

*Zen*. 3 vols. Bratislava: CAD Press, 1986, 1988, 1989. 2nd edition: 1990, 1991. No editors given, pp. 375 (Vol. 1), 365 (Vol. 2), 355 (Vol. 3). No prices given.

The present volumes are still the only sources of information on Zen in Slovakia and Bohemia. As dissident prints they were not published until the last three years of communist rule in Czechoslovakia. Consequently they were not public and remained familiar to only a small part of our society. Now, during the last two years the volumes have appeared for a second time—presented for the whole of Czechoslovak society—and the fourth is due to appear soon.

Because the editors worked in dissident conditions, their names are not given. The possibility of creating such a rich source of Zen literature was enabled by the courtesy and massive help of Mr. Sohn Wie Soo, the cultural attaché of the Korean Republic in Czechoslovakia.

These Zen volumes present Japanese Zen, Chinese Chan, and Korean Sŏn from different points of view. The main themes included in these volumes are (i) the philosophy of Zen: the idea of Nothingness in Zen, Zen and modern religions, epistemology, logic and semiology of Zen, and others; (ii) Zen meditation: contemplation and work, physical positions for meditation, psychological aspects of Zen, etc.; (iii) the art of Zen, including the art of tea, Japanese gardens, the art of archery, ikebana, Japanese theatre, the art of the Zen sword, and Zen aesthetics; (iv) Zen literature: the present volumes contain some texts written by great masters of Zen, e.g. Dōgen Zenji, Sengcan, and Huineng, about 100 *kōan*, together with contemporary philosophic interpretations of all of them. On the other hand there are some papers written by modern Zen interpreters in these volumes, e.g. D. T. Suzuki, A. H. Watts, S. P. Nestyorkin, and others—not least some Czechs: M. Novák, S. Hubík, etc.; (v) many more items of detailed information, including genealogical trees of Zen masters, both Chinese and Japanese (Vol. 3); a vocabulary of Zen terminology in Vol. 2, which explains about 1000 terms and names; a list of about 200 proper names in Chinese and Japanese transliteration; and short texts by M. Heidegger and E. Fromm, etc.

These Zen volumes are provided with illustrations that present figures in Zen history, Buddhist art, masks of the Japanese No theatre, etc. Because they were first published as dissident prints, the printing techniques used are not very up-to-date. Thus the illustrations are sometimes not very clear, but they are still very instructive.

The papers included do not present Zen systematically. Consequently some aspects of Zen are over-emphasised, e.g. various forms of Zen art, while others are neglected, e.g. *satori*. But it can be said that the present volumes

are so rich and many-sided in providing information that they will remain the main source of Zen in Czechoslovakia for many years.

Erich Mistrík  
Comenius University  
Bratislava

*Travels to Real and Imaginary Lands. Two Lectures on East Asia by Giuliano Bertuccioli. With an Appendix, "Francesco Carletti on Slavery and Oppression", by Antonino Forte. Italian School of East Asian Studies Occasional Papers, No. 2. Kyoto, 1990.*

This handsome little volume consists of three parts: an essay on the travels of the Italian merchant Francesco Carletti by Bertuccioli (pp. 1–31), an essay on the non-existent region of the parrots, also by Bertuccioli (pp. 33–58), and an essay on Carletti's view on slavery by Forte (pp. 59–80). A bibliographical note by Forte concludes the book. The essays by Bertuccioli, Professor at the University of Rome, La Sapienza, are the revised versions of lectures delivered at the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto in 1989.

The Florentine merchant Francesco Carletti (1573–1636) was the first individual to travel around the world by whatever means of transportation available and paying his way as he did so by engaging in any kind of profitable business. This circumnavigation of the world was by no means planned in advance but more or less dictated by his and his father's business transactions and initiated, it seems, by their desire to participate in the slave traffic across the Atlantic. The Carlettis' itinerary took them via Spain (January 1594), Cape Verde Islands (April 1594), Colombia (August 1594), Peru (January 1595), Mexico (1595–6), the Philippines (1596–7), Japan (1597–8), Macao (1598–9; the elder Carletti died in 1598), Malacca (1599–1600), Goa (1600), the Netherlands (1602), and back to Florence in 1606 after a sojourn in Paris, France, where Francesco acted as advisor to the king.

Having returned to Florence, Carletti wrote a book about his travels, and this was edited and revised by several individuals before it was published posthumously in 1701. By then the original manuscript was lost, but the book was based on one of four manuscripts still extant. Since then eight editions have been published and several translations have appeared, but still no critical edition has been prepared. According to Carletti himself, all his notes were lost on the last leg of his journey, when his ship was captured by Dutch warships, his sometimes highly detailed account seems to speak against the loss of all his material, and Bertuccioli suggests that Carletti tried to gloss over somewhat shady transactions by suppressing some of the facts. Given the nature of the slave trade this seems plausible, but it is also known that he incorporated loans from other works. Bertuccioli gives a few examples of stories from Carletti's work which also occur in Matteo

Ricci's *Journal*, e.g. a house in Nanjing which the Jesuits bought very cheaply because the Chinese thought it was haunted.

In his frustratingly short account of Carletti's chapters on Japan and China, Bertuccioli offers a few scattered examples, accompanied by reflections such as, "He found Japan a very pleasant country to live in because everything was so cheap, in sharp contrast with the situation today" (p. 10); or, "Violence and the liking for blood, supreme refinement and elegance—the soul of Japan is formed of these two opposites merged in an indissoluble unity" (*loc. cit.*). Bertuccioli recognizes the great value which lies at the core of Carletti's account because both his national and professional bonds differed from those of the Jesuits. Although confined to the areas within Nagasaki and Macao, Carletti could, as Bertuccioli says, give first-hand information about local customs which the missionary would not want to know about.

