

Practically Religious. Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan

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In diesem Buch wird die japanische Einstellung zu Religion analysiert: **Kerngedanke**: Eine Religion ist dann nützlich, wenn sie dem Menschen **in diesem Leben** hilft.

Seite:

Auszug

7 The view of Reischauer and Jansen, that „religion in Japan offers a confused and indistinct picture“, results, however, from their expectations of what is real religion rather than from any understanding of the actualities of Japanese religion.

7 Even Reischauer and Jansen, despite their view of a society in which religion does not play a central role, admit that **Japanese life is „intertwined with religious observances“**.

13 If Buddhism is intimately associated with the pursuit of benefits, so too is Shintō. One of the major differences is that Shintō priests as well as academics studying Shintō have had little problem in accepting the idea that religion may be concerned with worldly benefits as normative. Indeed, this is *raison d'être*: Shintō deities are constantly invoked for the benefits they are believed to provide, while the whole thrust of Shintō mythology and legends, as set out in texts such as the Kojiki, speaks of the role of Shintō deities (*kami*) in providing the good things that contribute to fruitful human life.

14 **Genze** (in this life) **riyaku** (benefit) in Japanese Religion. Our basic argument is that **genze riyaku is a normative and central theme in the structure and framework of religion in Japan** - sought through numerous ritual practices, symbolized by various religious objects such as talismans and amulets, and affirmed in doctrinal terms in various religious organizations as well through textual traditions.

15 **A religion that is true accomplishes things**. Japanese religion in general is governed by a world-affirming religious viewpoint. Few practices are as important in Japan as activities related to the ancestors and to rituals and practices centered on the deceased and their graves, and few concepts have been more powerful or so hopefully held than the promise of salvation and entry into the Pure Land. Ancestors are regarded as a potential source of benefits, while faith in post-death salvation is an important element in the development of this-worldly peace of mind

17 Praying for benefits also reflects an **implicit recognition that human beings are unable to accomplish everything by themselves**: they need some support. The gist of his response was quite straightforward: by praying to the Buddhas, displaying faith, and acquiring their benevolent grace, one attains peace of mind.

29 „**Common religion**“ is the best term to use in this case. We do not mean „common“ in the negative sense of being ordinary, hackneyed, or low: „Common“ is not a term limited and can mean something that belongs to the whole community and can be used by anyone in the community, refined or coarse. It refers to a **set of sentiments, behavior, practices, beliefs, customs, and the like that is shared by the vast number of people** and is common to all classes and groups in society, including the elites (aristocratic, economic).

87 Iijima’s portrait of Buddhism as a degenerating religion includes another mutation of religious behavior—namely the **shift from consciousness of people being under the control of the deities to an awareness that it is humans who control the gods**. Like Fujii, Iijima assumes that asking for benefits presupposes that we can control the gods or at least influence them to fulfill our requests.

91 numerous interactions between Buddhist and Shintō deities took place. But as we shall see in Chapter 4, to **explain this simply as „syncretism“ does not work**. What facilitated the interaction was that both religions spoke something of the same language in terms of the ability of their deities to provide practical benefits.

93 The pattern of divine vows fulfillable by the Hearing of the name is a common one that has been made popular particularly in the Pure Land (Jōdo and True Pure Land (Jōdo Shin) sects. The famous vows of Amida that form the basis of Pure Land belief promise, among many other benefits, **immunity from rebirth in hell**, mastery of extraordinary faculties, knowledge of other people’s minds, the divine eye and ear, immeasurable life, analytic understanding, homage from the world, noble robes, rebirth in the Buddha’s country, sweet perfumes, jewels, and other boons and bounties.

110 *Kaiun* (開運) is luck affected and even created by morality and religious ritual.

112 The power of the chant overshadows the capacity of non-ritual actions based on „will-power“ to change bad karma because the record of the past, having been written by the

results of actions, is **beyond the reach of ordinary action and can only be rewritten effectively by the extraordinary power of ritual**. Karma is not a deterministic force producing unalterable retributions, and the present time is an opportunity for shaping future karma through willpower and **rewriting the record and results from past karma through ritual power**. Chance, then, insofar as it is perceived to exist, is to be eliminated by the causal workings of moral effort, which, when it falls short of completing the task, can be **augmented by ritual virtue**.

137 *Gorai* goes on to note that the **transformation of wine and bread into the blood and body of Christ in the Christian Eucharist is every bit as magical as Buddhist chants and prayers**

144 **Personalization is a major characteristic of Japanese common religion**. *Jizō* (地藏) has many names, nicknames, and functions. A partial list gleaned from popular religious guidebooks (see Chapter 7) includes the Longevity *Jizō*, Cough-curing *Jizō*, Rice-planting *Jizō*, Perspiration *Jizō*, Bed-wetters' *Jizō*, Oil-covered *Jizō*, Naked *Jizō*, Buckwheat Noodle *Jizō*, Bean curd *Jizō*, Catfish *Jizō*, Carp *Jizō*, Octopus*jizō*, Thorn-extracting *Jizō*, Wart-removing *Jizō*, Face powder *Jizō*, and, of course, the well-known Aborted Fetus *Jizō* (*Mizuko Jizō*). While *Jizō* is a classical Buddhist bodhisattva, most of these specialized *Jizō* are creations made through personal interpretations and local legends that do not always have a formal basis in scripture or commentary. The list goes on and indeed can continue to go on: there is no limit to the number of needs and characteristics that can be related to *Jizō*.



Auszug und Hervorhebungen durch Dr. Richard Dähler, 2006
http://www.eu-ro-ni.ch/publications/Tanabe_Practically.pdf
www.eu-ro-ni.ch

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Siehe auch: Daehler, Richard (2002): *Was ist nach japanischer Vorstellung Religion? Wie unterscheidet sie sich von der westlichen Vorstellung?*
http://www.eu-ro-ni.ch/publications/Japan_Was_ist_Religion.pdf

Sehr lesenswert:

Smith, Bardwell L. (2013): *Narratives of Sorrow and Dignity. Japanese Women, Pregnancy Loss, and Modern Rituals of Grieving*. Oxford University Press. 410 S.