

plex. Como demonstrates that the cult of Prince Shōtoku, as well as the subsequent cult of his mother, Empress Anahobe, is directly linked to the rebirth of the temple.

Hōryūji Reconsidered is indeed a collection of great disciplinary breadth and depth that reflects the interests of contemporary scholars. Its contribution to the current body of scholarship is that all the essays consider Hōryūji as an organic, dynamic entity retaining traces of the cultures to which it has been witness. The potential “sentience” of a location is supported in David Summers’ epilogue “Hōryūji as Real Space.” In fact, it is Summers’ concept of real space that provides the theoretical framework of the entire compilation. While I am usually wont to suspect a heavy reliance on theory, it is that very thing that crystallizes and clarifies the various disciplines and methodologies contained in *Hōryūji Reconsidered*. As academe continues to expand and fracture under the demands of relevance, it is increasingly difficult to find multi-disciplinary research that coherently and artfully synthesizes theory with practice. I commend Dorothy C. Wong, Eric M. Field and the contributing authors of *Hōryūji Reconsidered* for their efforts.

Shinran: Un réformateur bouddhiste dans le Japon médiéval. By Jérôme Ducor. Gollion, Switzerland: Infolio éditions, 2008. 208 pages. Paperback €19.00.

Terre pure, Zen et autorité: La Dispute de l'ère Jōō et la Réfutation du Mémoire sur des contradictions de la foi par Ryōnyo du Honganji. By Jérôme Ducor. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2007. 171 pages. Paperback € 15.00.

WAMAE MURIUKI

Jérôme Ducor’s *Shinran* is an important addition to the burgeoning literature on Shinran available in the West. More significantly, as an introductory work on Shinran, rather than a more narrowly focused monograph, this book is well placed as an accessible yet rigorous introduction to Pure Land belief in general, and to Shinran’s True Pure Land in particular. This work by one of the most prolific writers and commentators on the Pure Land tradition at this moment joins such works as Jean Eracle’s *Sur le vrai boud-*

dhisme de la Terre Pure and Ueda and Hirota's *Shinran*, as one of just a handful of introductory works on Shinran available in French.

Ducor begins not with a biographical sketch of the life of Shinran but rather a look at the doctrinal foundations of Pure Land belief. In chapter 1, "Foundations of the Doctrine," Ducor sets out to distinguish a "Pure Land" from a heaven or paradise (p. 23). He notes that in the Mahayana tradition, the Pure Land came to be understood as an ideal place into which sentient beings could, through oral recitation and visualization practices, be born at the moment of death and there receive the Buddha's teachings directly (pp. 23–24). At this early juncture in the book, Ducor takes pains to stress four key points: the Pure Land teachings are not a monotheistic deviation from Buddhist orthodoxy, but rather conform strictly to the law of karma; that Amida only offers a practice leading to enlightenment open to even the most incapable but does not transform one's established karma; that the Pure Land is not a paradise, nor are the Pure Land's pleasures of the senses but of the Dharma; and finally that for the Pure Land masters, the Pure Land was both a real place and an expression of ultimate reality (pp. 25–27).

In the "History" section, Ducor briefly sketches out the history of Pure Land teachings and practices in India, China, Korea, Vietnam and Tibet, giving special attention to China, and the contributions of figures like Shantao and T'an-luan who figure largely in Shinran's own understanding. Ducor also situates the reception of Pure Land teachings in Japan with particular attention to their incorporation into Tendai teaching and practice.

With the doctrinal and historical basis laid down, Ducor devotes chapter 2 to an examination of Shinran's life and religious career. Placing it in the context of existing Pure Land practice and belief on Mt. Hiei and the Tendai school, Ducor takes pains to argue that even though Shinran has been traditionally understood as rejecting the Heian-era Buddhist orthodoxy, both he and Hōnen remained at least officially part of the Tendai institution. He bases this assertion on the fact that departures from Buddhist institutions were not particularly rare; in texts of the period, monks who left their official temple positions to focus on their spiritual life were called *inton*, but did not have to renounce their ties to their home institutions (pp. 65–66). Even Shinran's marriage to Eshinni places him within existing categories of religious practitioners—the marriage made him a *shami*; a term used to refer specifically to married priests and monks in the Kamakura era (p. 73).

