

ranking in this art: it embodies a democratic atmosphere. One may say it is a real modern art of our time, still alive after many centuries. Despite its long heritage, however, “the single most essential task of the Way of Tea in the future will be to find approaches that are ever fresh, but still firmly rooted in tradition.” These last words of this book of Sen Sōshitsu should penetrate the heart of all Western lovers of *chanoyu*.

Because this book is very important for introducing Japanese artistic thought to the West, a few critical remarks are in order. For the readers who are not well acquainted with Japanese texts the title of quoted texts should be translated. The annotations should also explain Japanese words sufficiently because most Western readers are not familiar with them. Also, it would be very helpful to add kanji for the Japanese words in the next edition of this book.

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SMYERS, KAREN A. *The Fox and the Jewel: Shared and Private Meanings in Contemporary Japanese Inari Worship*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998. ix + 271 pages. Illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. Paper US\$27.95; ISBN 0-8248-2102-5. Cloth US\$49.00; ISBN 0-8248-2058-4.

The worship of Inari-san (the “fox” deity) is an excellent example for showing how the two main religions of Japan, Shintoism and Buddhism, interrelate in modern times. Consequently, Smyers divided her time during fieldwork between a Shinto shrine (Fushimi Inari in Kyoto) and a Buddhist temple (Toyokawa Inari in Aichi Prefecture). She also took into account regional differences between eastern and western Japan by including other Inari worship centers in the prefectures of Miyagi, Ibaraki, Aomori, Osaka, Okayama, Shimane, Saga, and Kumamoto. She also looked at differences between urban worship centers such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka by comparing these sites with others in rural areas.

Although this book is about contemporary worship practices, Smyers takes the trouble to do extensive research on the history of the shrines and temples. She also tells us much about the history of Inari as a folk belief and even briefly cites comparative material from Korea and China to show that a distinctive Japanese tradition developed with very little influence from the continent.

This study is exceptional in that it looks at both priestly and shamanic traditions, including the more eclectic shamanic traditions, and examines the official doctrines and folk religion within Shintoism as well as Buddhism. What is more, all the “devotees” and “practitioners” (terms she prefers to the term “believer”) are quoted in their own words, thus providing the different voices and opinions that make up a polysemic symphony in the Bakhtinian sense. In her own words, “this study tries to emulate a Bakhtinian ‘novel’.... [T]he multiple voices on Inari, which exist in a polysemic but not truly polyphonic condition in Japan” (11). One of these voices—a sort of meta-voice—is that of her own experience in doing fieldwork with the various groups who themselves know of and mostly tolerate each other without seeking true dialogue. In fact, there were voices pointing out “mistakes” in the beliefs and practices of other groups and individuals. Efforts are made—at least at the Shintoist Fushimi Inari—to control to some extent the practices of affiliated groups (*kō*) who are sometimes led by shamanic women. In the same way, the priests of Fushimi did not seem to be too happy that Smyers devoted much of her time to the *kō* or that she decided to move to Aichi in order to study the Buddhist side of Inari.

The Shinto line of Fushimi Inari is traced back to the ninth century and has many branch shrines all over Japan—even the Buddhist line of Toyokawa seems to be connected to that line in the end. However, Smyers's work does not stop here; she carries her research on to the roots of Dakini-ten in Hinduism and early Buddhism in India in order to find out just why this deity is linked to the fox.

She applies a similar cultural-historical approach in her quest for the meanings of the jewel in Buddhist, Shinto, and folk traditions. All the major traditions merge in the symbols of the fox and the jewel but leave a vast array of possible interpretations. These different interpretations are used to distinguish the Buddhist monk from the Shinto priest and both from the lay follower or the shaman leader in general, and also to distinguish on the individual level priests, monks, lay followers, and shaman leaders. Anyone may hold his or her own personal view of the deity, which may not conform with the official doctrine of the shrine or temple where that person practices his or her belief. And it definitely is not voiced publicly to avoid disturbing the Japanese ideal of group harmony. However, Smyers was able to elucidate some of these personal opinions on Inari-san in person-to-person interviews.

This leads her to the central question of her study: Why does such a wide variety of beliefs and practices not lead to serious schisms or into a vast amount of separate groups? Why can those with different understandings of Inari still integrate themselves into the one big group of worshippers of Inari-san? Her answers indicate that this is a general problem for scholars of Japanese culture as a whole. So far, when focussing on one group of Japanese society, the centripetal mechanisms—those that keep the group together—have been emphasized. However, any group—including those of Japanese society—is made up of individuals, and individuality is a centrifugal power potentially destroying group cohesion. So far, scholars believed, the Japanese lacked individuality and therefore group cohesion was not endangered. In this study, Smyers shows clearly that the Japanese are just as much individuals as members of Western societies. What distinguishes them from Western individuals is the way they voice their individual opinions, or rather keep silent about them. This is one of the functions of the dichotomy *honno* and *tatemae* (*honno* being the term for individual opinions, and *tatemae* denoting the shared opinions of a given group). Smyers also discovered another usage of this pair of terms as they come to denote different levels of truth: *tatemae* means superficial truth that can be shared with outsiders, while *honno* indicates a deep truth that can only be shared with insiders. Therefore the decision of an informant to start talking *honno* to her—a foreign researcher and an outsider—is a great achievement for any serious scholar of Japanese culture.

The Fox and the Jewel is not only a study of Japanese religion but of Japanese society in general, doing away with the simple prejudice that the Japanese are less individualistic and more group oriented than other people. This book also shows how interdisciplinary work by anthropologists can give a more complete picture of a society than the more highly specialized studies of some Japanologists limiting their view, for example, to literature, sociology, or a single religious tradition of Japan.

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CHINA

BØRDAHL, VIBEKE, Editor. *The Eternal Storyteller: Oral Literature in Modern China*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Studies in Asian Topics, vol. 24. Richmond: Curzon, 1998. xiv + 368 pages. Illustrations, bibliography,