

**Setsu Shigematsu, *Scream from the Shadows: The Women's Liberation Movement in Japan*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 312 pp. ISBN: 978-0816667598, \$25.00.**

*Reviewed by Julia C. Bullock*

Setsu Shigematsu's *Scream from the Shadows* provides a cogent and much-needed study of *ūman ribu* (denoted *ribu* for short), or the women's liberation movement that emerged in Japan in the late 1960s and is most closely identified with the first half of the 1970s. As Shigematsu notes, this radical feminist movement was not a direct import from the West, but rather emerged as a consequence of the historical, economic and political tensions inherent in Japanese society of the 1960s. While *ribu* may be said to have formed in part as a reaction to the violent excesses and sexism of Japanese student movement radicals, Shigematsu demonstrates that the birth of *ribu* was also motivated by concerns regarding Japan's implication in the violence and imperialism of the Vietnam War era in a broader sense, as well as the conservative turn in gender politics during Japan's high economic growth period.

The book is composed of five substantive chapters, an introduction and an epilogue. The introduction provides context for the emergence of the movement, a topic that is explored more deeply in Chapter 1. The discussion of language in this chapter—and particularly of the linguistic valences and implications of the terms used (or not used) by movement activists to describe women and women's liberation—is particularly helpful. Chapter 2 traces the positioning of women in the New Left struggles of the postwar era, from the Ampo (anti-US-Japan Security Treaty) riots of 1960 to the violent implosion of the United Red Army (URA) in 1972. Here Shigematsu is careful to distinguish both the tactics and theories that the women of *ribu* borrowed from the New Left and the way they distinguished themselves from this legacy of revolutionary discourse. Chapter 3 traces the course and intellectual development of *ribu*, and Chapter 4 focuses on the problematic role of Tanaka Mitsu as the iconic "leader" of this ostensibly leaderless and non-hierarchical movement. Shigematsu treads carefully here, analyzing Tanaka's philosophies as influential to the movement while emphasizing the diversity of thought that characterized the movement itself, which was not coterminous with Tanaka's "leadership." Chapter 5 examines the response of *ribu* women to the violent excesses of the URA, and the way the events of

1972 influenced the movement's theoretical engagement with the "politics of violence."

Although a wealth of primary and secondary sources exist in Japanese on the topic of *ūman ribu*, this is the first English-language study to give the movement sustained attention, and that in and of itself provides a great service to the field. In addition to this substantial contribution, Shigematsu performs a number of important discursive and theoretical interventions into scholarship on "second-wave" feminism in Japan that deserve commendation. First of all, she demonstrates the larger relevance of the movement by countering the claims of many scholars that contend that *ribu* "died" in the mid-70s (102), demonstrating that its discourse and methods live on in the practices of its adherents as well as in the recent resurgence of historical scholarship on the legacy of *ribu*. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, she engages unflinchingly with the role of violence in radical feminist thought of the 1970s—particularly in Chapter 5, though this theme runs throughout the text. This is particularly important given the presumption of many mainstream Japanese feminist theories of a natural correspondence between femininity (or motherhood) and pacifism. In contrast, *ribu* women dared to embrace the notion that women too could be violent creatures, and sought to understand this violence through support of women like URA leader Nagata Hiroko and women accused of killing their children—women resoundingly rejected and treated as aberrant by mainstream Japanese society.

In summary, Shigematsu offers a theoretically sophisticated and nuanced discussion of the positioning of early 1970s radical feminist discourse vis-à-vis its relationship with other strains of Japanese feminist and New Left discourse, contemporary "second-wave" feminist movements in North America, and the structure of imperialist and Cold War politics in the postwar era. Her discussion of *ribu* discourse is mostly sympathetic, and at times I would have appreciated a more critical treatment of its tenets. For example, Shigematsu describes the radical thrust of the *ribu* movement as directed particularly toward an attack on the patriarchal *ie* (family) system, and specifically at the way this system structured and confined women's agency to the domestic sphere via the conventional roles of housewife and mother. However, what seems missing from this discussion is that the *ie* system was legally abolished by post-WWII Occupation reforms. It is certainly true that many of its cultural presumptions lived on well into the postwar period, and there is no doubt that such cultural values intensified the gender discrimination experienced by the women of *ribu*. However, I wonder

