

concern is even more pressing with regard to ever combustible context of South Asia. Clemens Six has made an important contribution to this discussion by focusing on how religion and politics have combined in “performative nation building” in modern India. Six’s monograph first presents an overview of key theoretical perspectives for understanding religion, politics, and nation building. Consideration then moves to several case studies that span the periods both preceding and following India’s independence. The result is a substantive and suggestive work that deserves a broad academic audience.

Six lays out his theoretical framework in the introduction. He begins with a question: “How does one explain the historical processes through which abstract ideas such as the idea of a nation become a motivation for mass mobilization, political re-organization and even violence at a large scale” (13). In order to unpack this question, Six draws upon the work of Thomas Meyer to delineate three levels of political discourse: the institutional framework, “the programmatic-operative strategy that unfolds within” it, and “the strategy of argumentation” (16). Central to Six’s analysis is that politics has a performative quality as “spectacle” (17). The monograph then moves to address specific cases of performative nation building in modern India.

In chap. 1, Six discusses the formative ideological struggles of the Indian Independence movement. Six surveys the bifurcated understandings of Indian nationhood that conceded authority to Europe in the material realm and located Indian identity, and uniqueness, within the fields of culture and religion. Mohandas Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, and B. G. Tilak all articulated versions of this position and contested with an opposing secular view of Indian national identity, advocated by Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, that derived from the tradition of English liberalism. Through this discussion, Six interrogates conventional Western understandings of religious nationalism as “bad” especially by referencing the important role played by Protestantism in the “implementation of nationalism” in Europe. As Six argues, religion should be seen as a powerful template for performatively articulating a metaphysics of national identity. In chap. 2, Six extends his discussion, and draws upon the work of Pierre Bourdieu, by arguing that nationalism has a ritual aspect reflected in its ability to “standardize,” “synchronize,” “emotionalize,” and “traditionalize” discourse to establish “the concept of the nation as a historical constant” (66).

The next two chapters delve more deeply into case studies from the precolonial Indian experience. Chap. 3 examines the Khilafat movement, which had the interesting but unintended consequence of promoting an image of Gandhi as “a supernatural saviour figure” (88). Chap. 4 unpacks the dynamics of the Shuddhi movement that attempted to reintegrate Hindus who had converted to Islam and Tribals, who had not been Hindus in a conventional sense, back into the Hindu fold. In doing so, the Arya Samaj performatively articulated and made real a vision of an Indian state “that demanded the compete and uncompromising cultural as well as religious subjugation of minorities or, conversely, the Partition of the subcon-

tinent in order to grant the Hindus their right to supremacy ...” (116).

The concluding chapters move the analysis to focus on more contemporary aspects of performative nation building in India. Chap. 5 examines the role of religion for political mobilization, and particularly focuses on the Rath Yatra of BJP leader L. K. Advani as well as the nuclear test blast at Pokhran, after which radioactive soil was distributed as a “traditional object of worship” (151). Chap. 6 discusses how the context for performative nation building has been changed by the expansion of media in India, particularly the arrival of television channels not under the control of the government, as Doordarshan had traditionally been.

The most suggestive part of the monograph is chap. 7, which discusses terrorism and religious violence as a “performative politics of fear” (180). Six argues that while terrorism should not be simply understood as “the mere communication of a message,” it nonetheless has a message that is capable of “change reality itself” (185). Indeed, Six observes that terrorism relies on a process not dissimilar to performative nation building. Six discusses the aftermath of the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002 as well as the “oligopoly of violence in Pakistan” (197). What emerges is a provocative but well-considered discussion.

In conclusion, Six relies upon Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of “the field” (205) to argue that the politics and nationalism is a discursive “terrain.” Understanding politics as performance – a communicative deployment of symbols, images, and acts – allows for a fuller and more sophisticated appreciation of the dynamics of nation building and the concomitant shaping the public sphere. “Spectacular Politics” is a clear and lucid work. It would be appropriate for advanced baccalaureate courses in politics as well for religious studies courses that examine how religion is connected to visualizing the nation and butressing, reforming or resisting the State.

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Staemmler, Birgit, and Ulrich Dehn (eds.): *Establishing the Revolutionary. An Introduction to New Religions in Japan*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011. 397 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-90152-1. (Bunka-Wenhua, 20). Price: € 29.90

New religions in Japan today claim many millions of devotees and play increasingly important roles in Japanese society and politics as well as in the religious life of the nation. Starting in the late Edo period (1600–1867), they evolved slowly in the years before World War II, but grew very quickly in the late 1940s and early 1950s amidst the chaos of postwar Japan. Today their growth in Japan has slowed remarkably, but several of these new religions claim a growing number of followers in Southeast Asia, North and South America, and in Europe.

