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## Editor's Introduction

### Religion and the Japanese Empire

THE ORIGINAL stimulus for assembling a collection of essays concerning Japanese religions and colonialism came from a conference held at Duke University in 2004 titled “Global Flows and the Restructuring of Buddhism in an Age of Empire.” The conference included presentations on transnationalism, global cultural flows, and Asian Buddhism in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As I continued to research the effects of international travel and cultural exchange on the development of Japanese religions during this period, I became aware of a growing body of literature in a variety of languages concerning the role of the Japanese empire in shaping the development of religious organizations inside Japan and elsewhere in Asia. Since the publication of Brian VICTORIA’s *Zen at War* (1997), a great deal of attention in the field of Japanese religious studies has been devoted to discussing the war responsibility of Japanese Buddhists, although there has been much less examination, particularly in English, of the long-term effects of the reorganization of religious organizations across Asia that occurred under Japanese imperial domination. In order to present some of the representative essays on this topic, I suggested a special issue collecting some of the essays concerning Japanese religions and imperialism/colonialism. It is my hope that this handful of essays will provide a stimulus for future research on this topic and be useful for teaching courses concerning modern Asian religions, a topic for which English-language material concerning twentieth-century developments is still relatively scant. Although several of the essays focus on Japanese religion in regions that were colonized

\* I am grateful to the graduate students in Japanese religions at Duke University for their help in preparing the articles for the journal.

directly by Japan—Korea and Taiwan, for example—others deal more broadly with Japanese religion in areas under Japanese occupation, in such allied puppet states as Manchukuo, and, to a much lesser extent, in regions like Hawai‘i and Brazil that became home to large numbers of migrant Japanese. In sum, these essays center on the role of Japanese religion in the construction of the Japanese empire.

In the last several decades, as the distance from the horrors of Japanese imperial aggression and the Pacific War has increased, the literature concerning imperial expansionism and Japanese religions has become more multivocal and diverse. This is the case not only literally—as scholars writing in Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, and other languages add to the literature on the subject—but also figuratively. This has occurred as analysis of the following has become more complex: 1. the motivations underlying cooperation with the Japanese government; 2. the colonial authorities in each region of the Japanese empire; and 3. the diverse strategies of the colonized for advancing their own interests while under subjugation. The growing body of literature concerning Japanese religions and the Japanese empire has begun to question simple top-down models of the colonial process that portrays all the actors involved solely as agents of the state. As Louise Young has noted in her study of Japanese imperialism in Manchuria, on a basic level all Japanese, whether at home or in the occupied territories, were complicit in the imperial project. For this reason, the line between private engagements with imperialism and official functions as agents of the imperial state is not completely distinct (YOUNG 1998, 8–9). As several of the studies in this special issue demonstrate with regard to Buddhist and Shinto religious organizations, although the efforts made by both the colonizers and the colonized on behalf of these sectarian organizations often are seen as actions undertaken to support the imperial order or—in the case of the subjugated—as complicity with or resistance to that order, these actions must also be understood as attempts to advance a private religious or sectarian agenda.

Another related development in the literature on religion within the Japanese empire reflected in several of these essays is the rejection of two-dimensional characterizations of the intentions of both the colonizers and the colonized. With the discovery of new archival materials that trace the earliest Japanese missions to Asian countries, for example, the missionary diaries recorded by Ogurusu Kōchō 小栗栖香頂 (1831–1905) while working on behalf of the Ōtani branch of Jōdo Shinshū in China, scholars have become aware of complex and often contradictory motivations for assisting in the process of colonization even over the course of one individual’s lifetime (CHEN 2009). As Ogurusu’s diaries make clear, he approached his work with a sense of duty to spread the most evolved, modern, and powerful form of Japanese Buddhism—Jōdo Shinshū—to the Chinese. At the same time, Ogurusu also expressed his desire to collabo-

rate with Chinese Buddhists in order to build a strong, united Buddhist bulwark across Tibet, China, Japan, and elsewhere in Asia to resist the growing threat of Christianity.

