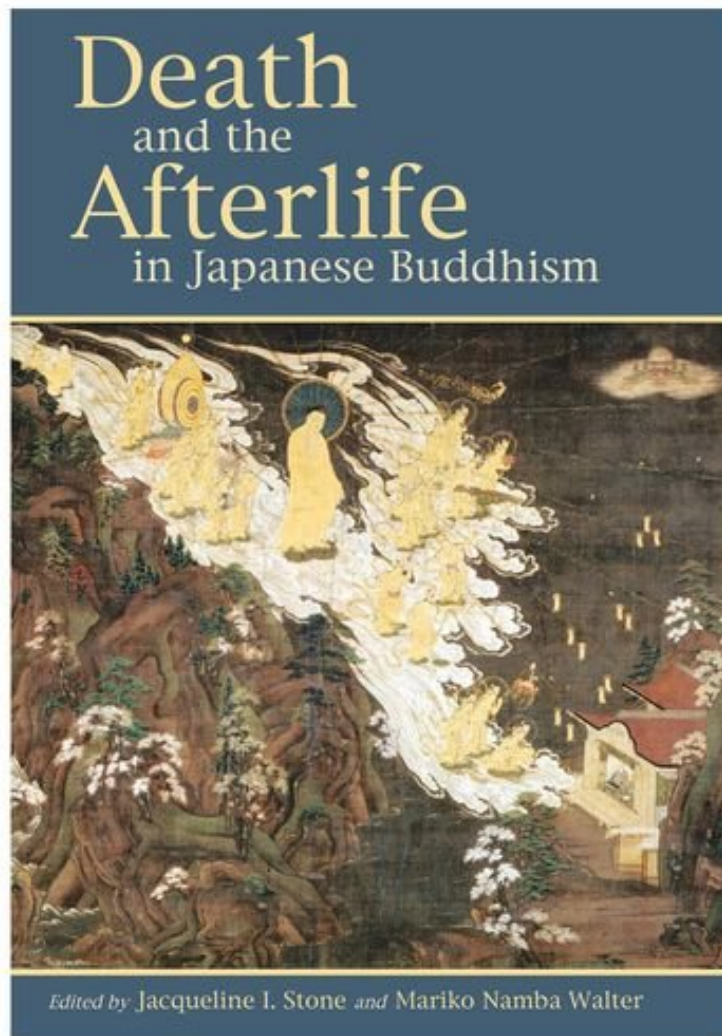


[Read free ebook] Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism

## Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism

From Brand: Univ of Hawaii Pr  
ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF



 Download

 Read Online

#1663173 in Books Univ of Hawaii Pr 2008-08-20 2008-08-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.90 x 1.50 x 6.20l, 1.60 #File Name: 0824832043368 pages | File size: 63.Mb

**From Brand: Univ of Hawaii Pr : Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. He loved the bookBy RoseEveMy son wrote a college paper on this and got a 100%! He loved the book. It's well laid out and easy to understand.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. "Ashes to Ashes"By Crazy FoxPerhaps because it's a religious tradition that emphasizes impermanence, Buddhism often gets saddled with handling funerals. In Japan this holds especially true, and generally for the average person there Buddhism is primarily if not exclusively associated with funerary rites (to the point that a wide-eyed 20-something's interest in the religion can strike them as mildly morbid). These rites clearly make for

Buddhism's most prominent role in society and are thus the economic backbone maintaining its institutional presence, about which a multitude of key doctrinal and ritual phenomena cluster as well. And yet scholarly studies of Japanese Buddhism tend to avoid this subject like the plague. Well, except for this fine collection of articles with a deceptively dull title. "Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism" rushes in where other studies fear to tread, exploring this key aspect of Buddhism as it has developed in Japan with exemplary depth and breadth. The assorted articles range in time from the early Heian to the contemporary present and cover a good variety of schools and disparate Buddhist traditions. Some articles are extremely specific, focusing for example on one apocryphal sutra and the beliefs and practices surrounding it, while others step back and consider the larger issues and ramifications of, say, the disconnect between certain Buddhist teachings and certain Buddhist funerary practices. Each article is of high scholarly caliber and yet eminently readable, and each is interesting, informative, or thought-provoking in its own manner. If I had to pick one, though, Mariko Walter's article unearthing the underlying pan-sectarian structure of Buddhist funerals is in particular a priceless resource repaying repeated reference. But the collection as a whole is a dead-on indispensable addition to the library of anyone seriously interested in Japanese Buddhism. Articles included in this book: 1.

