

Tokoro Shigemoto 戸頃重基, ed. *Tennōsei to nihon shūkyō* 天皇制と日本宗教 [The emperor system and Japanese religion]. Tokyo: Dentō to Gendaisha, 1973. 273 pp. ¥1,200.

Discussions about the emperor system have achieved a certain popularity in Japanese journalism in recent years. The Communist Party explicitly opposes the presence of His Majesty at the opening ceremony of the Diet, suspecting the possible revival of a totalitarian regime. On the other hand, pressures are building up for reinstatement of the traditionally revered symbols of the emperor's position now that he has resumed the custom of carrying with him the sacred sword, symbolic emblem of his rulership, whenever he travels outside the imperial palace.

Together with related issues such as that of the enshrinement of the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine, discussions of the emperor system represent an ideological confrontation between the right and left wings. Those who advocate having a stronger emperor voice their contentions through conservative Diet members from the Liberal Democratic Party. Those who oppose any political action on the part of His Majesty find their spokesmen among the Communists and Socialists. Neither wing, however, has sufficiently supported its contentions with philosophical analysis. The uniqueness of the book under review is the contribution it makes to such an analysis through a historical consideration of the emperor system in relation to Japanese religion.

The book consists of three parts: (1) the transcript of a roundtable discussion on "what the emperor system implies for Japanese religion," (2) eight independent articles on the relation between the emperor system and Japanese religions, and (3) the record of a discussion between two anthropologists on shamanistic elements in the role of the

emperor.

The participants in the roundtable are Tokoro Shigemoto 戸頃重基, a historian from Kanazawa University, Takao Toshikazu 高尾利数, a teacher at a Baptist college, and Maruyama Teruo 丸山照雄, a Nichiren priest. Tokoro observes that the emperor system, in historical perspective, has always been augmented as the core of the Japanese social system and that, particularly during the ancient and modern periods (as over against the feudal), he acquired both power and authority. This super social power, in Tokoro's view, derives from the mysterious shamanistic power associated with the emperor. He also maintains that there has never developed any thoroughgoing movement that would radically negate the emperor system.

Maruyama, in contrast to Tokoro, defines the emperor system as a uniquely modern invention. He asserts that the emperor system was fashioned into an imperialistic and absolutist *Kulturreligion* in the course of Japan's Westernization.

Takao, presenting a third viewpoint, contrasts the implicit and explicit functions of the emperor system. Takao argues that the emperor system is essentially symbolic and that it has functioned as the ideology of integration in the spiritual, cathectic, ideological, and customary realms, that is, in those realms not wholly controllable by military, legal, and economic powers. He then proceeds to expose the weakness of Christian criticism of the emperor system, arguing that Christian criticism has concerned itself only with the explicit functions of the system and failed to give sufficient weight to people's implicit support for the emperor.

The participants agree that the emperor system after World War II has made an influential shift of emphasis from the explicit to the implicit realm, but its function, they urge, remains the same: to support the political power structure. They arrive at a criticism both of the prewar Marxist challenge to the emperor system and the ultra-rightist dissatisfaction with it, holding that both failed to recognize the significance of the implicit element.

The first of the eight articles in part two is by Ichikawa Hakugen 市川白弦 and bears a title meaning "The emperor system and Buddhism as the religion of nationalism." In this article the author describes Japan's centuries-old national policy as based on the fictitious unity of: (1) the myth of the emperor, (2) unilinear descent by blood, and (3) the omnipresence of the imperial virtues. These three

mythological elements were instrumental in the formation of nationalistic Buddhism represented, according to Ichikawa, by Saichō, Kūkai, and Eisai. Noting that all these high priests of Japanese Buddhism besought the consent and support of the emperor even during the course of Buddhist prayers for the protection of the state, Ichikawa concludes that, through ritual prayers of this kind, Buddhism prostituted itself to the state.