In a similar vein, as several of these essays demonstrate, oftentimes contesting perspectives on the proper approach that should be taken towards indigenous religious organizations and customs existed within organizations involved in expanding and managing religion within the Japanese empire. For the subjugated too, dealing with imperial authorities and Japanese religious leaders overseas and in Japan was never a simple choice between resistance or “collaboration.” As individual actors, Japanese members of religious organizations working in the occupied regions and the imperial subjects, be they Korean, Manchurian, Chinese, or Taiwanese, attempted to use colonial authority to advance their own sectarian and personal agendas, either through cooperation with or resistance to the state authorities and their Japanese religious representatives. The China historian, Prasenjit Duara, for example, has emphasized this point with regard to members of new religious organizations: for example, the Red Swastika Society (Hongwanzihui 紅卍字会) and the Society of the Way (Daoyuan 道院) in Manchuria, who, after years of oppression at the hands of Chinese warlords, welcomed the opportunity to “collaborate” with the Japanese, who were far more tolerant of their organization, providing them an “ideology and a space” in which they could operate (DUARA 2003, 111–22). It is the work of Duara and (in this collection) Nam-lin Hur, Hwansoo Kim, and Sueki Fumihiko, for example, that illustrate the ways in which individual Korean or Chinese religious leaders vacillated between admiration and disdain towards Japanese Buddhists. What remained constant, no matter how much they shifted their position between “collaboration” and “resistance,” was the ongoing effort to advance the interests of their own sectarian organizations. The multiple agendas that spurred action from members of Korean, Taiwanese, and other colonial religious communities, suggest that the boundary between collaboration and resistance was not always distinct and that perhaps it is easier to categorize actions retrospectively than it was at the time they occurred.

The five essays collected in this special issue focus on but two Japanese religions, Buddhism and Shinto, primarily in Korea and China. They therefore deal with only a portion of the regions and the traditions affected by Japanese imperialism. This is in part due to the focus of scholarship to date on those two regions and, to a larger extent, to the happenstance of which selected articles finally made it through the translation and editorial process to be included in this special issue. In recent years a number of other studies reveal how religious organizations participated in or were affected by Japanese imperial expansion in such regions as Manchuria (KIBA 2006), Mongolia (NARANGO 2003), and Taiwan (FUJII 2001). Additional research, particularly regarding Korea, for

example, by AUERBACK (2007), KIM (2007), PARK (2009), and SUZUKI (2000), has also appeared in the last ten years. Although the studies in this special issue focus on Buddhism and Shinto, almost every major Japanese religious tradition was involved at home and overseas in Japanese imperialism. Members of various new religions, for example Ōmotokyō 大本教 (NARANGO 2007), and Christians (ION 2003), were implicated fully in imperialism, although they are not discussed in any of the essays in this volume.

The five essays in this special issue are divided between those dealing with Buddhist interactions in Japan and the wider empire, and two papers that examine the policies governing the establishment of overseas shrines and the role of Shinto in the process of “imperialization” (*kōminka* 皇民化), whereby the colonized subjects would be infused with the true spirit of Japanese imperial subjects (CHING 2001, 89–132). Given the controversial nature of the subjects covered by the essays, it is not surprising that the authors writing on similar subjects, for example, Japanese-Korean Buddhist interactions or overseas Shinto shrine policy, present different, occasionally opposing interpretations of the historical record.

The first essay, by Sueki Fumihiko, provides us with a brief introduction to the changing nature of Sino-Japanese Buddhist interactions from the Meiji period through the peak of hostilities between China and Japan from late-1930 until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. In particular, Sueki contrasts Chinese and Japanese attitudes towards the war and differences in their wartime roles through an examination of the shifting views of two Chinese Buddhists, the famous Buddhist humanist reformer, Taixu 太虛 (1889–1947) and the less well-known figure of Leguan 樂觀 (1902–?). Tracing their opinions of Japanese Buddhism over time, Sueki demonstrates the need to parse attitudes and policies in Sino-Japanese Buddhist interactions carefully, as individual attitudes and opinions changed drastically as relationships between Japan and China devolved into full-fledged hostilities. Sueki also underlines the need to consider the relationship between the Buddhist clergy and wider society in order to understand their different attitudes towards participation in the war effort in China and Japan.

