extended footnotes that have been built into the text. I cannot stress too much the value of much of what is written, but it is partly spoiled by that kind of polemical approach that is in danger of losing the idea of the forest amidst the trees.

The third part takes off into the modern situation, and again contains much clever analysis and well-researched insight. The idea of "soul possession" (on a par with *kitsune-mochi*?) has a big impact on religious organizations and compelled them to invent rituals to prevent revenge. If this is so, it shows that beneath the Buddhist exterior, the roots of Japanese folk religion remain as strong and healthy as ever. This could shift the ground of the argument to the point where it is not Buddhism versus Shinto, but the use of Buddhist rituals in a bricoleur way to deal with a primitive fear. Buddhism's links with death are long and deep, and therefore, it is not surprising that the links are there. A little more discussion of Amida and Jizo would have opened up this issue. So much for the limitations.

The book has three great merits which outweigh the problems I have raised. Firstly, it is a superb attempt to relate an issue in the field of Japan studies to the wider academic world outside, showing that in some cases, what is true in Japan is true elsewhere, but that sometimes it is not (for example Malthus). It is not narcissistically "Japanological," but tries to see Japan studies *in obiter visa*. The author is clearly excited about what he has seen, and rightly so, but is a little overwhelmed and tries to deal with too many issues that are of no direct consequence. But his insights are always suggestive, which heightens the frustration.

Secondly, it argues most convincingly that there is a complex value system at work in Japan, the result of the bricoleur mentality, and that moral issues are dealt with, not verbally, but through the symbolic power of ritual, and further that this system has as its goal, the preservation of social order. To those interested in social, political and economic value systems, this is a model for thought. Behind apparently moral positions that are recognized as such in the west, there is always a hidden, and different agenda in Japan. *Seichō no Ie* (House of Growth), for example, attacks abortion, according to the author, not on right to life grounds, but on neo-Shinto grounds. It shows how far religious movements in Japan may have to go in order to accommodate government inspired social norms. It also underlines the point that similar ideas found in Japan and the West may not necessarily share common or even similar presuppositions.

The conclusion is a return to learning from Japan, and particularly Japan's pragmatism which the author declares Americans seem to have erroneously viewed as their own philosophy. He raises the issue of population control and even the question of how the *mizuko kuyō* might be transferred to Christianity. He seems to return to a more objective stance on the problem, and offers some provocative comments.

In short an abundance of riches, that calls for time, effort and serious reflection which, I think, is very worthwhile.

Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change

Winston Davis

Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. x + 327 pp. Photos, figures, notes, and index. Paper. n.p.

Reviewed by David Reid, Seigakuin University, Tokyo

WHAT MAKES A BOOK worth reading? Someone has suggested that in the world of scholarship a book can be considered

"good" if it provides the reader with new information, or with new ways of understanding previously available information, or both. By these criteria, Winston Davis's *Japanese Religion and Society* is superb. I have lived in Japan for most of my adult life, and have specialized in the study of Japanese religion and society. Without qualification I can say that I have learned from this book. It has given me not only information about Japan but also some provocative insights into ways of thinking about this information. What more can one ask? Actually, I think there is a bit more that one can ask, but before taking up this matter, I want to say a word about the author and what he has attempted in this book.

Winston Davis, Wilson-Craven Professor of Religion at Southwestern University, spent four years in Japan teaching at the Kwansei Gakuin University Faculty of Sociology. He is well known as a perceptive fieldworker and theoretician because of his 1980 book *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*.

This new book brings together eight rewritten and updated articles, the earliest of which was first published in 1977, the latest in 1989. Each article has here become a chapter, and the chapters are divided into four parts: the structure of religious groups, the dynamics of social conflict, the dynamics of social and economic change, and secularization and national identity. What holds them together is Davis's consistent effort to formulate paradigms for understanding.

