Book Reviews


*The New Analects* is Tony Blishen’s English translation of Ning Qian’s recent Chinese-language edition of the *Analects* (see Qian 2012). Qian has reordered the content of the *Analects* thematically. A self-proclaimed “disciple of Confucius’ teachings,” he has taken this liberty in order to render the master’s philosophy more accessible to readers with no expertise in early Chinese thought.

Qian calls the traditional arrangement of the *Analects* the “Achilles heel of Confucianism” (10). The text is neither orderly nor logical, with related ideas dispersed throughout the text seemingly at random. According to Qian, this explains why the *Analects* has not received the respect it deserves from Western philosophers like Kant and Hegel, who dismissed it as an incoherent set of moral lectures. Furthermore, the *Analects*’ inchoate presentation makes it hard going for the average reader, who has no recourse to the commentarial tradition.

Qian colorfully explains why the *Analects* ended up such a messy collection of notes. Assuming as a fact that Confucius edited and corrected the *Chunqiu 春秋*, the *Shijing 詩經*, and the *Shangshu 尚書*, Qian considers it strange that Confucius did not edit the *Analects* as well. The explanation, he asserts, is that Confucius was prostrated by the death of a young disciple. Qian bluntly states that Yan Yuan’s 顏淵 “early death prevented the transmission of a ‘standard edition’ of the *Analects* corrected by Kongzi himself” (11).

This explanation is fraught with questionable assumptions. First, most scholars now find it unlikely that Confucius edited any of the so-called Classics. Second, textual work on the Classics shows that they are composite texts aggregated by different people over long periods of time and that prior to the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) none of them appeared in anything that can be called a “standard edition” (see Nylan 2001). Most scholars now agree that the text slowly accreted over two or more centuries with the earliest parts dating to the fifth century BCE. Furthermore, the idea that Yan Yuan’s death prevented Confucius from editing the *Analects* (which is itself pure speculation) jars with the fact that the *Analects* contains abundant material that post-dates the master’s
death. The text seems to have been destined to evolve beyond whatever state Confucius left it in.

In spite of the problems with Qian’s account of the composition of the Analects, his rearrangement is an interesting pedagogical experiment. In place of the orthodox text’s twenty chapters, The New Analects contains eight chapters. The first five chapters contain the sayings of the master himself while the remaining three chapters collate the sayings of Confucius’ disciples and later followers.

Qi an conceives ren (translated by Blishen as “humanity”) as the core concept of the Analects. He therefore collects all the passages that bear on the concept in the initial chapter. The second chapter collects sayings on the self-cultivation by which one attains ren. Chapter three bears on how ren can be applied to state governance and the regulation of social behavior. Chapter four collates examples of governance in order to illustrate different aspects of ren. Chapter five grounds ren in human nature and the mandate of heaven. The three concluding chapters—“Evaluation,” “Reminiscence,” and “Exposition”—respectively contain evaluations of Confucius, his disciples’ memories of him, and his followers’ further development of his key tenets.

The claim that Qian’s New Analects displays “the logic and profundity of Kongzi’s thought . . . without the addition or omission of a single word or sentence” (book jacket blurb) may be too strong. After all, Qian’s own marginal comments constitute a thorough defense of ren as the text’s central concept. In the end these comments arguably play a more important role in making the New Analects more than the creative rearrangement of the passages.

Many of Qian’s comments are helpful explanations of aspects of early Chinese culture and society that may be alien to non-specialists. However, some comments—for example his comments about the key virtue of ren—are potentially misleading since they assume that ren “has its source in the heart and is inherent in man’s original nature” (16). As Edward Slingerland shows in Effortless Action (2003), the idea of virtues being inherent in human nature is a Mengzian idea. Like the Xunzi 荀子, the Analects assumes that virtues are not innate but have to be acquired from external sources, such as the tradition of ritually correct behavior created by the sage-kings of old.

That being said, Qian’s New Analects does have a thematic organization that the traditional version lacks. In this regard, it may be a useful introduction to The Analects for people who have never encountered it. Even people who are familiar with the traditional version may enjoy the new perspective that Qian’s rearrangement provides.
Unfortunately Blishen’s translation of the Analects often strays far from the original classical Chinese. For example, he translates 故遠人不服，則修文德以來之 (Analects 16.1) as “This being so, if those afar do no submit then Ren, righteousness, Propriety, and music must be used to secure their submission” (127). Blishen’s translation of the phrase 修文德 xiù wén dé as “Ren, righteousness, Propriety, and music must be used” is problematic. Xiù is a verb meaning to “decorate/embellish” or “fix/repair.” It can also refer to the process of refinement or self-cultivation. Here it takes the complex nominal expression wén dé as its object. The term dé is often translated as “virtue,” but in this context “charismatic power” may be a better translation. Wén can refer to “civil” government as opposed to forceful submission through “warfare” (wù 武). Elsewhere in the Analects wén refers to an indigenous pre-Qin concept of “culture” understood as the refined or “patterned” tradition of the Zhou elite’s rituals and mores (see Analects 9.5). Slingerland (2003) translates 修文德 xiù wén dé as “refine your culture and Virtue,” which is sounder than Blishen’s choice of phrase.

I advise readers interested in Qian’s refreshing rearrangement to follow the ordering in the New Analects while reading the actual passages in Simon Leys’ (Nylan 2014) or Slingerland’s translations.

References


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Ernest Young’s Ecclesiastical Colony: China’s Catholic Church and the French Religious Protectorate is a major addition to the books on China’s foreign relations from the Opium Wars to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. It is the tale of a colonial power, France, hijacking an important arm of a global institution—the Roman Catholic
Church, which had been long established in China—thereby setting an example for other nations, including Protestant nations with missionary ideas of their own.

By the early nineteenth century, Roman Catholicism was deeply rooted in China. Even though it had been banned by the Manchus in the early eighteenth century, some local officials respected Catholicism as part of the patrimony of Chinese Catholics who were born into the faith. French missionaries were hard pressed to exert control over these traditionally Catholic Chinese whose leaders were often women. Nonetheless, as Young writes, “the indigenousness of Chinese Catholicism, stemming from its considerable history, was compromised by its continuing foreign hierarchy” (14).

Why did France attempt to meddle in China's internal religious dynamics? Young proposes that France wanted to expand its presence in China in order to keep pace with England's large network of missionaries and merchants in China. This initiative was so successful that by the beginning of the twentieth century seventy percent of foreign Catholic missionaries in China were French. I might add another motive underlying this meddling: France desired an outlet for religious and patriotic zeal that was not comfortably contained within France.

And how did France proceed? French diplomats encouraged French missionaries to ignore boundaries of foreign religious activities set by treaty after the first Opium War, deliberately expunged those boundaries in subsequent treaties, offered French passports and protection to non-French missionaries, and threatened the careers of Chinese officials. French Catholics underwrote those efforts with generous contributions. The French government supplemented the donations with large sums of money extorted as compensation from China's Manchu government and from provincial and local Chinese officials after local resistance to the missionaries and their Chinese co-religionists led to anti-Catholic violence. Young shows that the arrogance of the French diplomats was shared by many of the foreign church personnel under their protection, causing discontent among Chinese clergy and laity and antagonizing non-Catholic Chinese.

The Vatican, which had taken centuries to mitigate Portugal's control over the Catholic Church in China, could not effectively challenge France for control of the Church in China until World War I depleted French personnel and funding. Pushed by Chinese priests and laymen, as well as by the Belgian missionary Frédéric-Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940) and the Egyptian missionary Antoine Cotta (1872–1957), the Vatican promoted a policy of “indigenization” and elevated a handful of Chinese clergy to bishoprics. It also sent to China missionaries from
other nations such as the U.S. The French and some other missionary groups opposed the Vatican’s new policy of developing a Chinese clergy governed by a Chinese hierarchy throughout the country. Though the French Religious Protectorate ended before the outbreak of World War II, indigenization was nowhere near completion before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. At that point, the Vatican entered into a still-ongoing struggle with the PRC for ultimate control of the Catholic Church in China.

Young put prodigious effort over many years into researching this excellent book. He has scoured the secondary literature and mined libraries and government and ecclesiastical archives in Ann Arbor, London, Louvain-la-Neuve, Madison NJ, Nantes, New Haven, New York, Paris, Rome, the Vatican, and Washington. His style is graceful, his commentary judicious, and his conclusions warranted.

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Robert Kaplan’s geopolitical study of the South China Sea—which is to China as the Caribbean is to the U.S. and the Mediterranean is to Europe, he says—draws attention to a body of water that is the “demographic cockpit of the globe,” the world’s most important sea lane, a potentially vast source of oil and gas, home to a tenth of the world’s marine fisheries, an armed camp, and the location of a naval arms race. “If one assumes,” he writes, “that the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia are the two critical areas of the non-Western world that the United States should never let another great power dominate, consider the energy-rich South China Sea, which lies between them, the third. In fact, in geo-political terms it might arguably be the most critical geographical juncture of the non-Western world” (41).

Kaplan sees the military balance of power, vested in high-tech navies and air forces, shifting to Asia where the U.S. Navy is still dominant but fading. In his view, barring an economic meltdown, China will soon seize Taiwan. It will then focus its energies on the wider South China Sea before turning its attention to the Indian Ocean in order to protect energy supplies from the Middle East. Given that China will espouse commerce rather than a hostile ideology, it will be hard to rouse the American people to oppose China, unless, he argues, U.S. economic self-interest based on participation in new regional free trade
deals is threatened. Whether America will enter into such deals is presently a hotly contested political question.

Kaplan argues that U.S. self-interest is best served by fostering a balance of power rather than by trying to dominate Asia. It might achieve this balance by “helping [Vietnam and other regional states] to manage China’s rise in Southeast Asia” (22) and by maintaining “a sturdy air and naval presence in the South China Sea for decades to come” (23). He is confident that the U.S. will resist Chinese efforts to become a regional hegemon even if it means that Sino-American relations become “tense and contradictory” (24). If the U.S. fails to limit China’s aggression, either by retreating into “quasi-isolationism” (23) or becoming distracted by events elsewhere, he argues that China’s neighbors will become quasi-vassal states and China will dominate Asia (179). U.S. power alone can check China’s economic, demographic, and geographic momentum.

Kaplan begins his study with a brief discussion of his travels in Vietnam and the importance of Indian influence in what the French called Indo-China. He notes projections that the Indian economy will be second only to the Chinese economy in 2050. But Indian national interests and military potential are absent from the discussion until the very end of his first chapter, when he notes the suggestion of Australian strategist Hugh White that the U.S., China, India, Japan, and other Asian powers should initiate an arrangement for the management of Asia on the nineteenth-century “Concert of Europe” model. Inexplicably from a realist point of view, Kaplan continues to treat India and its power as an afterthought, potentially important only if China’s economy collapses. If the Indian and Pacific Oceans are best understood as a combined Indo-Pacific, as Kaplan argues, then greater attention must be paid to India, a nuclear power with a powerful and growing navy.

