

The World's Religions, Revised.

by Charles S. Braden

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As indicated on the jacket, this is a "simple, concise account of the great religions by which men have lived and live today." Twelve

a. 神輿 b. 熱田 c. 万葉集

pages are devoted to a well-named chapter on "Religions of Japan" (Chapter XI), with Shinto and Buddhism sharing about equal space and with some final comments at the end dealing with Christianity and some general aspects of the religious situation. Altogether the material is handled very well for a book of this kind with its very serious limitations in space.

There are, however, a number of statements which the careful reader will want corrected. For example, (1) while the rites of making food offerings by the Emperor in connection with his enthronement are impressive and, perhaps, in one sense can be called "the most notable of the festivals" (p. 154) of Shinto; the rite is strictly confined to the shrines within the palace grounds and do not concern the people as a whole. (2) It is inaccurate to say that any cases of *hara kiri* were reported in connection with the demise of Emperor Taishō^a in 1925 (not 1927)(p. 156). The only instance of voluntarily following the Emperor in death in modern times

is that of General and Mrs. Nogi^b, at the time of the funeral of Emperor Meiji, and this was a very special case. (3) It was only at the insistence of the Emperor that the general refrained from committing *hara kiri* after the Russo-Japanese War. The affirmation of the humanity by the Emperor was contained in an Imperial Rescript issued on January 1, 1946 and not, as stated on p. 158, on "a national radio broadcast" by the Emperor "in a very clear fashion." The only personal broadcast by the Emperor was in connection with the surrender in 1945. (4) The mention of the new sects under Shinto (p. 158) creates the impression that these sects were confined to Shinto, whereas actually new sects of Buddhist origin outnumber those of Shinto.

However, in spite of these minor errors which can only be accounted for by inaccuracies on the part of Japanese guides and interpreters, Dr. Braden's presentation makes for better understanding, and that, of course, is the purpose of the book.

(W.P.W.)

a. 大正 b. 乃木