt that if they somehow became associated with a wealthy Japanese movement, perhaps they could share in this prosperity. Aum deliberately employed its "Japaneseness" to attract members, implying that members could learn a lot about Japan through Aum and, by inference, how to become wealthy and powerful like so many Japanese. Reader supports this notion, observing that Aum may well also have attracted some followers, amongst whom were a considerable number of people who had lost their jobs in the economic upheavals of the period or who were unemployed postgraduates, because it was Japanese and hence associated in people's minds with the potential for economic advancement (p. 176).

Reader speculates that Aum went to Russia as part of an effort to both expand and internationalize its movement, but other scholars feel that the membership drive was only a smoke screen and that the hidden agenda was the procurement of weapons. There is no conclusive evidence to support either view, but what is clear is that both the search for weapons and new members was very intense and that every effort was made to succeed. My only guess is that both efforts were equally serious and sincere whether or not one came before the other and one paved the way for the other. Aum went to other countries such as Australia and perhaps the United States in a search for technology or uranium without much if any effort to gain members, but it went to Russia for both the acquisition of new members and weapons technology.

Ultimately, the Russian branch of Aum, like its parent group in Japan, ran into trouble when some of the families of Russian Aum members who had renounced the world to join the religion formed a pressure group to oppose Aum as a distinct threat to Russian society. Strong pressure and successful court action led to the revocation of Aum's legal registration as a religious organization.

Reader's *Religious Violence in Contemporary Japan* is a masterpiece of solid in-depth research and analysis that should be read by all persons interested in contemporary Japanese society and in modern religious movements. He consulted an amazing array of sources and conducted in-depth interviews with former and current Aum members who provide amazing insights into the movement. The most interesting chapter contains in-depth profiles of several members. Reader is also a brilliant writer whose lively and clear prose makes this book a genuine pleasure to read.

Masaharu Shibata and Hideharu Kaneda, *Toyota-shiki Saikyono Keiei: Naze Toyotawa Kawaritsuzukerunoka*. [The Toyota Style of Strongest Management: Why Toyota Keeps Changing.] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 2001).

Reviewed by: Kinko Ito

Toyota is a well-established Japanese multinational auto-mobile manufacturer whose particular, effective, and efficient management style and production systems are well-known. Many books and articles have been written about the company, their organizational systems and various production techniques have been emulated by not only Japanese corporations but by many others in different parts of the world. Shibata and Kaneda's book, *Toyota-shiki Saikyono Keiei*, aims at describing and explaining the reasons why and how Toyota keeps changing to adapt to the competitive world situations and turbulent economic environment where rapid globalization is taking place. The book also provides suggestions for the renovation of the Japanese style management. The authors analyze Toyota's strengths, especially the company's ability to adapt to new situations and its distinctive and persistent corporate culture.

According to Shibata and Kaneda, the Toyota production system can be understood in three different ways: its particular production methods, improvement and renovation methods, and enterprise renovation methods. The aim of these methods is to maximize the chance to win in the severe competition in the market. The key to the strongest management that Toyota boasts is that it utilizes the strength of Japanese group ethic, human resources, and the workers' autonomous activities for renovation. At Toyota, work = operation + improvement, and the efficient management of Toyota can be summarized as "the innovation activities where everyone participates" (p. 151; my translation). According to Shibata and Kaneda, organization is people. The workers' initiative to participate and their willingness to work hard are the definitive factors for the success of organizational renovation and progress. Toyota has a deep understanding of the human nature, and its managerial practice is based not on imposing control on the workers but on promoting their self-control and discipline.

The book being reviewed consists of an introduction and nine chapters that cover such topics as: the Toyota method innovation, the Just-in-time inventory system, certain Japanese managerial practices (e.g. small

group improvement activities [SGIA], *kanban*, *kaizen*, QC circle, etc.), Toyota's "seven habits," the managerial mind, remodeling, progressive organization and revolutionary human resources, leadership, etc.

