

KAMENS, EDWARD. *The Three Jewels: A Study and Translation of Minamoto Tamenori's Sanbōe*. Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies, Number 2. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1988. xii+446 pages. Figure, list of terms, selected bibliography, index. Cloth US\$29.95; ISBN 0-939512-34-3.

Near the end of the tenth century, a pious aristocrat presented a book of illustrated Buddhist tales to a princess at Japan's imperial court. The aristocrat, Minamoto Tamenori, had chosen the tales from a variety of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese sources, and had added his own descriptions of ceremonies performed at Japanese temples. It is this text (minus, sadly, the illustrations) that Kamens has translated for us.

A reading of *Sanbōe* should remind us that Heian Buddhism ought not to be dismissed, as it often is, as a package of complex ceremonials and abstruse doctrines that gave scant spiritual guidance to the believer. In fact, Tamenori's purpose was to provide instruction in Buddhism to the princess, Sonshi, a frail young woman who had taken Buddhist orders. Many of the episodes were chosen to illustrate virtues that Sonshi might hope to exercise—virtues such as kindness, forbearance, and diligent piety. As in similar collections, emphasis is placed on sincere devotion rather than on strict adherence to precepts. Especially important is patronage of the Buddhist clergy, even those who are lax or corrupt. It appears that in this regard, Tamenori is not addressing Sonshi the nun, but rather Sonshi the aristocrat, and through her all aristocratic patrons of Buddhism, who—through giving alms to monks, nuns, and temples—might find their best chance of salvation.

The book is divided into three volumes, each named after one of Buddhism's "three treasures," the Buddha, the teachings, and the clergy. The episodes in the first volume can be traced back to Indian sources, the *jātaka* tales that relate events in the past lives of the Buddha Shakyamuni. In the second volume, Tamenori relied on the ninth-century Japanese collection *Nihon ryōiki* for tales of Japanese Buddhist saints. The protagonists of these episodes range from the famous Prince Shōtoku, a prime exemplar of both scholarship and virtuous action, to lay believers who were models of devotion. The third volume not only describes Buddhist ceremonies, but also relates their histories and often the histories of the Japanese temples at which they were performed. Of particular interest is the account of the Kangakue (Episode 3: 14), an association of lay Buddhists to which Tamenori probably belonged. As Kamens points out, this is the only contemporary account of this influential society, a pioneer in lay devotion to the Buddha Amida.

Especially informative are the introductory chapters, which concern the lives of Sonshi and of Tamenori, and the sources, composition and contents of *Sanbōe*. Throughout the introduction Kamens keeps the book's intended reader clearly in mind, and periodically speculates on the significance the text might have had for her. The careful annotation of each episode not only indicates the depth of Kamens's scholarly research, but also helps bring the reader into Sonshi's world, one familiar with the scriptures, didactic tales, and classical literary sources to which the text refers. Since the illustrations have been lost, we can only imagine the way in which they must have enhanced the text, but Kamens's lively introduction helps us to do so. Kamens's lucid colloquial style makes both the introduction and the body of the work easy to follow.

A reader, however, might be put off by the sheer number of footnotes, which tend to be distracting. One possible option is to include definitions of Buddhist terms and biographical information in the glossary, to which a reader might refer if

he/she wishes. The notes then might be limited to bibliographical references.

Such minor quibbles aside, this is a valuable book for anyone interested in Buddhism or in pre-modern Japanese history. It is a welcome addition to the growing collection of Buddhist tales and homilies in English translation.

Janet R. GOODWIN
University of Southern California
Los Angeles

KATSU KOKICHI. *Musui's Story: The Autobiography of a Tokugawa Samurai*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Teruko Craig. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1988. xxi+178 pages. Color plates, illustrations, bibliography. Cloth US\$19.95; ISBN 0-8165-1035-0.

Unusual among samurai books, this autobiography presents an interesting and informative contrast. The samurai ("warriors"), who constituted the regime of the military aristocracy of feudal Japan which lasted until 1868, usually appear to have been dignified (if somewhat inscrutable), savage figures epitomizing the Japanese spirit in recent times, when Japan forced her way into modernity. The way of the samurai (*bushidō* 武士道) has been exalted as a spirituality the Japanese could be proud of vis-à-vis the Western spirit in, for example, *Bushido, the Soul of Japan* written by an American-educated intellectual NITOBE Inazō (1862-1933). This conception of how the samurai should be is, to a certain extent, corroborated by the highly intellectual and sincere samurai-minister ARAI Hakuseki (1657-1725) and his father as depicted in the former's autobiography (1979). Similarly, the heroic, ever-ready-to-die ethos of the samurai was advocated in the textbook for samurai, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai* (1979), attributed to YAMAMOTO Tsunetomo (1659-1719). By contrast, the present work by KATSU Kokichi (1802-1850) is quite different, depicting the hard lot a large number of samurai had to suffer in reality.

Toward the end of the Tokugawa period, a large percentage of samurai were jobless (already in 1705, almost a quarter of the samurai were in this category) and destitute. There were many more of them than governmental offices and fiefs to provide for them. Life was particularly hard for lower-ranking samurai as the townsfolk's standard of living edged up; and merchants, who were ranked fourth after samurai, peasants, and craftsmen in the hierarchical scheme of the regime, could wield considerably more clout than the low-ranking samurai. Although social classes were maintained by heredity, if one had great wealth one could buy samurai status by becoming an adopted heir of a samurai family and with the help of money and ingenuity, could climb up the ladder.

Katsu Kokichi was born the third son of the Otani family (which had originally purchased samurai status) in downtown Edo (today's Tokyo), and was given away at the age of six into a samurai family of good lineage, named Katsu, to succeed to its family name. The Katsu household was impoverished, and until Kokichi was married at seventeen and started his own household, the Otani family seems to have supported him financially and otherwise. Still, this meant a life of financial hardship and in the humiliating status of the unemployed, ill-matching the samurai pride in being the élite of society (samurai were six percent of the total population).

The constant frustration of not having any chance to exercise his own capability