

PUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

NANZAN LIBRARY OF ASIAN RELIGION AND CULTURE



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The following announcement is an overview of the most recent publication in the Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture series, The New Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions, coedited by Matthew D. McMullen and Jolyon Baraka Thomas. The book was published in December 2024 and is available for purchase from the University of Hawai'i Press, or wherever academic books are sold. A more detailed version of the announcement below is published in the Journal of the Nanzan Academic Society Humanities and Natural Sciences 30.

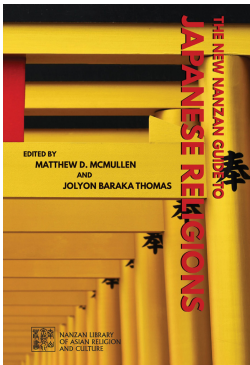
THE NANZAN LIBRARY of Asian Religion and Culture (NLARC) was established by James W. Heisig and Paul L. Swanson in 1996 through an agreement with the University of Hawai'i Press to publish research produced at the NIRC. The seventeenth and most recent volume in this series is *The New Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, coedited by Matthew D. McMullen and Jolyon Baraka Thomas. A companion volume to the 2006 *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, *The New Nanzan Guide* includes forty-two chapters on topics ranging from monastic debate to end-of-life care. Authored by a diverse, international group of scholars from various subfields related to Japanese religions, the chapters in the volume aim to broaden the scope of research in the field of Japanese studies as well as introduce this research to scholars in other fields of the humanities.

The idea for publishing a new volume of the *Nanzan Guide* evolved out of sundry discussions, both online and in “real life.” (Associate Editor’s note: online is real life.) According to legend, the *Nanzan Guide* had originally been envisioned as an ongoing, multi-volume series with new books published every decade. As almost fifteen years had passed since the first publication, a consensus emerged among the NIRC staff that perhaps it was time for a new volume.

Matthew D. McMullen (that is, me) took up the challenge of producing a new volume. Heeding the warning from one of the editors of the original guide (Paul L. Swanson) regarding the conceptional, organizational, and productional trials involved in producing a volume of such magnitude, McMullen wisely invited his long-time religious studies comrade and former officemate Jolyon Baraka Thomas from the University of Pennsylvania to join him on this adventure. And, indeed, an adventure it has been.

Publishing an edited volume of this length, array of content, and number of authors is a monumental endeavor that requires not only patience and flexibility in scheduling but also a vision and the will to carry out the project to the end. What distinguishes *The New Nanzan Guide* from other edited volumes on Japanese religions, and the NLARC series from most book series, is the fact that all editing, typesetting, proofreading, cover art, indexing, etc. are managed and carried out by the editors and staff of the NIRC. *The New Nanzan Guide* is a “farm to table” publication. The editors plant the seeds of ideas for the content and help the authors grow these ideas into drafts. They then prune the drafts through the long and painstaking editing process until they ripen into typeset chapters. Finally, the editors harvest the chapters to serve in the feast that is the volume.

The editors and NIRC staff would like to thank all those involved with the production of *The New Nanzan Guide*: authors for sharing their research and writing; anonymous reviewers for their supportive feedback; the editorial board for their advice; Hillary Pedersen for proofreading this massive volume; Horide Shrine in Ibaraki Prefecture for allowing us to photograph (courtesy Kaitlyn Ugoretz) the beautiful yellow *torii* to their sweet potato shrine; and to all of you who offered suggestions over the years at meetings and in conversation regarding content of the volume. Of course, the NIRC is grateful once again to the University of Hawai‘i Press for generously printing and distributing the NLARC series. The editors sincerely hope that this newest volume will satisfy the various cravings among scholars, students, and department administrators for new scholarship on Japanese religions.



Matthew D. McMullen and Jolyon Baraka Thomas
The New Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions.

University of Hawai'i Press, December 2024. 552 pages. Hard-back \$52.00. ISBN-13 9798880701322.

Summary of the Volume

In the two decades since the publication of the *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions*, the volume has served as a valuable resource for students and scholars of religion in Japan. Building on the success of the first volume, *The New Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions* expands the scope of its audience to include non-specialists of Japan. By focusing on the question of “why study Japanese religions” rather than “what are Japanese religions,” the new volume approaches the topic of Japan as vital for the general study of religion.

This volume addresses the question of “why study Japanese religions” in seven sections. Chapters in the section on “Knowledge Production” demonstrate that religion has long been involved in medical concerns, interpretations of sacred objects, and even the structure of academia. “Cosmology and Time” reveals how religion shaped the worldviews of premodern and modern Japan. The chapters in “Space and Environment” elaborate on religion’s role in perceptions of geography and where the inhabitants of the archipelago fit within it. “Feelings and Belonging” focuses on the religious aspects of human interaction in communities such as confraternities and vocations involving care. In the section “Politics and Governance,” the authors explain how state and politics are, and always have been, intertwined with religion. The final two sections include practical resources for conducting fieldwork and utilizing archives relevant to Japanese religions.

The breadth of topics covered in this volume as well as the accessibility of the individual chapters makes *The New Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions* an indispensable resource for anyone with an interest in the academic study of religion or Japan.

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