

BOOK REVIEWS

Buddhism, Unitarianism, and the Meiji Competition for Universality. By Michel Mohr. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014. 346 pages. Hardcover \$39.95.

ŌMI TOSHIHIRO

This work is a valuable monograph that details the development of Unitarianism during the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–1926) periods in Japan. The sections that consider the relationship between Unitarianism and Japanese Buddhism are filled with new knowledge, and it is a must-read for researchers in the field of modern Japanese religious history. Below, after providing an overview of each chapter, I will discuss its significance in relation to the history of the field. The contents are as follows:

I. Seeds and Transplant

1. Setting the Stage
2. The Advent of the Unitarians in Japan
3. The Wavering of Early Japanese Support

II. Bloom and Tensions

4. Inspired Buddhist Intellectuals
5. Japanese Students at Harvard and the Waseda Connection
6. Involvement in the Labor Movement

III. Fracture and Rebuttals

7. Dispatching the Hatchet Man
8. Discordant Voices
9. The Counterexample of Shaku Sōen

Epilogue: Reexamining the Universalizing Channels

In chapter 1, Mohr introduces the book's theme, previous research on the topic, and his approach. The primary focus of the book is a historical elucidation of how, through negotiations between Buddhism and Unitarianism, originally Western concepts such as “universality” and “universal truth”

were appropriated and interpreted by Japanese intellectuals and took root in the specific context of Japan. There is almost no literature on Japanese Unitarianism besides the works by missionaries themselves, and scholarship on the history of Christianity in modern Japan has given inadequate attention to the topic as well. Most of the treatments in Japanese scholarship of Unitarianism are related to Fukuzawa Yukichi; there are almost no works like Mohr's that discuss Unitarianism's relationship with other religions. Most of this monograph's content is based on materials related to the American Unitarian Association (AUA)—particularly correspondence sent by missionaries while residing in Japan—held at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library's Unitarian Archives. Basically no research exists that is based on these primary sources.

In chapter 2, Mohr considers the remarkable development of Unitarians' early period missionary activities (from the latter half of the 1880s to the mid-1890s). The Japanese mission, which was launched with Arthur May Knapp as its leader, caught the attention of the Japanese upper class that was seeking a religion fit for the modernization of Japanese society. The mission rapidly developed with Fukuzawa's strong support. Clay MacCauley, the successor to Knapp after he left the front lines in September 1890, rode on the strength of this favorable current and established in March 1894 the mission facility Unitarian Hall as well as the theological graduate school known as Senshin Gakuin. It is also worth mentioning that the Unitarians adopted as their missionary method "The Post Office Mission" ("direct mailing" in today's terms), an innovative technique at the time.

Chapter 3 discusses the process by which support by the Japanese for the Unitarian mission's activities receded through the 1890s. Amidst a conservative backlash and an anti-Western climate symbolized by the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, Kaneko Kentarō and some other supporters of the early period mission severed their ties with the Unitarians. The Unitarians' relationship with Fukuzawa would also slightly change, but Mohr rejects Tsuchiya Hiromasa's theory that this was caused by discord between Fukuzawa and MacCauley.

In chapter 4, Mohr considers Buddhists who were influenced by Unitarianism, particularly the thought and activities of some Shin Buddhist individuals. Furukawa Rōsen, who came from a Nishi Honganji-affiliated temple, developed a strong interest in Unitarianism under the influence of his friend Sugimura Sojinkan. Together they founded the organization Keiikai, which adopted as its philosophy an idea known as "free investigation" (*jīyū tōkyū*)—one of the principles of Unitarianism. Furukawa always spoke

highly of the significance of such Unitarian thought in the context of his own plans for the reform of Buddhism. Murakami Senshō of the Ōtani sect of Shin Buddhism, inspired by an article he read in the journal *Rikugō zasshi* (which was influenced by Unitarianism at the time), established his own unique free-range research method intending to fundamentally unify the various schools of Buddhism. However, his discourse had a political slant. For example, he asserted that it was only Japan—based, as he saw it, on an imperial lineage, loyalty, and filial piety—that could offer a “universal” message to other countries in Asia.

