

BOOK REVIEWS

HÖNEN'S BUDDHISMUS DES REINEN LANDES: *Reform, Reformation oder Häresie?* By Christoph Kleine. Berlin: Peter Lang, 1996.

GEREON KOPF
Luther College

CHRISTOPH KLEINE'S recent *Hōnen's Buddhismus des Reinen Landes: Reform, Reformation oder Häresie?* constitutes an impressive work of scholarship which fulfills the twofold function of reconstructing Hōnen's life and work and interpreting Hōnen's function within the Buddhism of the Kamakura period vis-à-vis a typology of "reform," "reformation," and "heresy." In addition, Kleine's twofold project not only introduces Hōnen to the academic study of religions (German: *Religionswissenschaft*) in the German language but, furthermore, raises interesting methodological questions concerning the textual reconstruction of biographies, the cross-cultural and cross-traditional applicability of typologies, and the presence of a multiplicity of discourses and subtexts underlying every project within the field of comparative religious studies (German: *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaften*). Thus, I would like to appraise the invaluable contribution of this stimulating work to the German landscape of religious studies and, at the same time, take it as a starting point to reflect on the methodological assumptions and difficulties central not only to Kleine's work but to any project in comparative religious studies.

Kleine's study pays a long overdue tribute to Hōnen, who is frequently identified as the originator of an "independent Amida-Buddhism in Japan" in the German language. While it is possible to find a few works on Pure Land Buddhism (Japanese: *Jōdoshū*) in the German language, these sources either function as rather general introductions to Pure Land Buddhism in analogy to Volker Zotz's *Der Buddha im Reinen Land* or focus on the alleged similarities between Shinran's True Pure Land Buddhism (Japanese: *Jōdoshinshū*) and Protestant Christian theology as does Christiane Langer-Kaneko's *Das Reine Land: Zur Begegnung von Amida-Buddhismus und Christentum*. Since the publication of Kleine's study, Christian Steineck has added a translation of

BOOK REVIEWS

Jōdoshū scriptures under the title *Quellentexte des Japanischen Amida-Buddhismus* to the German scholarship on Pure Land Buddhism. In this context, Kleine's focus on Hōnen's biography and his evaluation of Hōnen's work in its own right and in the context of "new Buddhisms" of the Kamakura-period from religious studies perspective and not merely as a forerunner of Shinran or vis-à-vis Martin Luther's or Karl Barth's doctrine of justification is refreshing and innovative and bridges the gap between German and Japanese Buddhological scholarship.

Kleine's reconstruction of Hōnen, which draws from Japanese hagiographies, particularly the *Gyōjō-ezu*, and biographies as well as from Japanese and Anglo-American scholarship, questions traditional, and, as Kleine argues, "sectarian" readings of Hōnen's life as the founder of a new branch of Buddhism vis-à-vis the "orthodox" doctrine of the *Tendaishū*; instead he suggests to read Hōnen's life in the context of the intra-Buddhist discourse during the Kamakura period. Kleine challenges the notion that Kamakura Buddhism was predominantly characterized by the "new schools," Zen Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Nichiren and argues, in analogy to Robert E. Morrell's "Minority Report" on early Kamakura Buddhism, that the reform movements within Tendaishū and Shingonshū contributed significantly to the Buddhist discourse and life of the Kamakura period. It is thus appropriate that Kleine reconstructs Hōnen's biography not only from the hagiographies compiled by scholars and priests of the Jōdoshū but equally from contemporary criticisms of Hōnen's religio-political opponents. Kleine focuses particularly on the Kōfukuji Petition (Japanese: *Kōfukuji-sōjō*) which was authored by the Hossō priest Gedatsu-bō Jōkei, an advocate of the *nembutsu* and representative of the "old Buddhism," and Nichiren, the founder of the Nichirenshū and a representative of the "new Kamakura Buddhism." In addition, Kleine contends that the Buddhist landscape of the Kamakura period was further influenced by the existence of saints (Japanese: *hijiri*), which Kleine identifies appropriately enough as "*heterodoxe Wanderpriester*." Ultimately, Kleine argues, Hōnen did not found a "new" Buddhist school which was based on the "selection-principle" (Japanese: *senchaku*), "the simplification of the Buddhist practice" (Japanese: *igyō*) in the form of an "exclusivism" (Japanese: *senju*) of the *nembutsu*, "antinomism" (Japanese: *han-kairitsu*), and an "appeal to the *populus*" (German: *Volkstümlichkeit*; Japanese: *minshū-sei*) as upheld by the sectarian polemic of the Jōdoshū and many a scholar. Instead Kleine contends that Hōnen was a member of the *hijiri* movement, which fulfilled a generally acknowledged religious function within the religio-political structure of Kamakura Buddhism, rather than the founder of the Jōdoshū as an independent monastic institution.