Later chapters record Kaplan’s discussions with officials and scholars in Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Vietnam. He notes the clash of civilizations in some states and finds the toll of corruption, dependency, and political decay among Southeast Asian nations especially heavy on the Philippines, which he considers burdened by Roman Catholicism and which he likens to the countries of Latin America.

While he presents a number of possible scenarios for the region, Kaplan has missed some that are equally likely. Indeed, events in the region are racing ahead of his work. Recently, for example, Japan has tried to cultivate ties with India and with the ASEAN nations. It is contributing coast guard vessels to the Philippines and considering the export of arms to countries in the region. These measures are consistent
with Japan’s determination to keep the lanes of communication in the South China Sea open.

Although it will probably give less satisfaction to hardcore realists than Joseph N. Luttwak’s *The Rise of China vs. The Logic of Strategy* (2012), Kaplan’s *Asia’s Cauldron* highlights many strands in the abundant material about the politics of the South China Sea that has appeared in recent years. And yet there are master’s theses and possibly even doctoral dissertations still to be written on the strands Kaplan has overlooked or left undeveloped.

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Resembling an elegant exhibition catalog, *The Brittle Decade* addresses the rising interest in 1930s Japan by showcasing collections in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The book is a beautiful coffee table volume printed on high-quality paper and bound in attractive silver-toned cloth. Its 170-odd images of posters, postcards, kimono textiles, photographs, paintings, and watercolors highlight Japan’s art and visual culture during the tumultuous 1930s, a relatively under-examined field in English-language scholarship (for the most pertinent scholarship, see Culver 2007, 2013; Toshiharu 2010; Weisenfeld, 2002, 2009). A volume like *The Brittle Decade*—combining astute analysis of historical context and high quality reproductions—is long overdue.

The book is the brainchild of collector Frederic Sharf, a wealthy businessman whose ability to seduce rich donors and make valuable finds in Japan helped the MFA secure hundreds of artworks from “the brittle decade.” No mere dilettante, Sharf has authored dozens of art books and catalogs, and he curated the MFA’s 2009 exhibition “Showa Sophistication,” which showcased 1930s-era Japanese art that he had himself collected (*The Brittle Decade’s* last chapter focuses on this show).

The volume’s authors are eminent, and they successfully emphasize the period’s turbulent history and deep impact on Japanese visual culture. John Dower is a Pulitzer Prize-winning professor emeritus of modern Japanese history at MIT; Jacqueline Atkins is a curator of textiles emerita at the Allentown Art Museum; Anne Nishimura Morse has worked as senior curator of Japanese Art at the MFA for over twenty-five years; and Sharf is an independent historian, art collector, and MFA trustee. Essays by Dower and Sharf frame chapters by the two
curators. There is inevitable overlap as they examine how the decade’s material culture expresses key events of Japanese public life (for example, the Kamikaze-go aircraft’s voyage to attend King George VI’s 1937 coronation and the aborted 1940 Tokyo Olympics and International Exposition). They might have cited Ken Ruoff’s seminal work (2010) on the 1940 commemoration of the mythical founding year of Japan. Instead, they extensively quote U.S. Ambassador Joseph Grew’s published diary. As it happens, Grew tends to reflect prevailing stereotypes rather than debunk myths about this era, which initially lacked a fixed trajectory towards fascism and militarism.

Though the authors omit a strict definition of the term, the “Brittle Decade” began in 1930, following the advent of the Great Depression, and ended in 1940, with Japan’s last gasp of internationalism before it plunged into the darkness of world war. Dower emphasizes the era’s cosmopolitanism: “Japanese artists and intellectuals did not see themselves as mimicking the West, but rather as participating in the great ferment of ideas and cross-influences in which their Western counterparts were engaged” (36). The 1930s were characterized by the cross-fertilization of the arts and faddish consumerism of goods and ideas. A dark turning point occurred in 1933. Rampant love suicides and an irreverent yoyo craze preoccupied the public, while overseas the “pacification” of Manchuria went forward after 1931, punctuated by the 1932 declaration that made it “independent” Manchukuo. The same year marked the rise of “transcendental cabinets” (i.e., cabinets unaffiliated with a political party in the Diet), the beginning of prime ministers hailing from the military or imperial family, and progressive upticks of Japanese aggression in China.

While internationalism persisted throughout the decade, “[t]ension between civilian dreams and military realities carried into and through 1937, as the revolutions in transportation and communications segued into great leaps forward in mechanized warfare” (42). Modernity’s seemingly fragmented nature fed the cohesive militarism that united the nation and bound the disparate elements threatening to tear the nation apart. Dower also notes the role of the proletarian movement, which generated awareness of capitalism’s alienating nature and tendency to foster disparities and inequalities. Throughout the decade, Japanese organizations attempted to propagate a peaceful national self-image by publicizing Japanese technological prowess, trumpeting equality with the West in telecommunications and transport, promoting tourism, and showcasing the empire’s attractions.

Dower introduces the decade in the first of four essays. His essay might stymie someone lacking background in modern Japanese prewar history, as it shifts topics relatively quickly and often return pages or
paragraphs later to the original subject. Nevertheless, Dower provides a sophisticated analysis of the decade and cites the prevailing English-language scholarship on the era’s popular culture. Dower truly shines when he ventures deeper into the 1930s and examines how the era’s socioeconomic climate slowly began to favor militarism and overseas adventurism and notes its impact on visual culture and entertainment pastimes. Even so, a short introduction explaining the volume’s purpose and how it developed might better have aided the MFA’s mission to publicize collections and educate broader audiences on Japanese art.

Morse highlights the intriguing hybridity of stylistic influences arising from the decade’s cosmopolitanism. Though she mentions the exoticism generated by a China encroached upon by invading Japanese troops, she neglects to show how this trend stems from Japan’s earlier high imperialist culture. Nor does she explore congruities with the experiences of Western empires like Great Britain and France, whose imperialism also deeply influenced the arts. She reveals how Prince Asaka Yasuhiko’s 朝香宮鳩彦王 (1887–1981) French-inspired Shirokanedai villa represented high Western modernism practiced by cosmopolitan Japanese aristocrats who had sojourned in Europe (Rene Lalique commissioned glass interiors).

Yet Morse argues that Tokyo’s Meguro Gajôen 目黒雅叙園, a wedding hall and reception center that she describes as “an extensive, fantastical entertainment complex,” more aptly highlights the ostentation of bourgeois taste (55). Built in 1931 by entrepreneur and art patron Hosokawa Rikizô 細川力蔵 for the staggering sum of 1.5 million yen, the complex showcased the period’s popular art, generally Nihonga 日本画 (traditional Japanese) paintings in the bijinga 美人画 (“images of beauties”) tradition. This art featured bright colors and new cultural contexts (cafés, ski slopes, or sailing), with women wearing Western or Chinese clothes. The consumption of art and food at the Gajôen also reflected the Japanese empire’s preoccupation with its weaker neighbor. “Nagasaki style” designated Chinese food mediated by Japanese cultural practices. The meal was consumed on tatamimats with Japanese utensils and service. No less than the women in the paintings, guests in the reception hall wore modified Chinese or Western dresses to embody modernity in a space reflecting the confluence of popular entertainment and the international political situation.

Atkins’ essay builds on her earlier edited volume on textiles and the home front (see Atkins 2005). Here, she focuses on the material and design culture of Japanese textiles, primarily the omoshirogara面白柄 or novelty kimono that so much reflected popular culture trends. Fabrics included new muslins and rayon replicas of more expensive silks that featured patterns emphasizing sports, technology, and even new military
hardware. Atkins also analyzes the material culture of the garment’s fabric—who wore it and how, and the meanings of its symbols. For example, she discusses how families wrapped baby boys in omiyamairi お宮参り—kimonos worn on first shrine visits—imprinted with nationalistic images like General Iwane Matsui 松井 石根 (1878–1948) riding into a conquered and devastated Nanking after the 1937 massacre. Though these images may disturb contemporary viewers, families at the time wished their sons to embody the military valor, courage, pride, and honor represented by the general. Atkins stresses that such emblems also expressed an important commercial dimension: “The soft propaganda message implicit in these and other designs is one that the textile producer or artist picked up as patriotic motifs that would sell” (140).

Lastly, Sharf examines “Showa Sophistication” as a device for selling products in department stores and fostering tourism within Japan and the empire. The modern in this context meant the squarely bourgeois lifestyle: a healthy body, leisure pursuits, and consciousness of prevailing fashion trends. Sharf might have emphasized the largely middle-class flavor of such “sophistication”—indicative of the high socio-economic level that some urban Japanese and provincial elites emulated, but representing a standard of living unavailable to all. Popular interest in the modern girl’s alluring figure, the sports boom, and upcoming national events in 1940 (the Tokyo Olympics and World Exposition) helped to sell trips, art, and a positive image of Japan globally. Following Japan’s third-place finish in the 1932 Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games, Olympic-branded products like novelty items, ashtrays, toys, cosmetics, clothing, and even umbrellas featured the Olympic rings (167). Sharf highlights the fact that official sponsorship and the patronage of the imperial family ignited crazes for sporting events like golf, mountaineering, and skiing in the 1930s—a telling commentary on the period’s effective use of media and print culture.

The book particularly excels in its account of Japan’s popular culture as an expression of the new militarism. The ubiquity of such seemingly innocuous symbols as stylized tanks, sleek submarines, emblazoned maps, and fluttering flags made it easy for the Japanese populace to accept the propaganda emanating from the government, but The Brittle Decade makes clear the complicated market dynamics spurring this propaganda: opportunistic advertisers exploited patriotism to generate consumption, department stores capitalized on military victories in China, and consumers equated fashion with the symbols and markers of current events. More analysis of such “soft” or informal grassroots propaganda from the level of the consumer and producer would have been welcome. However, the book’s appeal to a well-
educated general audience rather than a scholarly audience makes its exhibition catalog format a visually arresting and intellectually stimulating means of propagating the MFA’s educational mission.

References


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In the prefatory matter to Balinese Food: The Traditional Cuisine & Food Culture of Bali, author Vivienne Kruger explains that her goal was “to produce a meticulously researched and comprehensive storehouse of hard-to-find information on Balinese cuisine, encompassing all aspects of traditional village food found, grown and consumed on the island” (8–9). But she also notes a catalyst that competes with—and partially thwarts—her ambitions: the fact that her book is the fruit of an “extreme love affair with the food and food culture” of Bali, Indonesia (7).

