

Richard K. PAYNE, ed., *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*. Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 11. viii + 280 pp. Glossary and index. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998. \$28.95 paper, ISBN 0-8248-2078-9.

THIS FASCINATING and informative collection of essays brings together some of the best recent Western scholarship on the theme of "Kamakura" Buddhism. As outlined in the blurb on the cover, "Buddhism during the Kamakura era (1192-1333) has long been compared in the West to Christianity during the European Reformation. This popular view is reinforced by a retrospectivist historiography that regards all prior events as a prelude to the present.... However, this simplistic reading of the Kamakura as a Japanese Reformation and retrospectivist historiography obscure the complexity of the religious situation." While not totally denying the limited validity of the "reformation" model (see Dobbins's comments, p. 26), it reports on a revisioning of "Kamakura Buddhism" that has been going on for some time among scholars East and West, most notably in (but certainly not limited to) the work of Kuroda Toshio. After all, it has been almost twenty years since the publication of James FOARD's seminal article "In search of a lost reformation" (quoted frequently in the volume under review).

The contributions in this collection approach the subject from various fields and perspectives, a variety that underscores the theme that the religious and social situation in the Kamakura era was indeed complex and certainly not limited to the activities and teachings of the "new Kamakura" movements. Richard Payne provides a brief yet helpful Introduction to the collection, outlining the historiographic and methodological considerations and major issues in the study of Kamakura Buddhism. James Dobbins's essay also serves as an introduction, providing a helpful survey of the two "camps" of scholar-

ship on Kamakura Buddhism and offering the idea of “cultic centers” as a useful model with which to view the subject. George Tanabe (“Kōyasan in the Countryside”) and Allan Grapard (“*Keiranshūyōshū*”) take a look at specific aspects of, respectively, the Shingon and Tendai traditions during the Kamakura era. Robert Morrell (“*Kokonchomonjū*”) and James Foard (“The Account of Ippen at Kumano”) provide insights on the subject from a literary perspective, or, in Morrell’s phrase, “Kamakura Buddhism in the literary tradition.” Jacqueline Stone (“Chanting the August Title of the *Lotus Sutra*”) discusses the role of, and controversy surrounding, the chanting of the *daimoku* prior to and outside of the Nichiren context. Finally, Mark Unno (“Myōe”) and Richard Payne (“Ajikan”) provide two more detailed and specific studies on the development of Shingon beyond the Heian period. Although everyone is sure to find their own favorites from among such a rich collection, some of the highlights for me are the lucid introductions by Richard Payne and James Dobbins, which state the issues clearly and graciously; James Foard’s extension of his “lost reformation” article with a brief look at Ippen; and Jacqueline Stone’s fascinating account and detailed analysis of *daimoku* practices. James Foard’s comment on recent English-language scholarship on Kamakura Buddhism applies also to this collection: “In a profound sense—and I do not mean this at all as deprecation; in fact, just the opposite—this English-language Buddhological work represents the appropriation of the finest Japanese scholarship” (pp. 101–102).

It is unfortunate that this collection did not appear ten—or even five—years ago, for it seems at times to be arguing vehemently for positions that are already accepted among informed scholars. Much of the scholarship informing the “re-visioning” has been introduced in the special issue of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* dedicated to the legacy of Kuroda Toshio (23/3–4, 1996, James Dobbins, guest editor). The “re-visioning” (at least in Japan) has already advanced many steps further, with Kuroda’s “revisionist” theories coming under scrutiny from many angles, being further revised by his disciples (e.g., Taira Masayuki) or countered with constructive new theories (Sueki Fumihiko, Matsuo Kenji); some of these contributions have been reflected in works published recently in this journal. Nevertheless, Richard Payne is to be commended for bringing to print a collection of some of the best current work in the field and thus providing stimulating and required reading for anyone involved in the study of Japanese religions. It will perhaps prove to be the last nail in the coffin of overly simplistic “reformationist” stereotypes of Kamakura Buddhism.

#### REFERENCE

FOARD, James

1980 In search of a lost reformation: A reconsideration of Kamakura Buddhism. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 7: 261–91.

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