Chapter 5 elucidates the connections between Unitarians and individuals associated with Waseda University, primarily by tracing the path of Kishimoto Nobuta. Kishimoto was one of the central figures of Japanese Unitarianism, as well as a pioneer in research in Japanese religions. Returning to Japan after studying abroad at Harvard University, he wrote on comparative religion in *Rikugō zasshi* at Tokyo Vocational College (today’s Waseda University) while being actively involved in the Unitarian Association in Japan. Waseda at the time was an experimental site for new ideas and practice in which scholarship, journalism, and the performing arts co-existed. Its founder Ōkuma Shigenobu was also a supporter of the Unitarian mission.

In chapter 6, Mohr discusses the relationship between the socialist movement and Unitarianism in Japan. This relationship existed from early on; with, for example, Christian socialists such as Abe Isoo and Katayama Sen being involved in *Rikugō zasshi*. During this period that was not particularly welcoming of socialism, in 1912 the leader of the Unitarian Association in Japan Suzuki Bunji, formed the Yūaikai, which was a multi-purpose organization for laborers, promoting their unionization with MacCauley’s blessing. However, concern increased at the AUA that the Yūaikai was hijacking the Japanese Unitarian organization. Subsequently, it became difficult for Suzuki to continue maintaining his moderate stance, especially following the surge of the anti-capitalist movement in Japan influenced by the 1917 Russian Revolution. In the end, Yūaikai and the Japanese Unitarian Association parted ways, with the former being reorganized into a group that focused on the labor movement.

Chapter 7 describes the process by which MacCauley’s successor John B. W. Day brought the Japanese Unitarian mission to its end. Not only did it become difficult for the American association to continue supporting it due to financial difficulties, the American side’s suspicion of the Japanese Association’s connection to socialism was ever-growing. In this context,

Day was dispatched to Japan, a country which he was not very familiar with. This encouraged the conflict between the Japanese and American Unitarian organizations to gradually worsen and damaged the likelihood of any kind of reconciliation. In June 1922, Day returned to the United States, and no one was appointed to be his successor. In this way, the Japanese Unitarian mission eventually completely withdrew from Japan.

In chapter 8, Mohr covers the tense relationships and debates that arose among missionaries, focusing on Saji Jitsunen and Hiroi Tatsutarō. Saji, a former Shin sect priest who revered the imperial household, was appointed as the leader of the Japanese Unitarian Association in 1900 after MacCauley went back to the United States. While he was the leader, Japanese Unitarianism developed independently from the religion's home country. However, there were conflicts of opinion between Saji and Kanda Saichirō, who had been in a leading position in the Japanese mission from an early stage. In 1909 after MacCauley returned to Japan, Saji was dismissed. In response, Hiroi, a missionary sympathetic to Saji, criticized MacCauley for trying to spread a Christian-centric Unitarianism. By the beginning of the 1910s, MacCauley and his circle had stopped emphasizing the rhetoric of universality when missionizing. Thus the open stance that had allowed the hiring of an individual like Saji with a different doctrinal emphasis was lost.

In chapter 9, Mohr uses the Rinzai sect priest Shaku Sōen to discuss how Meiji Buddhists presented in a form somewhat different from Unitarians their idea of a "universal truth." Sōen, who had studied at Keiō University and found out about Theosophy while traveling in Ceylon, came to enthusiastically advocate a "universal religion of science" after meeting and becoming friendly with Paul Carus at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions. However, Sōen would also frequently discuss the unique "Japanese soul" (*Yamato damashii*) depending on the nature of the audience listening to his talks. This duplicity was not unique to him; MacCauley also would, in accordance with his audience, use the contradictory notions of a universal truth while also advocating at times the superiority of the tradition to which he belonged to.

In the epilogue, drawing from the book's content, Mohr considers how the concept of universality was received in modern Japan. He concludes that a constructive dialogue is needed in future research that connects two extremes: the naive assumption of a universal truth like the one actively discussed in Meiji period Japan, and the post-modern assumption popular in recent years of incommensurable cultural differences.

