

THORNHILL, ARTHUR H., III. *Six Circles, One Dewdrop: The Religio-Aesthetic World of Komparu Zenchiku*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. xv + 232 pages. Figures, appendix, glossary, bibliography, index. Hardcover US\$39.95; ISBN 0-691-07352-X. (Foreign price £30.00)

This study offers a deep and thorough encounter with the spiritual world of Noh as it was inherited by Komparu Zenchiku 金春禅竹 (1405-1468) from his father-in-law Zeami Motokiyo 世阿弥元清 (1363-1443). Confucian thought, Shinto cosmology, and Buddhist philosophy were all influential in Zenchiku's own approach to Noh as presented in the system of treatises *Rokurin ichiro* 六輪一露 [Six circles, one dewdrop]. A.K. Thornhill's book offers translations and studies of two extant treatises in this system: "Rokurin ichiro no ki" 六輪一露之記 [A record of *Six circles, one dewdrop*] and "Rokurin ichiro no ki chū" 六輪一露之記注 [Commentary on *Six circles, one dewdrop*], written in 1455-56. The first contains a pair of commentaries on an earlier version of Zenchiku's *Rokurin ichiro* by two famous contemporaries of Zenchiku, the Kegon abbot Shigyoku 志玉 (1383-1463) and the Confucian court official Ichijō Kaneyoshi 一条兼良 (or Kanera, 1402-1481), interspersed with Zenchiku's own comments. The second treatise presents Zenchiku's own descriptions of the six circles in terms of the art of performance and Shinto cosmology, while freely drawing from the Buddhist and Neo-Confucian thought of Shigyoku and Kaneyoshi.

After giving full translations of the treatises with extensive and informative footnotes, Thornhill presents in chapter 3 a commentary on the six circles, delineating them "as a dynamic repository of performance wisdom." The first circle in the system is the Circle of Longevity (*jurin* 寿輪), presented visually as an empty circle, abstracted from the original drawing from Zenchiku's brush.

This circle, according to Zenchiku's own words in the "Rokurin ichiro no ki," "is the fundamental source of the *yūgen* 幽玄 of song and dance. It is the vessel in which deep feelings arise upon viewing the performer's style and listening to his singing. Due to its round, perfect nature and eternal life span, it is called the Circle of Longevity" (25). As this remark indicates, Zenchiku's comments on performance are half-allegorical and half-psychological. The image of the circle in all of its six variations is given an aesthetic, religious, or religio-aesthetic significance, and more or less convincingly linked to the performer's education, skill, or (as here) effect upon the audience. Zenchiku's comments are grounded in an older treatise by Zeami (one seen as ideal by Zenchiku, who reportedly based "ninety percent" of his own words on them).

Zenchiku also depends extensively on Zeami for his interpretation of the second circle, the Circle of Height (*shurin* 堅輪), which concerns vocal technique. This circle is drawn with a vertical line cutting it from top to bottom. As Zeami comments in his *Fūgyoku shū* 風曲集, "The flow of the singing is from vertical to horizontal as one starts to sing, and again to vertical as one finishes. Breadth should be [thought of as] the handling of outgoing breath, height as the coloring of entering breath" (56).

The third circle, the Circle of Abiding (*jūrin* 住輪), is drawn with a short vertical line arising from the bottom. Zenchiku writes, "The short line's position is the peaceful place where all roles take shape and vital performance is produced" (27). Thornhill finds the source of the word *jūrin*, an explicitly Buddhist term, in Zeami's writings. The fourth circle, the Circle of Forms (*zōrin* 像輪), is presented as the fundamental art of playing different roles, using Zeami's "three roles" (warrior, woman, and old man) and his concept of *monomane* 物真似 (imitation). The drawing of the fourth circle, from Zenchiku's own brush, is filled with realistic figures of the moon and the sun, of woods and mountains, of animals, fields, and a man, representing the phenomena of worldly existence.

Harin 破輪, the Circle of Breaking, is represented by a highly abstract diagram of eight radiants originating at the center of the circle and breaking through the circumference for a

short stretch, thus indicating “rough, unrefined movements” (59).

The Circle of Emptiness, *kūrin* 空輪, represents the return to the beginning, and is thus drawn as another empty circle. Zenchiku’s advice for the actor is that “one performs without style or ornamentation, and yet this rank gives off fragrance and light” (61). He later comments about returning to a simple style after attaining skill and fame as a great artist: “It is that which causes a single flower to remain on an old tree. As all things wither and die, they faintly seem young; a single song, a single dance return to the stage in which they first came to bud” (63). Here again he relies on Zeami, whose flower image of the *Fūshi kaden* 風姿花伝 he is using.

The final symbol, the One Dewdrop, *ichiro* 一露, involves no particular aspect of performance. Thornhill gives his interpretation of its symbolic meaning in later chapters, particularly when referring to Shigyoku’s Buddhist commentary in the “Rokurin ichiro no ki.”