Objectivity is the foundation of any authoritative reference work; hyperbole and purple prose are out of place. Consider, then, this colorful description of nasi jenggo (rice, meat, vegetables, and chili sauce wrapped in banana leaf): “Nasi jenggo in its purest form resembles an artistic, house-shaped package of pleasure. . . . Open the outer leaves to reveal
the rice glory inside. . . . Eat the nasi jenggo with your right hand. Scoop up luscious, fiery fingerfuls and combine it with a generous mouthful of rice for a popular local culinary sensation” (67–68). Bebek betutu (whole smoked duck), which Kruger calls Bali’s most famous dish, receives the following treatment: “An award-winning Balinese masterpiece, bebek betutu explodes in your mouth like a flavor firecracker. It is full of hot, hand-crushed peppers, spice-driven excitement and a deep, abiding love for the gods. Embrace the sheer luxury of this elaborate duck dish as you let the intensity and integrity of the flavors slowly unfold, moment by moment, piece by perfect piece” (137). And the “captivating taste” of Balinese coffee “reflects the romance, power and divine energy of Bali, situated eight secluded, precious degrees south of the equator” (264). Terms such as legendary, mysterious, exotic, unique, magical, amazing, and secret are too common. In another instance of overreach, Kruger claims that “Balinese food is distinctive among the leading cuisines of the world” (14). Whose notion of “leading cuisines” would routinely include Balinese food?

I, too, have been enraptured by the food of countries I’ve visited, and I understand Kruger’s melodramatics. Embracing the text as a personal impression allows one to view it as a twenty-first-century addendum to Miguel Covarrubias’s (1904–57) Island of Bali (1937), published as Bali first became a “destination” for North American travelers. Indeed, Kruger quotes Covarrubias’s book frequently (perhaps too extensively), portraying his work as something of a lodestar and Covarrubias himself as something of a muse. Unlike Island of Bali, though, Balinese Food lacks an overarching sense of structure: the book collects twenty-one loosely connected chapters that touch on particular elements of Balinese food culture—rice, vegetables and fruits, snacks, poultry and meat, sweets, coffee and tea, alcohol—without providing much context. Helpful at the outset would have been a more thorough exploration of history, geography, and religion. How is it, for example, that Bali is predominantly Hindu while Indonesia is predominantly Muslim? What, exactly, is a tooth-filing ceremony? What is a mecaru ceremony? What are the roles of castes in Indonesia today? Maps, absent here, are always a blessing in a cultural reference work, and I would have appreciated a brief explanation of Indonesia’s regency (i.e., municipality) system. That many of the chapters enjoyed previous lives as stand-alone essays explains some of the repetition. Most chapters end with recipes, but any scholar who wishes to include recipes in a work should consult the guides by Jacob (2010) and Ostmann and Baker (2001) to ensure that recipes will be accessible and replicable. I am of course intrigued by the recipe calling for “1¼ lb (600 g) dragonflies” (26), but I would be much
more likely to attempt the Balinese recipes offered by von Holzen and Arsana (1995).

Kruger explores dynamics of tradition and change throughout her book, claiming that “largely unchanged customary practices continue to take precedence over modernity” (16). For example, most Balinese apparently “do not see or understand a need” for refrigeration (36): “In the villages, the wondrous, redundant, ‘curiosity’ refrigerator often takes lonely pride of place in the living room because the venerable, small, ‘traditional Balinese kitchen’ is still full of soot, smoke and ash” (37). But elsewhere we read of “ever-encroaching modern supermarkets” (28), traditional preparations that are “not used for daily cooking as people are too busy and the method is complicated” (30), and the use of electric rice cookers instead of traditional steamers (34, 52). Moreover, “few young women can be bothered to make home-made jaja [sweets] today” (203–4), and “people lead busier lives, families are becoming smaller, young women are less interested in cooking and fast food snacks and fried rice are available everywhere” (136). Nasi goreng—fried rice, Indonesia’s “iconic food and its ‘national dish’” (109)—is infrequently prepared at home but commonly bought at local warungs (freestanding food stalls). Indeed, due to the influence of tourism, “there is comparatively so much food now in Bali that there is no need to cook at home. If the Balinese have money, they can simply go to a warung and buy whatever they want” (46).

I learned much, though, from descriptions of traditional daily household routines: women shop in the early morning at markets for the day’s provisions, prepare the day’s fare, and set the finished dishes on the kitchen table under light cover (unrefrigerated) for family members to eat—typically not communally—throughout the day. Any leftovers are fed to livestock—“nothing is stored or saved or planned as food for tomorrow,” Kruger claims (37), an effect of (or reason for) the general lack of refrigeration—and the pattern repeats. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, dog meat may appear as satay (bite-size pieces of meat skewered, grilled, and served with sauce) at warungs; but sea turtles, traditionally an important part of the provisions accompanying religious ceremonies, are more problematic, given their endangered status. Prevalent ingredients like chilies and antioxidant-rich seasonings (such as alliums, galangal, ginger, and turmeric) are believed to counteract bacteria in dishes involving for example raw pig’s blood. (Remember Bali’s predominantly Hindu, not Muslim, population.)

The book is not one to read on an empty stomach. Sixteen pages of color plates—primarily photographs taken by the author—enhance the volume, but I would have appreciated indications in the text or captions as to which pages relate to each image. Appendices on Balinese
ingredients and kitchen equipment, a sourcing guide for Balinese foodstuffs in the English-speaking world, and a subject index round out the volume. A recipe index would have been a nice addition. Another nice addition would have been headings and subheadings, especially given the many chapters that include lengthy descriptions of Balinese dishes and food-preparation techniques.

Overall, Kruger offers a detailed and potentially useful window into the food and food culture of Bali. As long as you can forgive the romanticized presentation of this “staggeringly beautiful” island (108) with an “amazing culinary culture” (107), you will likely find the book informational and rewarding.

References


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Lauren Meeker’s Sounding Out Heritage: Cultural Politics and the Social Practice of Quan Hồ Folk Song in North Vietnam concerns efforts in Vietnam over the past half-century to preserve and promote a particularly rich folk-song tradition known as quan hồ that is concentrated in an area in and around the city of Bắc Ninh, which one can reach by bus from Hanoi in about thirty minutes. It is also about the daunting problems inherent in “preservation” and “promotion”; for, as the author demonstrates, it is almost impossible to make a musical folk tradition available to mass audiences without radical changes in style, content, and meaning. The author provides a rich array of observations from every sort of person involved in the quan hồ enterprise and shows a thorough awareness of analogous developments elsewhere in Vietnam and around the world.

In her introduction, Meeker describes the area from which quan hồ emerged: a 250-square kilometer area in Bắc Ninh Province and a bit of
Bắc Giang Province just north of the Cầu River. This area includes forty-nine villages designated as “quan họ villages.” It also includes a number of villages that have come to practice quan họ, even though they are not among the original forty-nine designees.

In chapter one, “Music After the Revolution,” Meeker provides helpful background, discussing the preservation, dissemination, and distortion of Vietnamese traditional music in general. Meeker suggests that the two most significant agents of distortion in the post-1945 period have been the ideological demands placed on music by state theorists and the structures and methods of Western music.

In chapter two, “Embodied Practices and Relationships of Sentiment,” Meeker lays out, with much delicacy and detail, the social context of quan họ before the advent of efforts to preserve and promote the form. Prior to 1945, people in the Bắc Ninh area did not generally speak of hát quan họ (singing quan họ), but rather of chơi quan họ (“playing” or “engaging in” quan họ). It was not essentially a performance genre. Its purpose was not entertainment, but communication and affirmation of social ties between individuals and small groups. There was no defined “audience” for quan họ aside from the participants themselves, who sang in groups of five or more called bôn. These bôn were all either exclusively male or exclusively female. Typically, each neighborhood (xóm) in a village would have one or more bôn. Members of a bôn engaged in intensive training and were paired into singing duos based on vocal compatibility, with one singer assuming the lead and the other a subsidiary role. The subsidiary singer continued lines begun by the lead singer. Taking alternate breathing breaks, the two singers could create an unbroken vocal line. Each bôn would seek out a bôn of the opposite sex in a different village with which to “make friends” (kết bạn). The two bôn would meet one or more times per month and exchange renditions of songs. These arrangements had nothing to do with courtship; marriage between members of paired bôn was in fact strictly forbidden, even though the feelings generated by the musical exchanges were personal, intense, and included deep admiration and friendship.

Chapter Three, “How Much For a Song,” begins by tracing phases in the development of quan họ practice after 1945 (there was a partial cessation of singing in the late 40s and throughout 50s, followed by a revival in the 60s), then deals with the chief origin myths associated with quan họ, and finally discusses the transplantation of quan họ from a context of social exchange to one of monetary exchange. According to the chief origin myth, Vua Bà, a daughter of the sixth Hùng Vương king, went on a sightseeing trip with forty-nine male and forty-nine female retainers. She and her attendants were swept from their intended path
by a storm and founded a settlement in what is now Diệm village, near Bắc Ninh, where she taught people the arts of sericulture and quan ho. She then married the forty-nine women to the forty-nine men, after which each couple founded a village. These villages became the forty-nine quan ho villages of Bắc Ninh tradition. By contrast, I once asked the poet Hoàng Cầm, a native of Bắc Ninh, if he had any thoughts on the origins of quan ho. He said that Bắc Ninh had for centuries been a crossroads for commercial and other traffic in north Vietnam, where merchants and itinerant monks often stopped. This created an eclectic atmosphere and a degree of intellectual ferment. He also said that Lý Công Uẩn (974–1028), founder of the Lý Dynasty, came from the Bắc Ninh area and did much to promote cultural activities in the region after coming to the throne. As Lý Công Uẩn died a thousand years ago, it seems farfetched to suppose that he contributed to the appearance of quan ho, but this idea is at least less fanciful than the myth of the Hùng Vương princess.

Chapter Four, “Staging Quan Ho,” discusses the addition of dance and spectacle to modern quan ho performances, changes in the use of pronouns in quan ho performance, changes in marriage conventions associated with quan ho, and finally the efforts of a small and underfunded Bắc Ninh Provincial TV station to restore the authenticity of the quan ho tradition. It is reassuring that so many involved in quan ho are concerned about authenticity, even though there is no conceivable way to make the traditional quan ho experience fully available to a modern listener.

Chapter Five, “Broadcasting to Ourselves,” discusses the “picturesqueness” of modern quan ho performance, focusing on mimetic gestures and the amplified, modernized quan ho sung on little dragon boats on ponds or on the Cầu River. Dance and physical mimesis played no role in quan ho prior to 1945; in fact participants maintained a studied immobility while singing. The eyes were the only expressive part of the body. It was standard practice for the singer to gaze directly into the eyes of the listener. This helped to create close bonds between the paired bôn. The pond and river performances are likewise a new development. Traditionally, quan ho was performed in open-air settings and within dwellings. However, modern listeners—even natives of the Bắc Ninh area—often assume mistakenly that there is something “traditional” about the little dragon boats.

In her conclusion, “The Heritage and Afterlife of Songs,” Meeker discusses the inherent tension between “preservation” and “development” and then focusses on the irrevocability of a particular song, “Hừ La,” which is considered the most difficult song in the genre. Though its lyrics consist of only four lines of poetry, the song takes ten
minutes to perform, due to the interstitial nonsense syllables that are an essential aspect of it. Contemporary singers, even expert ones, sing it only gropingly—it is too complex for them.

Technically, this book is excellent. Vietnamese names and quotations are for the most part given in correct form, with diacritics. The bibliography is useful and the endnotes are informative. It is a pity that the book does not include any transcriptions of melodies, and that it lacks an accompanying CD illustrating different phases and modes of quan hơ. Still one must be grateful for the considerable quantity of well-organized information that it does offer.