Thus concludes my overview of Mohr's monograph. Due to limitations in space I have only been able to present a brief overview of this rich monograph. Despite being so, surely the reader has realized by now that this work presents fresh research and perspectives heretofore unseen in the field. Here, I would like to discuss two points based on my interests.

First, Mohr's work is notable for its unprecedentedly detailed empirical account of the history of Unitarianism in modern Japan. Mohr makes clear its development by prodigally referring to and engaging in a close reading of the missionaries' correspondence. He depicts very concretely this development by elucidating areas almost entirely unknown to previous research and reconsidering and supplementing histories described therein. Mohr's overall approach is also very persuasive: he traces the process of the Japanese mission's progress, and ends by investigating individual missionaries' human qualities and ways of relating to others as well as taking into account, as appropriate, the social situations that surrounded them.

Second, I would like to comment on Mohr's multiple case-study-based analysis of Unitarianism's influence on Japanese Buddhists. In the past there have been discussions of the influence of Unitarianism on Japanese Buddhist reformers. However, they have never developed into full-fledged research that considers what this influence actually was. In this monograph, Mohr considers Furukawa and Murakami, two major figures who were involved in the modern Buddhist reform movement in Japan. He examines the influence of Unitarianism upon them, discovers new information about Murakami's relationship with Unitarianism, and discusses the context of the establishment of the Shin priest's innovative academic research. By adding an analysis of Sōen, who arrived at an innovative Buddhist thought system through a different path while having ideas similar to Unitarianism, he has enabled us to understand in a three-dimensional fashion the modern history of the relationship between Buddhism and Unitarianism.

However, while he does devote a considerable number of pages to all this, one issue remains neglected. Considering that "Buddhism" and "Unitarianism" are both included in the title, unlike the detailed treatments of Unitarianism's history in Japan that are found throughout the monograph, its relationship to Buddhism is only considered in a limited number of chapters. What is already a remarkable work would have been even more so had Mohr chosen to discuss, for example, the late Meiji period New Buddhism (*Shin Bukkyō*) movement, which informed the work of Furukawa and that of his circle under the clear influence of Unitarianism, in connection with the activities of Unitarians during that same period.

However, this wish for additional content arose due to the fact that, as a modern scholar of Buddhism, I myself came to understand clearly the significance of the presence and influence of Unitarianism in modern Japan thanks to this monograph. In the new horizon cleared by Mohr's work, various analyses from new perspectives regarding modern Japanese religion and thought await.

Plotting the Prince: Shōtoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism. By Kevin Gray Carr. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. 245 pages, numerous illustrations. Cloth \$40.00.

MICHAEL PYE

This fascinating work by a professional art historian seeks to chart the development and the complexities of the cult of Prince Shōtoku (572–621), who is broadly credited with having played a major role in the introduction of Buddhism to Japan. While other Buddhist leaders have also been the center of immense later reverence and hagiography (though little comparison is adduced here), the particular significance of Shōtoku lies in the fact that he could not be claimed exclusively by any one single Buddhist denomination in the later tradition, and that he also became a figure of national, civil significance. The legends about him grew steadily, finding expression in texts, sculpture, cultic buildings, and in particular in narrative painting. The latter developed notably in the Japanese “middle ages” when Buddhism was woven into a more or less coherent, complex cultural pattern integrating many notions of indigenous provenance. This book takes us on a grand tour of all of this, with particular concentration on the screens of the Picture Hall of Hōryūji, which can be dated back to precisely 1069. These, but not only these, are excellently reproduced, so that the art-historical analysis can be followed in detail. The colored illustrations, though in a non-massive format, evidently worked best on a certain kind of rather glossy paper (105gsm Gold East matt art), which makes the ordinary text in the book a little difficult to read. At least, being acid free, the work can be consulted for many years to come, as it should be.

Following an essay-style introduction, and a certain amount of agonizing over terminology such as the very use of the word “cult,” the book is set out