Bertuccioli's essay may serve as an appetizer to serious scholarship, both in terms of textual criticism and as regards reflections on Western images of the Orient.

In the second essay Bertuccioli traces the origin of the Land of the Parrots to Brazil and shows how cartographers of the 16th and 17th centuries placed it in different areas of the great unknown "Terra Australis" to the south. Via the Jesuits this mistake crept into Chinese maps too, and Chen Wenshu, a poet of the late Qing Dynasty, wrote a poem called, "The Map of the Land of the Parrots" (*Ying di tu*) in eighty verses, which Bertuccioli translates. Some fine maps are reproduced on the plates between pp. 48 and 49, but there are no references to these maps in the text or notes.

The appendixes by Antonino Forte on Francesco Carletti's view on slavery and the bibliographical note on the chapter on Japan are good examples of the kind of critical attitude with which one might confront Carletti's text.

Bent Nielsen  
*University of Copenhagen*

Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991. pp. xv + 277.

This book will be a welcome addition to the collections of libraries and individuals who might wish to supplement a mainly text-based knowledge of Japanese religion with consistently researched material on religion as it appears and functions in everyday Japanese society. Those inclined from the beginning towards anthropological or sociological approaches will certainly find much of use and value in the present work.

These aspects become apparent in the introductory portions of the book, where, as an illustrative example, Reader relates an anecdote from the early stages of his research in Japan: during an informal conversation on religion

with two colleagues, one of the professors turned to the other and asked which Buddhist sect the latter belonged to. The reply was—for those unfamiliar with the practice of Japanese religion—disarming: “I do not know: no-one in our household has died yet” (p. 3). The focus in this book never strays from the fundamental insight that religion in Japan has very much to do on the one hand with performing actions appropriate to a given situation, and on the other with a pragmatic try-it-and-see attitude. The latter assumes great importance when the author deals with the new religions, surely one of the most fertile areas of research for the socially or anthropologically inclined student of Japanese religion. In contrast, questions of personal faith, which the Westerner instinctively associates with religious practice and commitment, play a marginal role (cf., e.g., pp. 88f, 104).

Although Reader has some grounding in the historical and textual bases of Japanese religion (in particular Sōtō Zen Buddhism), the findings presented here reflect rather his propensity for fieldwork, in both a formal and an informal sense. As is apparent from the introduction, much of the data gathered for the book came from interviews and informal conversations conducted at all manner of religious sites the length and breadth of Japan. That the author enjoyed the enterprise is also perfectly clear, and the enthusiasm which lies at the core of the work comes out consistently throughout the whole book.

*Religion in Contemporary Japan* consists of eight chapters, sandwiched between an introduction and a conclusion. The chapter titles have been formulated to capture the readers attention and to start the process of correcting preconceptions as to the nature of Japanese religion before the book is opened properly: “Born Shintō” ...”, “...die Buddhist”, “Spirits, Satellites and a User-Friendly Religion: Agonshū and the New Religions”, to give just a couple of examples. The themes dealt with are, roughly enumerated, the structure of Japanese religion, the place and function of tradition in the Japanese religious consciousness (in which discussion the difference between emic and etic standpoints is clearly kept in the forefront), the nature and function of festivals and of death and ancestor worship, the role which holy places play, and the pervasive importance of this-worldly benefits (*genze-riyaku*). As far as these are concerned, Reader offers us the important insight that although these berxefits are on the surface sought to satisfy largely material needs, the basic meaning of “this-worldly” in this context should rather be understood as “benefits attained in this world”, i.e. emotional and spiritual rewards for religious practice (cf., e.g., pp. 32f). In this context, the long-standing connection between prosperity and happiness and the religious life is given appropriate emphasis. The penultimate chapter, which focusses on the Agonshū, illustrates how many of these themes are to be found alive and well and living in the new religious movements which have sprung up at varying rates in the course of the last two hundred years. The book thus concentrates on the present, but without losing sight of the histor-

ical and traditional precedents or of the prospects for the future. Happily, in contrast to the problematic presentation of contemporary Japanese religion in Byron Earhart's *Gedatsu-Kai and Religion in Contemporary Japan* (with which the present work in many ways invites comparison),<sup>1</sup> the essential distinction between emic and etic standpoints is, as indicated above, kept to the fore.

Besides his own observations, Reader has used a wide selection of materials in the writing of this book, ranging from scholarly items by leading Japanese and western researchers in the field to contemporary Japanese newspaper and magazine articles, as well as various items of paraphernalia, such as booklets and pamphlets issued by Japanese religious organizations. Written in a lively style and supported by ample references, the book is a useful and stimulating tool for the study of often neglected aspects of Japanese religion. It can be warmly recommended.

(IAK)

---

<sup>1</sup> Byron Earhart, *Gedatsu-Kai and Religion in Contemporary Japan*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. For an incisive review of this work and a discussion of the problems raised by Earhart's approach, see Alan Grapard's review article, "Problematic Representations of Japanese Religion", *Religion*, Vol. 21 (1991), esp. pp. 391–6.

## Erratum to *SCEAR* 3

Please note that the Bitnet address for Urs App at Hanazono College is not \*D54682@JPNKUDCPC, as I stated in the *Forum* section (p. 135), but D54682@JPNKUDPC, as stated in the advertisement at the end of the journal. I must have been off-line at the time. By way of apology, we are putting his Bodhidharma first in the advertisement section.

(IAK)