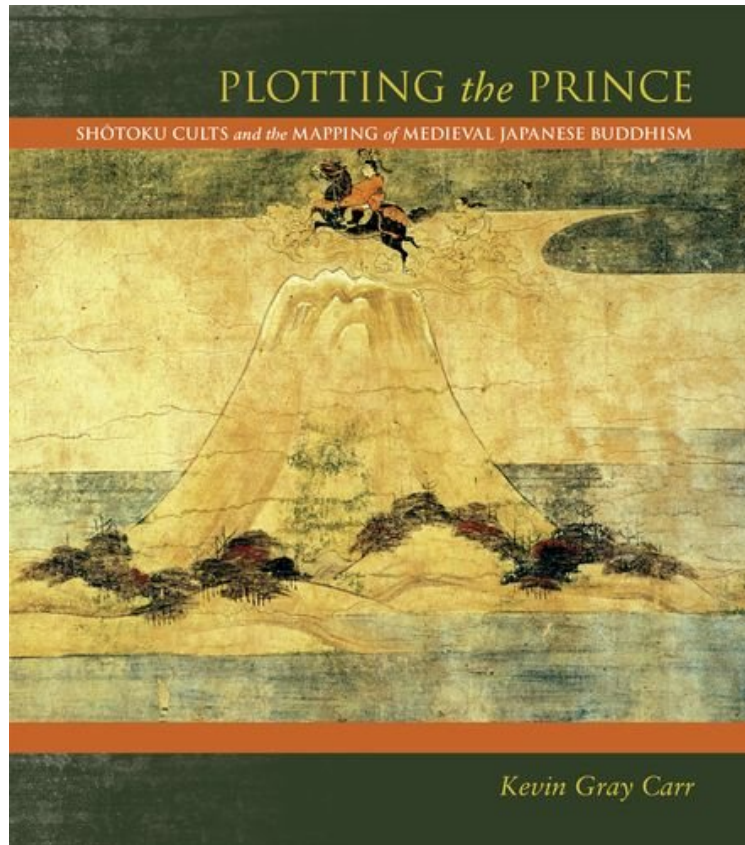


[Library ebook] Plotting the Prince: Shotoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism

Plotting the Prince: Shotoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism

Kevin Gray Carr

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Kevin Gray Carr : Plotting the Prince: Shotoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Plotting the Prince: Shotoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism:

Plotting the Prince traces the development of conceptual maps of the world created through the telling of stories about Prince Shtoku (573?622?), an eminent statesman who is credited with founding Buddhism in Japan. It analyzes his place in the sacred landscape and the material relics of the cult of personality dedicated to him, focusing on the art created from the tenth to fourteenth centuries. The book asks not only who Shtoku was, but also how images of his life served the needs of devotees in early medieval Japan. Even today Shtoku evokes images of a half-real, half-mythical figure who embodied the highest political, social, and religious ideals. Taking up his story about four centuries after his death, this study traces the genesis and progression of Shtokus sacred personas in art to illustrate their connection to major religious centers such as Shitenno-ji and Hry-ji. It argues that mapping and storytelling are sister acts both

structuring the world in subtle but compelling ways that combined in visual narratives of Shotoku's life to shape conceptions of religious legitimacy, communal history, and sacred geography. *Plotting the Prince* introduces much new material and presents provocative interpretations that call upon art historians to rethink fundamental conceptions of narrative and cultic imagery. It offers social and political historians a textured look at the creation of communal identities on both local and state levels, scholars of religion a substantially new way of understanding key developments in doctrine and practice, and those studying the past in general a clear instance of visual hagiography taking precedence over the textual tradition.

Kevin Gray Carr's beautiful new book explores the figure of Prince Shotoku (573?-622?) the focus of one of the most widespread visual cults in Japanese history. Introducing us to a range of stories materialized in both verbal and visual narratives, *Plotting the Prince* frames Shotoku as a symbolic vessel. *New Books in East Asian Studies* (6 February 2013) In this remarkable study Kevin Carr shows how Prince Shotoku became one of the most widely revered among the many nobles and priests who implanted the Buddhist faith in the hearts of the Japanese people. A crown prince who served as regent under his aunt, Empress Suiko, he directed the resources of the state to support the religion at a crucial moment in its arrival from the Asian mainland. At his country villa near Nara he built the famous Horyu-ji monastery, whose Eastern Precinct became a shrine to his memory after his death. Carr introduces exciting new pictorial evidence of the growth of the Shotoku cult in Japan's Middle Ages, and he brilliantly analyzes the intriguing eleventh-century panoramic paintings of Shotoku's life that covered three walls of the E-den (Picture Hall) in the Eastern Precinct. John M. Rosenfield, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of East Asian Art, Emeritus, Harvard University

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