Let me conclude with a personal experience that corroborates Meeker’s book. In the summer of 2006, I arranged for a small group of professional quan hơ singers to do a personal recital for me and a young Vietnamese friend in Bác Ninh. We were met on the street by Thúy Cái, the leader of the group. She was dressed in a Northern-style four-paneled áo dài. She and a male associate took us to an empty theater and invited us to sit on a group of mats on the stage. Four young women in traditional dress came out and sat on the mats as well. For the next hour and a half, I listened to quan hơ sung by the five young ladies and chatted with Thúy Cái and her associates in between the songs, which included “Còn Duyên” (“Charming”), “Vào Chùa,” (“Entering the Pagoda”), and “Người Ở Đừng Về” (“Oh Boarder, Don’t Go Back”). Each piece appeared to have a distinct modal and melismatic character. Some seemed minor-keyish, some major-keyish, and some seemed poised somewhere in between. I would have had to listen to them repeatedly to pin down the exact mode of each. There was no instrumental accompaniment, but the songs had inner voices that most probably would not have been there if the songs had been performed in a completely traditional style. We sat cross-legged on the stage, gazing into each other’s eyes. At the conclusion of the recital, the performers startled me by asking me to sing something. Fortunately, I was tolerably familiar with a quan hơ song called “Qua Cầu Giồ Bay” (“The Wind Was Blowing as I Crossed the Bridge”), and I did my part without total embarrassment. I see in retrospect that all this was very much in line with what Meeker says about essential reciprocity at the core of quan hơ.

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Art forms, like cicadas, develop in stages, generally in response to their environment. Where conditions are unfavorable, growth is stunted,
while the right combination of elements can stimulate remarkable metamorphoses. Unlike cicadas, however, art forms often flourish in “stressful” conditions—they are often nourished by stress. This particularly applies to any Japanese art form, like manga and anime, that flourished in the twentieth century, an era that was nothing if not stressful. Hazarding one more comparison, one might say that manga and anime are now (if you’ll pardon the pun) fully endowed imagos. Once considered a mass-cultural confection (even by its own lions like Hayao Miyazaki) and more recently considered an intramural fetish object (again, by Miyazaki), anime and manga continue to expand in global appeal—and in the face of similar criticisms. They continue to attract scholars who see them as philosophically serious and sociologically intriguing art forms, complexly imbricated in a whole range of cultural practices—less art forms than platforms for creative networks, involving video games, figurines, and more. A survey of recent titles devoted to manga and anime reveals the breadth and maturity not only of these art forms, but of their critical discourse, which increasingly attempts to consider manga and anime within their natural habitat.

One of the surest signs of this maturity is retrospection and stock-taking, which manifests within the artwork at the formal level of parody and allusion and within the criticism at the analytical level of synthesis. Mechademia 8 manifests both levels of maturity, tracing the career of Osamu Tezuka (1928–89) from imitator to innovator. Within a few short years, Tezuka’s uniquely demotic style became more or less identified with manga and anime, and it is really only now, some quarter-century after his death, that we can adequately reflect on that identification. The theme, therefore, of Mechademia 8 is “life,” both in the historiographical sense (e.g., Tezuka’s legacy) and in a more rarefied theoretic one: life as a continually contested and redefined category, ontologically and politically. For the newcomer to manga and anime, and the Mechademia series in particular, this volume might seem puzzlingly organized, as it moves from the latter sense to the former. Those unfamiliar with recent debates about biopolitics, the Anthropocene, vitalism, and the “inhuman turn” might find the opening section, “Nonhuman Life,” hard going (reading the volume backward, section by section, might help). Those familiar with these trends, on the other hand, will find much that is rewarding and provocative. Mechademia 8 does not assume fluency in the thought of Gilles Deleuze or Giorgio Agamben, but it is hard to imagine a reader wading confidently through the volume without some notion of this background.

Happily, Thomas Lamarre’s brief introduction provides theoretic context and defends the volume’s organization. He begins with a single
salient quality of Tezuka’s massive oeuvre, one that least invites scholarly evaluation, namely his ordinariness. Our sense of Tezuka’s ordinariness is a function of his ubiquity (he was, after all, Japan’s most industrious mangaka and animator), his unadorned style, and the (seemingly) bland social realism of his narratives. He seems safe; he seems predictable. What is more, he became an industry unto himself. So we can be forgiven for considering him less an artist than an elaborate art-management system. To give Tezuka his due, we must dismantle the history that supports his legend and find a way to construe him as extraordinary rather than ordinary. The first section of the volume, therefore, attempts to revise (or anyway derange) the auteurist gospel that would proclaim Tezuka the “God of manga” and “Godfather of anime.”

The first essay of the volume, Mary Knighton’s “‘Becoming-Insect Woman’: Tezuka’s Feminist Species,” initiates this derangement by revealing a dimension of the uncanny beneath the veneer of Tezuka’s ordinariness. Knighton connects Tezuka’s insects, with which “his manga literally swarms” (4), to the larger existential, if not cosmic, theme of metamorphosis that defines his career, particularly his career-spanning work Phoenix (火の鳥 Hi no Tori, 1956–89). Insects largely appeal to Tezuka in their allegorical dimension, as Knighton demonstrates, though not in an entirely straightforward way. There is always an element of satire in Tezuka’s allegorical insects, perhaps most acute when they intersect gender-related issues. Turning to The Book of Human Insects (人間昆虫記 Ningen Konchûki, 1970–71), Knighton traces the association of the feminine and insectoid in Tezuka’s work and finds what Lamarre calls an “incipient feminism” (xii). For Knighton, Tezuka’s insect-women serve “as a vehicle to depict not only the obstacles Japanese women faced in being recognized as fully human . . . but also those of Japanese men emasculated in defeat and Occupation” (11). Knighton maps Tezuka’s insect-women onto Rosi Braidotti’s concept of “becoming-insect”—one of several vectors of liberation explored in Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming (2002)—to show how “Tezuka’s feminist species enact multiple biomorphic and social possibilities” (18). G. Clinton Godart’s contribution, “Tezuka’s Circle of Life: Vitalism, Evolution, and Buddhism,” expands these possibilities outside their immediate frame, connecting Knighton’s sociological concerns to broader philosophical questions of life itself. Godart examines the various ways Tezuka, especially in his critical writings, expresses a vitalist attitude toward life. In this vitalism converge scientific and religious discourses, the strict materialism of Darwinian evolution on the one hand and the spiritual monism of Inoue Enryô (1858–1919), for example, on the other.
Without making an empirical, historicist claim, Godart argues that Tezuka and Inoue share a sense of a unifying life-force at the core of reality. Godart admits there is no evidence that Tezuka had ever read Inoue and asserts rather that vitalist interpretations of evolutionary theory reconciling Buddha and Darwin are “a structural aspect of Japan’s . . . Taishô and Shôwa intellectual history” (43). The reader might object that Godart substitutes one unsupported claim for an even greater one, but Godart offers enough bibliographic evidence to suggest (at least for the purposes of his essay) that Darwinian vitalism was “in the air.” In their respective essays, Linda H. Chance, Verina Gfader, and Christine L. Marran return to the insect as the staging ground for an escape from stifling anthropocentrism.

The volume’s second section, “Media Life,” directs the questions of the first section to the non-biological sphere, radicalizing our notion of what “life” signifies. Can art forms, for example, resemble cicadas at more than the metaphorical level? Do media interactions comprise an ecology of sorts? Can we track the evolution of a medium the way we do the evolution of anteaters, sunflowers, and other living things? Resistance to such possibilities often indicates our investment in biocentric and anthropocentric myths of exceptionalism and autonomy, particularly when it comes to art, where notions of “originality” and “genius” are central. Natsume Fukanosuke’s monograph Where is Tezuka Osamu? (手塚治虫はどこにいる Tezuka Osamu wa doko ni iru, 1992), two chapters of which appear here in translation, was one of the first to identify (and challenge) the “mythologizing discourse characterizing Tezuka as a sort of postwar ‘god’” (90); rather, through careful formal analysis, Natsume reveals Tezuka less as an originator than inheritor—an important one, to be sure—of visual trends in the making since at least the Meiji era. The emphasis is more on possibilities that emerge in art as a result of ongoing conversations occurring, as it were, within the medium itself, irrespective of artistic intention. The two chapters focus on changes in panel format (i.e., how panel formats in a given period imply certain expressive attitudes toward time and movement) and changes in the rendering of eyes (in the highlights of which Natsume sees a growing interest in psychological “interiority”). In their respective chapters, Renato Rivera Rusca, Marc Steinberg, and Jonathan Clements flesh out Natsume’s conclusions with closer analysis of specific titles and/or elements of Tezuka’s oeuvre. Rusca discusses Tezuka’s appropriation of various technical innovations to overcome creative impasses when bringing to screen Phoenix 2772 (火の鳥 2772 愛のコスモゾーン Hi no tori 2772: Ai no kosmozón, 1980). Particularly stark is the disconnection between the film’s formal and thematic elements: many of the images were cutting
edge, while many of the characters were hopelessly retrograde. Screening the film on U.S. college campuses, Tezuka was unprepared for feminist reactions to the passivity of his female characters, their blank drive toward subservience and self-sacrifice. To his credit, Tezuka took these reactions to heart and went on to write more complex female characters. Clements examines Tezuka’s achievements primarily in terms of their impact as a business model. The Tezuka franchise—addressed at greater length in Steinberg’s *Anime’s Media Mix* (2012)—may in fact be the most enduring aspect of his legacy. It represents the acme of “media mix” marketing, the all-out image assault waged across the material consciousness of a culture: its clothing, toys, games, novelties, movies, music, coffee mugs, phone cards, you name it. In many respects, as Steinberg persuasively argues concerning *Astro Boy*, Tezuka was a victim of his own success. The proliferation of images—including bad ones, counterfeits, and so on—gradually and ironically tends to undermine the original. In a clever and insightful turn, Steinberg shows how Tezuka thematized this erasure, along with anxieties about piracy and copyright infringement, within the *Astro Boy* manga itself in a story-line involving a fake or “reproduced Atomu.” The triumph of the “real” Atomu over his doppelgänger is also, of course, a symbolic victory over all those who would profit illegally from Tezuka’s creation.