While these formal ties remained with the Tendai institution on Mt. Hiei, Ducor shows in chapter 3, "The True Pure Land Teachings," how Shinran and Hōnen's thought drew away from orthodoxy. Ducor notes that while

Hōnen's approach to the Pure Land teachings is based on Shan-tao, and Shinran's from T'an-luan, ultimately it is from both these Chinese masters that the importance of the spoken nenbutsu rather than the contemplative or meditative nenbutsu was derived (p. 109). Ducor also sees the main distinction between Shinran and Hōnen (and Hōnen's other disciples) in terms of Shinran's particular dogmatics. For example, Shinran constructs a new Pure Land lineage including Indian, Chinese and Japanese masters, and devises his own "four kinds, two pairs" system of classifying Mahayana teachings, opposing the gradual self-power teachings with the Pure Land teachings that "leap crosswise" into full realization (pp. 129–34). Ducor argues that these differences are founded on a four-pronged hermeneutical approach as found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*; namely the authority of the scriptures, the authority derived from the spirit (rather than the letter) of the scriptures, the explicit authority of the sutras as opposed to that of interpreters, and the authority derived from spiritual practice (p. 137).

In chapter 4, "Shinran's Spiritual Dimension," Ducor argues that Shinran's ethical stance is based upon what can be called a *jinen* (of itself) morality; namely, Shinran does not advocate any particular set of rules or guidelines to be followed but rather views morality as a natural and spontaneous consequence of intimately experiencing true *shinjin* (p. 151). Addressing Shinran's relationship to the Buddhist precepts, Ducor points out that unlike Mosaic law, Buddhist precepts are based on an ideal of self-discipline rather than absolute law, and that for both Shinran and Hōnen, strict adherence to the precepts is not a pre-condition for entering the Pure Land. Nevertheless, even though Shinran took a wife and proclaimed himself to be "neither monk nor layman," he retained a deep respect for the precepts as embodied by his adherence to the regulations regarding priestly garments. Ducor sees this as evidence that Shinran did not simply reject the demands of the Buddhist precepts, but attempted to find a third way between the poles of "neither monk nor layman" and "both monk and layman" that respected the teachings on the decadence of the law in the sutras, and affirmed the value of following the Buddhist precepts *qua* personal vocation (pp. 157–58).

For Ducor, the personal, intimate dimension to Shinran's Pure Land teachings comes out of his deep introspection into human nature, as exemplified by the realization recorded in the Tannishō that Amida's Vow was taken for him alone (p. 160). This intimate experience of self and Amida Buddha is not mysticism, he argues, but the result of a profound spiritual union contiguous with what Shinran and his contemporaries would have considered

quite conventional spirituality, though perfectly realized in an intimate experience through the spontaneous working of Amida's Vow (pp. 165–67). Yet for all his uniqueness of spiritual vision, Shinran was a practically unknown figure in his time and barely mentioned in Japan outside the True Pure Land school (hereafter Shinshū) until the seventeenth century. Indeed this state of affairs reached a peak in the 1920s when the very historical existence of Shinran came under scrutiny. Ducor argues that part of this obscurity was due to the fact that Shinran was not as politically savvy as his contemporaries (p. 173) and not interested in gaining “true disciples” to inherit his teachings (p. 175).

In the section “Missed Opportunities,” Ducor notes that the early Christian missions to Japan were quick to distinguish the Pure Land from the other Buddhist schools, but argues that this knowledge was soon subsumed in the general ignorance of Buddhism prevailing in the West, which was only compounded by the philological bias of Buddhology in the nineteenth century (p. 177). He argues that it was not until Burnouf's analysis of the Sanskrit text of the *Sutra of Infinite Life* published in 1844, and Max Müller's translations of the *Sutra of Infinite Life* and the *Amida Sutra* between 1880 and 1894, that focused attention was paid to Pure Land belief. Yet, Ducor maintains that conditions in France were more receptive to Pure Land Buddhism than in England. As evidence, he points to the sensation caused by the celebration of Shinran's annual memorial service in the Musée Guimet by Koizumi Ryōtai and Yoshitsura Hōgen; the publication in French of *Le bouddhisme japonais* by Fujishima Ryōon in 1889, and the translation of Gyōnen's *Outline of the Eight Buddhist Sects of Japan* in 1892 under the auspices of the Musée Guimet (pp. 181–82). While at the beginning of the twentieth century much of the academic work on Shinshū was being done by Protestant missionaries in Japan, such as Reischauer, Haas and Lloyd, it was figures like Tagore and Rāmakrishna who were the subjects of discussion in the inter-war period, leaving Shinshū studies to fall by the wayside (p. 183). Indeed, one could argue as Amstutz¹ has that to a certain extent it is only now beginning to receive the academic attention it so richly deserves.