As is well known Japan has been going through an unprecedented recession since the early 1990's when a so-called "Bubble Economy" busted. Shibata and Kaneda think that Japan needs to utilize its own assets of management that are particular to Japan instead of importing the way of thinking and methods borrowed from the Anglo-Saxon countries. Japan needs to utilize the strengths of Japanese management and then add and include those of other nations. Changing only the hard core, or the technical aspects of organization, does not help transform the organization for the better.

Human beings change organization. Shibata and Kaneda consider that one of the most positive aspects of Japanese style management is intimate and close human relationships formed within the work groups and in the company as a whole. However, they note that the tightly-knit human relationships and socialization (company recreation day and trips, drinking after work, etc.) that once existed in Japanese corporation are disappearing now. The young Japanese seem to prefer spending time as they like instead of getting together with the same groups of people from work. This kind of informal organization used to play a very important role in terms of spreading of information and knowing what others in different departments are doing within the same company.

The socialization process is euphemistically called nominication. The Japanese word "*nomu*" means "to drink" or "to go out drinking with others." The term nominication is a hybrid of a Japanese word "*nomu*" and English "communication." A work group goes out drinking and engages in informal, frank, and casual communication with one another. Nowadays, according to Shibata and Kaneda, not only nominication, but dialogues seem to be lacking in Japanese organizations even at meetings. The information seems to flow only one way, and everyone seems to want to avoid those topics that she or he does not feel comfortable with.

This book offers the readers numerous case studies, concrete examples, and anecdotes not only from Toyota, but from other Japanese and American companies such as Ford and General Electric. There are also many diagrams to illustrate the managerial designs, processes, etc. that help the reader conceptualize what the authors are talking about.

Shibata and Kaneda describe and explain the managerial practices that are particular to Japan as well as those that are efficient and effective.

The Japanese approach to innovation and improvements as well as efficiency and rationalization is that everyone participates and helps come up with new ideas rather than a single super-bright individual coming up with his or her own ideas. It is a group endeavor. Toyota advocates holism and realism; the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The company encourages an activity called *jishuken*, or autonomous study/research that promotes critical and independent thinking and that leads to solving problems. This will bear fruits for improvement and renovation.

Wisdom comes from direct experiences and is not on the same level as knowledge. Wisdom also comes from interaction with others as the phenomenon takes place in front of the participants. It comes freely and should not be controlled or coerced. *Jishuken* encourages each individual worker to participate in the activity of renovation and improvement, and, in the process, good human resources are fostered. Toyota keeps changing and adapting to the new and difficult situations by *jishuken* activities, and this contributes to its strength of management.

This book is well written and is full of case studies and anecdotes that show the maturity of the authors' experience and knowledge about the company. It is recommended to those who are interested in Japanese management and organizations in general.

Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xxii +286 pages. ISBN: 0-691-07495-X.

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This is a thoroughly researched and impeccably written book on a fascinating but long overlooked aspect of modern Japanese Buddhism, that is, the fact that the male clergy is almost entirely married and meat-eating (*nikujiki saitai*). As Richard Jaffe, an authority of Meiji era religion and culture, shows, “The presence of the temple wife is now so taken for granted that today, along with the usual Buddhist doctrinal texts, histories, and popular religious manuals found in Buddhist bookstores, one can also find pan-sectarian works like *Jite fujin hyakka* (Encyclopedia for temple wives)” (p. 2). Although marriage along with issues of gender and sexuality is foremost in the discussion, Jaffe actually focuses on two interrelated aspects of the modernization of clergy. The second issue is meat-eating, which was another practice similarly restricted and prohibited by basic Buddhist monastic regulations now taken for granted.

