

## REVIEW

*Shinshūkyō jiten* 新宗教事典 [New Religions dictionary]. INOUE Nobutaka 井上順孝, KŌMOTO Mitsugi 孝本 貢, TSUSHIMA Michihito 対馬路人, NAKAMAKI Hirochika 中牧弘允, and NISHIYAMA Shigeru 西山 茂, eds. Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1990, xviii+1,147 pages, 66 pages of illustrations. ¥24,000.

New Religions have long been recognized as one of the most vital religious forces in contemporary Japan. When they first appeared in the early nineteenth century they were ignored and then suppressed by the government; as they became prominent in the twentieth century they were criticized and ridiculed by journalists. Only after World War II did New Religions slowly win the attention of scholars, and in the past few decades they have come to be considered not just as objects of scorn or merely competitors with the established religions, but also as religious phenomena worthy of academic investigation. With the publication of this huge dictionary, Japanese New Religions come into their own as a recognized field of study worthy of their own major reference work.

This dictionary represents the fruit of collaborative effort by many researchers and their extensive study of specific New Religions; as such it is a fitting companion to many reference works on Japanese religion, not only the earlier erudite works on Buddhism and Shinto, but also the more recent conceptually sophisticated works such as *Shūkyōgaku jiten* [Science of religion dictionary], edited by Oguchi Iichi 小口偉一 and Hori Ichirō 堀 一郎 (Tokyo, 1973). In fact this work is preceded by a number of reference works on Japanese New Religions: the five-volume series *Shinshūkyō no sekai* [The world of New Religions], edited by Shimizu Masato 清水雅人 et al. (Daizō, 1979); *Shinshūkyō kenkyū chōsa handobukku* [Handbook for study and field research of the New Religions], edited by Inoue Nobutaka et al. (including Kōmoto, Tsushima, and Nishiyama) (Yūzankaku, 1981); and *Shinshūkyō jiten* [New Religions dictionary], edited by Matsuno Junko 松野純孝 (Tōkyōdō, 1984). The five-volume work consists of one volume on the general issues related to New Religions and four volumes of extended essays on major New Religions. The handbook is a convenient brief work (307 pages) on the materials and approaches necessary for studying New Religions. The dictionary by Matsuno is a handy alphabetical listing of numerous New Religions with a page or two of information (Sōka Gakkai, however, is given about twenty pages). The work under review builds on the earlier works on Japanese New Religions but goes beyond them in scope, detail, and conceptual clarity.

This reference work is so rich in data and vast in coverage that it is difficult to single out its most important contribution. The fact that it includes such a wealth of information on Japanese New Religions within one volume is noteworthy. But equally significant is the conceptual approach to the dictionary,

which combines the best features of topical introductions to general issues and alphabetical listing of individual New Religions. More than half of the book is devoted to topical approaches under eight chapter headings:

- I. Origin and Development
- II. Founders
- III. Religious Groups
- IV. Teaching and Thought
- V. Practice
- VI. Facilities
- VII. New Religions and Society
- VIII. New Religions and Other Cultures.

The first chapter carefully discusses the terms for New Religions and their definition as well as chronological considerations of the development and influence patterns within various New Religions. Subsequent chapters first introduce the general topic and then take up the topic by reference to specific New Religions. For example, the second chapter deals with the term for founder (*kyōso*), its significance and special features within Japanese religion in general and New Religions in particular; then founders are treated in seven major religions and the related subject of “successors” is treated in seven New Religions. Other chapters follow this same pattern of general introduction and case study, referring to many New Religions.

The smaller portion (slightly under half) of the work consists of a ninth chapter on “Materials,” listing more than three hundred New Religions alphabetically and providing a page or two of key information such as address, phone number, founder, number of believers and leaders, and also a brief history. This section provides succinct and easily retrieved “quick reference” facts. (This section is comparable to the Micropaedia volumes of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.) By utilizing both a topical/conceptual approach with specific examples, as well as the standard alphabetical listing (by new religion), this dictionary combines the best of two worlds: easy access to basic information, and in-depth analysis of topics with numerous case studies. Three separate indexes—for individual items, religious groups, and historical persons—simplify the task of finding information within the first eight chapters.

The indexes are but one example of the elaborate apparatus that makes this dictionary a visual treat as well as a mine of information. The work opens with sumptuous color photographs of activities of major New Religions, and the text is graced with abundant black-and-white photographs of historic and contemporary events. Most chapters feature a number of charts or diagrams. For example, chapter 1 includes a general chart of derivation of independent religious groups, and then follows with a number of charts of the “lineage” of movements in turn derived from these groups (such as the many New Religions developing out of Tenrikyō). The Reiyūkai lineage chart occupying the whole of page 83, shows the several dozen movements that seceded from Reiyūkai by their year of separation and founder. This is the kind of detail that can be grasped better visually by means of a chart than through a written text. Excellent charts are also used to illustrate the organizational structure of reli-

gious bodies in chapter 3. Some charts are chronological, such as the growth in membership for related groups (pp. 195–202). Three pages are devoted to the symbols or crests of various New Religions. Several chronologies trace important legal incidents and key events in the history of New Religions; calendrical celebrations are also charted. Lengthy bibliographies of both scholarly monographs and articles, and primary sources published by New Religions, as well as a sizeable Western-language bibliography, add to the usefulness of the dictionary.

The material covered in the work is mainly Japanese New Religions, defined loosely from the early nineteenth century through to the present, including both those new groups considering themselves as religions as well as some ethical and spiritual groups serving as religious organizations. It is not limited to Japanese movements, including both Western movements such as Christian-derived groups and other movements such as Indian religious groups. Nor is it limited to movements in Japan, tracing the passage of Japanese New Religions to other shores.

A short review cannot do justice to the conceptual sophistication of this dictionary, which relates a wealth of information to the latest theoretical approaches. Perhaps the most important emphasis is the relationship of the New Religions to social, economic, and political conditions, but there is also concern for types of movements, and analysis of factors such as “motive” for joining New Religions. Articles are clearly written and balanced to represent the consensus of scholarship. Introductory sections of the chapters are penned by leading scholars of New Religions. I have checked especially the items on the new religion Gedatsu-kai with which I am most familiar, and find them written by the younger scholars who have done extensive research on Gedatsu-kai.

This is the kind of work whose excellence stretches the mind of a reviewer to find fault with it. Perhaps only two minor points might be mentioned – the expense which will keep it out of the hands of many scholars, and the fact that its publication in Japanese will make it inaccessible to most Westerners. However, one should not quibble with an achievement that will become a standard reference for all future research.

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