

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 2021 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.

The year 2021 marked the forty-eighth year of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies (JJRS)* and forty years since the journal arrived at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture. The *JJRS* was founded by David Reid at the International Institute for the Study of Religions in 1974 as a rebranding of *Contemporary Religion in Japan*, which had been established by William Woodward and Hideo Kishimoto in 1960 as a continuation of their research on religion in postwar Japan. Since its inception, the *JJRS* has published academic articles by scholars both from within Japan and abroad on a triannual and, since 1995, a biannual basis. The journal has endeavored to strike a balance between modern and premodern topics as well as represent research from scholars working in the diverse array of fields constituting the humanities and social sciences.

The spring issue of 2021 was one of the largest issues we have ever published. The six articles cover topics such as music, food, animality, sectarian unification, regional temple networks, and the adaptation of the Gion Festival to COVID-19 restrictions. The issue also includes an assortment of book reviews. Initially, we planned to publish a special issue in the fall as the culmination of a series of conferences jointly hosted by Columbia and Nagoya Universities, but more time was required to translate the Japanese-language contributions to the volume. Fortunately, we had a waiting-list for special issues, so we switched the order. Although this change of plans put us behind schedule, “Religion and Identity in Japan since 1940,” edited by three-time guest editor Peter Nosco (University of British Columbia), is now available print-on-demand from your

local Amazon marketplace. As of this moment, the online version is on hold until the launching of our new website (more on that below). The special issue includes articles by several veteran scholars, including our former colleague at the Nanzan Institute Okuyama Michiaki. See the table of contents below for details.

The upward trend in online activity for the *JJRS* continued with 97,162 successful DOI searches between April 2021 and March 2022, almost doubling the number from the previous year (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 108,339 times between April 2021 and March 2022. These numbers do not include downloads directly from the Nanzan Institute or *JJRS* (jjrs.org) websites. Only 28 print-on-demand copies were sold during the same period.

As noted above, the website of the Nanzan Institute through which we publish the *JJRS* is currently under construction. Databases such as EBISCO, WORLDCAT, and CINI link to articles on the website, and search engines such as Google redirect there as well. Therefore, online publications are on hold until the new site is launched. The new website will include additional information about *JJRS* articles, such as abstracts and links to other publications by authors.

The spring issue, like the previous year, is turning out to be a big one. In recent years, we have been fortunate to receive a large number of quality manuscripts. This influx in articles has not only resulted in longer issues but has increased the waiting time for publication. Some authors have been waiting for more than two years to see their work published. Therefore, beginning this year, we will publish two “at large” issues, one in the spring and the other in the fall. Special issues will be published on a rolling basis. Special issues, which are more akin to edited volumes than journal issues, tend to take much longer to complete than issues containing unsolicited articles. This new flexibility will allow us to publish two regularly scheduled issues, while special issues will be published when the editors agree they are complete.

As I mentioned in last year’s update, we are planning to host an event in the summer of 2023 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the *JJRS*. We hope to host speakers from within Japan and abroad, assuming travel restrictions are lifted. A special issue related to the event will be published the following year. We hope to see you all at the celebration.

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