Moerman, D. Max. *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 235. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006. xviii + 297 pages. Maps, illustrations, references, character list, index. Cloth US$42.50; ISBN 0-674-01395-6. (Distributed by Harvard University Press)

In *Localizing Paradise*, Max Moerman examines the cultural and religious history of the three-site Kumano shrine complex on the Kii peninsula in central Japan. As Moerman explains in his introduction (3), his work is inspired by "the practical specificity of Allan Grapard's call to 'study Japanese religious phenomena *in situ*, starting from the basic territorial unit and community in which they developed rather than from the more traditional focus on sects or major thinkers.'" In accord with this methodological approach, Moerman explores the significance of the Kumano cultic center in the ancient and medieval imagination, focusing in particular on issues of pilgrimage, geography, religious suicide, politics, patronage, and the status of women at Kumano (among other topics) as a means of both examining Kumano and broaching these and related subjects in the larger social and religious history of premodern Japan. Moerman's book is at once intelligent and well written—a pleasure to read—and its theoretical sophistication is worthy of praise. In addition, it is beautifully produced with a plethora of photos, diagrams, and eight pages of color images.

In organizing his study, Moerman relies heavily upon the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *Nachi sankei mandara* 那智参詣曼荼羅 (*Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala*, copies of which were used in preaching and fund-raising in the late medieval and early Edo periods) as "a structural and explanatory device" (240) for introducing and sometimes developing the major themes of his five central chapters. In chapter four, for example, he refers readers to painted scenes of two abdicated emperors in the course of discussing the history, motives, and implications of imperial pilgrimage to Kumano; in chapter five, he prefaces his discussion of women at Kumano (and women in medieval Japanese religious culture in general) with descriptions of images of Myōshinji 妙心寺, "the institutional headquarters for the itinerant Kumano *bikuni*" (181), and the Heian woman poet Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部. The *Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala* has been analyzed before, most notably, in English, by Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis in *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), but Moerman's sustained use of the artwork to discuss the history of Kumano (rather than the contents or significance of the Mandala itself) is both novel and engaging. In addition to the *Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala*, Moerman draws upon an impressively diverse range of painted and primary textual sources, including a variety of canonical and lesser-known written works from the Japanese Buddhist, historical, and literary traditions.

Despite its many virtues, *Localizing Paradise* is not without flaws. Several of the black-and-white details from the *Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala*, on page 124, for example, are badly blurred as a result of over-enlargement. It is unfortunate that Moerman was unable to obtain higher resolution photos, considering their importance to his work as a whole. More seriously, Moerman has a tendency to omit valuable information—particularly dates, or approximate dates—which sometimes lends his study a disconcertingly ahistorical tone. On page five, for example, he explains that the term *Kumano sanzan* "first appeared in the eleventh century," but he fails to identify the eleventh-century source. Although one might argue that this omission suits the general reader, that same general reader is likely to be stymied by Moerman's omission of a date (or even a century) of composition for *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 (8, footnote 7), *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (11), and *Genpei seisuiki* 源平盛衰記 and *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 (30). In chapter three (130), Moerman writes with a similar imprecision when he describes the *setsuwa* 説話 anthology *Sangoku denki* 三国伝記, compiled by Gentō 玄棟 in the first half of the fifteenth century, as simply "one medieval text," and again later in the same paragraph when he refers to the encyclopedia *Jinten ainōshō* 塵添壒嚢鈔 (which he misidentifies in footnote 86 as "*Jite ainōshō*"), compiled in twenty volumes in 1532, as "another text" (historical period unstated).

Moerman's scansion of *waka* 和歌 (Japanese poetry) in the "Female Trouble" subsection of chapter five is also problematic. With some exceptions, *waka* tend to comprise thirty-one syllables in two parts (*ku* 句), the first of which (the *kami no ku* 上の句) comprises three parts of 5, 7, and 5 syllables, and the second of which (the *shimo no ku* 下の句) comprises two parts of 7 and 7 syllables. For this reason, *waka* are usually romanized in English-language sources in either five lines of 5/7/5/7/7 syllables, or two lines of 5/7/5 and 7/7 syllables. Unfortunately, Moerman seems to be unaware of this convention. His haphazard scansion of poems (a total of seven verses in five pages) is especially annoying when it causes him to misrepresent published translations by Edwin Cranston and Edward Kamens (197, 199). In the case of the former, Moerman recasts Cranston's five lines of 5/7/5/7/7 syllables into four lines of 11/6/11/3 syllables (and, without explanation, changes a colon in Cranston's translation to a comma); in the case of the latter, Moerman recasts Kamens's two lines of 6/7/5 and 7/7 syllables into four lines of 10/8/10/4 syllables. Moerman's lapse may be purely technical, but the effect is jarring to anyone with a serious interest in Japanese poetry.

A more fundamental shortcoming of Moerman's book is its excessively narrow focus. Although Moerman does an excellent job of representing Kumano in the breadth and depth of its own particular history, he fails to adequately contextualize it within the larger world of Heian and medieval Japanese cultic centers and pilgrimage sites. To some extent, this is a natural result of his methodological approach. Nevertheless, Moerman could have done a better job of situating Kumano within its broader institutional and religious context. On page 149, for example, Moerman refers to "pilgrimages to Kumano and to other medieval sites as well," but he neglects to identify, much less comment upon, those "other medieval sites." Again, on page 184, Moerman writes that "[o]ther pilgrimage sites popular among noblewomen included Ishiyamadera in Ōmi province, Hatsusedera (or Hasedera) in Yamato, Shitennōji in Settsu, and Kiyomizudera in Yamashiro," but he chooses not to discuss these temples or their pilgrimage practices in any depth. The result, for the reader, is a loss of comparative perspective. Upon reaching the end of the book, I was left wondering about the place and significance of Kumano within the larger religious history of premodern Japan. To what extent is Kumano unique? And to what extent is it not?

Despite these relatively minor complaints, *Localizing Paradise* is a wonderful book. It is smart, sophisticated, and treats a variety of complicated subjects with insight and

aplomb. It is clearly a valuable addition to the growing corpus of scholarly works on Heian and medieval Japan, and should be read by everyone with a theoretical interest in the problems of pilgrimage, patronage, and religious devotion in a premodern historical context.

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