The third section, “A Life in Manga,” presents a series of portraits of Tezuka as a young man, focusing simultaneously on his development as a storyteller and the development of his readership. Hashimoto Yorimitsu’s “Toward a Theory of the ‘Artist Manga’: Manga Self-Consciousness and the Transforming Figure of the Artist” emphasizes the anxiety of influence vis-à-vis romanticism, particularly the fraught attempts at self-actualization that define the *künstlerroman* (Dazai Osamu’s *No Longer Human* is a fascinating touchstone throughout). Ryan Holmberg traces the impact of *Manga Shônen* (1948–55), in which Tezuka published his first major serial; as Holmberg demonstrates, *Manga Shônen* was a “crucible” out of which “many of the top sellers and innovators of postwar manga” emerged (174). It thus provides an interesting “base-line” for Tezuka’s development. Fujiki Hideaki’s essay, “Implicating Readers: Tezuka’s Early Seinen Manga,” describes Tezuka’s transition from *shônen manga*, which was aimed at boys, to *seinen* manga, which was aimed at young men, and all the subtle and not-so-subtle modulations of approach entailed. Fujiki focuses on three aspects of this transition: “the relation of humans to nonhuman, supernatural or abnormal phenomena; the maturation or self-realization of characters; and evil” (202). Fujiki finds that whereas Tezuka’s *shônen* works depict a stable moral universe, the *seinen* works tend toward
complexity, to the point where the reader is implicated in the negotiations being conducted from panel to panel. Jonathan Clements examines negotiations of another kind altogether: the financial and technical negotiations involved in producing a televised *anime* series, as Tezuka did so successfully. The world-wide popularity of *Astro Boy* ensured that many of Tezuka's business innovations, for good and ill, would be cemented as common practices. For some, the “Tezuka model” works to the detriment of the artists; for others, its financial success gives storytellers greater leverage against studio executives aiming at the lowest common denominator.

The essays of the last section of the volume, “Everyday Life,” open Tezuka’s work to examination on the essentially political level and seek to coordinate Tezuka with prevailing social trends. Of particular interest to me were Ôtsuka Eiji’s and Patrick W. Galbraith’s contributions, though all of the essays are strong. Ôtsuka’s ambitious argument attempts to triangulate Tezuka with Walt Disney and Sergei Eisenstein (whose montage theory was in circulation in Japan), an “unholy alliance” that more or less set the parameters of *otaku* culture. Many of the aspects of that culture can be traced back, for Ôtsuka, to fascistic, war-glorifying images absorbed and reproduced by Tezuka from these sources. Galbraith for his part is intrigued by the erotic life (and after-life) of Tezuka's creations, the way in which his images have been appropriated by others, as evident in the recent Tezuka-themed exhibit, “Osamu Moet Moso” (2010–present). These appropriations reveal that Tezuka is legitimately the “god of *moe,*” that set of stylized (and often neotenous) character traits that *manga* and *anime* consumers so often fetishize. Hori Hikari’s essay, “Tezuka, Shôjo Manga, and Hagio Moto,” revisits Tezuka’s career as a writer of *shôjo* (girl’s) *manga,* in which one often finds more liberated depictions of sexuality. Such reevaluations are not meant to deflate Tezuka’s reputation or even to “set the record straight.” Their goal is to help us assess the tremendous impact he had on *manga* and *anime,* and the various conditions—human and nonhuman—that both stressed and nourished his incredible career.

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will appeal to both newcomer and old hand. Condry is able to walk that delicate line—thin as spider's silk—between erudition and populism, reinvigorating discussion of perennial favorites like Tezuka's *Astro Boy* (鉄腕アトム *Tetsuwan Atomu*, 1963–66) and encouraging further discussion of more recent works like *Tekkon Kinkreet* (鉄コン筋クリー *Tekkonkinkuriito*, 2006). He also makes deft use of critics, theorists, and commentators—from David Harvey and Judith Butler to Azuma Hiroki and Ōtsuka Eiji—without losing narrative momentum. What most makes this text stand out, however, is Condry’s unapologetically ethnographic approach. Those familiar with Condry’s earlier book, *Hip-Hop Japan* (2006), will recognize the focus and methodology: analysis based on interviews, sociological data, and first-hand fieldwork. This approach gives *The Soul of Anime* a rather different “feel” than academic titles with a more literary or film-theoretical bias. Condry’s methodological approach is consonant with the book’s overarching thesis: that the global success of *anime* is largely due to its creative collaboration across media (as described in Marc Steinberg’s fine 2012 study *Anime’s Media Mix*) but also, crucially, between *anime* creators and fans/consumers.

According to Gondry, the nexus of “collective social energy” (2) that freely assumes both official (licensed) and unofficial (fan-created) forms constitutes the soul of *anime*. Because it initially flourished without massive corporate sponsorship, *anime* represents what Condry calls “globalization from below” (214 et passim)—a triumph of grassroots aesthetics and hobbyist passion. Commitment, not money, is the currency of such a realm. While it has obviously become a huge industry, *anime* still enjoys a unique relationship to amateur and fan-created work. Where other entertainment and art industries manically police their copyright fiefdoms (often at a cost greater than losses projected from piracy), *anime* has taken a more balanced approach that recognizes the financial and creative dividends of a dedicated fan-base. This isn’t to say that the industry is not sometimes petty and territorial, but that its structure entails avenues of engagement that are rare if not unknown in other media. (Think Linux as opposed to Microsoft.) At its core, then, the success of *anime* is a function of the interplay between the purely imaginative frisson of world-building and what Condry broadly refers to as “the social aspect”—the way value, meaning, and identity are generated; the way *anime* becomes a pretext for interaction; the way it regulates patterns of participation. We need to “become sensitized,” Condry claims, “to the leaps across ‘weak’, or unexpected, links that can be the impetus for radical rethinking” (82).

The first two chapters emphasize the practical side of *anime* production. Given the complexity of this production, logistical problems
naturally abound (e.g., coordinating timetables for different groups of animators involved in different parts of the process) as do technical ones (e.g., how to achieve desired visual effects on a given budget). Condry elucidates these problems by examining the work of Hosoda Mamoru 細田守 (b. 1967) and the design team “m&k.” At stake in both cases is the way “characters operate as a platform of creativity in anime” (39), in other words, how the creative process is driven and shaped by questions of character design, then world design, and then, belatedly, narrative. This seemingly upside-down approach—beginning with the “look” of the characters—has already been the subject of scholarly commentary. Azuma Hiroki argues in Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals (2009) that it reflects the bias of postmodern consumption toward instant gratification as opposed to earlier modes that required greater levels of affective investment. (Think Twix as opposed to Madame Bovary.) For Azuma, the emphasis on character design in manga and anime has in many ways reduced consumers to “database animals” who engage characters wholly at the level of physical traits. Condry’s book offers a counter-narrative, far less dire, that observes how character-design can emphasize “an idea of openness so audience members can add something of their own” (39), even to the point of feeling, in Hosoda’s words, “a kind of joint ownership” (40). The design team “m&k” suggests a similar lesson: by focusing almost solely on the projected relation between audience and character (as opposed to plot), they “hope to show how there are all kinds of ways to be in the world” (64–65). On this view, character design is not just a smorgasbord of affective triggers, but something closer to a spectrum of ethical possibilities.

Having established some of the practical challenges of anime, Condry in chapter three offers a sketch of the postwar industry. He examines the workings of Toei Animation Studio, the rivalry with (and emulation of) Disney, and the role of manga, which often provides the source material for anime. One of the major ways anime differs from Disney, as explored in chapter four, is target audience. Whereas Disney is primarily for the kiddies, anime targets all age demographics. Focusing on robot-oriented titles, Condry shows how “synergies” with the toy industry aided the maturation of the (sub-)genre. The result was larger, more sophisticated, and more expensive toys meant to entice older fans. Such shifting between material and virtual planes—between the physical toy and the fantasy image—has a ramifying effect on both. For Condry, it constitutes the basis of true anime fandom. Newly emergent multimedia franchises gave fans much material over which to obsess. This was the milieu that gave rise to Gainax, the studio that produced Neon Genesis Evangelion (新世紀エヴァンゲリオン Shin Seiki Evangerion, 1995–96), often credited with the precipitous intensification of anime fandom.
Chapter 5 introduces three studios—Gonzo, Ghibli, and 4°C—and explores the creative processes that eventuate in original features and series. This kind of fieldwork sets *The Soul of Anime* apart. In addition to being interesting in its own right, it frames Condry’s larger, thematic questions in a more productive light. How do we define “cutting edge”? How do studios strike a balance between originality and broad appeal? How does creative collaboration occur in an industry that is often portrayed as an image factory, with countless drones slaving repetitiously over their little allotment of cells? Even basic-seeming things like the way the offices are physically arranged, the noise levels, and so forth, can be extremely suggestive—some are closer to zen retreats, others to bustling newsrooms: the particular flavor of collaboration can be glimpsed therein.

The final two chapters turn their attention to anime fans at home and abroad. Chapter six asks three nested questions: Is fansubbing—the digitizing, subtitling, and online distribution of anime by individual fans or groups—ethical? How do studios feel about fansubs? Do they hurt the market? Predictably, none of these questions has a clear answer. Fansubbing often expresses a legitimate desire to champion a particular title, if not the art form itself. It is not intended to displace licensed release, but to encourage it, to prepare the way even. Some argue that fansubbing actually *increases* the profitability of titles. Whatever its intentions, fansubbing certainly skirts outright piracy. Still, there are interesting precedents of appropriation that muddy the issue. Add to these the industry’s hesitation to provoke a passionate fanbase and you have the current legal and cultural deadlock. In many ways the avatar of this conflict is the *otaku* おたく/オタク (i.e., hyper-obsessive fan) himself. Condry concludes with a consideration of the problems and opportunities presented by a niche market. Unlike most commentators on *otaku*-related matters, Condry is not preoccupied by the sociological meaning of the *otaku*. Rather, he recasts the *otaku* question in refreshingly prosaic terms: not “what do they symbolize?” but “what do they do?” For Condry, the “idea of relating to anime primarily in terms of ‘love’ can be viewed as a gesture toward a different basis for understanding value, consumerism, and media” (202). For those seeking a grander argument, there is the tantalizing hint of “alternative social worlds” (203), but these Edens will have to be evaluated when they bear actual fruit.

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From April to December 1941, the Japanese leadership made a series of decisions that many at first failed to recognize as a doomed path toward war. The attack on Pearl Harbor was hardly preordained and there was little unanimity among Japanese leaders as to whether war with the United States was a necessary or even wise step. The Japanese army was bogged down in an invasion of China, and yet these leaders contemplated an additional war against the U.S. and Britain. Several influential members of the government including Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe 近衛 文麿 (1891–1945) and Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto 山本 五十六 (1884–1943), who drew up the plans for the strike on Pearl Harbor, were convinced that simultaneous wars against China and the Western powers had little chance of success. They nevertheless went ahead with their plans and gambled that the Western powers, being preoccupied with Nazi Germany in Europe, would cave in after the first waves of attacks by Japanese bombers. But if so many of Japan’s ranking leaders were convinced that Japan would be the ultimate loser, why did they proceed?

Eri Hotta, a Japanese writer, examines the rocky road to Pearl Harbor in her new book, *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy*. Hotta’s focus is entirely on Japan and the decision-making process that led ultimately to the date that will forever “live in infamy.” According to Hotta, the Japanese need for consensus combined with a convoluted government organization that allowed the military to make decisions free from civilian control drove Tokyo down a path that many Japanese did not want to follow. This governmental structure allowed younger naval and army officers to initiate a series of steps toward war that senior officials found themselves increasingly powerless to rein in.