"Mukaeko: Practice for the Deathbed" by Sarah Johanna Horton<sup>2</sup>. "With the Help of 'Good Friends': Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan" by Jacqueline I. Stone<sup>3</sup>. "Beyond Death and the Afterlife: Considering Relic Veneration in Medieval Japan" by Brian O. Ruppert<sup>4</sup>. "Collective Suicide at the Funeral of Jitsunyo: Mimesis or Solidarity?" by Mark L. Blum<sup>5</sup>. "At the Crossroads of Birth and Death: The Blood Pool Hell and Postmortem Fetal Extraction" by Hank Glassman<sup>6</sup>. "Funerary Zen: Soto Zen Death Management in Tokugawa Japan" by Duncan Ryuken Williams<sup>7</sup>. "The Structure of Japanese Buddhist Funerals" by Mariko Namba Walter<sup>8</sup>. "The Price of Naming the Dead: Posthumous Precept Names and Critiques of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism" by Stephen G. Covell<sup>9</sup>. "The Orthodox Heresy of Buddhist Funerals" by George J. Tanabe, Jr.

For more than a thousand years, Buddhism has dominated Japanese death rituals and concepts of the afterlife. The nine essays in this volume, ranging chronologically from the tenth century to the present, bring to light both continuity and change in death practices over time. They also explore the interrelated issues of how Buddhist death rites have addressed individual concerns about the afterlife while also filling social and institutional needs and how Buddhist death-related practices have assimilated and refigured elements from other traditions, bringing together disparate, even conflicting, ideas about the dead, their postmortem fate, and what constitutes normative Buddhist practice. The idea that death, ritually managed, can mediate an escape from deluded rebirth is treated in the first two essays. Sarah Horton traces the development in Heian Japan (794-1185) of images depicting the Buddha Amida descending to welcome devotees at the moment of death, while Jacqueline Stone analyzes the crucial role of monks who attended the dying as religious guides. Even while stressing themes of impermanence and non-attachment, Buddhist death rites worked to encourage the maintenance of emotional bonds with the deceased and, in so doing, helped structure the social world of the living. This theme is explored in the next four essays. Brian Ruppert examines the roles of relic worship in strengthening family lineage and political power; Mark Blum investigates the controversial issue of religious suicide to rejoin one's teacher in the Pure Land; and Hank Glassman analyzes how late medieval rites for women who died in pregnancy and childbirth both reflected and helped shape changing gender norms. The rise of standardized funerals in Japan's early modern period forms the subject of the chapter by Duncan Williams, who shows how the Soto Zen sect took the lead in establishing itself in rural communities by incorporating local religious culture into its death rites. The final three chapters deal with contemporary funerary and mortuary practices and the controversies surrounding them. Mariko Walter uncovers a "deep structure" informing Japanese Buddhist funerals across sectarian lines a structure whose meaning, she argues, persists despite competition from a thriving secular funeral industry. Stephen Covell examines debates over the practice of conferring posthumous Buddhist names on the deceased and the threat posed to traditional Buddhist temples by changing ideas about funerals and the afterlife. Finally, George Tanabe shows how contemporary Buddhist sectarian intellectuals attempt to resolve conflicts between normative doctrine and on-the-ground funerary practice, and concludes that human affection for the deceased will always win out over the demands of orthodoxy. *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism* constitutes a major step toward understanding how Buddhism in Japan has forged and retained its hold on death-related thought and practice, providing one of the most detailed and comprehensive accounts of the topic to date. Contributors: Mark L. Blum, Stephen G. Covell, Hank Glassman, Sarah Johanna Horton, Brian O. Ruppert, Jacqueline I. Stone, George J. Tanabe, Jr., Mariko Namba Walter, Duncan Ryuken Williams.

About the Author Jacqueline I. Stone is professor of religion at Princeton University.