to what degree the conventionally feminine roles against which the *ribu* movement struggled in the 1970s might have resulted from the gendered division of labor that was itself a product of the historical, cultural and economic specificities of the high growth economy of the previous two decades, rather than the prewar *ie* system *per se*. This seems to have been a blind spot of the *ribu* movement itself rather than Shigematsu's analysis of it, but I would have been very interested to know if taking the more immediate postwar context of housewife-and-motherhood into account might have altered some of the author's discussion of the movement's theoretical positioning. Additionally, while Shigematsu does a fine job in the Epilogue of tracing the tensions between the *ribu* movement and the rise of women's studies and state feminism in the following decades, it would have been interesting to learn whether these latter strands of feminism might have been influenced (consciously or not) in specific ways by the theoretical premises of *ribu*. However, these are small quibbles with what is otherwise an excellent study that promises to contribute much to English-language scholarship on Japanese feminism in the future, and should be read by anyone working at the nexus of Japanese Studies and Gender Studies.

This book will be of particular interest to graduate students and scholars in fields related to Asian Studies, feminist theory, and gender and sexuality studies. The author has done an excellent job of providing the necessary historical, cultural, and linguistic context to make this study accessible to researchers outside the field of Japanese Studies. Nevertheless, because the text assumes some familiarity with the conceptual vocabulary of "second-wave" feminism and Marxist doctrine, it may be less accessible to students of Japan who lack this theoretical foundation. While instructors of Women's or Gender Studies courses may have no trouble employing this as a text in their undergraduate classes, those working with undergraduate students with a background in Japanese Studies should be prepared to supplement the text with some introductory information, or else limit its use to a senior seminar or honors program course.

**James Mark Shields, *Critical Buddhism: Engaging with Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011. 206 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4094-1798-9. \$89.95.**

*Reviewed by Steven Heine<sup>1</sup>*

Critical Buddhism (*hihan bukkō*) is an innovative methodological movement that was formed by a couple of Buddhist scholars at Komazawa University in Tokyo, which houses the largest Buddhist Studies department in Japan that is affiliated with the Sōtō Zen sect. The approach initially developed in the mid-1980s in response to a nexus of sociopolitical issues that were at the time plaguing Sōtō and other Japanese Buddhist schools. As James Mark Shields explains in the “Introduction” to his new book, at a major conference on world religions held back in 1979 a representative of the Sōtō sect declared that there was no discrimination against the outcast community of Burakumin by Buddhism in Japan. Because egregious examples of such bias were well documented over many decades, the expression of denial triggered a round of protests. This, in turn, caused Sōtō leaders to respond by commissioning a group of professors to investigate the history of Buddhist teachings and attitudes that may have led to ethical lapses and an uncritical acceptance of societal problems. A related issue examined was the pre-World War II Buddhist backing, or at least a lack of denouncing, of Japanese super-nationalism and imperialism. Why was Buddhism in Japan, it was asked, operating for the most part as a force for supporting and reinforcing the status quo rather than for disputing and attempting to reform social deficiencies?

By 1985, the Critical Buddhist movement had emerged with the writings of Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō, which gained a high degree of sympathy but also some disapproval from colleagues. Hakamaya and Matsumoto were particularly noted for their rather harsh manner of condemning Zen and other forms of Japanese Buddhism for failing to adhere to basic ethical principles. By allowing its moral philosophy to be corrupted over the centuries through a variety of cultural and historical factors, authentic Buddhist behavior was subverted and lost, the Critical Buddhists claimed. For example, a genuine understanding of the notion of karmic rewards and punishments was turned into an insidious justification for

---

<sup>1</sup> Author’s note: Published by permission, this book review will also be included in the Fall 2015 issue of *Philosophy East & West*.

discrimination and nationalism through an outlook that can be characterized as, “you get what you deserve.” Shields describes how Critical Buddhism was of small proportions in being constituted by a handful of scholars but with great aspirations in attacking the sanctity of the Japanese Buddhist institution and its multifarious spokespersons. This confrontation was carried out through a critical analysis of the discrepancy between fundamental Buddhist doctrines and current practices in light of modern examples of critical Western philosophy, especially Rene Descartes and his detractor Giambattista Vico, among others.

