

PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

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Matthew D. McMullen

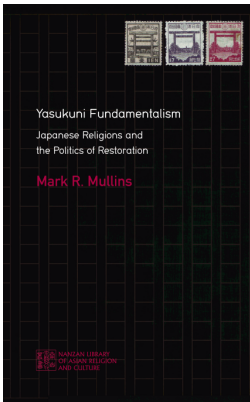
Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

*The following announcement is an overview of the most recent publication in the Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture series, *Yasukuni Fundamentalism: Japanese Religions and the Politics of Restoration* by Mark R. Mullins. The book was published in July 2021 and is available for purchase from the University of Hawai'i Press, the Nanzan Institute, or wherever academic books are sold.*

The Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture was established in 1995 in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i Press with the aim of publishing scholarship on topics related to religion and culture in Asia. Since its inception, the series has produced sixteen volumes on subjects including translations of Chinese Buddhist texts, Japanese philosophy, and Christianity in contemporary Japan as well as several edited volumes such as the *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*.

The newest addition to the series is *Yasukuni Fundamentalism: Japanese Religions and the Politics of Restoration*. The author, Mark R. Mullins, has published several books on religion in contemporary Japan as well as Christianity, including a previous volume in the Nanzan Library, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (1998). He is currently Professor of Japanese Studies and Director of the Japan Studies Centre at the University of Auckland in New Zealand and previously held positions at Shikoku Gakuin University, Meiji Gakuin University, and Sophia University.

Mark's most recent publication examines the complicated relationship between religion and politics in post-World War II Japan. Focusing on Yasukuni Shrine, the book demonstrates how Shinto institutions, nationalism, and the policy agenda of the ruling party of Japan (Liberal Democratic Party) intersect in a backlash to the separation of religion and state enforced by the US Occupation and mandated in the Constitution of Japan.



Mark R. Mullins

Yasukuni Fundamentalism: Japanese Religions and the Politics of Restoration.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, July 2021. 270 pages.
Hardback \$64.00. ISBN-13 9780824889012.

Author's Summary

Although religious fundamentalism is often thought to be confined to monotheistic “religions of the book,” this study examines the emergence of a fundamentalism rooted in the Shinto tradition and considers its role in shaping postwar Japanese nationalism and politics. Over the past half-century, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the National Association of Shrines (NAS) have been engaged in collaborative efforts to “recover” or “restore” what was destroyed by the process of imperialist secularization during the Allied Occupation of Japan.

Since the disaster years of 1995 and 2011, LDP Diet members and prime ministers have increased their support for a political agenda that aims to revive patriotic education, renationalize Yasukuni Shrine, and revise the constitution. The contested nature of this agenda is evident in the critical responses of religious leaders and public intellectuals, and in their efforts to preserve the postwar gains in democratic institutions and prevent the erosion of individual rights. This timely treatment critically engages the contemporary debates surrounding secularization in light of postwar developments in Japanese religions and sheds new light on the role religion continues to play in the public sphere.

Words of Praise for the Book

This well-researched and gracefully written book brings us inside the worldview surrounding the ardent veneration of the war dead at the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine. It brilliantly details the resurgence of sectarian patriotism in Japan exemplified by the shrine and illuminates the controversies around its xenophobic adoration. In doing so it not only provides an important case study of Japanese religious politics, but also portrays a significant example of a global

phenomenon. For that reason, it should be required reading for those interested in Japanese religion and society, and for anyone concerned about the rising tide of religious nationalism around the world.

— *Mark Juergensmeyer, University of California, Santa Barbara*

Mark Mullins's study, *Yasukuni Fundamentalism*, goes well beyond the issue of Yasukuni to explore religious nationalism in Japan in all its forms. Set in the context of a sophisticated view of the nature of secularization in Japan, as essentially an elite, top-down project, he examines the Association of Shinto Shrines and its close ally the Japan Conference. Association leadership, he writes, acts out of a sense of having been unfairly deprived by the Occupation of Shinto's public status and a determination to restore lost privileges. He shows that in fact, however, support for nationalist campaigns such as constitutional revision is weak among Shinto shrine priests and parishioners. This book is a major contribution to the study of religion and nationalism.

— *Helen Hardacre, Harvard University*

Professor Mark Mullins reveals the complex political process during the US Occupation of Japan that resulted in the transformation and survival of Shinto, before presenting a comprehensive analysis of the close relationship between the postwar Shinto restorationist movement and the revisionist political initiatives of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. A huge contribution to the fields of Japanese studies, sociology of religion, and the comparative politics of nationalism, this book is a must read for those interested in modern Japan as well as those who study the contemporary and global phenomenon of religious nationalism from a comparative perspective.

— *Kōichi Nakano, Sophia University*