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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism by Richard M. Jaffe

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Shunzei (pp. 289–95) and the Regent Kujō Yoshitsune (pp. 333–49)—on the court, as well as of the death of Go-Toba's concubine Owari (pp. 330–31).

Appended to the study are genealogical charts, fairly substantial biographical notes on important poets, translations of several important documents, and a timeline for events involved in the compilation of the anthology. These add greatly to the usefulness of the volume. The index, too, is very comprehensive and will help make the book very useful as a reference tool, which one can be sure it will become.

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*Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism.* By RICHARD M. JAFFE. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xxii, 288 pp. \$42.50 (cloth).

It is well known that Japanese Buddhist institutions are unique in world Buddhism in accepting clerical marriage. The relatively recent provenance of this situation, however, has been largely unknown or misunderstood. That today approximately 90 percent of male clerics are married is the result of a controversial 1872 government edict ending state enforcement of the Buddhist disciplinary code ban on eating meat and clerical marriage (*nikujiki saitai*). This gave rise to a prolonged and bitter debate focused both on the doctrinal contradictions entailed and on the enormous effect that the presence of married clergy would have (and has had) on the institutional, economic, and social life of Buddhist temples. The presence of temple wives and families raises issues of financial support and temple succession and calls into question the very distinction between “clerical” and “lay” as temple families increasingly resemble those whom they serve. We are here confronted with an issue of identity that continues to disconcert established Buddhism (*kisei Bukkyō*) in its contemporary struggles over legitimacy with various new religions of Japan. Richard Jaffe's study, the first in any Western language and, Japanese sources included, the only book-length treatment of the subject, provides a comprehensive account and convincing analysis of the origin of clerical marriage, the debates concerning its practice, and its importance for any understanding of contemporary Japanese Buddhism.

The reasons for enacting the 1872 law were related to a prevalent late Tokugawa and early Meiji period perception that the precept forbidding sexual relations was regularly being flouted by a significant number of Buddhist clergy. Jaffe explores the origin of this perception in an overview of precept enforcement by the state in Japanese history (chap. 2). The picture that emerges is that fornication (*nyobon*) and marriage (*saitai*) by clergy were not uncommon in pre-Meiji Japan. While clerical marriage was usually kept concealed at larger, official temples, “it appears to have been accepted tacitly as an institutional practice” in smaller, local ones (p. 33). Although state and religious authorities attempted periodically to enforce precept violation, this became increasingly regular only after Nobunaga's destruction of Buddhist military power, culminating in the often brutal punishments meted out by the Tokugawa regime.

Against this *longue durée* background of church-state relations in Japan, the *nikujiki saitai* legislation signals a dramatic shift: for the first time in Japanese history, the state would no longer enforce religious law. The 1870s also saw the enactment of various laws stripping the clergy of special status. The result, according to Jaffe, was

the clergy's "legal laicization" (p. 94): clerical status no longer entailed legal benefits and was now no different from any other occupation. Jaffe counters the common perception of these moves as attempts by the Meiji government to destroy Buddhism. First, by situating these changes in the context of laws dissolving privileges for other groups, he demonstrates that they were part of the government's conscious, although inconsistent, policy of centralizing authority and maintaining social control (chap. 4). Second, Jaffe reveals not only support for the *nikujiki saitai* legislation among some supporters of Buddhism but also the probability that it was first proposed by Ōtori Sessō, a Sōtō Buddhist cleric, seeking to reform and modernize Buddhism. This dispels another misunderstanding: that state policy was determined solely by anti-Buddhists. Rather, Jaffe portrays a complex process of struggle and negotiation among Buddhists (who *did* maintain influence with powerful politicians), nativist and Shintō leaders, and government officials (chap. 5).

The state's decision not to enforce Buddhist law resulted in an ambiguity that divided the Buddhist world. Although the *nikujiki saitai* law stated that clerics were "free" (*katte tarubeki*) to marry, it was not self-evident whether this was to be decided by individual clerics or by the leadership of each denomination. The debates that ensued are treated in chapters 6 through 8. For those Buddhologically inclined, these chapters provide wonderful reading in that numerous passages of polemic are translated for the first time and reveal Meiji deployments of traditional Buddhist teachings.

The debates petered out as denominational leadership proved unable to enforce sect law and was confronted by the *de facto* existence of an increasingly married clergy. The resulting difficulties are treated in the final two chapters, in which Jaffe shows that, although there has evolved a tacit acceptance of clerical marriage by the formerly celibate denominations, official recognition continues to be rejected. The result is the awkward contemporary situation in which an ideal of monastic celibacy exists in stark contrast to the lived reality of most clergy.

This work carefully integrates a deep understanding of Buddhist doctrine with historical detail and ethnographic description. On the issue of clerical marriage in Japanese Buddhism, not only is Jaffe's book the only show in town, but it is a show that no one interested in Japanese Buddhism, Meiji history, church-state relations, religious celibacy, modernization, or secularization would want to miss.

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*Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852–1912.* By DONALD KEENE.  
New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. 928 pp. \$39.50 (cloth).

Donald Keene's biography of the Meiji emperor is a long read (920 pages), moving chronologically from the birth of Meiji's father, Emperor Kōmei, in 1831 to the death of Meiji and the attendant suicides of General Nogi and his wife in 1912. Clearly the product of devoted reading and reflection over many years, the biography is carefully researched and annotated with 720 pages of text, 140 pages of footnotes, and a substantial bibliography, glossary, and index. The majority of the footnotes (hundreds of them) refer to the twelve volumes of the *Meiji Tennō-ki* (Records of the Meiji emperor), which Keene has mined as no other scholar working in English. Keene also makes extensive use of the *Kōmei Tennō-ki* (Records of Emperor Kōmei), diaries and