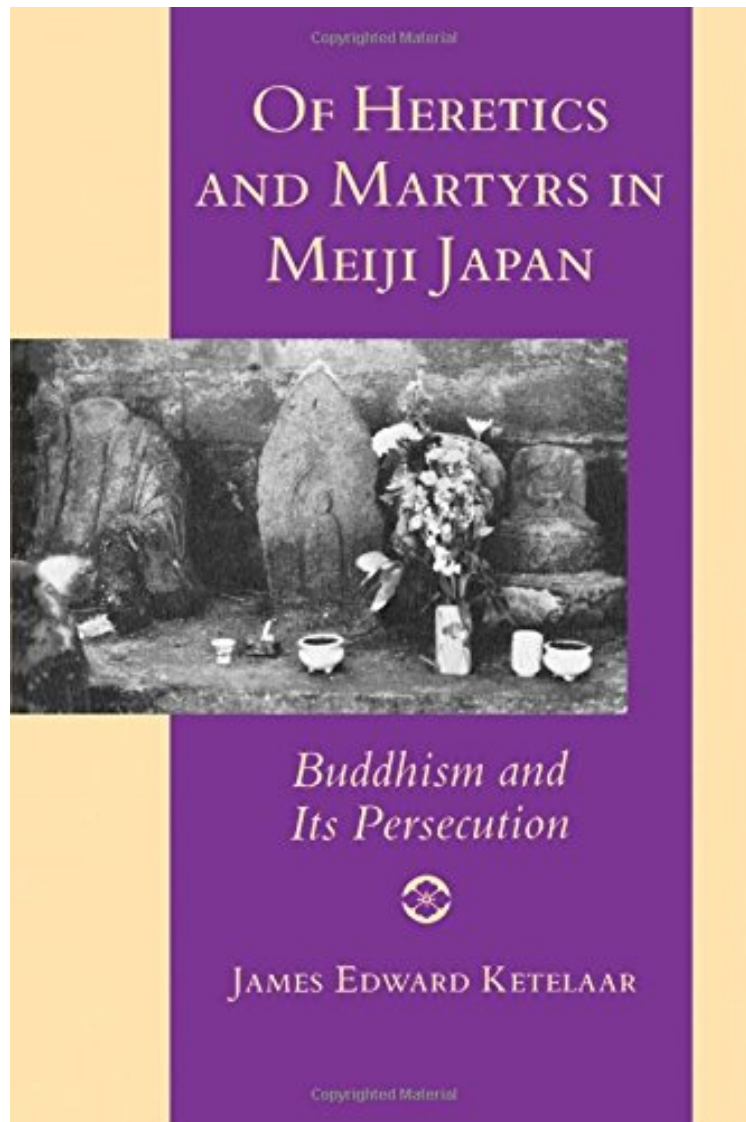


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## Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan

*James Edward Ketelaar*

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**James Edward Ketelaar : Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. along with "The Question's of King Milinda / Menander" are my favorite historical readings on Buddhism so far By Jared G. Halfway through the book and I'm enjoying every minute of being transported back to the Meiji era. It's a heavy read, so be prepared to pause and absorb each detail. This book, along with "The Questions of King Milinda / Menander" are my favorite historical readings on Buddhism so far! 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Insight into modern Japanese Buddhism By Kim Boykin This book is an

academic study of the persecution of Buddhism in Japan in the first half of the Meiji era--i.e., in the late nineteenth century. It may be of interest to different readers for different reasons:(1) It's a study of a particular period in JAPANESE HISTORY, highlighting "the dominant ideological concerns of the period and the consequences of those concerns for individual and institutional action."(2) It's a study of PERSECUTION and responses to it, using as a case study the Meiji Buddhists, who managed to transform themselves from heretics to martyrs.(3) It's a study of JAPANESE BUDDHISM. Meiji Buddhism was "caught in the crossfire between Shintoists, enlightenment thinkers, nationalists, imperialists, economists, Confucians, and the newly emergent scientists and historians . . . as they did battle over the correct interpretation of 'civilization and enlightenment.'" Japanese Buddhism not only survived persecution but, in responding to this persecution and also to critiques from within, managed to reconstitute itself as nonheretical. This was done so effectively that the Meiji persecution of Buddhism "is all but forgotten in chronicles of Japanese history," and the "modern Buddhism" produced by the Meiji Buddhists came to be central to Japan's self-understanding.Ch. 1 examines the critiques of Buddhism in the Tokugawa era that set the stage for persecution in the Meiji era--historicist, nativist, and economic critiques. Ch. 2 examines the Meiji persecution of Buddhism and some Buddhist responses to it. Ch. 3 examines the creation of a national ideology and the institutions designed to promulgate it, including the Great Teaching Academy, and the Buddhist-led countermovement that closed the academy and transformed Buddhism "from a persecuted other to a paradigmatic martyr of the illustrious heritage of the nation." Ch. 4 examines the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago and its role in Japanese Buddhism's self-(re)definition as modern, cosmopolitan, and universally applicable. And Ch. 5 examines the way in which a unified vision of Meiji Buddhism and a new history were created and how they were used in producing a Buddhist claim to religious universality.I read this book mainly to learn about the Japanese Buddhism that was transmitted to the U.S., and I was interested to learn that it wasn't just Western Buddhists who were responding to accusations that Buddhism is passive or who were touting Buddhism as an eminently rational religion. Japanese Buddhists were already refiguring Buddhism as socially useful and as compatible with an enlightened society and a scientific worldview.

How did Buddhism, so prominent in Japanese life for over a thousand years, become the target of severe persecution in the social and political turmoil of the early Meiji era? How did it survive attacks against it and reconstitute itself as an increasingly articulate and coherent belief system and a bastion of the Japanese national heritage? Here James Ketelaar elucidates not only the development of Buddhism in the late nineteenth century but also the strategies of the Meiji state.

Winner of the 1991 Hans Rosenhaupt Memorial Book Award, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship FoundationFinalist for the 1993 Pacific Coast Branch Book Award, American Historical AssociationWinner of the 1992 Hiromi Arisawa Award, Association of American University Presses"Eloquent and provocative. [This] is one of only a few studies that tackle the question of traditional religions in modernizing Japan."--John Breen, *Monumenta Nipponica*"A superb narrative about religion in nineteenth-century Japan. . . . One of the best books available that discusses religion in modern Japan."--William R. LaFleur, *Journal of Church and State*"Well-researched and insightful."--Janine A. Sawada, *Journal of Asian Studies*.From the Back CoverHow did Buddhism, so prominent in Japanese life for over a thousand years, become the target of severe persecution in the social and political turmoil of the early Meiji era?About the AuthorJames Edward Ketelaar is Assistant Professor of History at Stanford University. *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan* was a finalist for the Hiromi Arisawa Prize Award given by the American Association of University Presses.