In chapter 1, "Japanese religious affiliations: Motives and obligations," for example, he uses Alfred Schutz's distinction between *in order to* motives and *because* motives to construct a typology of religious affiliations that helps to explain Japanese syncretism. Again, in chapter 4, "The Weber thesis and the economic development of Japan," he argues that the role of religion in Japanese economic development is better understood not as a matter of "positive enablement" (the stance taken by Weber and subsequent Weberians) but as a matter of "passive enablement," an argument he advances by adapting the market theory of Karl Polanyi. Chapter 5, "Buddhism and modernization," carries the passive enablement argument forward by showing how prewar Japanese Buddhism, with an eye to its own survival, acquiesced in government policy by silence and ambiguity even when policy (e.g., militarism) contradicted Buddhist principle (e.g., non-killing). Davis here introduces his participant-observer study of Ittōen, a utopian community that idealizes the ethos of the feudal village while drawing heavily on the Buddhist tradition. He sees it as an example of the revitalization of the values of premodern Japan, "a feudalistic morality in the context of a capitalist economy."

Davis does not hesitate to challenge any theory that leaves, in his view, important dimensions of Japanese existence unaccounted for. As over against Durkheim and those who would explain society and culture in terms of structure and function, and as over against Marx and those who would explain society and culture in terms of conflict, Davis regards both consensus and conflict as "partial" theories. Hoping to take advantage of both, he identifies his own position as one of "conflict structuralism." This interest in the explanatory power of conflict for understanding the structures of Japanese society and culture forms the background both to his study of pre-Meiji pilgrimage and to his study of conflict within the Japanese Christian "community." With reference to Christianity, his chapter "The cross and the cudgel" is an examination of conflict within the United Church of Christ in Japan (which he often abbreviates as "Kyōdan"). His assessment is that the conflict is not between a "'church faction' and a 'society faction,' or even between 'conservatives' and 'progressives.' It is a vigorous conflict among progressives who are divid-

ed over whether or not physical force will be allowed to overturn democratic procedures" (p. 104). Here he makes an ethical indictment that is blunt and to the point: "….most church members simple [*sic*] remained indifferent to the problems of the Kyōdan and to the larger issues of faith and society. The moralism the Kyōdan had inherited from both Confucianism and Protestantism discouraged most members from seriously considering problems that could not be solved by, or reduced to, personal piety" (p. 107). To the extent that this charge holds true, it implicitly calls for serious reflection about what it means to shape socially responsible Christian community in Japan.

In "The secularization of Japanese religion" Davis draws attention to the difficulty of treating Japanese religions as systems of belief, though it is precisely from such a context that the idea of secularization arose. He states that "religious praxis (*shugyō*) and feelings (*kimochi*) and not belief per se form the core of Japanese religion" (p. 236). I would put the matter a little differently, but I think that Davis is on the right track. What disturbs me is that instead of presenting support for this view, he simply passes it off for a self-evident truth. It may be true, but it is hardly self-evident. At this point there is an unfortunate logical gap in his argument. Davis suggests that secularization in Japanese culture is to be understood not as decline in religious belief but as shrinkage in the scope and practice of religious customs—a worthy suggestion indeed.

The final chapter, "Japan theory and civil religion," reviews the general tone of the plethora of books and articles on what it means to be Japanese. He points out that many of the functions of the prewar civil religion are now being taken over by the symbols, values, and imagery employed by the writers on Japan theory. The main difference, as he sees it, is that the prewar civil religion was "religious" whereas the postwar civil religion is more secular. One could quibble with this characterization, for it is difficult to clarify the sense in which the ostensibly non-religious pre-1945 civil religion was in fact religious and the presumably secular post-1945 civil religion less religious, particularly when he claims that the latter may "give birth to a new religious self-understanding." It is hard to quibble, however, with his interpretation of Japan theory as part of "an ongoing search for a new national identity by a people whose economic enterprise has recouped what generals, gods, and a divine emperor previously lost" (p. 270).