In Hotta’s account, Japan’s war with China had become a deepening quagmire. Japan depended entirely on oil shipments and other resources purchased from the West, but the U.S. and British governments had placed strict embargoes on Japan, hoping to force it out of China. Japan faced a hard choice: abandon military operations there and resume trade with the West or press farther into Southeast Asia and procure resources by force. The key to the latter strategy was gaining access to Indonesian oil, then controlled by the Dutch. However, seizing Indonesian oil by force was sure to provoke a war with the U.S. and Britain. The Japanese felt that this strategy must include destroying the U.S. and British fleets in the Pacific as a prelude to their invasion of Indonesia.
Prime Minister Konoe predicted that an all-out war with the United States would bring total defeat for Japan, and many senior military officials like Admiral Yamamoto agreed with this assessment—that overstretch was particularly dangerous given that Japan had never fully gained control of the war in China. However, mid-level strategists from Japan's army and navy argued that the Western forces in Asia were weak, that a sudden attack would destroy their morale, and that they would not want to extend a European war to the Pacific. It was a case of now or never. If Japan continued the war in China, the embargo would cripple Japan, while to pull out of China after so much blood was unthinkable. Senior leaders, wanting to save face, appease the restless young officers, and achieve a consensus, persuaded Konoe to make preparations for war while hoping for a diplomatic breakthrough with the West. But when it became clear that the embargo would continue and that there would be no diplomatic settlement, Japan finally decided to gamble on war. Hotta summarizes Japan's war rationale as follows:

[T]he root problem in the Japanese government remained consistent throughout 1941: None of the top leaders, their occasional protestations notwithstanding, had sufficient will, desire or courage to stop the momentum for war. . . . From April to December 1941, the Japanese leadership made a series of decisions that many at first failed to recognize as constituting a doomed path toward war. But with each step, room for maneuver was lost. The unwinnable war with the West was never an absolute inevitability, however. Despite the risk of losing all that had been achieved since Meiji, the leaders ultimately succumbed to a destructive—and self-destructive—course in the name of maximizing Japan's chance of survival and self-preservation in the short term and, more ambitiously, building an Asia for Asians under Japan's leadership in the long term. Neither the short-term nor the long-term goals were ever realizable because the planning for them was not realistic. Japan approached the war as a gambler would, taking comfort in the likelihood of initial advantages while deluding itself that it would be able to take the money and run, though running was never an option in this game. (286)

Given that contemporary Japan and China are now confronting each other over a small group of rocky islands in the East China Sea, Hotta wonders whether Japan's conservative and highly nationalistic government might inadvertently push Japan into another no-win conflict. Writing in The New York Times, she speculates that the old self-defeating pattern might be recurring:
Watching Prime Minister Shinzo Abe today, tensing up and pushing back against China's provocations in the East China Sea, one wonders how much of that tradition has survived within the Japanese leadership. Mr. Abe seems determined to be defiant. He has recently pushed through Parliament a bill to establish a U.S.-style national security council and allow the government to withhold information it deems vital to national security. He has argued for revising Japan's Constitution, including its war-renouncing provision. Is this tough talk the same kind of ultranationalism that led Japan into war with China in the 1930s and then the West? (Hotta 2013)

Hotta acknowledges that Japan of 2014 is very different from Japan of 1941, but she fears that the emergence of ultra-nationalism in Tokyo even now could lead to problems in Sino-Japanese relations.

Hotta's meticulously researched book provides a complex and detailed look at the Japanese decision-making process that led to Pearl Harbor. She does not answer all one's questions, but she brings perfect candor to those she does answer, placing the blame for the attack squarely on Japan and the young militarists who carried the day.

Reference

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Seymour Morris argues that the huge success of the allied occupation of Japan was primarily due to the enlightened and powerful leadership of one man, General Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964). There is considerable evidence to support this assertion. Although he considered himself a conservative Republican, MacArthur commissioned a Japanese Constitution far more liberal in its content than the American Constitution, fostered the growth of labor unions, provided basic rights for women, engineered a major land reform, and did much more to encourage the growth of a peaceful and democratic Japan. There can be no doubt that MacArthur, the supreme commander of the Allied Powers, was the driving force behind the occupation.

Morris portrays MacArthur as a highly intelligent man and brilliant manager who was always able to see the “big picture,” who came with a clear set of objectives, and who achieved virtually everything that he
planned to accomplish. MacArthur saw the need to bring about major reforms across the spectrum of Japanese society. He argued that Japan must not revert to its prewar social structure, which greatly restricted the rights and potential of women, impoverished farmers, and greatly exploited workers. Japan had been ruled by a wealthy and powerful group of oligarchs who controlled both business and the government. MacArthur’s initiatives gave women the vote, the right to marry whom they pleased, and to own and manage their own property. Labor unions gave workers a much stronger voice and land reform created a large class of middle-class property owners. Perhaps most importantly, MacArthur’s Article Nine in the Constitution forced Japan to renounce war and forbad the creation of a military that could invade other lands.

One of MacArthur’s key decisions was to support the retention of the emperor. Many leaders in the West and the rest of Asia wanted to try Emperor Hirohito 裕仁 (1901–89) as a war criminal, but MacArthur realized that keeping the emperor on the throne would enhance social stability. MacArthur met often with Hirohito, who became a major spokesman in support of MacArthur’s objectives.

Morris claims that MacArthur played a key role in keeping the Russians out of the occupation while choking the growth of the Communist Party in Japan. When a reporter asked Japanese Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 (1878–1967) what he felt MacArthur’s greatest triumph had been, he responded that MacArthur’s resistance to Soviet efforts to occupy part of Japan and his suppression of the communists in Japan in 1946 were critical to Japan’s revival after the War.

Morris’ research and writing are excellent. His work is one of the most informative and cohesive general studies of the occupation. The inevitable flaws are few. Morris mentions land reform only in passing, though many scholars argue that it was MacArthur’s crowning achievement as supreme commander of the Allied Powers. And by placing so much emphasis on MacArthur’s role Morris ignores both the huge contributions of other members of the occupation leadership and the willingness of so many Japanese to cooperate with the American reformers. If the Japanese had refused to cooperate, the occupation would have failed. But Morris correctly emphasizes MacArthur’s insistence that the reform process had to start early and proceed quickly and aggressively because the Japanese would soon grow restless and demand an end to the occupation.

All in all, Morris’ Supreme Commander is an excellent study that would enhance any college course on the history of modern Japan or U.S.-Japanese relations.

Since the 1990s, Peter D. Hershock, of the Asian Studies Development Program at the East-West Center in Honolulu, has been developing Buddhist responses to suffering in an interdependent and increasingly globalized world. In *Liberating Intimacy* (1996), *Reinventing the Wheel* (1999), *Buddhism in the Public Sphere: Reorienting Global Interdependence* (2006), and his edited volume *Changing Education* (2007), Hershock, true to both his Buddhist and philosophical trainings, has addressed the pressing and globally intertwining issues of authority, ecology, economy, education, diversity, and technology, attempting to show how we can effectively respond to suffering and conflict by availing ourselves of Buddhism’s ancient teachings. However, one need not be a Buddhist or a student of Hershock’s earlier work to appreciate his most recent volume *Public Zen, Personal Zen: A Buddhist Introduction*.

*Public Zen, Personal Zen*, like Hershock’s earlier work, emphasizes a contemporary Buddhist response to an increasingly complex and often violent world that manifests both tremendous suffering and the potential to alleviate suffering. In his “Introduction,” Hershock describes the book’s guiding assumption “that if all things arise interdependently and are continuously changing—two of Buddhism’s founding insights—then Zen should be presented as having complex origins and as relentlessly dynamic” (xii). *Public Zen, Personal Zen*, focusses on the transmission of Chan Buddhism to Japan and chronicles how Japanese Buddhists integrated their own institutions, perspectives, and practices within broader Japanese cultural contexts, but the book is not simply a history of how Chan came to Japan and became Zen. The book, he explains, “is an attempt to move in the direction of closing the gap that has ‘come to be’ between seemingly opposed ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ approaches to presenting Zen, offering what aims to be a more ‘nondualist’ approach to Zen” (xvi). This “gap” refers to differing, sometimes aggressively maintained viewpoints that stem from new scholarship and the growing world popularity of Zen practice. While welcome, such differences exacerbate the difficulty of responding to “important questions about what it means to responsibly and accurately either present or represent Zen” (xvi).
In Part 1, Hershock culturally situates Buddhism, chronicles the early phases of the Japanization of Buddhism, and introduces us to the main figures in the development of Zen institutions and practice. The larger story of Buddhism’s perambulations is three-fold:

In personal terms, it has been a story of experiential movement from the “here” of ongoing suffering (samsara) to the “other shore” of enlightening release (nirvana); conceptual movement along a “middle Way” running oblique to prevailing and competing views about what exists, what matters, and why; and physical movement from the Himalayan foothills where Buddhism originated to Central, East, and Southeast Asia and beyond. (3)

As Buddhism attempted “to adapt to local conditions” (18), practitioners had to engage in the always ongoing hermeneutic process that all cultures undertake: “to consider which identities and traditions to retain and which to abandon” (5). At the same time, as the above quotation suggests, Zen had to maintain its countercultural position, which cuts against prevailing assumptions about the nature of humanity and the world.

Even as Buddhism’s cultural contexts shift, however, there remain core teachings. Hershock does an excellent job of succinctly presenting these core teachings, otherwise known as the Dharma. His account traces Buddhism’s arrival in Japan and the influence of early Japanese Buddhism’s two most renowned figures, Saichō 最澄 (767–822) and Kūkai 空海 (774–835), founders of distinctly Japanese forms of the Chinese Tiantai 天台宗 and Zhenyan 真言宗 traditions, respectively. Hershock also shows how by the eighth century Japanese Buddhism, which had been associated with the ruling elite, developed a broad appeal among the common people. As Japanese Buddhism continued developing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, two profoundly important Japanese figures, Myōan Eisai 明菴栄西 (1141–1214) and Dōgen Kigen 道元希玄 (1200–1253), went to China and returned with the teachings of Chan. They went on, respectively, to found the Zen sects of Rinzai 臨済 and Sōtō 曹洞.

Hershock is careful not to imply that Chan, or any form of Chinese Buddhism, became something totally different in Japan. He notes that while “many of the institutional features of Chan would not be inherited by Zen, the association of Chan with cultural refinement and leadership would be an important part of Zen in Japan” (65). What Eisai and Dōgen brought to Japan after their respective sojourns in China was a dedication “to orchestrating a renewal of Japanese monastic life through promoting strict adherence to the Chan monastic code and its
idealization of monastic self-reliance (Chan became famous for its ‘no work, no eat’ policy), social harmony, daily meditation practice, and regular interpersonal teaching” (67). Zen’s arrival in Japan signaled an end to the seamless relationship between “Buddhist institutions and the state” and in its stead established what would become a key element of its own identity: “tensions between what we might call public Zen and personal Zen” (71).

