Śibi's story and also her misunderstanding of the Tigress story is a consequence of her inaccurate reading and preconceived ideas about Faxian's and Xuanzang's travel accounts (p. 2ff.). Faxian never mentioned to Prince Mahāsattva in the excerpted passage, and Xuanzang did not relate that the king who sacrificed his eyes was King Śibi. Xuanzang most surely referred to King Sudhīra's story found in the *Sutra of the Wise and the Fool*.

In spite of the shortcomings discussed above in the philological treatment of the material, the author's discussion on the Buddhist attitude towards the body is interesting and noteworthy (chapter 6). In Buddhism, the body is, on one hand, the object of contemplation through which one must discern its impurity and understand the necessity of detaching oneself from it. This is an essential step in the process of attaining deliverance from samsaric existence. However, on the other hand, the bodhisattva needs his body to practice the *pāramī*/*pāramitā*s to attain buddhahood. This aspect may serve as an important source in the discussion of such contemporary issues as suicide, or organ donation, and, of course, the issue of the meaning and value of human life.

Hōryūji Reconsidered. Edited by Dorothy C. Wong with Eric M. Field. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. xxii + 314 pages. Hardcover $79.99.

ALICIA R. EAST

The publication of *Hōryūji Reconsidered* is no small feat in many regards. Scholars across disciplines have examined Hōryūji numerous times over the decades. Historical records surrounding the site, as well as the temple itself, yield only a set amount of intellectual fruit as time passes. It would seem, in the twenty-first century, that the topic has reached a point of critical mass. Yet Wong, along with Field, has compiled a collection of essays that underscores the utility of sowing ancient ground.

Hōryūji Reconsidered is comprised partly of papers given at the University of Virginia's 2005 symposium "The Dawn of East Asian International Buddhist Art and Architecture: Hōryūji (Temple of the Exalted Law) and Its Contexts" and partly of essays contributed thereafter. Much like the symposium, the book seeks to imbue the known corpus of evidence with

inter-disciplinary perspectives and contemporary methodologies. This inter-disciplinary approach is immediately evident in the book's structure; concisely bifurcated into "Art and Architecture" (chapters 1–5) and "Religion" (chapters 6–8). Contemporary methodologies are discreetly nestled, like so many gems, within the essays themselves.

In chapter 1, J. Edward Kidder Jr. applies modern dendrochronological discoveries and quite a few well-turned phrases to the issue of Hōryūji's reconstruction after the fire of 670 CE. Aptly titled "Reviving the Burning Question: The Hōryūji Fires and Its Reconstruction," the essay posits that the current axis pole was salvaged from the original building. Kidder details the arguments surrounding the severity of the fire, which range from "no fire at all" to "devastating inferno," and ultimately surmises that a rainstorm quelled the blaze in sufficient time. The pole, recycled out of economic need, thus guided the dimensions of the new building, which is often noted for its reference to the archaic style.

Eric M. Field provides further insight into the axis pole in chapter 2, "The Central Core Structural System: A Three-Dimensional Analysis of the Five-Story Pagoda of Hōryūji." A design technologist at the University of Virginia School of Architecture, Field utilizes three-dimensional graphic modeling and geometric analysis to illustrate that the pole does not support the building, as commonly thought. Instead, the building supports the post, which is suspended several feet above the ground. Despite the prevailing supposition that the post symbolizes the *axis mundi* of the Buddhist cosmos, it is no mere index. Field reveals that the post buffers the building from lateral stressors such as high wind and earthquakes.

Nancy Schatzman Steinhardt solves the riddle of Hōryūji's aesthetic reception in chapter 3, "Seeing Hōryūji through China." Steinhardt points out that, even in 711 CE, the reconstruction was considered antiquated because it did not reflect the dominant eighth-century East Asian Buddhist architectural style. Using up-to-date archaeological evidence from mainland China, she explains that the plan is a specifically Japanese phenomenon, but the architecture reiterates forms present in fifth- and sixth-century China and Korea. If one accepts Kidder's position in chapter 1—that the current pole is the salvaged original and that it facilitated the archaic design—then Steinhardt's idea that the initial style reflects roughly contemporaneous trends gains even greater strength.