At the beginning of this review, I noted that even if a scholarly book offered new information and new ways of understanding previously available information, as this book definitely does, there is still a bit more one could wish for. I refer to readable style. Many years ago Adolf von Harnack criticized Ernst Troeltsch for his *Satzungeheuer*, or "monstrous sentences." *Japanese Religion and Society* is written in a way that makes heavy demands on the reader. In part, this results from the nature of the material and the erudition of Davis's wide-ranging scholarship. With this I have no quarrel. After all, Davis is not writing for children. In part, however, the difficulty one experiences in reading this book springs from its "monstrous sentences." This is not always true, to be sure. Once in a while an insight is couched in vivid imagery, as in the statement "dichotomous configuration theories of modernization have the tendency to smother the historical specificity of religious change under the soft pillow of sociological abstraction" (p. 231). Here the image redeems the rest of the sentence. There are many sentences, however, with no redeeming image. In these cases the reader must simply grind ahead, taking the surprising number of typos in stride.

I want to say unequivocally, however, that this is a book eminently worth reading. Probably nobody will accept unconditionally all of the author's "paradigms." But becoming newly aware of the significant and timely problems to which he directs our attention, and seeing how he goes about fashioning paradigms of understanding, is an educational experience. All who read this book will find themselves indebted to Winston Davis.

Patriots and Redeemers in Japan: Motives in the Meiji Restoration

George M. Wilson

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. xvi + 201pp. Notes, glossary, bibliography, index. Paper. n.p.

Reviewed by J. Mark Ramseyer, University of Chicago

GEORGE M. WILSON promises an intellectual history of the Meiji Restoration. Although he delivers a brilliant book, it is also a bit oxymoronic. Whatever the restoration may have been, it was not primarily an intellectual event. Although serious intellectual changes ensued, the event itself seems more a cross between coup d'etat and revolution. People seldom win coups and revolutions by ideas. Although they invent elaborate ideologies to justify killing the people they do, they usually win them by guns and bombs. Neither do they usually organize the guns and bombs for ideas. They organize them for wealth and power, and convince their followers to fire the guns and plant the bombs by promising them the same. Often with a ideological gloss, to be sure, they promise their followers lower taxes, higher wages, and land redistribution.

Not so Wilson's Meiji Restoration. The men who headed it fought neither for power nor for wealth. According to Wilson, they fought to "redeem" the realm. He could be right, of course, though readers who have seen the homes of early Meiji leaders may wonder. Those men may have had altruistic motives, but some of them paid themselves handsomely for their efforts. If it was all a matter of redemption, then at least for the Meiji oligarchs redemption was a well-paying job.

Wilson also claims from the outset that the restoration leaders acquired "legitimacy" by invoking the emperor (Chapter 1). He would be hard put to find a more tired "fact" about Meiji Japan. Yet sometimes tired facts should just retire. Consider first how the Emperor might have benefited the leaders. If the "legitimacy" he gave them made any difference, it should have lowered the costs involved in taking and retaining military control. That Wilson never shows us. Consider too whether this "legitimacy" was hard to obtain—whether manipulating the Emperor (a) was difficult, or instead (b) was something any of the serious pretenders to the government could have done if they could just win militarily. If hard, Wilson should tell us why it was hard, and how the eventual victors successfully obtained it. If (as seems more likely) any of the plausible pretenders could have manipulated the Emperor, Wilson should tell us why anyone cared. Suppose that any Japanese group able to win the military battles could have captured the imperial symbol. If so, then if Group "A" rather than Group "B" eventually invoked the Emperor, that fact conveyed no independent information to the public. It told people only the obvious point that "A" had beaten "B." Unless the people swore blind obedience to the Emperor (unless, in effect, they were fools), they would not have deferred to "B" out of reverence. They would have deferred to "A" because it controlled guns and bombs.

These are questions of emphasis. Whatever the ultimate significance of