The next two essays concern how interactions between Korean Buddhists and the Japanese Buddhist missions in Korea affected reform efforts within the Korean Buddhist world in the twentieth century. In these two essays, Nam-lin Hur and Hwansoo Kim approach the problem from two directions, with Hur considering such Korean Buddhist reformers as Han Yong’un 韓龍雲 (1879–1944), Paek Yongsōng 白龍城 (1864–1940), and Yi Hoegwang 李晦光 (1862–1933), while Kim analyzes the actions of Takeda Hanshi 武田範之 (1863–1911), the Japanese Sōtō cleric long vilified in Korean scholarship for his supposed efforts to incorporate the Korean Buddhist order into the Sōtō denomination. Both authors demonstrate how Han, Paek, Yi, and Takeda attempted to

utilize the opportunities created by the annexation and colonization of Korea to advance the interests of the Korean Buddhist sangha. By moving beyond the simple dichotomies between pro- and anti-Japanese, or collaborator and resister, the essays demonstrate the importance of considering multiple, overlapping identities of these historical figures, who saw themselves not only as Korean or Japanese, but also as Asians, Buddhists, and members of specific sectarian traditions. Without overlooking the sometimes insidious role played by these clerics in advancing the Japanese colonization of Korea, Hur and Kim demonstrate the utility of a more nuanced analysis of their actions.

The last two essays of the volume, by Nakajima and Suga, both deal with a topic that has not received a great deal of attention in English-language scholarship: the extensive effort by Japanese migrants to establish overseas shrines throughout the Japanese empire in areas such as Hawai'i and Brazil that became home to large numbers of Japanese emigrants. As Nakajima suggests, although some of these shrines were frequently established autonomously by groups of Japanese migrants, the Japanese government authorities, who viewed these sites as useful tools in the process of "imperialization," attempted to incorporate them into an official system of overseas shrines. Nakajima's detailed overview article reveals how, following the Manchurian Incident in 1931, as Japanese attitudes towards its Asian dominions hardened and hostilities on the continent grew more intense, the system of overseas shrine worship became increasingly systematized and repressive with regard to local religious customs as part of the effort to more effectively assimilate the local populace into the empire.

While Nakajima provides a careful periodization and overview of overseas shrines in the Japanese empire, Suga examines in detail the scholarship and attitudes towards overseas shrines of Ogasawara Shōzō 小笠原省三 (1892–1970), the author of one of the first major studies of this phenomenon, *Kaigai no jinja* 海外の神社, which was published in 1933. Although a staunch anti-communist supporter of Japanese imperial policies, as Suga details in this essay, Ogasawara frequently expressed dissent from the official enshrinement and shrine worship policies advocated by the Japanese imperial authorities. Suga's essay demonstrates that even among those religionists like Ogasawara, who did not question the overarching, increasingly repressive and violent expansionism of the Japanese empire, there were contesting views as to how shrines might be utilized to create a harmonious, multi-ethnic empire. As Suga describes in detail, Ogasawara believed that imperial subjects in Korea, Taiwan, and even Brazil would voluntarily embrace the worship of indigenous deities at local shrines, thereby strengthening their loyalty to the Japanese empire. Thus, as Suga shows, Ogasawara advocated the enshrinement of Dangun 檀君, the legendary founder of the first Korean kingdom, alongside the Meiji Emperor as the main objects of worship at the Chōsen Shrine, instead of Amaterasu, a deity for whom the

Koreans felt no natural affinity. In so doing, Ogasawara argued, shrine worship would flourish throughout the empire and garner the support of local subjects. By tracing this overlooked and ultimately unsuccessful strand of Shinto thought within imperial Japan, Suga, like the authors of the other essays in this special issue, demonstrates the variegated nature of and multiple approaches to religion within the Japanese empire.

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