

## REVIEW

Mark TEEUWEN, *Watarai Shintō: An Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine in Ise*. CNWS Publications vol. 52. Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1996. 471 pp. Fl 47.00 (Dutch guilders), ISSN 0925-3084.

The fortuitous appearance of *Watarai Shintō* as we prepared the special issue on the legacy of Kuroda Toshio seemed to call for at least a brief introduction of this excellent study of “what the intellectuals of Watarai Shinto had to say about [the Ise] Shrine and its religious meaning” (p. 4). Mark Teeuwen’s book, a Ph.D. thesis for Leiden University that was subsequently prepared for publication in the CNWS Publications series, provides a broad yet detailed analysis of the origins, development, and demise of Watarai (or Ise) Shinto. Teeuwen chooses to use the term “Watarai Shinto” rather than “Ise Shinto” because it identifies “the ‘main guardians’ of the school, and does not imply a value judgement labelling certain elements of the [Ise] tradition as more ‘essential’ or ‘meaningful’ than others” (p. 10). Watarai Shinto “developed in the thirteenth century, went into decline in the fifteenth, was revived in the seventeenth, and died a slow death in the nineteenth century,...[and is] generally regarded as the wellspring of Shinto thought” (p. 1). It was the source and main interpreter of the early “secret books” of the Ise Outer Shrine (including the so-called *Shintō gobusho*), and was involved in the development of the idea of *shinkoku* (Japan as the land of kami)—issues central to Kuroda’s theories of *kenmitsu taisei*, the influence of the concept of *shinkoku*, the role of exo-esoteric Buddhism in the development of Shinto, and so forth.

Kuroda’s theories, though certainly not the only (nor even the main) framework for Teeuwen’s study, weigh heavily in the discussion. In his introduction Teeuwen discusses Kuroda’s idea that Shinto emerged as an independent religion only in recent times; although he acknowledges the validity of many of Kuroda’s theories, he takes exception to the overgeneralization of this point, saying that “even if we accept that there is no independent, continuous tradition of ‘Shinto thought,’ the Ise shrines nevertheless present an obvious continuity as an institution, as a ritual system and as a physical presence.... [Watarai Shinto] can be studied as a more or less continuous tradition of a well-defined group: the Ise priests, or even the priests of the Ise Outer Shrine” (p. 7). In three chapters Teeuwen traces 1) the process of rewriting sacred history and the development of new rituals in “early Watarai Shinto,” 2) the continuity and discontinuity in the Watarai tradition from the late Kamakura to early Edo periods as pilgrimage became increasingly important at Ise, and 3) the revival and eventual demise of “late Watarai Shinto” as it responded to the new context informed by Confucian scholarship (in contrast to the Buddhist context of earlier times). Although he accepts the view that Watarai Shinto grew out of “an attempt to reinterpret Shinto ritual in the light of Buddhist thought,” Teeuwen (pp. 402–403) argues that

Kuroda’s views cannot be accepted in their entirety. Kuroda refers to Watarai Shinto as an argument in support of his thesis that “Shinto” as the continuous national religion (*kokumin shūkyō*) of Japan is an

a-historical construct. He argues that Watarai Shinto offered a lay version of the esoteric Buddhist doctrine of *hongaku*; in the final analysis, its “Shinto theories may give the impression of continuity with [the later] Confucian Shinto and Kokugaku Shinto, but in reality it did not contain any ideas that are consistent with these [later Shinto schools].”... This study shows that there was in fact a great deal of continuity, most obviously between Early Watarai Shinto and “Confucian Shinto”—the Shinto theories of Hayashi Razan, Yamazaki Anzai, and Late Watarai Shinto.... It would be absurd to state that there is no continuity in the process of rewriting Shinto myth.

Between his helpful introduction and stimulating conclusions, Teeuwen provides a careful and insightful presentation of a relatively neglected subject. I found the first section on the emergence of Watarai Shinto, “the introduction of a new method of rewriting, the ‘translation’ of Buddhist concepts into Shinto mythology” (p. 127), to be particularly informative and instructive. My only quibble, minor though it may be, is Teeuwen’s habit of placing a macron in the word “Shintō.”

In short, this book provides the detailed information and analysis for, among other things, a closer examination of Kuroda’s theories and a deeper understanding of the development of religious rituals and ideas in Japan, from medieval times to the present. It can be ordered from the Research School CNWS, Leiden University, Nonnensteeg 1-3, Leiden, The Netherlands (or through e-mail at “CNWS@Rullet.LeidenUniv.nl”), with the catch that payment must be made in Dutch guilders.

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