To support this claim, Kleine develops a threefold argument. First, Kleine

doubts that Hōnen's owes his Pure Land doctrine for the most part to the Tendai priest Genshin, as has been maintained by traditional biographies such as the *Gyōjō-ezu*, and suggests that Hōnen was, at least equally, influenced by a "southern" tradition of the *nembutsu* doctrine which was primarily based on the Pure Land teaching of the Chinese monk Shandao. He argues that Hōnen encountered this "alternative Pure Land doctrine" (German: *andere Lehre des Reinen Landes*) in the writings of and conversations with the Sanron scholars Yōkan (1031–1111) and Chinkai (1091–1152) and the Shingon priest Jitsuhan (d. 1144). This influence manifested itself in Hōnen's *nembutsu* doctrine, which, contrary to Genshin's version (or, as Kleine indicates, Hōnen's interpretation of Genshin's version as presented in his *Ōjōyōshū-shaku*) privileges the recitation (Japanese: *shōmyō*) of the *nembutsu* over the contemplation (Japanese: *kansō*) thereof. Furthermore, Hōnen's elevation of Amida's *Sukhāvātī* over Maitreya's Tushita heaven not only emphasizes Hōnen's indebtedness to what Kleine calls the "southern" tradition of the *nembutsu* doctrine and to the thought of Shandao but also seems to reflect his doctrine of the single practice of the *nembutsu* vis-à-vis the rather syncretistic interpretations of the Pure Land tradition by Genshin and Gedatsu-bō Jōkei. Second, Kleine argues that Hōnen did not leave Mount Hiei to found another monastic order but simply to live as a hermit (Japanese: *tonsei-sō*) and, then, as a *bes-sho hijiri* to practice the *nembutsu* and to teach the *nembutsu* to "ordinary people" (Japanese: *bonpu*). Kleine argues that, while he definitely initiated a *nembutsu* movement, Hōnen failed to develop a "system of ordination" (Japanese: *jukai-sei*), to build temples as spiritual and political centers of the *nembutsu* movement, to constitute an "authoritative genealogy" (Japanese: *kechimyaku*), to establish a new classification of Buddhist doctrines (Japanese: *kyōsō-hanjaku*), or to identify a successor who would continue the transmission of the doctrine (Japanese: *shūden*) and monastic regulations (Japanese: *kaiden*). Therefore, Kleine contends, it is rather problematic to identify Hōnen as the founder of a Buddhist monastic institution and/or tradition. By the same token, Hōnen's movement does not qualify as a reformation movement, which is driven by "the protest about inadequacies of the established religion" and a desire to return to the "original ideal state" but is stigmatized and excommunicated by the ruling orthodoxy. Hōnen's movement, however, did not break away from the orthodoxy of the "old schools" but rather attempted to maintain its selective doctrine of the "original vow" of Amida (Japanese: *senchaku-hongan-nembutsu*) and its "antinomical tendency" within the confines of the ruling orthodoxy. Kleine concludes that Hōnen thus fulfills the criteria of the category "heretic."