Although there is no division mentioned in the table of contents, the structure of *Critical Buddhism* seems to fall naturally into two parts. The first part consisting of the introduction and the initial three main chapters, which constitutes about seventy percent of the volume, provides an historical overview of the origins and implications of the methodological movement in relation to diverse social and intellectual developments in Japan. This major section of the book is very successful in illuminating the central features of Critical Buddhist philosophy and its connections as well as disconnections with the works of related schools of thought. These range from the writings of the Kyoto School, which Hakamaya and Matsumoto criticize for supporting imperialism, to Rinzaï Zen priest Ichikawa Hakugen, known for his condemnation of prewar Buddhist trends. Ichikawa has a great affinity, alongside differences, with Critical Buddhism that is analyzed appropriately here.

Shields’ introductory essay explains that Critical Buddhism sets up a contrast between its approach to criticism (or “criticalism”), inspired in large part by the Cartesian tradition in the West, and topicalism, or a substantive (Skt. *dhātu-vāda*) philosophical outlook that undermines Buddhist doctrines of impermanence and emptiness and detracts from a reliance on the ethical principles of causality and karmic retribution. Then, Chapter 1 on “Buddhism, Criticism, and Postwar Japan” provides a survey of a variety of societal and political issues as well as ideological responses over the course of a century since the Meiji era that helped give rise to Critical Buddhism and related approaches offering a sometimes devastating cultural criticism of Japanese modernity. In these chapters, Shields points out that the movement’s method based on a philological analysis of texts, which emerged out of the discipline of Buddhology, tends to weaken its arguments regarding the extent of collective injustice in Japan, which probably requires a more sophisticated social scientific examination.

The next chapter on the “Roots of Topicalism” investigates Critical Buddhism’s major philosophical argument for understanding the basis of problems with contemporary Buddhism’s conceptions of self and reality that have been intruded upon by Japanese nativist trends and other indigenous ideologies. This critique is seen in regard to comparable observations made by Ichikawa, although postwar Buddhist reformer Ienaga Saburō probably should have been mentioned in this context. Chapter 3, “Problems of Modern Zen Thought,” delivers a sustained examination of Critical Buddhism’s analysis of unintended topical conceptions of the absolute that support nationalism by Kyoto School philosophers, including Nishida Kitarō, Nishitani Keiji, and Watsuji Tetsurō. According to Shields’ assessment of the conclusions of Hakamaya and Matsumoto, Kyoto School representatives must be seen as “complicit in the devastation wrought by Japan on its own and other peoples during the first half of this [sic] century” (123).

While the discussion in the main part of the book is insightful and compelling, I am more skeptical of the final two chapters. This section embarks on the ambitious aim of constructively situating and critically reflecting on the role of Critical Buddhism in terms of contemporary Western philosophy. Chapter 4 on “Criticism as Anamnesis” makes a very promising start by engaging a wide variety of modern Japanese and Western thinkers ranging from Hisamatsu Shin’ichi to Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida in relation to the goal of developing a “truly critical Buddhist hermeneutics” (144), although that objective remains undefined.

In Chapter 5 on “Radical Contingency and Compassion,” some problematic scholarly tendencies undercut Shields’ arguments. Shortcomings include a lack of familiarity with some of the Buddhist sources, including misleading references to the Huayan and Mādhyamaka schools on pages 172 and 173 (where the latter’s doctrine is conflated with Zen), as well as a letdown in choosing to use the best translations available, such as citing Dōgen via Thomas Cleary’s *Rational Zen* (Cleary has a lot of reliable renderings, but this is not one of them). There is also an overreliance on the early writings, up through the mid-1990s, of both Hakamaya and Matsumoto without referencing their more recent works. Newer studies by both thinkers of Kamakura-era Buddhist leaders, including Hōnen, Shinran and Myōe, who continue to exert great influence, shed much light on the underlying views of Critical Buddhism regarding modern Japanese religiosity.

Nevertheless, many of the philosophical musings in the second part of Shields’ book are rich in ideas and reflections on the role of Critical

Buddhism as a mode of thought that has worldwide significance, especially in trying to link a decentered metaphysics with a commitment to ethical behavior. Given the strengths of the opening chapters, his work overall has much of merit to offer readers seeking to relate current Buddhist conceptual trends to the complex challenges of the sociopolitical context in modern Japan, and it can be highly recommended for its many interesting and perceptive discussions of this and related comparative philosophical topics.

