

Vol. 2: *Girei no kōzō* 儀礼の構造 [Ritual in Japanese popular religion]. 1972. 304 pp.+index. ¥1,200.

As with the other volumes in this series, the contributors to this volume chose subjects based on a central theme, in this case "ritual." The book contains five articles: "The shaman" by Sasaki Hiromoto 佐々木宏幹, "Founders, living kami, and living buddhas" by Umehara Masaki 梅原正紀, "Ascetic exercises" by Naitō Masatoshi 内藤正敏, "Temporal help" by Fujii Masao 藤井正雄, and "The festival" by Sonoda Minoru 園田稔. In addition, Muraoka Kū 村岡空 has provided an overall interpretive essay.

The articles on "The shaman," "Temporal help," and "The festival" view their respective subjects within the general theoretical framework of the sociology of religion and address themselves to the question: "What features emerge as distinctly Japanese when this general framework is applied to Japan's religious phenomena?" The article entitled "Founders, living kami, and living buddhas" describes several founders of comparatively unknown religious groups. The essay on "Ascetic exercises" elucidates the "buddhahood in this body" (*sokushinbutsu* 即身仏) faith associated with Mt. Yudono in Yamagata Prefecture, where priests who died after a life of asceticism were preserved as mummies and became objects of worship. The remaining two articles are also descriptions of what seem to be distinctively Japanese religious phenomena.

One complaint I would have about the volume as a whole is that it lacks methodological coherence. The "outside" approach, wherein the scholar attempts to differentiate himself from the object studied, the approach that would seek to apply an external theoretical framework to Japan, is confused with the "inside" approach, where the scholar understands and describes a given religious phenomenon from an insider's point of view. Sonoda's essay attempts to unite the two approaches in a "phenomenological method," but his "characteristics of the festival" do not come clear. Indeed, from the outset the meaning of the book's title, "Ritual," is less than obvious. Sasaki's essay includes suggestive emphases on a categorization of shamans and on the contrast between shaman and priest, but the structural analysis of shamanistic ritual remains unclear. Umehara accepts Sasaki's typology and goes on to deal with "living kami" (*ikigami*). His material is most interesting, but he does not mention ritual. Fujii's

article stops with delineating the function of “temporal help” within the ritual, as seen in the Buddhist scriptures.

Despite such defects, however, I would evaluate the book highly as a pioneer contribution marking a turning-point in the history of the study of popular religion in Japan.

The scholarly study of popular religion by Japanese already has nearly a thirty-year history, but phenomena such as those treated here—the shaman, founders of sects, mummification, “temporal help,” and the festival—have been studied either out of curiosity or as expressions of a “premodern” faith or yet again with an attitude of mild disdain. In the scholarly contributions of authors such as Oguchi Iichi and Hori Ichirō, promoters of this latter approach, one perceives the tendency, no matter how unconscious it may have been, to stand on the heights of “modernity” and look down. Though the authors of the present volume are promising scholars in their thirties and early forties, they have attempted rather to assess such popular religious phenomena more positively, an intent common to them all and apparent in the following excerpts: “Shamanism played the role of renovator and reformer of the traditional religion” (Sasaki, p. 51); “Even though we cannot claim that we are capable, through the premodern thought processes of the ‘living kami’ and the ‘living buddhas,’ of remedying all the distortions brought about by modern rationalism ...” (Umehara, p. 108); “An attitude of opposition to the authorities pervaded the Mt. Yudono faith [the mummy faith]” (Naitō, p. 169); “A solid conviction similar to the religious belief that if one employed the medium of the incantation ritual he could, as a man, control the gods to some extent” (Fujii, p. 233); linking the festival with present-day student movements, Sonoda says, “By sacrifice of professors who were forced into self-criticism in mass negotiations, they succeeded in plunging the daily operation of the university into chaos. Even the intervention of riot police did not restore normal university life as had been intended” (p. 250).

The authors do not desire that popular religion be modernized or rationalized or that it achieve the status of “proper” faith. Rather, they have attempted to take seriously the “anti-establishment,” “counter-cultural” aspects of popular religion. In the ‘60s, since the collapse of the anti-U.S.-Japan Security Treaty movement, interest in such worldly power and influence of popular movements, namely, “people power,” has been strong. I call this volume a “pioneer con-

tribution” because it is the first systematic effort to date to deal with popular religion.

My only reservation here is in regard to the way the authors—all of them—unconditionally and uncritically applaud the “people power” seen in the religious phenomena under study. What criterion of judgment is implied by a statement like: “We can value this up to a point, but...”? There is a decided lack of clarity here. Statements of this kind suggest a pretense of intelligence, or in any case something other than scholarship. If the authors understand their work as anti-establishment or counter-cultural, they should have been more rigorous in such matters. Finally, it seems to me they should have dealt with the popular religious phenomenon of the end-of-the-world cults in the advanced societies, which tend toward mysticism or intuitionism, or at least treated several contemporary examples in Europe and America.

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