EASTERNIZATION OF THE EAST? ZEN AND SPIRITUALITY AS DISTINCT CULTURAL NARRATIVES IN JAPAN

Jørn Borup

Abstract

Zen Buddhism has for decades fascinated the West, and the former elitist tradition has in contemporary times become part of broad popular culture. Zen is for Buddhists, but it is also part of a general “Easternization” and alleged “spiritual revolution” narrative. In Japan, both Zen and “spirituality” are important factors in both media and the lived religious environment. This article aims to investigate how and to what extent “Zen” and “spirituality” are related as narratives and religious practices in a contemporary Japanese context. While there are overlaps, it is argued that the two domains are separate and that such a division is based on general differences in culturally constrained narratives (Western/Japanese, Zen/spirituality). Besides focusing on a concrete Japanese context, the article also contributes to research on global and transnational (Zen) Buddhism as well as to the field of comparative spirituality.

Keywords

Japan; Zen; Easternization; spirituality; new age; circulation

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REFBACKS

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KEYWORDS

Buddhism Buddhism in America Buddhism in the West China Chinese Buddhism Digital Buddhism Japan Social media Stephen Batchelor Thai temple food Tibetan Buddhism Zen Community cultivation food court meditation meditation-in-movement mindfulness popular culture secular Buddhism transnationalism
Easternization of the East? Zen and Spirituality as Distinct Cultural Narratives in Japan more. by Jorn Borup. Zen Buddhism has for decades fascinated the West, and the former elitist tradition has in contemporary times become part of broad popular culture. Zen is for Buddhists, but it is also part of a general "Easternization" and alleged "more. Zen Buddhism has for decades fascinated the West, and the former elitist tradition has in contemporary times become part of broad popular culture. This article is based on a quantitative study of two rather distinct religious traditions (Buddhism and Christianity) sharing the same ethnic origin (Vietnamese) in the same host nation (Denmark). It investigates the possible relations more. This is a powerful, well-argued, and carefully researched historical narrative that boldly throws down a gauntlet to scholars, believers, and skeptics alike. Agree or disagree, it’s a damned good read.” —Eileen Barker, Professor Emeritus of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion, London School of Economics. “We are in the hands of a master. Both creative and thought-provoking, The Easternization of the West engages with our times. It enables us to reflect on the extent to which the dualisms of the Enlightenment are in the process of being replaced by a monistic worldview. Ei Keywords: Buddhism Buddhism in America Buddhism in the West China Chinese Buddhism Digital Buddhism Japan Social media Stephen Bachelor Thai temple food Tibetan Buddhism Zen community cultivation food court meditation meditation-in-movement mindfulness popular culture secular Buddhism transnationalism. Font Size. Home. About. Login. Register. Search.