**Robert K. Fitts, *Banzai Babe Ruth: Baseball, Espionage, & Assassination During the 1934 Tour of Japan*. Lincoln NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 319 pp. ISBN: 978-0803229846, \$24.95.**

*Reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux*

Sports can often play an important “soft power” role in the relations between states. One can argue that the current “Korean Wave” in Japan began with the 2002 World Cup where Japan and Korea shared the venue. I got a better sense of the calm in Taiwanese-Chinese relations when I attended a World Baseball Classic game between the two countries in Tokyo. It was a very routine game that produced no tensions that was won by Taiwan. Both sides seemed to enjoy the game and played excellently against each other. A week later I attended a brilliantly played game between Korean and Japanese all-stars that was won by Korea 1–0. Japanese and Korean spectators cheered loudly for both teams and when Korea won, Japanese fans in the Tokyo Dome could be seen warmly congratulating groups of Koreans in the crowd. This was a visible sign that although tensions remained between the governments of Japan and South Korea, relations on a popular level were rapidly improving.

Baseball as “soft-power diplomacy” is the topic of a fascinating new book by Robert K. Fitts, *Banzai Babe Ruth*. Fitts, an archaeologist by trade but a Japanese baseball historian by choice, is the author of two other fascinating works on baseball in Japan including a well written 2008 biography of Wally Yonamine, the first Japanese-American player to have a successful career in Japan. Fitts in *Banzai Babe Ruth* details the November 1934 tour of Japan by an all-star group of American players that included Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jimmy Fox, future OSS secret agent Moe Berg, and aging manager Connie Mack. It was not the first tour of Japan by American players, but it was the most significant because it included so many all-stars.

The significance of this book lies not so much in what was even then a rather routine baseball tour as in Fitts' analysis of the growing tensions between Japan and the West that would result in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor only seven years later. As these tensions mounted in the 1920s and 1930s, many people in Japan and the United States hoped that the tour would lower the barrier between the two nations. The American players obliged very well through their excellent play, courtesy towards their hosts and respect for Japanese ball players. Babe Ruth was an outstanding cultural diplomat with his willingness to warmly embrace Japanese players, people, food and drink. Connie Mack later called the tour one of the greatest peace measures in the history of nations, but the good will eventually wore off. Fitts notes sardonically that several of the Japanese players, including their star pitcher, Eiji Sawamura, went on to serve in the Japanese army in World War II. Sawamura in particular developed strong anti-American feelings. His pitching arm came in handy when hurling grenades at American troops before his transport ship was sunk with no survivors by an American submarine.

The tour was sponsored by Matsutaro Shoriki, owner of the then struggling Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*, who hoped to increase his paper's circulation through the publicity generated by the tour. The key was to attract Babe Ruth, whose playing days with the New York Yankees had just ended, but who retained a huge following both in Japan and the United States. Ruth's abilities were still apparent and one can only wonder at the fear of any Japanese pitcher might have felt having to face Ruth, Gehrig and Foxx in succession. Shoriki also correctly hoped that the tour would encourage the development of a professional baseball league in Japan.

The Americans played 18 games against all-star Japanese teams and won all the games. Most often the American squad won by wide margins, but a couple of the games were quite close. Sawamura pitched the best game against the American and had a no-hitter going through several innings in a game on 20 November 1934 before the Americans broke through with a couple of hits and runs to win a thriller. Fitts notes that the Japanese improved greatly over the course of the tour and several of their players including Sawamura emerged as strong Japanese ball players later in the 1930s as professional baseball grew in popularity in Japan.

Moe Berg, a journeyman catcher for the Cleveland Indians, emerges as one of the most interesting characters. Berg was a brilliant scholar—a graduate of Princeton and Columbia Law School who spoke 12 languages including fluent Japanese. Fitts writes that he was an odd pick. Berg could



speak many languages, but could not hit in any of them. But his knowledge of Japanese, his deep respect for the Japanese and his previous experience there played a great role in helping the Americans make meaningful contact with the Japanese. Berg became a very important OSS agent in Europe during World War II and there has been speculation that Berg was sent as a secret agent on this trip to photograph sensitive areas of Japan in case war broke out. Berg did indeed take many photos and made lengthy videos of the Tokyo sky line from tall buildings, but Fitts clearly demonstrates that Berg was acting on his own in Tokyo and was not an agent at that time.

Fitts does a remarkable job in reconstructing the socio-political climate of Japan during the 1930s. We note the political tensions both within Japan and between Japan and the West. We see the growing wave of nationalism in Japan's military and political circles at the time as well as its strong military and commercial presence in Taiwan, China and Korea. But the warm response by average Japanese to the American baseball tour makes one wonder if there was a great disconnect between powerful Japanese political and military leaders and the average Japanese citizen. The good will from the tour worked briefly, but later in the 1930s relations began to sour once more. Pearl Harbor was the final result.

