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Richard M. Jaffe. *Neither Monk nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xxii + 288 pp. \$47.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-07495-5.

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To Marry or Not: Japanese Male Clerics Say

A book of great strengths, *Neither Monk Nor Layman* fills a lacuna in the historical study of Japanese Buddhism. For the general observer of Buddhism, who is familiar with the Buddhist tendency towards celibacy, the display of male clerical marriage in contemporary Japan is distinctive, even shocking. Jaffe's book helps explain the complex context that gave rise to that development. For those who are familiar with this phenomenon, Jaffe's careful examination of the historical records and accounts provides rich detail that has heretofore been almost entirely missing in western publications. A few Japanese scholars, including Hori Ichiro (1966) and Kawahashi Noriko (1995), have examined some of the issues Jaffe has explored, but none with the historical scope of Jaffe's study.

Jaffe's investigation covers the historical ground centering on the 1872 decree of the Japanese government that ended the criminalization of meat eating and marriage by ordained Buddhists. He begins his study by looking at the evidence found as early as the sixteenth century, tracing developments through the Edo Period (1600-1867), detailing salient events in the Meiji Period (1868-1911), and outlining their ramifications through to the 1990s. Evidence of medieval clerical fornication is drawn from several types of historical documents, including government regulations like the 1665 *Shoshu jiin hatto* and the writings of Francis Xavier from 1549 and 1552 about the "enormous sins" of the bonzes (p. 13). Tokugawa criminal records demonstrate that antifornication regulations were enforced throughout the Edo Pe-

riod. These include the records of Kanrin Zenkoji, a cleric who was put to death by crucifixion for fornication in 1671 and, in 1824, the cleric Kyoze of Myohoji who was "punished by public exposure at Nihonbashi for having engaged prostitutes in Shinjuku, Yoshiwara, and elsewhere" (pp. 23-24).

Jaffe looks at the controversial development of clerical marriage from the perspective of the conservative voices that saw it as a degeneration of the monastic tradition and from the forward-looking voices that saw it as a mark of a modern society. Jaffe draws out the distinctive voices among the various sects. He informs us who held what perspective and documents the reasoning that accompanied their view on whether the monastic tradition of celibacy should be maintained or abandoned. A vivid illustration of the variant views is as recent as the 1990s. "The 1991 schism between the Nichiren lay movement Soka Gakkai and its parent organization, the cleric-centered Nichiren Shoshu, is a prime example of the tension that can arise between organizations favoring complete laicization and those where a married priesthood still wields institutional control" (p. 233).

Various currents that shaped modern Japanese society as we know it today are seen in a fresh light when viewed from the perspective of the controversy surrounding male clerical marriage. Jaffe provides the details of the institutional restructuring of Buddhism and the new position of the clergy in Japanese society needed to understand post-Meiji changes in Japanese religious

life and Buddhist thought (p. 60). Through this careful study, the relationship between the government and the administration of the various Buddhist sects during this time period comes into focus. His scrutiny of Buddhist historical and governmental documents illuminates the motivations of the government in regards to Buddhism and religion. Here is where we also are given a look at an important influence that Protestant Christianity has had on modern Japanese society. "From mid-Meiji through the Taisho period, the criticisms of Buddhism by domestic and foreign Christians made the recasting of Buddhist attitudes toward marriage, women, and family life imperative" (p. 198). During this time, Buddhists from several sects wrote about the importance of family.

One example from 1917 is by Kuruma Takudo, a Soto Buddhist who was abbot of Banryuji in Tokyo. He wrote, "marriage is one of the great issues of human existence. It is no exaggeration to say that the success or failure of a life depends on this event" (p. 220). From this historical perspective, one can see the quiet, though powerful, influence Christians had and how they acted as a legitimating force for those who preferred male clerical marriage. The shift from a "religiously" based state to separation of religion and state is discussed, underscoring the complexity of defining the parameters of "religion" in the Japanese context. Jaffe writes, "particularly during the first quarter of the Meiji era, one can detect an effort to define religion using the neologism *shukyo* as the Japanese translation of the term: precisely, as an activity that lay outside the bounds of state jurisdiction. Both Meiji officials, who wished to end their involvement in the exceedingly contentious realm of sectarian doctrine, and a wide variety of Buddhists, who wished to free themselves from the control of denominational hierarchs, used the public/private distinction to justify their actions" (p. 229).

Also, the differences within each Buddhist sect become evident. Discrepancies between touted practices and actual practices are brought into high relief, revealing that male clerical marriage had more commonly occurred and been preferred before 1872 than has ever been openly exposed and documented before.

Another issue Jaffe exposes that has not received much attention is the plight of the "temple wives and children" who had previously not been formally acknowledged by the sect institutions until the 1880s. Their

economic vulnerability, the illegitimacy of their children, and the dispossession of widows forced the issue of adopting family protection laws for temple families. Their treatment, in the end, became a key to melting the tension between those who agree with male clerical marriage and those who think celibacy is central to the path of the ordained. By the end of the Meiji and the beginning of the Taisho periods, several major denominations responded to the social consequences of clerical marriage.

Jaffe's historical study of the issue of *nikujiki saitai* (meat eating and clerical marriage) provides crucial data useful for furthering religious analyses of several issues germane to inquiry into human religiosity, including the place and role of Buddhist monasticism in contemporary societies and the ongoing gender distinctions among ordained adherents of Buddhism as well as comparatively across cultures and traditions.

Jaffe's use of sources is one of the primary strengths of this book. It is thorough in its depth, drawing from historical documents, letters, institutional records, sectarian tracts, and scholarly materials in Japanese and English. His is the first publication to make such extensive use of these primary documents.

Jaffe aptly sought a word that would describe the people whom he is studying. He rejected the obvious choices of "monk" and "priest" and chose the term that best conveys their context: "cleric." Without the necessary qualification of gender, however, the result is less than something for which one might wish. Statements on the precise nature of his study in the introduction would help the reader understand that the scope of concern of the book is primarily the male perspective on male clerics. Using the generic term "cleric" creates the impression that the author is speaking about both male and female ordained Buddhists. This is misleading and confusing. Although he draws a few distinctions, closer examination would reveal a much wider gap between monks and nuns with regard to this issue. Although both face the pressure of finding a successor, the overwhelming majority of nuns have rejected the option of marriage as a possible solution. In considering why most male monastics have chosen to marry, but females have not, it is interesting to consider the differing roles within marriage. Men escape domestic duties by marrying. Women escape domestic duties by taking monastic vows!

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