

BOOK REVIEWS

Buddhist monks as a weapon? Admittedly, this question is so complex that it could, and perhaps should, be the topic of another book.

Last, Adolphson's discussion of Kōyasan sometimes seems tacked on as an afterthought. For a detailed early history of Enryakuji and Kōfukuji, however, and for a thought-provoking reexamination of theories which have long been unquestioned, the book is invaluable. It will be of most use to advanced graduate students and to scholars of Heian and Kamakura Japan. For these people, it should be required reading.

The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jōdo Hōmon Genrushō. By Mark L. Blum. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. pp. xxi + 470.

ROBERT F. RHODES

Over the past several years, a number of ground-breaking studies on Kamakura Buddhism have been published. Translations of many of the major works of the so-called "new Kamakura Buddhism" have appeared, including Hōnen's 法然 *Senchakushū* 選択集¹ and Shinran's 親鸞 writings in their entirety.² At the same time, influenced by Kuroda Toshio's 黒田俊雄 *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 (exoteric-esoteric system) theory, which holds that the traditional Buddhist sects originating in the Nara and Heian periods continued to dominate the Japanese religious scene during the Kamakura period, scholars have begun to research other long-overlooked figures of the earlier Buddhist sects of this age, such as Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232) of the Kegon 華嚴 sect.³ Mark Blum's ambitious new study on another Kegon scholar-monk, Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321), is a notable addition to such studies on the thought of previously neglected Kamakura-period monks.

Gyōnen was a prominent scholar-monk of Tōdaiji 東大寺, the great temple in Nara known for its colossal statue of Vairocana Buddha. This temple was burned down by the Taira army in 1180 but was soon rebuilt and quickly reasserted itself as

¹ Senchakushū English Translation Project, trans., *Hōnen's Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.

² Dennis Hirota, et al., trans., *The Collected Works of Shinran*. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.

³ George J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) and Mark T. Unno, "Recommending Faith in the Sand of the Mantra of Light," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, edited by Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), pp. 167–218.

one of the major centers of Buddhist learning in Japan. Gyōnen, a prolific writer who authored over 125 works during his lifetime, was a leading figure in this academic revival. Tōdaiji had always prided itself on being the center for the academic study of all branches of Buddhist thought,⁴ and this is reflected in the broad range of works which Gyōnen composed: erudite treatises on Buddhist doctrines, major studies on the precepts, works of Buddhist history, such as the *Sangoku byuppō denzū engi* 三国仏法伝通縁起 and the *Jōdo hōmon genrushō* 浄土法門源流章 (hereafter *Genrushō*), and the famous *Hasshū kōyō* 八宗綱要, a succinct guide to the doctrines of the Buddhist sects of Japan. Citing Kamata Shigeo, Blum stresses that “for Gyōnen scholarship was practice” (p. 67).

Blum’s volume takes up one of the works in Gyōnen’s oeuvre, the brief but important *Genrushō*, the earliest history of Pure Land Buddhism composed in Japan. Hence, despite its title, this study is not about the origins and development of Pure Land Buddhism per se. The book is divided into three sections. Part I, entitled “Gyōnen and Kamakura Pure Land Buddhism,” contains five chapters: one on Hōnen’s Pure Land faith, another on the Pure Land thought of Hōnen’s disciples, a brief third chapter on Gyōnen’s life, a lengthy chapter on Gyōnen as a Buddhist historian and a final fifth chapter devoted to text-critical information on the *Genrushō*. Part II contains a thoroughly annotated translation of the *Genrushō* while Part III consists of a facsimile of the 1814 xylograph of the *Genrushō* and three appendices: a concordance to the *Genrushō* facsimile, an essay on Gyōnen’s Pure Land beliefs and a list of his extant writings.

