humility"—is seen as the practice of their "faith." Such matters have yet to be addressed and must be taken up. Kohiyama's book is very valuable for it can guide us towards that task.

Mary Jane Forbes Greene (1845–1910), Mother of the Japan Mission: An Anthropological Portrait, Volume 30 in *Studies in Women and Religion*

Marion Kilson

Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991. x + 132pp. Photographs, appendices, bibliography, and index.

Reviewed by Alison Young, Tokyo

MODERN HISTORICAL scholarship has increasingly recognized that the lives of women comprise half the picture of human history. Considering that the story of her great grandmother, Mary Jane Forbes Greene, must surely be worth telling alongside the already published biography of her husband, Kilson became interested in reconstructing the life of this Meiji Era woman who was cofounder of the Japan Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1870. In approaching the subject as an anthropologist, Kilson's intent is to present her life story as representative of the other women of her generation who participated in the foreign missionary movement, thus illuminating the general through the particular.

The preface begins with an honest appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of this particular study within the scope of its late nineteenth-century historical context, as well as the methodological problems encountered because of limitations in the sources available for research. It goes on to offer a brief historical overview of studies portraying the experiences of American Protestant women in the foreign missionary movement. This grounding in the modern history of scholarship on Protestant women does much to put this modest study in context. Without this setting, its straightforward anthropological approach would make less compelling reading.

Chapter One provides a brief history of Protestant missionary activity in the Meiji Era and sets the scene for the forty-one year period of service the Greenes spent in Japan. Their arrival in 1869 coincided with the opening of Japan to foreign influences, and their newly formed Japan Mission rode the crest of Japanese interest in Christianity through the 1880s. From this high point they witnessed the sudden and radical decline in membership in the churches they had helped to found, ending in widespread indifference to Christianity expressed by the majority of Japanese people they had come to convert.

Details of Mary Jane Greene's life are unfolded, beginning with references to her early family life and educational experiences. Kilson undertakes a reconstruction of her worldview and major life themes, drawing on such sources as college essays, journal entries, letters and other relevant material from the period. A coherence is achieved by this approach, for rather than presenting a simple chronology of life events, Kilson's aim is to construct a picture of her subject within the world in which she lived.

The picture is rounded out by treatment of significant relationships in her life, including her husband and eight children, with whom she corresponded regularly after they returned to the U.S. for schooling as teenagers. Also examined are relations with the women and men within their missionary community and contacts with friends and supporters in America, as well as friendships with Japanese people in many contexts. Kilson has gleaned from Greene's letters and journal entries an inter-

esting array of opinions and impressions. In the final chapter, she considers some of these responses to Japan and her perceptions of sociocultural differences in the Meiji Era, and aspects of her role as a mediator between Japanese and American cultures. Fluent in the Japanese language, she faithfully studied Japanese literature throughout her life in Japan. She and her husband adopted many customs of the culture, from offering their guests slippers at the door, dressing their grandchildren in Japanese clothes to celebrate the new year, to displaying the Japanese flag next to the American flag on holidays. Kilson concludes that Mary Jane Greene was herself significantly transformed by the culture she sought to transform.

Supplementary to the text are three appendices: a chronology of milestones in her life; biographical details of her eight children; and selected writings of Mary Jane Greene, chosen to illustrate her life in Japan.

Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan

William R. LaFleur

Princeton University Press, 1992. 257pp. Appendix, chapter notes, bibliography and index.

Reviewed by Stuart D. B. Picken, International Christian University, Tokyo

THE BOOK IS EXTREMELY interesting, and offers many original insights and valuable observations, but, as the author confesses, it also contains parts to which readers may have objections, for example, learning from Japan. I wonder indeed, if these are the parts to which objections will be made. That the reader must decide for himself or herself.

The volume is in three parts, dealing respectively with generic concepts created in Japanese culture, historical traditions on abortion and natalism followed by a concluding section on the contemporary situation and the issues surrounding abortion in its wider world context. Taking these in turn, part one as a basic resource on a new topic in the study of Japanese religions is by far the most careful and least controversial. The opening section sets the tone by illustrating that behind the image of the Daibutsu in Kamakura, there is another world of Buddhism represented in La Fleur's argument by the Hase-dera which is devoted to Kannon, a figure in the Buddhist pantheon associated with healthy childhood, along with another figure of Indian origin, Jizo, whose task it is to protect the souls of miscarried, aborted or stillborn children. The temple states that there are 50,000 such souls under the protection of Jizo. The existence of Jizo suggests to the author that people feel the need to "do something" after an abortion. The temple caters for natural (miscarriage) and induced abortions as well as for stillborn infants. The central category may rank numerically highest, but the others exist, and the temple has provided pastoral comfort in all cases.

On page 26, the author refers to abortion as "horrifying and abominable" a judgment that sets the tone of some of the subsequent discussion. I think in the early stages, instead of suggesting that the book has a slant, the author might have spent more time discussing the origins of those rituals which "fit into that piece of bricolage" which he perceptively analyses as the Japanese moral posture in the world, something constructed out of various elements and embodied in ritual. He is very sensitive to the complex meanings that survive in ritual, especially in Japan, and this itself is a valuable insight that religion experts usually ignore. Greater study of Japanese rituals as the work of a *bricoleur* culture would be a