How and when did this arise and go on to become so widespread? What were the premodern precedents for this practice, as well as the various forces of modern secularization that brought the process to fruition? Why is the case of Japan so anomalous among Buddhist cultures? Who were the key players in different Buddhist movements in relation to social and political pressures, and how did they react pro or con to the new trend? The answers to all of these questions and much more are amply provided by Jaffe’s study. He carefully traces the history of pre-Meiji examples that demonstrate the prevalence of the temple wives, as evidenced by the enforcement of anti-fornication ordinances, especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The “Introduction” shows how the case of Japan’s departure from a monastic and ascetic emphasis is unique among Buddhist cultures and to a large extent reflects the Meiji era “attacks on Buddhist temples, forced laicizations of the clergy, seizure of temple lands, and abolition of clerical perquisites” (p. 4). Chapter two discusses pre-Meiji antecedents going back to classical (Nara and Heian) and especially Tokugawa era violations of the precepts regarding sexual transgressions and non-violence or eating meat. The next chapter analyzes the origin of the term *nikujiki saitai* in light of the context of Tokugawa political, legal, and social changes which in restricting

and restraining Buddhist clergy brought to light just how commonplace these seemingly anti-monastic practices already were. At that time, the center of the debate was the Shin clergy, which came under increasing attack for long permitting clerical marriage, whereas other sects seemed to sanction clandestine activities.

Chapter four analyzes the changes in policy regarding Buddhist clergy enacted in the early Meiji period, around the early 1870s, in light of the persecution of Buddhist institutions in *haibustu kishaku* (destruction of Buddhist iconography) and *shinbutsu bunri* (separation of kami and buddhas) campaigns, as well as sweeping reforms of many sectors of society that dissolved similar regulations governing other groups. These changes included laws allowing commoners to use surnames in public and samurai, who were banned from carrying swords by the mid-1870s, to cut off their top knots, while the outcaste communities (hinin and eta) were eliminated. On May 31, 1872, there was a straightforward edict that read, "From now on Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are permitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities" (p. 72). One main result was the rapid diminution in the numbers of clergy and temples, thereby weakening the overall Buddhist monastic structure.

The remainder of the book traces a kind of zigzag progression in the evolution of *nikujiki saitai* laws and practices from surprising support by Buddhist clergy to adamant resistance in some quarters and eventually to the widespread acceptance and even encouragement of the practices. For example, by the mid-1940s, the Sōtō sect was holding seminars for temple wives and ordination ceremonies to induct them as nuns. Jaffe shows in chapter five that during the early Meiji period there was a trend emphasized by Ōtori Sessō, a Sōtō monk who worked for the Ministry of Doctrine, among others, to modernize Buddhism and eliminate the dissonance between traditional monasticism and secularized, industrialized society. Not only was there a decriminalization or *nikujiki saitai*, but Japanese subjects were being warned against "corrupt customs" like vegetarianism and celibacy.

Chapter six, however, discusses the way that Buddhist clerical protests quickly became a factor. Fukuda Gyōkai led the charge to say that the reform of Buddhism should go in the opposite direction of a stricter adherence to the precepts. The precept restoration movement held that Buddhist codes are immutable and inviolable for all who want to wear robes and shave their heads.

What changed matters, as examined in chapters seven through ten, was the gradual emphasis on laicization – that is, more involvement of the lay community and more acceptance of the idea that the lives of clergy were not so distanced from laymen – that was part and parcel of modernist and secularist social trends. This wore down factions of resistance and gave a tacit acceptance of *nikujiki saitai*. By the early part of the twentieth century, bans on clerical marriage were being removed and regulations concerning precept adherence were being compromised. Tanaka Chigaku, one of the founders of a Nichiren-based new religion, devised a Buddhist wedding ceremony, one of the earliest religious marriage rituals created in Japan, and other voices advocated sexuality as a healthy, natural drive rather than the source of delusion and defilement. At the same time, the exposing “of such phenomena as temple poverty, illegitimacy, and dispossession of widows as social problems” (p. 213) forced Buddhist institutions to become protectors of women and to embrace the role of temple wives. Presently, there remain factions, especially in Sōtō Zen, which reject clerical marriage and hold to a traditional stance that it results in corruption and antinomianism that cannot be reconciled with the precepts.

One minor criticism is that this book, which takes a pan-Buddhist approach covering the major sects and key new religious movements, tends to lose a focus on what the particular groups believe or have come to accept. We get the overview but sometimes lose the trees for the forest. In conclusion, Jaffe’s work is clearly the definitive study of the social changes in the lives of clergy from Meiji period on, and it vividly depicts how various Buddhist schools have struggled with the gap between the traditional and the modern.

Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).

Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

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In the last two decades, postmodernists have pushed for an increasingly decentered historiography, i.e., research and monographs focused on largely neglected, seemingly peripheral or at least marginalized subject matter. Much valuable work has resulted, especially on topics such as women, rebels, outcasts, and geographically remote areas. Though not a postmodernist, the work of Mikiso Hane comes to mind on this count. Two of his monographs, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan* (Random House, 1982), and *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Prewar Japan* (University of California Press, 1993), well illustrate this trend. Yet traditional topics of historiography have remained quite vital, and recently have even generated two new monumental works. Herbert Bix's biographical study of Hirohito, the Shōwa emperor, and Donald Keene's¹ work on Mutsuhito, the Meiji emperor, explore these two emperors and the evolving Japanese imperial institution in exceptional detail. While Bix's is hardly the first study of

¹ Donald Keene, of course, is the leading western authority on the history of Japanese literature. His works are too extensive to cite here (the Library of Congress online catalog gives 72 entries), but suffice it to note that among them are *Anthology of Japanese Literature from the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Grove Press, 1988); *World Within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600-1867* (Henry Holt, 1976); *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (Holt Rinehardt and Winston, 1984); *Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late-Sixteenth Century* (Henry Holt, 1993). *Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology* (Grove Press, 1956); *No and Bunraku: Two Forms of Japanese Theatre* (Columbia University Press, 1990); *Four Major Plays by Chikamatsu* (Columbia University Press, 1961); *Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720-1830* (Stanford University Press, 1969).

Hirohito,² Keene's encyclopedic study of the Meiji emperor is the first of its kind. Without a doubt it will stand, if for no other reason than enormity of detail, as the reference work in English on the Meiji emperor for decades to come.

Despite their very different subjects, the two books share many traits, good and bad. Both are as much, studies of the history of the period during which the respective emperors reigned, as they are biographies of the men themselves. Thus, for example, when Keene examines the Meiji emperor's contacts with U. S. President Ulysses S. Grant or the Hawaiian monarch, David Kalakaua, far more time is devoted to accounts of Grant and Kalakaua, and their overall travels to Japan, than to the relatively brief exchanges between the Hawaiian, the American and the Meiji emperor. Similarly, Bix's study of Hirohito is more consumed by accounts of the various and sundry important figures of the Shōwa period than by coverage of Hirohito's life itself. Also, surprisingly enough, neither book is concerned with addressing, positively or negatively, the host of related historical studies that indeed exist in English. For example, Bix does not attempt to situate his findings in relation to the many reputable works in English dealing with the Shōwa period, such as the anthologies edited by Carol Gluck, *Shōwa: The Japan of Hirohito* and John W. Dower, *Japan in War and Peace*.³ Instead, Bix sets forth a narrative of his own which, while based on extensive reading of Japanese sources, does little to incorporate, or critique explicitly, existing western scholarship. Similarly, Keene's study does not seek to address recent works pertaining to the Meiji period such as

² Other works include, Peter Wetzler, *Hirohito and War: Imperial Tradition and Military Decision Making in Prewar Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 1998); Carol Gluck and Stephen Graubard, eds., *Shōwa: The Japan of Hirohito* (Norton Company, 1993); Edward Behr, *Hirohito: Behind the Myth* (Villard Books, 1989); and David Bergamini, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy* (William Morrow, 1971).

³ John W. Dower, ed., *Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays* (New Press, 1993). Other works by Dower that are not addressed explicitly in the main text are *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (Norton, 1999); *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (Pantheon, 1986); *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Harvard University, reprint 1979).