With a view to correcting this relative neglect, Ducor closes the book with a brief look at some of the most common (mis)understandings of Shinran's thought in the West. He particularly takes issue with monistic views of the Pure Land, noting that the person of the religious practitioner and

¹ See Galen Amstutz's “Missing Hongan-ji in Japanese Studies,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 23, nos. 1/2, 1996, pp. 155–78.

that of Amida Buddha preserve their proper identities in the saving dynamic of *shinjin* (p. 189). Against comparisons with Luther, Ducor argues that while “grace” has no precisely corresponding Buddhist term, there are some points of similarity with the notion of the transfer of merits (p. 189). Finally, Shinran’s teachings are characterized by a person to person intimate relationship between the individual and Amida as the personification of ultimate reality; a relationship that does not subordinate the individual to the absolute, but which respects their “otherness” in a non-substantial fashion (pp. 190–91).

The book ends with an appendix detailing the various Buddhist schools in Japan, a brief bibliography of Shinran’s works, and a selected bibliography of secondary works in French. Since this work is intended as an introduction to Shinran and his legacy, the book could have profitably included a discussion of modern Shinshū thinkers and their engagement with Shinran; even a brief reference to figures like Kiyozawa Manshi, Soga Ryōjin or Kaneko Daiei would have been welcomed.

Notwithstanding this, Ducor’s *Shinran* strikes a clever balance between the need for detail and intellectual rigor, and concessions to accessibility to the general reader. It will surely be of great use in introductory classrooms and can certainly stand alone as a critical resource for the study of Shinran and his teachings.

If Ducor’s *Shinran* showcased his ability to introduce Shinran to a general audience, *Terre pure, Zen et autorité: La Dispute de l’ère Jōō et la Réfutation du Mémoire sur des contradictions de la foi par Ryōnyo du Honganji* demonstrates Ducor’s strengths in scholarly analysis. The Jōō-era dispute to which the title refers, involved a series of accusations leveled against Saigin, then head (*nōke*) of Nishi Honganji’s fledgling college dedicated to doctrinal studies, by Gekkan, head priest of Enjuji, in 1653. Chapter 1, “Scholarly Study at Honganji” details the context leading up to the construction of the college in 1639 at the behest of the abbot Ryōnyo, to systematize and formalize the study of Shinshū foundational texts. Study of these texts had previously only been made possible by permission of the abbot, and taught in a highly ritualized and compressed format. Ducor notes that when Rennyō undertook the ritual of transmission (*denju*) in 1430, he was taught all six volumes of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in just six days. As he was just sixteen at the time, Ducor is right to wonder whether this was an experience fit for an adolescent (p. 14). He goes on to argue in chapter 2, “The College,” that the primary purpose of establishing the college was to ensure

the lines of doctrinal transmission while removing the constraints of ritual formalism and opening up instruction to all Shinshū priests without distinction of rank (pp. 16, 21).

In chapter 3, “The Jōō-era Dispute,” Ducor lays out in careful detail the timeline of the dispute, reproducing the doctrinal arguments and counter-arguments brought by all the parties involved. In brief, Ducor shows that the accusations brought by Gekkan touched upon the heart of the new college’s mission; namely ensuring the continued rigor and accurate exegesis of Shinshū texts. He notes that Gekkan’s claims consisted of three basic charges: that Saigin used Zen ideas and doctrines in his teachings; that Saigin consorted with heretics and taught his students “pernicious doctrines” and “bizarre rites” that they then spread to the provinces; and that he mocked Shinshū faith and the transmissions of the seven Shin patriarchs and neglected his priestly duties (pp. 29–30). Saigin responded quickly to Gekkan’s original charges, but Gekkan was dissatisfied with his reply and wrote a rebuttal which included an additional thirty-three points of contention in the voluminous *Demonstration of Proofs in Refutation of Heresy*. Gekkan’s persistence in pursuing his line of attack against Saigin eventually precipitated the intervention of Ryōnyo who, without engaging in the subtler points of doctrine involved in the original charges, simply stated that “concerning the issue of the faith of both parties, we find there are no divergences” (cited in Ducor, p. 37). Not content to let the matter rest, Gekkan composed yet another, longer series of grievances, this time addressed directly to Ryōnyo. Over the next few months, he continued to forcefully press his case with the Nishi Honganji establishment, eventually leading it to attempt to arrange his banishment in November of 1653. Finding refuge first at Saikōji, and then with his father-in-law, Hon’ami Kōon, he wound up defecting to Higashi Honganji, the principal rival of Nishi Honganji. All the while, Gekkan’s case had been referred to the civil authorities in the person of Itakura Shigemune, the Shogun’s governor in Kyoto (p. 41).