Thus far the book, with its translations of the texts and explanations of the *rokurin ichiro* system, presents pretty much what a reader might have expected. However, what follows in the three final chapters — “Shigyoku’s Commentary: The Buddhist Response,” “Kaneyoshi’s Commentary: The Confucian Response,” and “Zenchiku and Medieval Shinto” — is a breathtaking philological and philosophical exploration of the realm of medieval thinking in the time of Zenchiku. Limitations of space prevent me from citing specific examples, but I found myself wondering again and again which was to be more admired: Thornhill’s outstanding ability to find ever-deeper associations in the words of the texts (so that they are suddenly seen in a different connection and a broader meaning), or Zenchiku’s skill in bringing together from out of his heritage so many allusions and so many voices of wisdom. Thornhill makes it clear that Zenchiku was leading his contemporary readers — who were still armed with the right keys of knowledge — to realms far beyond what might be suggested by his simple-appearing symbols and poetically appealing words. Diving with Thornhill into the vastness of medieval philosophy, religion, aesthetics, and poetry means discovering an immense wealth of multifaceted knowledge. With its fine glossary, bibliography, and index, this work will certainly serve as a veritable encyclopedia for Western scholars and students.

I do, however, have a few reservations. For example, chapter 3, with the author’s commentaries on the original Zenchiku text, appears relatively short and aphoristic with respect to Zenchiku’s performance and acting theory, especially when compared with the Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto “archeology” that follows. Although Thornhill states that “this study is solely concerned with the *rokurin ichiro* system as a cultural monument of the fifteenth century,” its author was a famous Noh playwright, actor, and theorist whose thought is as important as philology and the philosophy of terms. More detail would have been of great interest to students of drama, theater, dramaturgy, and the history of acting.

There exists a small volume entitled *Zenchiku’s Aesthetics of the Nō Theatre*, by Benito ORTOLANI (1976). It provides very useful and (at the time of its publication) rare information on Zenchiku’s plays and the *rokurin ichiro* system. One misses it in the otherwise comprehensive bibliography of Thornhill’s book. Ortolani, like Thornhill, cites Jin’ichi Konishi, in one place saying, “Konishi warns about the danger of indulging too much in difficult Buddhist terminology and metaphysical considerations, without proceeding to the core of Zenchiku’s theory as related to the phenomenon of Nō” (1976, 10). Extreme views should be avoided, in other words, through the balanced practice of the “Middle Way.” Ortolani modestly calls his few pages on the *Rokurin ichiro* a “brief and introductory exposition,” but with its translations by Asaji Nobori and its reproductions of Zenchiku’s original drawings (which I personally much prefer to computer graphics!) his book preserves the essential “drop of dew” of Zenchiku’s experience and wisdom, and deserves a place beside Thornhill’s new “archeological” monument on the Noh theater.

REFERENCE CITED

ORTOLANI, Benito

1976 *Zenchiku's aesthetics of the Nō theatre*. New York: Riverdale Center for Religious Research.Günter ZOBEL.
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TYLER, SUSAN C. *The Cult of Kasuga Seen through Its Art*. Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies 8. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1992. xv + 215 pages. Maps, plates, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$39.95; ISBN 0-939512-47-5.

The study of the indigenous Japanese religious tradition known as "Shinto" did not flourish until quite recently, despite the importance of Shinto in Japanese nativism and nationalism. The current academic interest in the topic is reflected in the spate of new books that has appeared in the past few years on an important Shinto-Buddhist shrine complex: Kasuga Shrine and Hōfuku-ji Temple in the ancient capital city of Nara. TYLER 1990 was followed by GRAPARD 1992, and these are now joined by Susan Tyler's *The Cult of Kasuga Seen through Its Art*. Although some may complain that the overlap is unfortunate in such an underdeveloped field, the situation also suggests the richness of Shinto-related subjects awaiting future study.

Susan Tyler's distinctive contribution to Kasuga research is her focus on art as a means of studying what she calls the "cult" of Kasuga (12). She thus joins the growing number of scholars — including HUNTINGTON (1990), SCHOPEN (1991), and WU (1989) — who are using art-historical (and archeological) materials to balance the heretofore exclusive focus on textual sources in the study of Asian religion. Tyler's work also takes its place with that of such scholars as GRAPARD (1992), McMULLIN (1987), and THORNHILL (1993) in a trend that questions reductionistic distinctions between the Buddhist, Shinto, Taoist, and Confucian religious traditions.

Tyler's study is organized thematically into two clusters of chapters, supplemented by an introductory overview and an epilogue. The overview surveys for the nonspecialist the range of cultural sources for understanding Kasuga, including poetry, narratives, and the early religious paintings known as Kasuga *mandara*, a distinctive Japanese variation on the cosmic diagrams known as mandala. Tyler groups in chapters 2 to 5 a survey of four types of paintings of the Kasuga Shrine complex: *miya mandara* depicting the shrine in its landscape setting; *Kashima dachi mandara* showing deities journeying from the region of Kashima to the shrine; *shika mandara* portraying the deer associated with the shrine; and *honji suijaku mandara* representing Shinto deities and their Buddhist counterparts.

Following a chapter on the important temple Kōfuku-ji, with which Kasuga has long been associated, Tyler moves into her second group of chapters focusing on the paradise themes and deities found in Kasuga paintings. These chapters cover a wide variety of topics, but basically there is a chapter each on Kasuga as a Buddhist paradise; the Buddhist paradise or heaven associated with Kannon (C. Kuan-yin) and Gedatsu Shōnin (1155–1212); the paradise associated with the historical Buddha and Myōe Shōnin (1173–1232); and the manifestations at Kasuga of a number of other deities. The epilogue introduces the contested question of Shinto's place in Japanese religious history. Tyler takes the traditional view that the religion did indeed exist, but she does not consider many of the important issues raised in the seminal article on this topic by KURODA (1981).