

ANNUAL UPDATE

Japanese Journal of Religious Studies



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The following is a summary of activities and circulation of the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies during the 2020 academic year. This update includes table of contents for published issues, an overview of online engagement with articles, and notes on present and future plans for the journal.

William Woodward and Hideo Kishimoto, among others, established *Contemporary Religion in Japan* in 1960 to provide scholars of religion with data on postwar Japan. After a brief hiatus, the journal was revived by David Reid in 1974, and the name was changed to the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (JJRS) to reflect a broader scope of historical and methodological approaches in the study of Japanese religions. Since its relocation to the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in 1981, the JJRS has become widely recognized as a top journal in the fields of Japanese and Religious Studies.

Publication was slightly delayed in 2020 due to COVID-related schedule changes, but we managed to produce two excellent issues. In the spring, we published a special issue on “Esoteric Buddhist Traditions in Medieval Japan” edited by yours truly and featuring articles from an international group of early career scholars. The fall issue includes five superb articles covering a range of topics and time periods, from twelfth-century Buddhist monastics to Christian advocacy in post-World War II Japan. The latter issue also includes a review of recent research on Ainu religion as well as reviews of three recent books on Japanese religions.

Online activity for the JJRS increased from the previous year, with 55,071 successful DOI searches between April 2020 and April 2021 (see the JJRS update in *Bulletin* 44 for an explanation of DOIs). On JSTOR, which collects its own data for searches in their database, JJRS articles were accessed 107,124 times between April 2020 and April 2021, doubling the number views from the previous year.

These numbers do not include direct engagement with the journal from the Nanzan Institute or JJRS (jjrs.org) websites, and, of course, readership of the print copy of the journal is not reflected in these numbers. Sales of print-on-demand copies of the journal increased by two-thirds in 2020.

Editing is currently underway for the spring 2021 issue, which promises to be the largest single issue we have ever published. An “at-large” issue, 48/1 includes six articles on topics related to religion in medieval Japan and one on the contemporary problem of conducting festivals during COVID-19. The issue also includes several provocative reviews that engage controversial debates in the study of religion. A special issue edited by Haruo Shirane and Michael Como of Columbia University is planned for the fall, which is the culmination of a collaboration between Columbia and Nagoya Universities. At the time of writing this summary, the spring 2022 issue is almost fully booked. A special issue is scheduled for fall 2022, which will be edited by veteran guest editor Peter Nosco of the University of British Columbia and includes articles from an all-star cast of scholars in the field of Japanese religions. In 2023, we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of JJRS publications. A special issue edited by editor emeritus Paul Swanson and yours truly is in the works. We also hope to host a conference to celebrate half a century of the JJRS and to invite advisory board members, authors, and friends of the journal.

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