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**[Rhee, Hong Beom. Asian millenarianism: an interdisciplinary study of the Taiping and Tonghak rebellions in a global context]**

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385-404) and a helpful index (p. 405-408). Chapter 1 (p. 11-38) tersely discusses some theoretical key issues and approaches in the study of contemporary Japanese religions, and briefly introduces a new analytic category – “modern religious organizations” (*Moderne Religiöse Organisationen*) – which is supposed to replace labels like “new religious movement” or “new religion” which are considered as misleading and inappropriate when applied to modern religious phenomena in the Japanese context (p. 18, 366). Chapter 2 (p. 39-66) continues with a short methodological overview, while chapter 3 (p. 67-109) primarily elucidates the historical development of World Mate and its precursors. The following chapter (p. 110-180) is an enlightening and focused description of the initially somewhat unsystematic *weltanschauung* of Fukami Tōshū as seen through his many writings. These days – we learn – World Mate ambitiously strives to systematize its teachings (p. 357).

Chapter 5 (p. 181-237) gives an outline of the different religious and ritual specializations and merits, and the daily agenda of a typical *shibu* (local chapter). Chapter 6 (p. 238-285) then discusses a collection of offered rituals and techniques aiming at granting relief or happiness and solving problems (*Glückstechnologien*). Chapter 7 (p. 286-329) continues by giving an instructive account of the large-scale rituals that are regularly organized by World Mate to take place at sacred sites in places such as Hakone or Ise. The following chapter (p. 330-360) succinctly discusses the networking activities, the movement’s careful internationalization and its prospects. Chapter 9, finally, closes with a conclusion (p. 361-374).

The study purposely puts emphasis on the pragmatic side of World Mate. The teachings of the movement are in a constant flux having no considerable formative impact on the adherents’ understanding of life, nature and cosmos, and can barely constitute a clear-cut portrayal of a coherent doctrine. Thus, Prohl focuses on the member’s individual motivations, aspirations and beliefs rather than delineating a kind of uniquely valid or (allegedly) universally accepted

code of teachings handed down by Fukami, which noticeably does not exist (p. 43-46). To some degree critical towards Fukami and World Mate (e.g. p. 172-173, 278, 335), the author provides a highly anticipated multi-perspective disquisition on a Japanese new religious movement or “modern religious organization” – applying the methodological arsenal of areas such as Economics of Religion, Sociology of Religion or Aesthetics of Religion – that deserves to rank among the shiny examples of excellent scholarship in the field of the Study of contemporary Japanese religions. Inken Prohl’s opus is a needed and most welcome contribution to the field and will doubtlessly meet gratitude within scholarly circles.

LUKAS POKORNY

## **Hong Beom Rhee, Asian Millenarianism: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Taiping and Tonghak Rebellions in a Global Context,**

**Youngstown: Cambria Press  
2007, xxx + 436 p.  
ISBN 978-1-934043-42-4.**

The study of millenarianism has been revived in the past 15 years following tragic events such as the Branch Davidian raid and shootout near Waco in 1993, the sarin nerve gas attack on the Tōkyō subway by Ōmu Shinrikyō in 1995, the mass suicide of 39 members of Heaven’s Gate in 1997, or the mass murder-suicides of members of the *Ordre du Temple solaire* between 1994 and 1997. What all these movements had in common were strong millenarian and in particular apocalyptic beliefs, preparing the grounds and mindset for what was to come later.

Basically, when talking about contemporary millenarian traditions scholars mainly

put emphasize on “Western” movements, only occasionally including a discussion on Ōmu Shinrikyō to illustrate the universal impact of millenarian ideas that can evidently be detached from a Christian, or more broadly Abrahamic belief setting. Moreover, millenarianism, albeit mistakenly, is frequently equated with apocalypticism, ignoring that the latter is in fact a variety of millenarianism.

The study at hand refers to a wider extension of the term “millenarianism” guided by Norman Cohn’s groundbreaking definition (Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: A History of Popular Religious and Social Movements in Europe from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century*, London: Secker & Warburg 1957), and thus endeavors to examine the millenarian dimension of two non-Christian religious traditions – Taiping and Tonghak (later renamed into Ch’ōndogyo) – that have significantly shaped the history of East Asia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and, to some extent, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Without a doubt, scholarly publications on East Asian millenarianism have been scarce. Hence, the study is definitely supposed to fill a desideratum but, admittedly to much of my regret, it underperforms in many ways.

The author, Hong Beom Rhee (Yi Hong-bōm, b. 1942), has obtained a PhD in History from the University of Pennsylvania. The study is based on his doctoral thesis and was approbated in 2005. Being a private scholar not affiliated with any academic institution, Rhee primarily dedicates himself to philanthropy promoting peace and freedom and fostering mutual understanding between South Korea and the United States.

To put it in a nutshell rephrasing Francis Hilary Conroy (b. 1919), Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, in his foreword, the book contains a “staggering abundance of ideas” of which some are rather “eccentric” (p. xvi) or bizarre.

Thorough reading quickly reveals a large number of formal errors: Romanization of Korean (McCune-Reischauer), Chinese (Hānyǔ Pīnyīn) and Japanese (Hepburn and not Wade-Giles [!], see p. xxvii) is defective. Typing mistakes and wrong dating are

all too frequent. Furthermore, in many cases the author has neglected to add crucial references. In terms of formality, the study therefore lacks the standards of serious scholarship.

Frankly speaking, Rhee’s approach is to a great deal unscientific and rather appears to be “esoteric” or “religious”. Plenty of his assumptions have no basis in fact and it would go beyond the scope of this review to list all of them. However, some of his speculations shall be mentioned briefly.

