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[Prohl, Inken. Religiöse Innovationen: die Shintō-Organisation World Mate in Japan]

Religio. 2011, vol. 19, iss. 1, pp. 137-138

ISSN 1210-3640 (print); ISSN 2336-4475 (online)

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/125363>

Access Date: 28. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

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dovských kultur a moderních artikulací židovství. Zatřetí ji pak lze doporučit všem, kdo se zajímají o problematiku utváření osobní identity a roli vyprávění v tomto procesu či o téma narativní konstrukce reality.

MICHAELA ONDRAŠINOVÁ

Inken Prohl, Religiöse Innovationen: Die Shintō-Organisation World Mate in Japan,

**Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag
2006, 416 p.
ISBN 978-3-496-02794-2.**

In late December 2008 the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs (*bunkachō*) recorded 182,601 religious corporations (*shūkyō hōjin*) comprising mainly religious edifices that are in a great measure maintained by Buddhist and Shintō traditions. However, the data base also covers multitudinous individual religions including a large number of what the Japanese call *shinshūkyō* (new religions), i.e. religious movements that have emerged since 1800, or *shinshinshūkyō* (new new religions), i.e. religious movements that have been founded in the past few decades. Some of these traditions play a significant role in contemporary Japanese society engaging in the political discourse, in social service activities and/or in the field of education. Movements like the Sōka Gakkai, Risshō Kōseikai or Kōfuku no Kagaku are said to potentially draw upon hundreds of thousands or even millions of followers underlining their strong momentum in modern Japan. Among the more influential and spotlighted new religions we can find a movement which despite a comparatively small number of adherents – totaling around 50,000 – has evolved into a dynamic and well connected player in the domestic religious landscape. The Shintō based religious tradition World Mate (*wārudomeito*) was founded by Fuka-

mi Tōshū (born 1951 by the name of Handa Haruhisa), purportedly a successful businessman, ritual expert and gifted spiritual medium, who is not only the figurehead of this particular religious organization but the mastermind behind a veritable conglomerate.

The study at hand is based on extensive field research by the author conducted between 1995 and 1997, and was approbated as a postdoctoral dissertation (*Habilitation*) at Free University Berlin in 2003. It is the first comprehensive and in-depth investigation of World Mate, a religious tradition that is still hardly known outside of Japan. The author Inken Prohl is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Heidelberg and distinguished specialist of contemporary Japanese religions. In her opus she endeavors to thoroughly inquire into the manifold facets of World Mate thereby employing a mixed methodological approach combining philological and social scientific methods. Prohl chiefly relies on the output of her field research and Japanese source materials also taking into account a vast amount of recent Japanese and, of course, Western scholarship.

The Romanization of Japanese follows the Hepburn system with some modifications in terms of diacritics concerning the rendering of *katakana* (adding a circumflex instead of a macron for indicating long vowels). The Romanization of Chinese follows the Wade-Giles system. The writing style is smooth and with respect to formality the study meets the demands of high quality research. At the end of the book the author provides a short glossary (p. 375-384) which contains a selection of Japanese terms and their corresponding Romanization including a short translation/explanation. At this point, however, I believe a more complete glossary covering all Japanese terms that have been used in the text would have been more expedient. Moreover, at times, particularly when discussing Fukami's teachings, I miss some further references that would have been valuable to follow up some details.

The study consists of 9 chapters, the glossary, a voluminous bibliography (p.

385-404) and a helpful index (p. 405-408). Chapter 1 (p. 11-38) tersely discusses some theoretical key issues and approaches in the study of contemporary Japanese religions, and briefly introduces a new analytic category – “modern religious organizations” (*Moderne Religiöse Organisationen*) – which is supposed to replace labels like “new religious movement” or “new religion” which are considered as misleading and inappropriate when applied to modern religious phenomena in the Japanese context (p. 18, 366). Chapter 2 (p. 39-66) continues with a short methodological overview, while chapter 3 (p. 67-109) primarily elucidates the historical development of World Mate and its precursors. The following chapter (p. 110-180) is an enlightening and focused description of the initially somewhat unsystematic *weltanschauung* of Fukami Tōshū as seen through his many writings. These days – we learn – World Mate ambitiously strives to systematize its teachings (p. 357).

Chapter 5 (p. 181-237) gives an outline of the different religious and ritual specializations and merits, and the daily agenda of a typical *shibu* (local chapter). Chapter 6 (p. 238-285) then discusses a collection of offered rituals and techniques aiming at granting relief or happiness and solving problems (*Glückstechnologien*). Chapter 7 (p. 286-329) continues by giving an instructive account of the large-scale rituals that are regularly organized by World Mate to take place at sacred sites in places such as Hakone or Ise. The following chapter (p. 330-360) succinctly discusses the networking activities, the movement’s careful internationalization and its prospects. Chapter 9, finally, closes with a conclusion (p. 361-374).

The study purposely puts emphasis on the pragmatic side of World Mate. The teachings of the movement are in a constant flux having no considerable formative impact on the adherents’ understanding of life, nature and cosmos, and can barely constitute a clear-cut portrayal of a coherent doctrine. Thus, Prohl focuses on the member’s individual motivations, aspirations and beliefs rather than delineating a kind of uniquely valid or (allegedly) universally accepted

code of teachings handed down by Fukami, which noticeably does not exist (p. 43-46). To some degree critical towards Fukami and World Mate (e.g. p. 172-173, 278, 335), the author provides a highly anticipated multi-perspective disquisition on a Japanese new religious movement or “modern religious organization” – applying the methodological arsenal of areas such as Economics of Religion, Sociology of Religion or Aesthetics of Religion – that deserves to rank among the shiny examples of excellent scholarship in the field of the Study of contemporary Japanese religions. Inken Prohl’s opus is a needed and most welcome contribution to the field and will doubtlessly meet gratitude within scholarly circles.

LUKAS POKORNY

Hong Beom Rhee, Asian Millenarianism: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Taiping and Tonghak Rebellions in a Global Context,

**Youngstown: Cambria Press
2007, xxx + 436 p.
ISBN 978-1-934043-42-4.**

The study of millenarianism has been revived in the past 15 years following tragic events such as the Branch Davidian raid and shootout near Waco in 1993, the sarin nerve gas attack on the Tōkyō subway by Ōmu Shinrikyō in 1995, the mass suicide of 39 members of Heaven’s Gate in 1997, or the mass murder-suicides of members of the *Ordre du Temple solaire* between 1994 and 1997. What all these movements had in common were strong millenarian and in particular apocalyptic beliefs, preparing the grounds and mindset for what was to come later.

Basically, when talking about contemporary millenarian traditions scholars mainly