Tokoro Shigemoto in "The emperor system under the Kamakura shogunate" traces the views of Shinran, Dōgen, and Nichiren as they relate to the emperor system. Shinran, he argues, could not radically criticize the emperor system because of his admiration for the nobility (represented by Prince Shōtoku) and because of his neglect of class conflicts. By contrast, Tokoro gives good marks to Dōgen for having transcended nationalism in favor of Buddhism. Yet Dōgen's monasticism, it is contended, contained authoritarian tendencies due to: (1) denial of equality between the sexes and between monks and lay people, (2) unnatural repression of human sentiment, and (3) dependence on donations from lay people in order to maintain the monastic economy. Tokoro then turns to Nichiren, characterizing him as representative of the middle class. According to Tokoro, Nichiren both negated and affirmed the emperor system. He did not approve of the idea of the absolute character of the emperor and attempted to judge his actions as right or wrong in the light of the Lotus Sutra. Nonetheless, Nichiren was not free of the magical pattern of behavior nor was he free of the eclecticism typical of Buddhism and Shinto. Thus he eventually came to demand that a national temple be established by the state. Tokoro concludes that the founders of Kamakura Buddhism were all trapped by their admiration for the nobility and were unable to transcend the emperor system.

Yamaori Tetsuo 山折哲雄 presents a monographic article, "The emperor system in Shinran." In it he illustrates the comparative distance of the various Buddhist sects from the emperor by enumerating the dates on which the several founders were granted by the emperor the honorary title of *daishi* or Grand Master. The sanctity of the emperor system, a sanctity attributed to it by Shinshū followers, is said to be grounded in communal ties that suggest the mystic isolation of the holy presence, thus impeding any tendency to transcend the authoritarianism of the system.

Miyazaki Eishū 宮崎英修, in "The emperor system and the religion of no concession to non-believers," provides an example of religious suppression by the Tokugawa regime. He presents this action as an antithesis to the emperor system.

Tamura Yoshirō 田村芳朗 deals with "The response of Buddhism to the emperor system in the Meiji era." He traces the suppression of Buddhists by the government and concludes that governmental intervention in Buddhism did not derive from provocation by the Buddhists.

Murakami Shigeoyoshi 村上良重, writing on "The emperor system and State Shinto," defines State Shinto as the established religious foundation of modern Japan. He explains the legitimation of imperial rule in terms of: (1) the divine prophecy of the imperial regime, (2) the three emblems of divine rule, and (3) the myths relating to the creation of the nation. Murakami concludes that unless State Shinto is totally negated, people will remain controlled by the principle of community rule and that the revival of State Shinto would be practically identical with the failure of democracy in Japan.

Fujitani Toshio 藤谷俊雄, turning to "The emperor system and the new religions," describes the relation between the history of the new religions and their repression by the imperial state. Fujitani argues that the best index of the faithfulness of a new movement as it comes to grips with its own doctrines is the seriousness of its confrontation with the emperor system.

Iisaka Yoshiaki 飯坂良明, himself a lay Christian, presents a penetrating article of self-criticism under the title "The emperor system and Christianity." Iisaka argues that despite many frequently cited examples of church-state confrontation, there has not been a single case in modern Japan where Christians chose to stand up against the emperor system. Iisaka is of the opinion that substantive confrontation is of vital importance and that in pursuit of this objective, joint efforts with adherents of other religions as well as with unaffiliated people are not only appropriate but indispensable.

The third and last part of the book, the dialogue between two anthropologists, Sasaki Hiromoto 佐々木宏幹 and Sakurai Tokutarō 桜井徳太郎, is titled "The emperor system and shamanism." Dividing shamans into three types—medium, prophet, and priest—Sasaki assigns the emperor to the last type. Sakurai further classifies the first two types as extralegal in orientation, contending that shamans

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of the priestly type tend to function as lawmakers. Sakurai also suggests that the lack of religiosity at Shinto shrines is a result of Meiji government intervention.

While objectivity prevails throughout these papers, the definition of the emperor system provided in the introductory discussion is not necessarily shared by the writers of individual papers. Doubts arise, therefore, as to the effectiveness of the criticisms leveled at the system. Furthermore, while descriptions of the influence of the emperor system on Buddhism are detailed and chronological, treatments of this influence on other religious traditions are topic-oriented and lack historical follow-up. Discussion of the relation between the emperor system and Shinto, in particular, calls for considerably more detailed and analytic coverage. In the final analysis, the value of this book lies in its presentation of the various ways the emperor system has influenced the historical development of Japanese Buddhism.

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