Chapter 4 features Kidder once again. His essay, "Yakushi, Shaka, the 747 Inventory, and the Cult of Prince Shōtoku," is a detailed investigation

of inscriptions and other documentary sources that reveals a deliberate conflation of Prince Shōtoku with Śākyamuni Buddha. While the notion of religion bolstering royal prerogative is frequently utilized in cultural studies, Kidder contributes solid archival evidence supporting this claim.

In light of the previous chapters' claims of antiquated architecture, Dorothy C. Wong turns her eye to the *kondō* murals in chapter 5, "Reassessing the Wall Paintings of Hōryūji," as a means to show that Japanese artists fully participated in the international Buddhist style emerging from the courts of T'ang-dynasty China. Physical evidence derived from nearly a century of scholarship has led to the common belief that the murals were copied from Chinese stencils. While this claim is plausible, no stencils are extant. In a convincing demonstration of how the Silk Road facilitated international dissemination of the Chinese idiom, Wong draws visual connections between the Dunhuang cave paintings and the Hōryūji *kondō* to prove that Japan was a significant body within the cultural milieu.

Chapter 6 moves *Hōryūji Reconsidered* along into Part Two with Mark L. Blum's essay "When the Dharma Comes: Contextualizing the Public Transmission of Buddhism to Japan." Blum examines three sutra commentaries attributed to Prince Shōtoku and directly correlates them with the themes and concerns raised in sixth-century China and Korea. Blum goes further to trace the path of these particular kinds of Buddhist thought from their fluorescence in China to the three major states of Korea and ultimately to Japan. He points to the influx of Chinese and Korean immigrants, as well as the employ of Korean Buddhist teachers, in Japan at the time of the driving cultural force.

Lori Meeks refocuses the lens of history to incorporate women into the monastic practices of the Asuka period (593–710) in chapter 7, "Chūgūji and Female Monasticism in the Age of Shōtoku." Also drawing from archaeological evidence to answer the questions of when and for whom the monastery was constructed, Meeks reveals that the first nuns in Japan studied Buddhism in the Korean kingdom of Paekche around 587 CE. Meeks not only reveals Korean origins for early Japanese Buddhist nuns, but also foregrounds the importance of women in the development of Asuka-period Buddhism.

The final chapter, "Of Temples, Horses and Tombs: Hōryūji and Chūgūji in Heian and Early Kamakura Japan," by Michael Como turns to an analysis of folklore, gender relations, material culture and Japanese Pure Land Buddhism as a way to reexamine the eighth-century expansion of the com-

plex. Como demonstrates that the cult of Prince Shōtoku, as well as the subsequent cult of his mother, Empress Anahobe, is directly linked to the rebirth of the temple.

Hōryūji Reconsidered is indeed a collection of great disciplinary breadth and depth that reflects the interests of contemporary scholars. Its contribution to the current body of scholarship is that all the essays consider Hōryūji as an organic, dynamic entity retaining traces of the cultures to which it has been witness. The potential "sentience" of a location is supported in David Summers' epilogue "Hōryūji as Real Space." In fact, it is Summers' concept of real space that provides the theoretical framework of the entire compilation. While I am usually wont to suspect a heavy reliance on theory, it is that very thing that crystallizes and clarifies the various disciplines and methodologies contained in *Hōryūji Reconsidered*. As academe continues to expand and fracture under the demands of relevance, it is increasingly difficult to find multi-disciplinary research that coherently and artfully synthesizes theory with practice. I commend Dorothy C. Wong, Eric M. Field and the contributing authors of *Hōryūji Reconsidered* for their efforts.

Shinran: Un réformateur bouddhiste dans le Japon médiéval. By Jérôme Ducor. Gollion, Switzerland: Infolio éditions, 2008. 208 pages. Paperback €19.00.

Terre pure, Zen et autorité: La Dispute de l'ère Jôô et la Réfutation du Mémorandum sur des contradictions de la foi *par Ryônyo du Honganji*. By Jérôme Ducor. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2007. 171 pages. Paperback € 15.00.

WAMAE MURIUKI

Jérôme Ducor's *Shinran* is an important addition to the burgeoning literature on Shinran available in the West. More significantly, as an introductory work on Shinran, rather than a more narrowly focused monograph, this book is well placed as an accessible yet rigorous introduction to Pure Land belief in general, and to Shinran's True Pure Land in particular. This work by one of the most prolific writers and commentators on the Pure Land tradition at this moment joins such works as Jean Eracle's *Sur le vrai boud-*