In Part II, Hershock chronicles the significant moments, sects, figures, and practices that constitute what he calls “Public Zen,” or the institutional and exoteric aspects of Zen. “The full story of Zen’s emergence,” he writes, “is thus a story of intimately interrelated Zen exemplars and Zen institutions: a story of the interdependence and interpenetration of the personal and the public” (74). Hershock devotes separate chapters to the Rinzai, Soto, and Ōbaku 黄檗 traditions, describing each sect’s institutional or public development from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. His detailed account clarifies how each sect’s institutional aspect shifted in its relation to the ruling elites; who some of the major players were; and ramifications for future practitioners. In the chapter focusing on the Rinzai tradition, for example, Hershock shows how Rinzai’s participation in the uniquely Japanese gozan 五山 system of Zen monastic hierarchies is “inseparable from the political, social, and cultural aspirations of individual sponsors” (84); however, Hershock also alerts the reader to the fact that Rinzai’s participation in the gozan system through the fifteenth century came at the cost of the monastic authority sharing power with secular officials. According to Hershock, this precipitated “a gradual drift from strict discipline and the centrality of communal zazen [seated meditation] and labor toward increasing temptations to benefit materially from sponsorship relations” (94).

The Obaku tradition is relatively unfamiliar to most us. Hershock explains the specific ways that this third great tradition helped establish Zen, beginning with its arrival from China in the seventeenth century. Obaku had a very different relationship to China than either Rinzai or Soto. Whereas both Rinzai and Soto sought religious authenticity in their derivation from Chan by “tracing a direct line of person-to-person transmissions back to the historical Buddha,” Obaku “was in contrast inseparable from its being culturally Chinese” (127). The difference between these three sects is part of a larger cultural story about the difficulties involved in negotiating intercultural contact and interchange. Indeed, it is a fascinating example of the limits of both accommodation and advocacy. This chapter highlights the positive and negative dimensions of the public reception of this very Chinese form of Zen. Obaku’s appeal to Rinzai and Zen is, first and foremost, it seems to me,
that Obaku’s arrival aided both Rinzai and Soto in their respective movements for reform and contributed to the decline in the gozan system. Obaku’s emphasis on the scholarly path of sutra study was also a welcome benefit for Zen monastics who felt that propitiations to the public and benefactors were eroding the rigor of Zen practice. The Rinzai and Soto sects, however, disapproved of Obaku’s appeal to the ruling elites and the general populace. “Chinese Obaku monks,” Hershock explains, “were well known for their cultural acumen, and many were accomplished calligraphers, painters, and poets” (140). Cultural refinement was highly prized by “the imperial family and members of the court” (140). Obaku Zen’s appeal to the laity was a source of irritation because Obaku Zen accommodated Pure Land Buddhism’s sutras and the practice of nembutsu 念仏, the chanting of Amida Buddha’s name. The latter practice was particularly irksome because of Zen’s insistence upon self-power (jiriki 自力), and chanting Amida Buddha’s name demonstrates reliance on other-power (tariki 他力); however, as Hershock notes, by the mid-eighteenth century Obaku’s syncretism had become acceptable.

Part II’s concluding chapter, “Zen in Modernizing Japan,” takes us into the Meiji Restoration and the continued challenges to public Zen faced by Zen sects. The difficulties facing Zen sects during the Tokugawa era continued into the Meiji, but with a very different character. Wanting to eliminate vestiges of what the Meiji government considered an outdated Japanese medieval worldview via “rational universalism and Japanese particularism,” the Meiji Charter Oath pledged to get rid of “all evil customs of the past” (145). Both Buddhism and Confucianism were thus linked to a Chinese-influenced past that had been deemed undesirable. Between 1868 and 1874, tens of thousands of Buddhist temples were destroyed and a quarter of all monks and nuns were returned to lay life. Hershock notes that this was a temporary situation as both Shinto and Buddhism were enlisted in the government’s plans for “Japanese self-strengthening and nation building initiatives” (146–47). On the bright side, Zen sects were able to reinvigorate temple life by offering education to the general public through temple schools and Zen universities. On the darker side, there emerged “Imperial Way Zen,” an ideological form of Zen that advocated “the nonduality of the Japanese imperial ‘wind’ and the Buddhist ‘sun’ as forces for bringing about ‘enlightening’ change in the world” (148).

Part III addresses “Personal Zen” and adopts the viewpoint that “personal” transformation, or the esoteric dimension of Zen, is just as significant in the development of Zen Buddhism as Public Zen. Developing this idea, Hershock proposes that Chan’s important and unique element is its presentation of “a new ideal of exemplary Buddhist
personhood” (158). More than just a new religious fashion, Zen’s appeal in medieval Japan “signaled the emergence of a new kind of creativity—a new religious ‘technology’ for transforming personal, communal and imperial fortunes” (159). “Zen training,” in Hershock’s account, “is reproducing or enacting, here and now, the transformative partnership realized by Buddha and his disciples—realizing a world in which all things and all activities do the great work of enlightenment” (186). This conception suggests that Zen views of personhood have relatively little to do with modern, liberal conceptions of the person as an autonomous, free, and rights-bearing individual. Furthermore, Buddhism has always claimed that the work of transformative personhood is a mutual accomplishment of both the individual and the community, of both student and teacher. Not even one’s body is wholly one’s own; instead, one’s body, being the vehicle for liberation, is “a focus of life-enabling relationships” that owes much to the Confucian notions of filial piety. One’s body belongs to parents and to the ancestors to whom one returns upon death. This overtly East Asian conception of personhood has given rise to Western misunderstandings of the relationship between individual and community. Hershock notes how communal practice is not performed in “uniform collectives” and is certainly not a matter of slavish obedience to authority (172). “Communal practice,” he notes, “does not eliminate the need for relentless personal striving. If anything, it intensifies that need” (169). Thus, for Hershock, Zen functions as “relational opening” in which both teacher and student participate in “karmic clarification: a ‘sobering’ of awakening intent” (185).

As the centrality of the teacher-student relationship implies, much depends upon the creative virtuosity of the teacher. Chapter 9 touches on four exemplars important to the development of Zen: Dōgen, Ikkyū 一休 (1394–1481), Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1686–1768), and Ryōkan Taigu 良寛大愚 (1758–1831). These figures, in Hershock’s account, exemplify enlightening embodiment. In the “liberating intimacy” enacted in the teacher-student relationship there is no Zen teacher, only “self and self” in which both move “from ordinary to enlightening relationality” (188–89). The chapter’s focus is on each exemplar’s unique contribution to the development and revitalization of Zen. Dōgen, Hershock writes, “had attempted a revitalization based on the primacy of sitting as a Buddha” and whose “greatest legacy lay in his philosophical writings and his personification of freedom in the medium of language” (200, 201). Ikkyū, an interesting inclusion, attempted to revitalize Zen during his day by “personally exemplifying the at times shocking capacity for relating freely that featured so prominently in the recorded encounter dialogues and koans attributed to such Tang dynasty Chan masters as Mazu, Huangbo, and Linji” (200–
Hakuin’s revitalizing contribution is captured in the phrase “tireless responsive virtuosity in the midst of any activity.” He deemphasized attaining enlightenment and emphasized direct and uninterrupted bodhisattva activity. For Ryōkan, the revitalization of Zen is achieved only through empathy as relational virtuosity. Hershock shows how each of these figures made Zen his own while manifesting widely varying “ways of engaging Zen” (226). Above all, Hershock emphasizes practice.

The final chapter introduces the contemporary cultural moment. While Chan retained a strong sense of connection to Chinese culture as it became Japanese Zen, the Zen that emerged in the West was both a by-product of pluralistic currents moving through the world in the nineteenth century and of cultural changes to Zen, especially in its exoteric aspects, as Zen accommodated itself to Western cultures. This is to say that the conditions for the reception of Zen in the West were advantageous on at least two counts. Zen and other non-Western traditions appealed to Westerners who were at the vanguard of developing a pluralistic view of truth. The first World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 set the stage for Zen’s entrée to the West. Hershock notes three major resonances between American culture and Zen that have allowed its continuing favorable reception since World War II: “the human ‘individual’ as a being primarily responsible for his or her own salvation and ultimately unbound by the constraints of the natal family and forms of inherited community”; “Buddhism’s more general rejection of class—and caste-bound determinism”; and “both practical and theoretical support for gender equality” (230). Within Zen communities in the West the change can be marked in terms of both public and personal Zen: “the readiness of Zen communities in the West to make liberal institutional commitments to gender equality” and “the degree to which many Western Zen communities have blended personal practices with social responsibility” (234).

According to Hershock, Zen’s prospects hinge, as they always have, on reconciling the ideal and real perspectives, the public (exoteric) and the personal (esoteric). Hershock is adamant that Zen must continue to emphasize “enlightenment as an achievement of practice and not something attained through it” (240). Finally, Zen’s emergence both in Japan and in the West has largely been a function of accommodation. If it is to ease world suffering, Zen must take up its ancient task of creatively improvising countercultures that will challenge both our common-sense view of how the world works and our self-interested individualism.

*Public Zen, Personal Zen* is a timely addition to the fast-accumulating scholarship on Zen. While broad, Hershock’s survey is succinct and
careful. It clarifies significant developments and contextualizes each sect’s development without overwhelming us with detail (those desiring more depth might consult the second volume of Heinrich Dumoulin’s *Zen Buddhism: A History*). *Public Zen, Personal Zen* continues Hershock’s project of developing a middle-way response to suffering in our complex globalizing world. While providing a Buddhist introduction to the development of Zen Buddhism in Japan and the wider world, it eschews both the facile dualism of public/personal and the reduction of the public to the personal or vice versa. While weaving a highly readable narrative, Hershock continues his development of a Buddhist lexicon for the twenty-first century.

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In *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th Century China*, Tobie Meyer-Fong examines a despairing and desolate Jiangnan during the Taiping Rebellion and resolves “to capture the ambiguity, shifting loyalties, nuances, contingency and the abjectly miserable behaviors and consequences that characterized the wartime experience” (206). Tattooed faces, burned bodies, severed limbs, the sound of the dying, the odor of human remains, the taste of human flesh, haunting ghosts—the book is obsessed with the dead, as it relentlessly draws readers into scenes of mayhem that recall both apocalyptic fiction and warzone newsreels. *What Remains* departs from traditional war history narratives that emphasize the political significance of events; instead, it focusses on how people made sense of and eventually came to terms with the war. Meyer-Fong’s use of overlooked sources, including pro-Qing memoirs, local gazetteers, official documents, and traveler’s tales, is notable. In addition to lending a fascinating literary variety to the narrative, these sources provide different perspectives on the war, revealing “the contradictions between individual and local experience and the moralizing imperatives of state-sponsored accounts” (15). They also help us understand the relationships between the state, local officials, and the general populace during the late Qing era.

Meyer-Fong prefaces her book by stressing the importance of framing the Taiping Rebellion as a war, allowing us to strip away biases and reminding us of the event’s terrible attrition. The following five chapters, “Words,” “Marked Bodies,” “Bones and Flesh,” “Wood and
Ink,” and “Loss,” ponder the war’s legacy—remnants of propaganda, human remains, memorials for the dead, the emotional scars. The final chapter, “Endings,” asks what remained when the dust had settled.