We learn about the proven existence of psionic (p. 55), yes, divine powers (p. 206) which were for instance frequently employed by Korean mystics in the past (p. 208). We are told that by meditation our *ki* (Chinese *qi*, see e.g. p. 110) which can be transferred thousands of miles away can potentially cure cancer and numerous other diseases (p. 47, 205). What is more, the Japanese in order to prevent Koreans to produce an intelligentsia during the age of colonial rule have purposely defiled some areas of accumulated *ki* why “mountains such as Mt. Kumsan ... produced a lot of blood-colored water” thereafter (p. 48). “According to quantum theory, even light particles and *ki* energy have consciousness like a human being” (p. 49). Rhee continues to explain that the Chinese characters are actually of Korean origin (p. 32) and that there is matter-of-fact proof of a proto-Korean script which might have had an impact on the creation of *Hiragana* and *Katakana* (p. 90). We learn that ancient Korea is likely to be older than 60,000 years, that there is a close kinship between Jews and Koreans (p. 88), that Koreans ruled most parts of ancient China as well as early Japan (p. 28-30; “In the ancient millenarian period, Korea was the mother of the Chinese and Japanese civilizations”, p. 16), or that great names of Chinese history such as Confucius or the legendary sage-kings Yáo and Shùn are actually Koreans (p. 120). In addition, most religious traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism or Christianity have been massively influenced by ancient Korean millenarian teachings (p. 84). According to Rhee, even Siddhārtha Gautama “claimed

that there was Buddhism in Korea before [sic!] he was born” (p. 120).

The author notably adheres to a strict ethnocentric worldview embraced by an intellectual horizon striving to form a symbiosis between science and religion. This overshadows the few valuable findings and leaves the general reader quite disenchanted. The study commences unveiling the author's idiosyncratic understanding of East Asian history (p. 1-58). The following chapters outline some theoretical reflections on millenarianism (p. 59-79), the history and impact of supposedly ancient Korean millenarian thought (p. 81-126), and the societal setting of Chosŏn and Qīng-Dynasty (p. 127-154). Chapters 4, 5 and 6 elucidate the Tàipíng and Tonghak movement in the light of their historical and social development, and their millenarian grounding (p. 155-334). Chapter 7 covers a terse discussion on Chūngsangyo and the Unification Church (p. 335-64), while the concluding chapter aims at reformulating a categorization of the notion of “millenarianism” (p. 365-404).

In summary, Rhee's opus can hardly be called serious scholarship and will completely disappoint anyone interested in the study of millenarianism. Neither formally nor content-related does it meet the demands of high-quality research.

LUKAS POKORNY

## Lucie Olivová a kol., Zvířecí mýty a mytická zvířata,

Praha: Academia 2010, 202 s.  
ISBN 978-80-200-1815-1

Sborník příspěvků *Zvířecí mýty a mytická zvířata*, které se sešly na stejnojmenné konferenci pořádané katedrou asijských studií University Palackého v Olomouci, má editorsky „na svědomí“ olomoucká sinoložka a badatelka Lucie Olivová. V rámci sborníku je publikováno třináct studií čtrnácti autorů, z toho dvě studie pocházejí od za-

hraničních odborníků. Samotný sborník je, jak uvádí editorka (s. 8), koláží do jisté míry nahodile sestavenou z témat, jimiž se autoři (převážně lingvisté, ale také religionisté a antropologové) zabývají, a nemůže tedy pokrýt téma mytické zvířeny v Asii komplexně a systematicky. Tato reflexe je na místě: po přečtení sborníku čtenář opravdu získá dojem, že vklad editorky v podobě úvodního či závěrečného slova nebo rámce, který by ve sborníku zastoupené studie nějak komentoval, strukturoval, organizoval, spojoval či rozděloval, nebyl příliš výrazný. Zdá se, že dvě normostrany „Předmluvy“ jsou k vysvětlení toho, proč a jak je sborník koncipován, přeci jen nedostatečné. Toho si je však editorka vědoma a uvádí, že co se výběru témat týče, učinili z nedostatku přednost, když dílo ušetřili generalizace, schematizace a z toho plynoucích nepřesností, a naopak specializací témat umožňují podat problematiku s přesností, plasticity a z perspektivy různých oborů zahrnujících orientální filologii, historii, obecnou lingvistiku, etnologii, religionistiku a zoologii (s. 8). Jednotlivé příspěvky ve sborníku mají nestejnou kvalitu a úroveň zpracovanosti. Z geografického hlediska sborník čtenáře zavede do Japonska, Koreje, Číny, Tibetu, Indie, Vietnamu či Taiwanu.

V prvním příspěvku „Mytické zvíře v paleolitickém umění (teoretické aspekty)“ (s. 11-27, obr. 1.1-1.4) vychází biologický antropolog Josef Duda z předpokladu, že mladopaleolitický člověk měl kapacitně i strukturálně obdobný mozek, a měl tedy mimo jiné schopnost abstraktního myšlení, jehož důkazem je existence perietálního a mobilního umění zahrnujícího zpodobnění tvorů reálných, ale také nadpřirozených (s. 12). Autor se dále věnuje kategorizaci mytických zvířat, paleolitické ikonografii, úloze a symbolice mytických zvířat, rituálu, totemu a tabu nebo šíření mýtu v mladším paleolitu. V příspěvku se objevuje celá řada významných témat, okruhů, kategorií či typologií, které jsou ovšem rozpracovány jen velmi stručně až povrchně. Příspěvek příliš nezohledňuje zásadní aktuální literaturu k tématu.

Druhým příspěvkem v pořadí je příspěvek Daniela Berounského nazvaný „Opice