Arthur H. THORNHILL III. *Six Circles, One Dewdrop: The Religio-Aesthetic World of Komparu Zenchiku.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. xvi + 232 pp., glossary, bibliography, and index. Hardcover, US$39.95, ISBN 0–691–07352–X.

Thornhill's book, dealing with the Noh thought of Komparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405–1468?), is remarkable in both breadth and depth. I might borrow the words of Nankō Sōgen 南江宗沅 (1387–1463), a Zen-priest-turned-poet who appended comments to one of the early analyses: "[Thornhill's] discussions of the circles and sword are surpassingly beautiful and good. How could someone like myself add a single word to [his]?" (p. 42). I will nevertheless hazard a few comments, if only to help introduce this fine book to a wider audience.

Komparu Zenchiku was the son-in-law of the great Noh playwright, actor, and theoretician Zeami Motokiyo 世阿弥元清 (1363–1443). Zenchiku, while lauded in his own lifetime for his skill as a Noh actor, has received less attention than Zeami for his aesthetic treatises on Noh (*nōgakuron* 能楽論). The verdict on these has been mixed, according to Thornhill, with criticism ranging from "derivative [from Zeami] and unoriginal" to "excessively abstract and theoretical" (p. 4). Zenchiku's contributions to *nōgakuron* are built around the set of seven symbols that provided Thornhill with the title of his

book: six circles and one dewdrop, or *rokurin ichiro* 六輪一露. Briefly, the seven symbols are:

1 Circle of Longevity (*jurin* 寿輪)
2 Circle of Height (*shurin* 竪輪)
3 Circle of Abiding (*jūrin* 住輪)
4 Circle of Forms (*zōrin* 像輪)
5 Circle of Breaking (*harin* 破輪)
6 Circle of Emptiness (*kūrin* 空輪)
7 One Dewdrop (*ichiro* 一露)

After a brief chapter introducing some of the influence on Zenchiku, Thornhill presents in the second chapter two of Zenchiku's treatises on the symbol system: *Rokurin ichiro no ki* 六輪一露之記 (A record of six circles and one dewdrop) and *Rokurin ichiro no kichū* 六輪一露之記注 (Commentary to *Rokurin ichiro no ki*). The compositional history of these two treatises is complex, and demonstrates one of Thornhill's central points: the syncretistic, multilayered intellectual milieu of the time (see pp. 20–23). The first treatise, *Rokurin ichiro no ki,* is actually composed of two separate commentaries on the "six circles, one dewdrop" system by authors other than Zenchiku; Zenchiku's contribution is limited to a few cryptic comments on each symbol interspersed into the first commentary, which is a Buddhist analysis on the system by Shigyoku 志玉 (1383–1463), a Kegon-shū priest associated with the Kaidan-in of Tōdai-ji in Nara. The second commentary, by Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (1402–1481), emphasizes Confucian themes and is followed by the brief comments of Nankō Sōgen. The first and sixth circles are empty, while the others contain lines or images; e.g., a sword pointing upward symbolizes the One Dewdrop. The symbols are clearly diagrammed in Thornhill's book, and an unusually helpful array of additional figures illustrate many of the discussions (though a few seem gratuitous, such as Figures 4-1 [p. 92] and 4-2 [p. 94]). While Zenchiku's minimal introductions of the symbols refer to performance and the art of Noh, the commentators are solely concerned with the religious and cosmological possibilities of the symbols. Thornhill speculates that the commentators were responding to an earlier version of the *rokurin ichiro* that is no longer extant.

We have to wait until the *Rokurin ichiro no kichū,* a response to the *Rokurin ichiro no ki,* for Zenchiku's own more explicit formulation of his system. We thus learn most about the *rokurin ichiro* symbols from a commentary by Zenchiku on the commentaries of others on his original work. Yet the task is not to construct some lost original *rokurin ichiro* system, but rather to appreciate the collaborative nature of the *Kichū,* in which Zenchiku interacts with his commentators, builds from their insights, and explores the aesthetic and religious ramifications of his symbol system. The translations are accompanied by thorough notes that identify a wide range of source materials for terms, allusions, and images found in the works.

Chapter 3 offers Thornhill's analysis of the Noh performance aspects of Zenchiku's *rokurin ichiro* system. The first three circles, in particular, stand for

mental states that must be attained by a performer (p. 75). Thornhill shows how the *rokurin ichiro* symbol system is based upon, yet divergent from, Zeami's nine ranks and *hana* imagery. He also introduces two principles, the centrifugal and the centripetal, to help interpret the aesthetics of Noh. The *rokurin ichiro* interpreted as a centrifugal movement of generation places great emphasis on the ontological priority of the mental states of the actor for both the techniques of performance and the subjective responses of the audience. Zenchiku's formulation of the movement from actor's mind to performance to audience response is well worth studying. It should be noted, however, that the treatises and Thornhill's discussions make almost no reference to specific Noh plays or roles; readers looking for a close tie between the aesthetic principles and their instantiation in Noh plays will have to make their own connections. This lack of specificity adds to my concern about the admitted ambiguity of some of the principles.

But the real thrust of the book lies beyond the aesthetic as limited to performance and personal growth as an artist. Succeeding chapters are devoted to excavating the religious-literary-intellectual foundations of Muromachi discourse. Important Buddhist themes are taken up in chapter 4, which works through Shigyoku's commentary in the *Ki*. Kegon teachings are emphasized as Thornhill attempts to show that much of the secondary literature on Zeami and Zenchiku tying Noh to Zen nearly exclusively is mistaken (Zen influence is not denied; rather, the argument seeks to establish a wider Buddhist background). Chapter 5 analyzes Kaneyoshi's commentary, with its Confucian themes. Thornhill sees in Kaneyoshi an emphasis on *michi*, following an artistic way with religious implications, whereas Shigyoku's analysis is limited to the soteriological per se (p. 148). Chapter 6 ("Zenchiku and Medieval Shinto") is perhaps the most provocative, with Thornhill using water as a purity motif in medieval Shinto (emphasizing inner and not merely ritual purity) to explicate the dewdrop symbol.

The range of Thornhill's book is vast; he often provides a two- or three-page excursus on yet another theme from Chinese and Japanese religious and literary studies (e.g., *I Ching*, Taoist mysticism, early Mādhyamika thought) to illuminate another stream of influence on Zenchiku's thought. Specialists may choose to quarrel with some of the details in these discussions. I wish to raise a minor quibble about a more major theme of the work.

Thornhill repeatedly emphasizes the syncretistic, multilayered, harmonious nature of the diverse streams that coalesced in the *rokurin ichiro* literature. Thornhill's work amply demonstrates such fusion and "correlative thinking" (p. 148), and thus his general conclusions stand; however, a number of his own examples belie this harmonious picture of the intellectual backdrop for Zenchiku's treatises. For example, consider the very familiar syncretism of *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 theory ("fundamental essence, trace manifestation"; p. 179), discussed in several places by Thornhill, in which the Buddhas and bodhisattvas (*honji*) appear in Japan as Shinto deities (*suijaku*). As Thornhill correctly notes, Shinto revivalists such as Jihen 慈遍 (d. 1347?) offered alternative *honji-suijaku* theories in which the Shinto deities are *honji* with the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as *suijaku*. Also, in the appendix (a fine

annotated bibliography of Zenchiku's treatises), we find that Zenchiku himself does not always display the thematic syncretism; in the next-to-last entry (*Jōdo-kyō hihan*) Zenchiku opposes the "other power" (*tariki*) interpretation of nenbutsu practice and emphasizes instead his preference for the "self-power" (*jiriki*) of concentrated, continual nenbutsu practice. Thus while the major theme of syncretism and "correlative thinking" is borne out overall, an ongoing minor theme of struggle for position and power needs to be reiterated. As Thornhill points out, the interaction of the two themes is sometimes ironic, as when Jihen and others use Buddhist syncretistic arguments for their own ends (p. 180).

Thornhill's work contains a good glossary, bibliography, and fine index; these are especially welcome given the wide scope of sources cited. This work more than accomplishes its purpose, stated in the introduction (when commenting on the relative difficulty of Zenchiku's treatises): "to uncover the larger patterns of cultural discourse this facade of discontinuity represents" (p. 5). In so doing, Thornhill has also given us a fresh look at the aesthetics of Noh and its interpenetration with the religious world.

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