

Reviews

H. Byron EARTHART, *The new religions of Japan: A bibliography of Western-language materials*, 2nd ed. Michigan Papers in Japanese Studies, No. 9. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1983. xxvi + 213 pp., including an 8-page author index and an 11-page topical index. n.p.

THE INDEFATIGABLE Byron Earhart has once more put us in his debt. His first edition of this book having appeared in 1970, it now comes to us in a much improved form. Two evidences of this improvement are worth noting here.

The first improvement is quantitative. The second edition contains nearly twice as many entries as the first.

The second improvement is organizational and relates to ease of use. In the first edition, the New Religions were listed as they appear in the annual statistical compilations of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, that is, under one of four categories: Shinto, Buddhist, Christian, and the "wastebasket category" Other. This organization meant, however, that unless one knew in advance what category a specific group was listed under, he might have to look under three or four separate headings. The second edition, with one exception for "Utopian Groups," lists the New Religions alphabetically. This arrangement of the material is clearly advantageous to the user, especially one coming to a relatively unfamiliar subject.

Computers that do not require of their users a great amount of technical knowledge are said to be "user-friendly." By the same token, this bibliography is "user-friendly," and the secret of this friendliness is to be found in its appendixes and indexes.

The appendixes offer helpful "Suggestions for Locating

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Western-Language Materials on the Japanese New Religions," a list of earlier bibliographies on "Western-Language Materials on Japanese Religion," a brief but valuable list of "Japanese-Language Materials on the New Religions," and some suggestions as to "Comparative Materials for the Study of New Religious Movements."

Of the author index, nothing need be said. It is quite straightforward. The real bonus to the researcher is the topical index. As opposed to the table of contents, where the New Religions are listed individually, the topical index presents major themes that run through several New Religions. These themes include, for example, Ancestor worship, Confucianism, Conversion, Death, Doctrine, Ethical teachings, Founders and foundresses, etc. It is a rare bibliographer who takes the trouble to present the material in such helpful form.

A reviewer is hardly worth his salt if he does not say something critical, so I looked high and low for something to criticize—but with little luck. At the last moment, though, I finally found a small mistake. On p.181 the author, referring to the International Institute for the Study of Religions, says that even though it closed its office in early 1980, it still publishes the *Japanese journal of religious studies*. The fact is that this journal is now published not by the above-mentioned institute but by the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture. Further details concerning this latter institute may be found on the inside front cover.

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