Meyer-Fong’s dissection of the remains of the Taiping Rebellion starts with “Words.” In this chapter, she examines the literary works by Yu Zhi 余治 (1809–74), a failed examination candidate and philanthropist who strove to promote the orthodox ideology during and after the war. To arouse both the fear and sympathy of the masses, he utilized a variety of media and approaches, including composing songs and poetry, producing and disseminating pamphlets that included horrifying paintings such as An Iron Man’s Tears for Jiangnan (Jiangnan tielei tu 江南鐵淚圖), and organizing charities. Meyer-Fong is particularly interested in Yu Zhi’s use of religious imagery and tales to preach moral obligations that reflect the religious sensibilities of the time. More importantly, Yu Zhi’s work demonstrates how local elites tried to give the war an indigenous meaning and communicate it to the local community, connecting these elites to the dynasty and reestablishing order during the mayhem of war. Yu Zhi often invoked the city-god Lord Wenchang 文昌公, a deity celebrated in the Jiangnan area during the mid-nineteenth century. He also created a local cult by consecrating a local personality: the late Pan Zengyi 潘曾沂 (1792–ca. 1853), a well-known scion of a wealthy Suzhou family and local philanthropist, whom Yu Zhi transmogrified into a part of the divine bureaucracy with the ability to visit the dreams and warn of calamities. Pan’s divinized image served as an effective way to communicate dynastical moral teachings to the masses. Meyer-Fong argues that local elites such as Yu Zhi localized the orthodox messages and thus became interpreters and advocates of imperial demands.

Perhaps the most illuminating and creative part of the book is “Marked Bodies,” in which the author meditates on the human body as evidence of the obfuscation of identities, and thus focuses a different lens on the war and its damage. Both Qing and Taiping forces closely ministered and controlled the bodies of their subjects to exert power. Tattooing was not only used to punish and humiliate captives, but the Taiping rebels used it during the war to mark their conscripts and exile them from their original communities. Hairstyles and clothing were also politicized mechanisms of identification. An unshaved crown was a clear marker of rebel affiliation. Even the cadence of accents came to mark affiliation and allegiance. But did the demarcation of bodies in these fashions create clear boundaries and stable identities? The author shows this was not always the case. In fact, changing garb and disguising appearance were easy enough. Rebels, militiamen, bandits, and soldiers frequently crossed boundaries—group loyalty was often ephemeral.
Disguises and alterations suggest uncertainty and chaos, and foreign observers often registered confusion about the appearances of both Qing and Taiping soldiers. Descriptions of attire and hairstyle were often politically or ideologically charged. The Taiping rebels were sometimes characterized as Christian revolutionaries, while at other times they were called savages and “mock-heroic buffoons” (97). The most consequential confusion created by the Taiping Rebellion concerned the identities of the rebels who survived. Were they still citizens of the Qing Dynasty? Even memoirs written by the pro-Qing elite suggest a loss of trust in the Qing government and condemn military destruction by both Qing and Taiping forces.

Dead bodies are equally telling. In “Bones and Flesh,” Meyer-Fong describes how millions of corpses and heaps of bones showcased the massive casualty scale. Cannibalism was at its height, and people were selling bodies openly in the market. Traditional morality was now confused and abandoned. It is easy to conclude that society had descended into complete disillusionment and nihilism. But people actively searched for meaning even amid those terrible remains. Yu Zhi, as mentioned previously, framed the destruction as retribution from heaven. Others would proclaim the virtue, chastity, and perfection of the bodies of family members who had died in the war. The Qing, on the other hand, used the commemoration of bodies to reconsolidate the dynasty’s ideology and reintegrate post-war society and imperial power.

In “Wood and Ink,” Meyer-Fong investigates the Qing effort to rebuild shattered communities. She writes, “the re-inscription of orthodox values through construction of loyalty shrines and compilation of martyrologies could reiterate commitment to the dynasty and the principles it ostensibly stood for” (135). However, when the imperial commemoration task was executed locally, officials often used the practice to enhance their own status by commemorating allied elites and relatives. The dead of ordinary families rarely enjoyed any recognition or compensation.

On the personal and emotional level, the formal sanction and compensation might mean little to individuals who had lost their family or friends. The book dedicates an entire chapter to the personal grief of Zhang Guanglie 張光烈 (born ca. 1853), a local elite who lost many relatives during the war, and most devastatingly, his mother. Zhang’s profound and sorrowful account of his loss is almost diametrically opposed to the orderly commemoration script that qualified his mother for official enshrinement. By emphasizing personal loss and the necessity of expressing this loss, the author demonstrates the failure of the state’s attempt to reintegrate and reconnect the citizenry to the dynasty—the state’s project to re-instill orthodoxy and order was empty
in the face of personal bereavement. Inscriptions on the body or inscriptions on wood, however indelible, could not heal sorrowful hearts mourning for loved ones.

*What Remains* is slightly blemished by its overemphasis on the religious sensibility of the time, as exemplified by Yu Zhi. While illuminating, it distracts from the main theme—the interaction between the Qing state, the local government, and the individual in the reconstruction of post-war society. Nevertheless, the book’s illumination of Taiping and late imperial Qing culture cannot be overpraised. Its novel approach to sources highlights the disorder, chaos, and devastation of the war and invites us to reexamine and contemplate the moral clarities that other narratives on the Taiping Rebellion tend to assert. The book questions not what was gained from the war in a political sense, but what was lost, what remained, and what mattered. A tint of fictive reconstruction both shadows and elevates the work. The author reconstructs the feelings and emotions of the survivors, but they are inevitably a matter of imaginative conjecture. On the other hand, this approach reminds us of the commonality of humanity across time and space, with relevance to the present. The painful loss of loved ones is a universal human theme. When we are busy mapping ideological camps and blaming each other for wars and disasters, it is perhaps more important to recall and reflect on the basic humanity, the elementary fact of life, and turn our attention to those who suffer.

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In this exploratory work, Niraj Kumar investigates the multi-leveled relationship between the philosophical traditions of Indian culture and the land in which that culture is rooted. Kumar begins his argument with a discussion of space and place, quoting the positions of numerous philosophers to establish the importance of the land in the formation of patterns of thought and the establishment of a sacred nature in regards to key concepts within such systems of thought. This work has, as a uniting concept, the symbol of the Śrī-Yantra, a complex geometrical sign with extensive religio-philosophical meaning and centuries of use in ritual and meditative contexts. Kumar describes the scale and diversity of this symbol’s significance in vivid detail throughout this work, exploring both the micro- and macro-level information embedded in the Śrī-Yantra.
In the macro-view (i.e., via the lens of the geological sciences), the sacred geometry of the triangle is potentially derived from the very shape of the Indian peninsula, an apparent triangle itself. The core pattern at the heart of the Śrī-Yantra is a series of overlapping triangles that form an array of primary and secondary triangles at their intersections. This pattern of sacred geometry, containing length, width, and depth in a given “space,” is derived from the “place” in which it was originated. Further evidence of the numerical significance of “3,” derived from the triangular landscape, is found in the etymological development within the Sanskrit languages as well as the prominence of triads within rituals and beliefs. As Kumar notes, the Vedas are threefold, fires are threefold, the powers of śakti, the states of speech, the states of consciousness, the kinds of breath, etc. are all threefold—a recurring theme that leads Kumar to the somewhat reductionist—yet-evidence-based—conclusion that “Indian thinking is inherently triadic” (50).

Later in his text Kumar discusses how the Indian sub-continent has been bound together across the ages not primarily by politics or a common language, but rather by the pilgrimage routes interwoven throughout its landscape. In support of this claim, Kumar analyses numerous pilgrimage sites and shines, providing data suggesting that each site has strong magnetic field resonances. Kumar states that sites of the greatest significance are found at “points where there is a hexagonal structure created by the presence of upward and downward energy triangles” (140). His argument, in other words, is that the pattern of the Śrī-Yantra reveals a spiritual science grounded in ancient Indian geology. Kumar points out that religious sites spread throughout the Indian landscape in fact can be connected in the shape of triangles (he particularly emphasizes the triangular spatial relation between Srinagara, Udaipur and Sringeri Śāradā Pīṭha [57]) mirroring the three spiritual centers that are united within the anthropomorphic depiction of the goddess Tripurasundarī herself, whose non-anthropomorphic depiction is as the poly-triangular Śrī-Yantra.

In his discussion of the micro-information (i.e., encoded information at the biological and molecular level) within the Śrī-Yantra, Kumar highlights parallels between the biology of the human body and the geometrical formations of the Śrī-Yantra, even positing that the Śrī-Yantra goes beyond the role of a stationary diagram, “but [is] also an active principle with the property to induce neurobiological changes” (108). On an even smaller scale, the geometry of quantum particles is compared to the overlapping geometrics within the sacred symbol. In this way, new and revolutionary discoveries in quantum physics are juxtaposed with the ancient and established understandings of the
cosmos, present in both Indian philosophies, generally, and the Śrī-Yantra, specifically.

This book is not without its challenges. Perhaps most significantly, is the fact that Kumar attempts a synthesis of so many apparently disparate fields of knowledge. In just over two hundred pages, Kumar touches not just on Indian philosophy, geography, religion, and geometry, but also poetry, mathematics, music, architecture, biology, etymology, physics, politics, and nationalism. The range of themes discussed in this work makes difficult the attempt to excavate his core argument throughout. Further, his heavy reliance on Sanskritic terms and Indian cultural concepts likely limits the book’s audience to those with a strong background in Indian thought.

These reservations notwithstanding, the book is nonetheless an intriguing and worthwhile example of the benefits of interdisciplinary scholarship. By drawing together the connections between landscape, religion, philosophy ritual and science Kumar helps us think about the Śrī-Yantra via both emic and etic hermeneutical lenses. In this way, Kumar successfully illustrates the depth of culture-specific knowledge contained within the Śrī-Yantra while also effectively teasing out an array of possibilities for mining deep and meaningful interpretive connections to systems of thought whose origins lay outside the subcontinent. Kumar’s scholarship is at once rigorous, meticulous and bold. His book provides a rich addition to the field of scholarship on Hindu Tantra, Śrī Vidyā and the Śrī-Yantra broadly, complementing the works of such eminent scholars as Douglas Brooks, André Padoux, Madhu Khanna and David Gordon White. While the interdisciplinary study of Tantric practices and philosophy has been en vogue for a while in (mostly Tibetan) Buddhist circles, only a handful of Hindu scholars (Glen Hayes preeminently but also Lorilai Biernacki, Jeffrey Lidke and Sthaneshwar Timalsina) have pursued such a cross-disciplinary approach in recent years. What is most promising about Kumar’s book is that it contributes richly to this budding field of the western sciences (particularly neuroscience) and Hindu Tantric traditions. Hopefully, the book will receive the attention it merits, from specialists and non-specialists alike.

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