In the *Genrushō*, Gyōnen lays out the history of Pure Land Buddhism as he saw it. Although he briefly discusses the central scriptures of the Pure Land tradition and its development in India, China and pre-Kamakura Japan, he devotes the major portion of the *Genrushō* to Hōnen and five of his followers: Kōsai 幸西, Ryūkan 隆寛, Shōkū 証空, Shōkō 聖光 (also known as Benchō 弁長) and Chōsai 長西. Hōnen’s interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism was revolutionary for his time, but by Gyōnen’s age, two generations later, it had already come to constitute the central strand of this stream of Buddhist practice. Moreover, as Gyōnen had studied with Chōsai, he was well acquainted with Hōnen’s Pure Land beliefs. For these reasons, the *Genrushō* is a valuable source for understanding the early phase of Hōnen’s Pure Land movement, in particular how his early followers understood their master’s teachings.

As the *Genrushō* makes clear, each of Hōnen’s five followers interpreted his master’s teachings in different ways. In the most thorough discussion of this topic to date, Blum analyzes their views in detail, highlighting the plurality of doctrinal positions that were competing for supremacy among Pure Land thinkers at this time. He also makes the important point that neither Shinran nor Ippen 一遍 is mentioned in

⁴ This attitude is expressed by the slogan *hasshū kengaku* 八宗兼学 or, as Blum puts it, “syncretic study of all eight schools of Buddhist learning” (p. 61).

the text, a glaring omission since these two figures are now generally regarded as representative figures of Kamakura Pure Land Buddhism.

Also valuable is the chapter on Gyōnen as a Buddhist historian. As Blum asserts, “Gyōnen is known today primarily as an historian, arguably the first major historian of the Japanese Buddhist tradition” (p. 69). Interestingly, Gyōnen does not stress the notion, so widespread during his time, that the world had entered the “final age” of *mappō* 末法, the degenerate age in which it is no longer possible to practice the Buddhist teachings and attain enlightenment. Instead he argues that “Buddhism represents a divine message transcending historical circumstances that can not and does not decline” (p. 86). He develops this notion using the scheme of *sangoku denzū* 三国伝通 or “transmission across the three countries” which, in framing Buddhism as a historical phenomenon that flowed from India to China to Japan, asserted Japan’s equality with China within the international culture of Buddhism. Gyōnen stresses the central role that master-disciple lineages play in this transmission, for he sees the history of Buddhism as the collective history of the various *shū* 宗—a term normally rendered as “school” or “sect”—that constitute it. Interestingly, Gyōnen accepts that “one master may be succeeded by many disciples, and that their interpretations need not be uniform” (p. 126). Based on this principle, he could easily assert that all of Hōnen’s disciples belong to the Pure Land transmission even while holding views that diverge significantly from each other.

Unfortunately, this book contains occasional mistakes. For example, the characters for *kenmitsu taisei* should be 顯密体制, not 顯密大成 (p. 13). The sentence on page 55, “There is no indication if edited or emended. . .” should probably have read “There is no indication if Shikyoku edited or emended. . .” The title of the famous Tendai esoteric text is *Asabashō* and not *Azabashō* (p. 91 n. 49). “Emperor Junwa” (pp. 103, 105) should be “Emperor Junna.” The correct Chinese characters for Tendai are 天台; it is never written with the old unsimplified character for *dai* 臺 (p. 103 n. 74). Finally, contrary to Blum’s claim that Ryōgen’s 良源 *Gokuraku jōdo kubon ōjōgi* 極樂浄土九品往生義 is the “only reliable reference for understanding Pure Land theory and practice in the generation before Genshin” (p. 199 n. 7), Satō Tetsuei 佐藤哲英 has discovered and published two other texts by Ryōgen’s contemporaries which shed important light on this significant formative period of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism.⁵

However, these are minor mistakes that do not detract in any way from the value of *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism*. This is an important work which should be read by everyone interested in Japanese Buddhism.

⁵ The texts in question are the *Jūgan hosshinki* 十願發心記 by Senkan 千觀 and the *Amida shinjūgi* 阿弥陀新十疑 by Zenyu 禪瑜, which can be found in Satō’s monumental study of Pure Land Buddhism in the Tendai sect, *Eizan Jōdokyō no kenkyū* 叡山浄土教の研究 (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1979), part 2, pp. 159–258.