Birgit Staemmler, a researcher at the Japanese Department of Tübingen University in Germany, and Ulrich Dehn, a professor of the Study of Religions, Missiology, and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Hamburg, have produced a comprehensive and well-written

volume, “Establishing the Revolutionary. An Introduction to New Religions in Japan.” This work begins with four long introductory chapters that analyze the historical development as well as the doctrinal, sociological, and economical aspects of Japan’s new religions. The body of the book consists of chapters on ten of these religions which analyze each of their history, doctrines, membership, and present situation and activities. While Staemmler and Dehn have written some of the chapters themselves, they have solicited significant contributions from such highly respected scholars in the field as Susumu Shimazono, professor of Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo, and Masako Watanabe, professor of Sociology at Meiji Gakuin in Tokyo. The result is a fascinating handbook about these new religions.

The introductory chapters provide an in-depth study of the defining characteristics of Japan’s New Religions. Birgit Staemmler provides a useful analysis of the historical development of these religions from their origins in the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Yoshihide Sakurai, professor of Sociology at the graduate school of Hokkaido University, has produced a very original chapter on how the New Religions have devised very successful methods of collecting money and financing their operations while the dwindling flow of contributions to traditional temples means that many of the older temples may be forced to shut down in years to come.

Masako Watanabe focuses on a sociological approach to the New Religions noting that a prime motivation for joining a new religion “is said to be a serious shortage in the fulfillment of fundamental needs, as in poverty, illness and strife ... This kind of deprivation is felt to be the result of individual failure, but if looked at from a larger perspective, it is often the product of social conditions” (69). Many of these religions experienced their greatest growth during the chaotic period right after World War II, when huge social change threatened and dramatically altered the lives of most ordinary Japanese. Watanabe notes that these religions have been successful because they can “provide an emotional place of belonging and bring about psychological and spiritual stability ... [They] can give meaning to people’s lives, make their lives worth living again, and lead to rediscoveries of human solidarity” (87). These religions’ emphasis on small group activities promote a sense of inclusiveness so essential to Japanese culture and their relief activities after major disasters have won them a favorable image in the public eye.

The best chapter in the book is Susumu Shimazono’s study of “The Concept of Salvation” among the New Religions. Shimazono stresses that their focus on the concept of finding true happiness here and now is crucial to their success. He notes that the New Religions differ from those of traditional Buddhist schools in that they deal with everyday problems facing people in their present lives. “In new religions, even when their teachings refer to a world after death, salvation is not thought to be achieved in a world beyond or a different dimension, but to be realised as a happy life in this world. ... [S]alvation means a calm life in which poverty, sickness, and discord ... have been resolved and one’s days are spent in peaceful and harmo-

nious relations with family and friends. ... Health, wealth and peace ... are the embodiment of salvation” (44).

The body of the book consists of studies of ten of the larger or most controversial of Japan’s New Religions including Ōmoto, Seichō no ie, Risshō Kōsei-kai, Kōfuku no Kagaku, and Chino Shōhō and the Pana-Wave Laboratory. I paid special attention to Ulrich Dehn’s eighteen-page analysis of the Sōka Gakkai, my major focus of scholarship. Ulrich presents a very clear and well developed study of Sōka Gakkai with an excellent overview of its history, doctrines, former relationship with Nichiren Shōshū, and its social and political activities. The commentary on the split between the Gakkai and Nichiren Shōshū is especially compelling. Dehn presents a credible history of the foundation and growth of the Gakkai’s unique political party, the Kōmeitō, including its controversial decision to join the Liberal Democratic Party’s ruling coalition between 1999–2009. There are, however, a couple of factual errors here. Dehn states that between 1955 and 1964, when Kōmeitō was founded, Sōka Gakkai candidates had been elected to both houses of parliament when in fact they only entered the upper House of Councillors. Dehn also fails to note the defeat of this coalition in the 2009 national elections.

The only real fault of Dehn’s study of Sōka Gakkai is his almost complete failure to address the organization’s international activities. Sōka Gakkai International has chapters in over 200 countries and territories with perhaps two million or more members. Sōka University has established an affiliated college in California that is growing rapidly. While membership growth of Sōka Gakkai has stagnated in Japan, its international membership, especially among Koreans and ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia, has grown rapidly in Japan. While other authors do address the international activities of several of the New Religions, a separate chapter on the international expansion of these religions would have been a welcome addition to this work.

Erica Baffelli and Birgit Staemmler’s chapter on Aum Shinrikyō is an excellent overview of the group’s controversial past. The main value of the chapter, however, is its study of the transformation Aum into two separate small groups, Aleph and Hikari no Wa, and the political and social consequences of Aum’s controversial and murderous activities in the mid-1990s.

Staemmler and Dehn’s “Establishing the Revolutionary” is the best general introduction to Japan’s New Religions available today. The chapters are well written and meticulously researched using excellent and up-to-date source material. This work belongs in the Asia section of every major personal and institutional library.

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Strong, Mary: *Art, Nature, and Religion in the Central Andes. Themes and Variations from Prehistory to the Present.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. 356 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-73571-2. Price: \$ 60.00

Este libro, recomendado por un autor de la talla de Paul Doughty, propone una mirada general al mundo an-