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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).

Problems with the methodology of this study illustrate the difficulties of interdisciplinary scholarship. Tyler's cross-disciplinary approach is essential to understanding early and medieval Japanese religion, which was shaped and practiced by the members of a culture whose conceptions of reality were not those of twentieth-century Euro-American academics. However, Tyler's attempt to operate in more than one discipline seems to have kept her from acquainting herself with the depth and breadth of scholarship on a number of topics relevant to her subject. For example, her conception of Shinto (78) relies on the popular yet misleading stereotypes reproduced in HERBERT (1967), which present Shinto as a tradition lacking "real texts" (11) and doctrines but still somehow capturing "the purest essentials of religion" (78); she does not refer to the voluminous Japanese-language scholarship on both Shinto and syncretism. This problem is compounded by a conversational tone that, while perhaps approachable for the general reader, falls into distortive descriptions, such as when she characterizes syncretism as "irrational, medieval, and outlandishly complicated" (8) or medieval religion as seemingly "miscellaneous" (3).

This book is clearly not intended for specialists or even for graduate students in the fields of premodern Japanese religion and art history — large sections depend heavily on synthesized information readily available in English and do not discuss important questions relating to attribution and dating. On the other hand, undergraduates and general readers may find some of the terminology difficult or misleading. For example, there is no definition of *mandara* until page 115, well after the reader has completed the first group of chapters on the *mandara*'s various types; this important term is, in addition, missing from the index. Tyler also freely uses the word "cult" without either discussing the current specialized scholarly usage of the term or correcting its negative connotations in contemporary popular usage. While many of the numerous diagrams and illustrations of buildings and sculpture are well reproduced, most illustrations of paintings are too small to be of help in understanding Tyler's analysis.

Despite these problems, the study is still quite useful either alone or in tandem with GRAPARD (1992) and TYLER (1990) for teaching undergraduate courses on Japanese religion and art history, as well as for non-area courses on such topics as the relation of religion and the arts.

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CHINA

KNAPP, RONALD G., editor. *Chinese Landscapes: The Village as Place*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992. xii + 313 pages. Maps, drawings, photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$46.00; ISBN 0-8248-1413-4.

Anthropologists and sociologists often regard villages as social units only, and their analyses of these communities are directed solely at clarifying human relationships and social organizations. Villages, however, are more than mere social entities. Their ecological environments, their layouts, and their physical structures (houses, temples, graveyards, bridges, etc.) all have a special meaning for the inhabitants. Thus when studying villages we must try to understand not only their social reality but also their socio-topological reality.

This collection on Chinese villages is a good example of a study that shows the reality of the village as a place. Jin Qiming and Li Wei, employing the criteria of settlement structure, natural environment, and economic activity, classify Chinese rural settlement patterns into three major systems in eleven basic regions. We are then given eighteen case studies done by anthropologists, architects, geographers, historians, sociologists, and a veterinary ecologist. These involve villages located in twelve of the mainland provinces, from Shanxi to Hainan and from Sichuan to Zhejiang. Also included are one village each from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The respective villages' spatial patterns are clarified within the wider perspective of the region's characteristics using maps, photographs, illustrations, and figures. We are given an enjoyable tour of the vast land of China, from the arid inland to a sunny island.

Also discussed is village *fengshui* (geomancy). *Fengshui* is an expression of the traditional Chinese notion that human alterations to the landscape affect the prosperity of the people in the vicinity. The Chinese still believe in the principles of *fengshui* and often use them in fortunetelling.

The village studies are divided into those that focus on tradition and those that focus on transition. Let us look at tradition first. The most important characteristic of the traditional village is, I believe, the close connection between the village community and the patrilineal system. Even the names of the villages reflect this connection: five of the eighteen villages studied are named after the dominant lineages (e.g., Xiqi village for the Xi lineage and Dangjia village for the Dang lineage).

Knapp writes that in most Chinese rural settlements the historical development process is rather difficult to trace. Great shifts in population may have occurred in any given area due to famine, warfare, or natural disaster, and communities may have formed several times on the same site. I believe, however, that the developmental pattern in these communities was roughly the same, based on the principle of the village founder proliferating his agnatic descendants. In this way the village as a whole can be regarded as an extension of the household, with the village community being like one large house divided into families. Xiqi village in Guangdong is a typical example. We also have Oliver Laude's description of a Hakka *tulou* residence in Hekeng, Fujian. *Tulou*, "earthen buildings," are multistoried fortlike structures that sometimes house twenty-five or thirty related families with a total of