While Kleine's discussion of Hōnen's life in the light of a more complex picture of Kamakura Buddhism is invaluable and appealing, I am skeptical about

BOOK REVIEWS

the applicability of a typology developed in the context of a history of Christian doctrine and church history to the case of Hōnen. It is very much to Kleine's credit that he attempts to develop a typology "which is not strictly bound to the historical event of the Protestant reformation" and thus, to some degree, independent of the specifics of Christian church history. However, Kleine's seemingly tradition-neutral and ahistorical definition of reformation, sect, and heresy not only remains closely tied to the historical and socio-religious specifics of the medieval Christian heresies, the Protestant reformation, and the Christian sectarian movements of nineteenth century America, which to explain these terminologies were developed, but also seems to overlook the vertical dimension of such a typology. While it might be possible to define "reformation" as a schismatic reform movement, "sectarian movements" as voluntary schisms, and heresy as a failure of a heterodox movement to separate from the ruling orthodoxy, all three types not only share the common feature of heterodoxy but also can be interpreted vertically as different developmental stages of schismatic movements in general. In addition, and this seems to be the more important, their structural differences reflect most of all distinct historical and political realities: The medieval heresies developed on the background of a monarchy which differentiated "religious and political elites and religious and political organizations" but not "civil religion." The Protestant reformation flourished in a milieu which was not only politically more differentiated than that of the church-sponsored monarchies of the Middle Ages but also saw a rising emphasis on the individual philosophically and religiously. The nineteenth century sectarian movements, in spite of the persecutions suffered by, for example, the Church of the Latter Day Saints, clearly profited from the religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. While the political climate of the Kamakura period might have been more akin to the European Middle Ages than, for example, nineteenth century America, the religious landscape was not. The ordination platform (Japanese: *kaidan*) of Nara was not bound to one monolithic definition of orthodoxy but rather encompassed so to speak a variety of orthodoxies. In addition the application of the very idea of orthodoxy to Kamakura Buddhism is problematic not because of the Buddhist emphasis on orthopraxy, but more importantly, because of the Buddhist conception of truth, which inherits the conceptual legacy of Nāgārjuna's dialectical exposition of *śūnyatā* (Japanese: *kū*), and the techniques of "ranking of the doctrines" (Japanese: *kyōhan*) characteristic of Chinese and Japanese Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The main question raised by these considerations is not a question of content but one of methodology. While Kleine's approach is predominantly textual, his interpretation cannot but raise also historical, political, philoso-

phical, and methodological questions. The employment of the categories of heresy, reformation, and sectarian movement suggest a comparison of Hōnen's Pure Land movement to various schismatic movements within the history of Christianity. Such an implied comparison is problematic not only because it is impossible to compare the "orthodoxy of Nara Buddhism" with the "orthodoxy of the Roman Catholic church of the Middle Ages and/or sixteenth century Europe" but, more fundamentally, because it implies that the history of Christianity is paradigmatic or even normative for religious development in general. The problem here, I believe, lies, above all, in the methodological tools available to the scholars of comparative religions. A re-evaluation of Hōnen's Pure Land movement would require a dialogue between a textual study of the caliber of Kleine's work, a comparative study of different conceptions of truth, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy, and a historical analysis of the political and religio-political situation at the beginning of the early Kamakura period. In addition, the various textual and interpretative traditions evaluating Hōnen's religious, philosophical, and political significance will have to be evaluated not only concerning their historical accuracy or lack thereof but also with regard to the discourses and subtexts which underlie and influence the historical, textual, sectarian, ideological, and religious study of Hōnen. Kleine's study constitutes an important and necessary first step in such a dialogue.

Decorah, October 10, 1998

TEXTOS DE LA FILOSOFÍA JAPONESA MODERNA. Antología, vol. I (1995), pp. 375; *LA OTRA FILOSOFÍA JAPONESA: Antología*, vol. II (1997), pp. 434. Translated and edited by Agustín Jacinto Zavala. Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, ISBN 968 6959 38 6, 968 6959 55 6, respectively.

JAMES W. HEISIG
Nanzan Institute for
Religion and Culture

TO PUT IT simply, Agustín Jacinto is a phenomenon sui generis. I know of no one in the Western world as familiar with the writings of Nishida Kitarō as he. Nor is there anyone who has done as much as he to introduce modern Japanese philosophy to the Spanish-speaking world. The two volumes of this