Fitts' *Banzai Babe Ruth* is a meticulously researched and well written study not only of the history of baseball in Japan, but, more importantly, a very fine analysis of American and Western relations in Japan during a time of growing ultra-nationalism in Tokyo. There are times when the book sounds like a dull travel itinerary, but in general *Banzai Babe Ruth* is a smooth work of genius.

**Seymour Morris, *Supreme Commander: MacArthur's Triumph in Japan*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. 368 pp. ISBN: 978-0062287939, \$26.99.**

*Reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux*

General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) remains one of the most controversial characters in American history. He is in many ways one of our great military heroes, but a greatly flawed hero. His brilliant and daring landing at Incheon in 1950 certainly turned the tide of the Korean War, but his drive north near the Chinese border at the Yalu River and his pronouncements suggesting that the U.S. drop atomic bombs on Beijing led to the disastrous intervention of Chinese forces and horrific American defeats

later that year. Too often MacArthur's huge ego got in the way of his valuable contributions to the Allied cause in World War II and the Korean War. When I teach courses on modern Japanese history I offer this mixed picture of MacArthur's legacy, but I do give a very positive analysis of MacArthur's excellent performance as chief of Allied forces during the occupation of Japan (1945–1952). This view is strongly endorsed in Seymour Morris' latest book, *Supreme Commander: MacArthur's Triumph in Japan*.

Morris argues that the huge success of the allied occupation of Japan was primarily due to the enlightened and powerful leadership of one man, General MacArthur. There is considerable evidence to support this assertion. Although he considered himself a conservative Republican, MacArthur commissioned a Japanese Constitution far more liberal in its content than the American Constitution, fostered the growth of labor unions, provided basic rights for women, engineered a major land reform, and did much more to encourage the growth of a peaceful and democratic Japan. There can be no doubt that MacArthur, the supreme commander of the Allied Powers, was the driving force behind the occupation.

Morris portrays MacArthur as a highly intelligent man and brilliant manager who was always able to see the "big picture," who came with a clear set of objectives, and who achieved virtually everything that he planned to accomplish. MacArthur saw the need to bring about major reforms across the spectrum of Japanese society. He argued that Japan must not revert to its prewar social structure, which greatly restricted the rights and potential of women, impoverished farmers, and greatly exploited workers. Japan had been ruled by a wealthy and powerful group of oligarchs who controlled both business and the government. MacArthur's initiatives gave women the vote, the right to marry whom they pleased, and to own and manage their own property. Labor unions gave workers a much stronger voice and land reform created a large class of middle-class property owners. Perhaps most importantly, MacArthur's Article Nine in the Constitution forced Japan to renounce war and forbade the creation of a military that could invade other lands.

One of MacArthur's key decisions was to support the retention of the emperor. Many leaders in the West and the rest of Asia wanted to try Emperor Hirohito 裕仁 (1901–89) as a war criminal, but MacArthur realized that keeping the Emperor on the throne would enhance social stability. MacArthur met often with Hirohito, who became a major spokesman in support of MacArthur's objectives.

Morris claims that MacArthur played a key role in keeping the Russians out of the occupation while choking the growth of the Communist Party in Japan. When a reporter asked Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru 吉田 茂 (1878–1967) what he felt MacArthur's greatest triumph had been, he responded that MacArthur's resistance to Soviet efforts to occupy part of Japan and his suppression of the Communists in Japan in 1946 were critical to Japan's revival after the War.

Morris' research and writing are excellent. His work is one of the most informative and cohesive general studies of the occupation. The inevitable flaws are few. Morris mentions the Land Reform only in passing, though many scholars argue that it was MacArthur's crowning achievement as supreme commander for the Allied Powers. And by placing so much emphasis on MacArthur's role Morris ignores both the huge contributions of other members of the occupation leadership and the willingness of so many Japanese to cooperate with the American reformers. If the Japanese had refused to cooperate, the occupation would have been a failure. But Morris correctly emphasizes MacArthur's insistence that the reform process had to start early and proceed quickly and aggressively because the Japanese would soon grow restless and demand an end to the occupation. In general Morris gives too much credit to one man, MacArthur, while often diminishing the important contributions of other Allied leaders in Japan.

All in all, Seymour Morris' *Supreme Commander* is an excellent study that would enhance any college course on the history of modern Japan or U.S.–Japan relations.