T. Fujitani's *Splendid Monarchy*,⁴ or before that, Gluck's *Japan's Modern Myths*. Instead, Keene takes as his task the exposition of a chronicle-like study of the Meiji emperor, based largely upon the thirteen-volume Japanese chronicle, *Meiji tennō ki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1968-75). Readers who go to these volumes expecting a discussion of the larger field of literature will be disappointed: despite the fact that Bix and Keene have labored heroically in completing their enormous projects, they have opted not to take the opportunity to assess related literature in the field. Those familiar with this literature should have little difficulty in seeing how the new works compare, e.g., Keene obviously does not subscribe to the view that the imperial system was “invented” in the Meiji period as a largely novel, and nontraditional institution. Rather he accepts the more traditional analysis that what happened in the Meiji was, in many significant respects, a continuation of practices, relationships, and tendencies that had characterized the immediate and more remote Japanese past. At the same time, it would have been very interesting to hear, in explicit terms, exactly what Keene makes of Fujitani's view that the Meiji imperial institution was little based in anything “traditional,” and instead represented a largely novel invention.

Bix, as is well known, advances a more aggressively critical analysis of the Shōwa emperor, taking issue with the standard view of Hirohito as an aloof, even passive monarch who refrained from any kind of opposition to militarism due to (1) fear of a coup, and (2) constitutional limitations that obliged him to endorse the policies of the militarist prime ministers, primarily Tōjō. Instead, Bix argues that Hirohito was a “dynamic emperor” (p. 12) who “had been educated to play an active role in political and military decision making” (p. 294), but one who also “projected the defensive image of a passive monarch” (p. 12). Among other things, for example, Bix suggests that Japan's similarities with the fascist powers, Italy and Germany, while mixed, are more compelling, in their similarities— including “the similar psychological roles played by their cult leaders”— than their “obvious differences” (p. 202).

Many may well find Bix's interpretations compelling, but the careful reader will note that they are very often little more than conjecture and surmise. For example, Bix states, “There is the *strong possibility*

⁴ Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 1996).

(italics added) that Hirohito had received an informal briefing on the ballon-bomb weapon program..." (p. 477). This is one of many examples where Bix, in the absence of hard evidence, is willing to appeal to probability of involvement rather than refrain from judgment. Insights about Hirohito's feelings, his intentions, desires, hopes, aspirations, and so on are often the subject of comment, though no clear documentation is given. Due to the very sensitive nature of the subject matter, such speculation at points seems to reduce the overall credibility of the study. Bix's readiness to blame Hirohito largely for what occurred goes to far "the other way" in advancing revisionism. For example, Bix states, "Hirohito's reluctance to face the fait accompli of defeat, and then to act decisively to end hostilities...were what mainly kept the war going..." No doubt Hirohito was more responsible than most have allowed, and should be held accountable for his complicity, but to suggest that Hirohito alone was "what mainly kept the war going" seems excessive in its confidence that the ostensibly passive emperor could have, by raising his voice righteously, brought the momentum of militarism to an effective halt. In numerous other cases, Bix is ready to conclude the worst about Hirohito even when there is little hard evidence to substantiate the same. For example, he declares that, after Nagasaki, what Hirohito cared most for was "not primarily ... the Japanese people ... but for his own imperial house and throne" (p. 524). And in the postwar period, that Hirohito "naturally ... did not in any way hold himself or the court group responsible" for defeat (p. 535). Bix also blames Hirohito, without hesitation, for the failings of postwar Japan. Thus, for example, he states, "Hirohito's continuation on the throne after independence clearly inhibited popular exercise of the constitution's guarantee of freedom of thought and expression" (p. 649). No doubt this is true to an extent, but Bix seems all too willing to excuse the Japanese people, while blaming the emperor, as though things would have been all that different in terms of the exercise of constitutional liberties had Hirohito abdicated. Perhaps a more serious weakness of the book is its overwhelming focus on Hirohito's life leading up to and including the war, as compared to the relatively short shrift given to the postwar years and the recreation of the monarchy and the man. Surely much of what Bix has argued needed to be said, and he puts it in a way that is academically respectable. Yet equally important to assessing Hirohito was the aftermath. Given that many developments could have been cast to suggest that Hirohito was still actively involved, in a way that bode well for the reconstruction of state and society, but that these developments were not so interpreted, leaves one with a sense that the

treatment was so aggressive in its vision of Hirohito as an emperor, who was responsible for the tragedies of militarism, that it overlooks the possibility that in his final decades Hirohito's impact continued to be real, and yet more positive than unrelentingly self-serving and counterproductive elements of democracy.