The Prince and the Monk addresses the historical development of the political and religious myths surrounding Shôtoku Taishi and their influence on Shinran, the founder of the Jōdo-Shinshū school of Pure Land Buddhism. Shôtoku Taishi (574–622) was a prince who led the campaign to unify Japan, wrote the imperial constitution, and promoted Buddhism as a religion of peace and prosperity. Shinran’s Buddhism developed centuries later during the Kamakura period, which began in the late twelfth century. Kenneth Doo Young Lee discusses Shinran’s liturgical text, his dream of Shôtoku, the imperial prince who was both a political and religious figure.

Kenneth Doo Young Lee is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at California State University at Northridge.

February • 228 pp.
$24.95 pb 978-0-7914-7022-0
$74.50 hc 978-0-7914-7021-3

Embodying the Dharma
Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia
David Germano and Kevin Trainor, editors

Exembodies the practice of relic veneration in a variety of forms of Buddhism.

Embodying the Dharma explores the centrality of relic veneration in Asian Buddhist cultures. Long disregarded by Western scholars as a superstitious practice reflecting the popularization of “original” Buddhism, relic veneration has emerged as a topic of vital interest in the last two decades with the increased attention to Buddhist ritual practice and material culture. This volume includes studies of relic traditions in India, Japan, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, as well as broader comparative analyses, including comparisons of Buddhist and Christian relic veneration.

January • 201 pp. • 5 b/w photographs
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Christianity and Human Rights
Influences and Issues
Frances S. Adeney and Arvind Sharma, editors

A wide-ranging look at Christianity and human rights.

This book addresses the relationship of Christianity and human rights—a relationship fraught with ambiguity. While human rights discourse arose in a Christian culture, it has sometimes stood in opposition to organized Christianity. Christianity has been a champion of human rights; on other occasions it has been a major violator of them. Contributors to this book explore both positive and negative views of human rights arising from Christian traditions. Among the issues discussed are the sources of ideas on human rights, Christian influences on international human rights covenants and conventions, Christian theology and human rights, the right to change religions, Roman Catholic perspectives, and Christian peace activism and human rights. Christian discourse is juxtaposed with the proposed Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World’s Religions, which is included.

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2 figures
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Contributors
Frances S. Adeney
Lutheran Theological Seminary

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The Charismatic Community: Shi’ite Identity in Early Islam

María Massi Dakake

Looks at the emergence of Shi’ism as a distinct communal identity within Islam. The book reveals the profound and continually evolving connection between the spiritual ideals of the Shi’ite movement and the practical processes of community formation. Author María Massi Dakake traces the Qur’anic origins and early religious connotations of the concept of walāyah and the role it played in shaping the sense of communal solidarity among followers of the first Shi’ite Imam, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. Dakake argues that walāyah pertains not only to the charisma of the Shi’ite leadership and devotion to them, but also to solidarity and loyalty among the members of the community itself. She also looks at the ways in which doctrinal developments reflected and served the practical needs of the Shi’ite community, the establishment of identifiable boundaries and minimum requirements of communal membership, the meaning of women’s affiliation and identification with the Shi’ite movement, and Shi’ite efforts to engender a more normative and less confrontational attitude toward the non-Shi’ite Muslim community.

“The author admirably manages to highlight the major developments of early Shi’ite events and ideas within the general development of Islamic thought and history. This book enriches our knowledge and discussion of one of the most crucial periods of Muslim history.”

— Mahmoud M. Ayoub, author of The Qur’an and Its Interpreters, Volume II: The House of ‘Imran

Maria Massi Dakake is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at George Mason University.

A volume in the SUNY series in Islam

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor

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Dealing with Deities: The Ritual Vow in South Asia

Selva J. Raj and William P. Harmon, editors

Explores the practice of taking ritual vows in South Asia, a lay tradition prevalent in the region’s religions.

The cornerstone of lay religious activity, vow rituals are adopted by Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs who wish to commit themselves to ritually enacted relationships with sacred figures in order to gain earthly boons and spiritual merit. The contributors offer a fascinating look at the varieties and complexities of vows and also focus on a unique characteristic of this vow-taking culture, that of resorting to deities and shrines of other religions in defiance of institutional directives and religious boundaries.

January • 288 pp. • 42 b/w photographs, 2 maps, 1 figure
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Henrik Bogdan

Historical exploration of masonic rituals of initiation.

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Henrik Bogdan teaches in the Department of Religious Studies and Theology at Göteborg University in Sweden.

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David Appelbaum, editor

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This book critically analyzes claims made by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the White House agency of accountability in the nation’s drug war. Specifically, the book examines six editions of the annual National Drug Control Strategy between 2000 and 2005 to determine if ONDCP accurately and honestly presents information or intentionally distorts evidence to justify continuing the war on drugs.

Matthew B. Robinson and Renee G. Scherlen uncover the many ways in which ONDCP manipulates statistics and visually presents that information to the public. Their analysis demonstrates a drug war that consistently fails to reduce drug use, drug fatalities or illnesses associated with drug use; fails to provide treatment for drug dependent users; and drives up the prices of drugs. They conclude with policy recommendations for reforming ONDCP’s use of statistics, as well as how the nation fights the war on drugs.

“The authors have performed a valuable service to our democracy with their meticulous analysis of the White House ONDCP public statements and reports. They have pulled the sheet off what appears to be an official policy of deception using clever and sometimes clumsy attempts at statistical manipulation. This document, at last, gives us a map of the truth.” — Mike Gray, author of Drug Crazy: How We Got into This Mess and How We Can Get Out

At Appalachian State University, MATTHEW B. ROBINSON is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, and RENEE G. SCHERLEN is Associate Professor of Political Science. Robinson is the author of several books, including Justice Blind? Ideals and Realities of American Criminal Justice, Second Edition.

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