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Yijiang Zhong

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Modern Shinto in Japan: The Vanquished Gods of Izumo (Bloomsbury Shinto Studies):

Yijiang Zhong analyses the formation of Shinto as a complex and diverse religious tradition in early modern and Meiji Japan, 1600-1868. Highlighting the role of the god Okuninushi and the mythology centered on the Izumo Shrine in western Japan as part of this process, he shows how and why this god came to be ignored in State Shinto in the modern period. In doing so, Zhong moves away from the traditional understanding of Shinto history as something completely internal to the nation of Japan, and instead situates the formation of Shinto within a larger geopolitical context involving intellectual and political developments in the East Asian region and the role of western colonial expansion. *The Origin of Modern Shinto in Japan* draws extensively on primary source materials in Japan, many of which were only made available to the public less than a decade ago and have not yet been studied. Source materials analysed include shrine records and object materials, contemporary written texts, official materials from the national and provincial levels, and a broad range of visual sources based on contemporary prints, drawings, photographs and material culture.

This book presents a stimulating case study of the interdependent relationship between the secular and the religious. Yijiang Zhong convincingly argues that the establishment of the public and secular Japanese nation-state was possible only by consigning some Shinto schools to the private, religious sphere. Highly recommended for anyone interested in Shinto and Japanese history as well as critical study of religion and secularization. (Jun'ichi Isomae, Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Japan 2016-05-09) With this rich, nuanced, carefully researched and deeply thoughtful work, the sophistication and maturation of Shinto studies continues. Too long over-looked, Izumo, its grand shrine, and complex tradition, are illuminated by Zhong in ways that nothing else in English gets close to. A tour de force, this work sets new standards for works in Japanese religion and thought. (James E. Ketelaar, Professor of Japanese History, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, USA 2016-05-09) About the Author Yijiang Zhong is Associate Professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo, Japan and a Research Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan.