"refuse to reconcile the two" and "calling attention to the potential hypocrisy of [the author's] proclaimed didactic agenda" (p. 126 and p. 132). The Tang literati were already experimenting with complex and ambiguous narrative methods that would endow their tales with lasting interest. Thanks to Manling Luo's painstaking and extensive study, the door is now wide open to understand better – through stories – the human condition and society of Late Medieval China.

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WILLIAM E. DEAL and BRIAN RUPPERT:
A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism.
(Wiley Blackwell Guides to Buddhism.) x, 303 pp. Chichester and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. £19.99. ISBN 978 1 4051 6701 7.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X1500138X

The authors have set themselves a daunting task: to present 1,500 years of Japanese Buddhist history in one slim volume of 300 pages. And on the whole, they succeed admirably. In what is clearly intended to be a textbook, William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert introduce readers not only to the current state of the field but also to its academic history by presenting the most recent Western and Japanese scholarship in the context of critically evaluating standard narratives of the Buddhist tradition in Japan. This allows readers who have but a passing acquaintance with the field to appreciate the importance of the arguments discussed. The volume thus responds to the need for an accessible, integrated account of Japanese Buddhism.

Significantly, the authors extend their discussion to modern and contemporary Buddhism without shrinking from controversial issues such as Buddhist involvement in Japanese imperialism and wars. In this regard, I found it particularly heartening to see a consideration of Critical Buddhism. The Critical Buddhism movement has helped to train awareness on discriminatory and socially exclusive practices in Japanese Buddhism. Responding to this concern, the authors give considerable space to neglected voices such as those of "non-persons" (*hinin* 非人) and, in dedicated sections, female practitioners.

Another laudable aspect is the author's adoption of a progressive chronology based on key developments within the Buddhist traditions rather than the political periodization of Japanese history. For example, the authors speak of "early" (950–1300 CE) and "late medieval Buddhism" (1300–1467) rather than "Heian", "Kamakura" or "Muromachi-period Buddhism". This reflects the fact that the roots of medieval Buddhism are actually to be found in the late Heian period, and that the so-called "new Kamakura Buddhism" did not flourish until after the Kamakura period. However, it is not always entirely clear on what criteria the authors base their periodization. For example, why choose 950 as the beginning of medieval Buddhism? The authors explain that "the ritual and political consolidation of the Heian royal court" occurred "around 950" (p. 87) but give no concrete example of what this implies. Furthermore, the authors themselves note that in the case of the Tendai tradition the rise in prominence of oral transmission lineages, often taken to be the beginning of "medieval Tendai" (J. *chūko tendai*), did not occur in the tenth century, as is traditionally claimed, but rather in the eleventh (pp. 91f.). Here a more nuanced discussion of exactly what developments mark the transition to medieval Buddhism might have been helpful.

Following general trends in the field the authors favour a cultural approach, rather than focusing on details of doctrine. Yet it is in this latter respect that the book would have benefited from more careful editing. For example, the authors explain the doctrinal position of the Jōjitsu tradition as follows: "[Jōjitsu] denies the existence of both mind and matter. [. . .T]his means that neither the self nor anything else has a permanent existence or reality" (p. 57). As stated, this is at least misleading. While it is true that the Jōjitsu tradition did deny the permanent existence of self and *dharma*, it did not deny their existence outright. Rather, it held that all phenomena are empty (*kū*) and abide only provisionally (*ke*) on the level of worldly truth. It consequently understood itself as taking the "middle path" (*chūdō*) between eternalism and nihilism. In a similar vein, the authors write that the Hossō school "teaches that reality is nothing but mental ideations" (p. 56). Hossō taught the exact opposite: that being caught in "mere ideation" (*yuishiki*) we are unable to perceive reality (*shinyo*).

The above are minor details. However, there are also some fundamental misunderstandings to be found in this book. The authors describe the precepts Ganjin introduced to Japan as follows: "The Mahayana precepts that Ganjin brought to Japan, though originally based in Theravada practice, became the template for the Vinaya embraced in the Mahayana lineages of East Asian Buddhism. [. . .] These monastic regulations, known as the Bodhisattva precepts [. . .] required adherence to vows based on Mahayana doctrine" (p. 65). First, the East Asian *vinaya* lineages are based on the Dharmaguptika *vinaya*, not the Theravada one; and second, the Bodhisattva precepts are separate from the monastic regulations of the *vinaya* and are open to lay believers as well. Better editing could easily have prevented this glitch as only a few pages later, in their discussion of the Tendai precepts, the authors provide a correct explanation (p. 74).

There is also some confusion regarding basic schemes of doctrinal classification. Concerning the distinction of exoteric and esoteric teachings, the authors write: "Exoteric Buddhism focused on doctrinal systems that provided an explanation and rationale for the significance of secretly transmitted esoteric practices" (p. 71). By this definition, the doctrinal *oeuvre* of Kūkai, the founder of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, which presents a "doctrinal system[. . .] that provide[s] an explanation and rationale for the significance of secretly transmitted esoteric practices" would count as exoteric!

Yet, in conclusion, these are minor squabbles. The authors have succeeded in synthesizing an enormous amount of scholarship into a readable, thorough and comprehensive overview of Japanese Buddhist history. When used with an awareness of its limitations, this volume will be an invaluable teaching resource.

Stephan Licha

JEFFREY L. RICHEY (ed):
Daoism in Japan: Chinese Traditions and Their Influence on Japanese Religious Culture.
(Routledge Studies in Daoism.) xiii, 267 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2015. £90. ISBN 978 1 138 78649 3.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X15001391

Since Egami Namio first proposed what came to be called the "horse-rider theory" of early Japanese history in 1948, according to which horse-riding warriors from the Korean peninsula invaded the Japanese islands in the fourth century CE and founded