The case took an unexpected twist when Junshū, the abbot of Kōshōji and father of Gekkan’s adoptive son, chose to secede Kōshōji and its entire complex of associated temples from Nishi Honganji’s control, in a bid to assert its status as *waki-monzeiki* that had been granted them by Emperor Ōgimachi in 1569. This meant that the dispute now involved not just a struggle over doctrinal orthodoxy, but over institutional power; a struggle which drew in members of high-ranking families in Kyoto like the Matsudaira and the

Kujō, and inevitably the full attention of the authorities in Edo (pp. 44–46). Like Gekkan, Junshū addressed a formal document entitled *Anjin sōi no oboegaki* 安心相違之覺書 (A Memorandum on the Contradictions in Faith) sharply critiquing Ryōnyo's initial intervention in the dispute. In so doing, Ducor argues that Junshū was positioning himself as the guarantor of the orthodoxy of the Shinshū doctrine, and thereby directly attacking the Nishi Honganji abbot's prerogative (p. 46). Forced to respond, Honganji issued the *Ha anjin sōi no oboegaki* 破安心相違之覺書 (Refutation of "A Memorandum on the Contradictions in Faith") in September of 1654, signed personally by Ryōnyo. Translated in full by Ducor in chapter 4, the *Ha anjin sōi no oboegaki* marks the first time that a formal doctrinal document had been signed by a sitting abbot since Rennyō (p. 48). Meanwhile, the civil case was being passed from one official to another until July of 1655, when Ii Naotaka, minister to Shogun Ietsuna, was placed in charge of the case. Taking swift action amidst the coming and going of official messengers from both parties, he proposed a series of radical solutions beginning with the razing of the newly-built college (pp. 50–51). Ducor argues that the shogunate took this dispute as an opportunity to reassert its authority over all institutions, whether educational or religious. Indeed, Ii's judgment involved the destruction of the college, the banishment of both Gekkan and Junshū, and the closing of Kōshōji and all its affiliated temples, which were then passed to the direct control of Governor Itakura (p. 53). In one swift decision, Ii succeeded in reasserting Ryōnyo's authority, but the demonstration of shogunal power represented in the razing of the college would no doubt have made clear just who wielded ultimate authority (p. 52).

In Ducor's analysis in the final chapter, "Commentary," the Jōō-era dispute was in part precipitated by the fact that the establishment of a college under the direction of a *nōke* reasserted Honganji's claim to doctrinal orthodoxy (and thus control) over and above Kōshōji and all other affiliated temples. At the same time, Ryōnyo's *Refutation* advanced the argument that while doctrinal study was not necessary for birth in the Pure Land, it was critical for any organization charged with passing on teachings on the Pure Land (p. 85). Thus the dispute occurred against the backdrop of Nishi Honganji's assertion of control in matters spiritual and institutional, perhaps going some way to explaining why Gekkan's grievances were so entrenched, as well as the harshness of the shogunate's response. Further, Ducor argues, the charges of heresy and deviation leveled against Saigin were really aimed at his "global approach to doctrine which refused to isolate Jōdo Shinshū

from other Buddhist traditions” (pp. 102–3). Thus Gekkan’s charge that Saigin was taking a “mind-only” position with regards to the Pure Land could be read as part of a broader struggle over the value of comparative approaches to Shinshū doctrinal studies in general.

In the end, Ducor argues that while Gekkan’s real motivations remain obscure, “the vehemence of his attacks may also be explained by a real problem engendered by Zen interpretations of the Pure Land that were developing at the time,” and does concede that Saigin’s own doctrinal position may not have been purely orthodox (p. 114). Institutionally, Honganji and its abbots emerged from this dispute secure in their doctrinal and administrative authority over their own network of temples, benefitting from the shogunate’s mandate on familial temple registration (*terauke*) and thereby contributing to the government’s ideological control over Japan over the next two hundred years (p. 115).

Rounded out by a comprehensive bibliography and detailed glossary, Ducor’s *Terre pure* is a solid contribution to the field of Pure Land studies and a fascinating look into the early history of Shinshū doctrinal studies.

Neglected Themes & Hidden Variations. Edited by Victor Sōgen Hori and Melissa Anne-Marie Curley. *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* 2. Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2008. 261 pages. Paperback ¥ 1,000.

MELANIE COUGHLIN

“Frontier,” or “*saizensen*” in Japanese, connotes novelty, fringe, and contention. As the second in the *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* series, this work’s particular focus on “neglected themes and hidden variations” brings the reader out to the edges of the field conventionally known as the Kyoto School. Contrary to what one might expect, this liminality effectively offers a new place for centers of concern driving the broader fields of philosophy and religion today, such as the methodologies of systematic ontology vs. comparative literature, the ethics of autonomous rule-following vs. those of particularistic concern, scientific explanation vs. phenomenological description, liberalism vs. totalitarianism, and so on. Hence, the frontiers at stake here, so artfully traced by the papers in this book, are not limited to