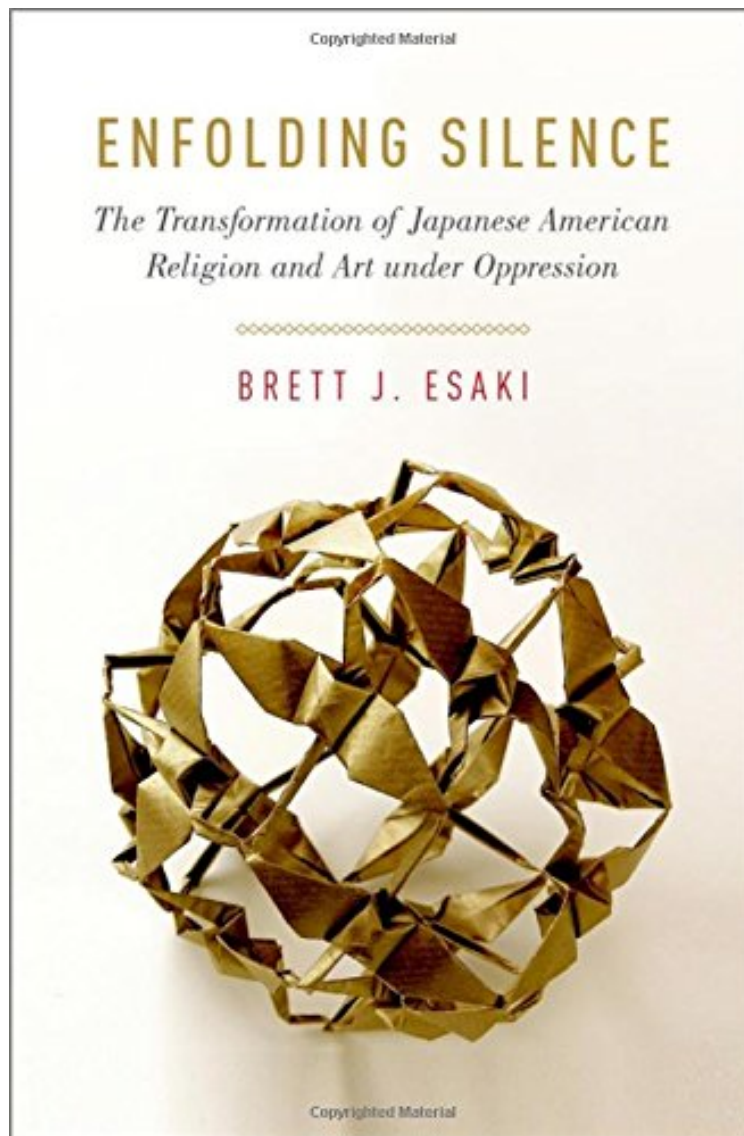


(Download pdf) *Enfolding Silence: The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression* (AAR ACADEMY SER)

Enfolding Silence: The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression (AAR ACADEMY SER)

Brett J. Esaki

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Brett J. Esaki : *Enfolding Silence: The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression* (AAR ACADEMY SER) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Enfolding Silence: The Transformation of Japanese American Religion and Art under Oppression*

(AAR ACADEMY SER):

This book demonstrates how Japanese Americans have developed traditions of complex silences to survive historic moments of racial and religious oppression and how they continue to adapt these traditions today. Brett Esaki offers four case studies of Japanese American art-gardening, origami, jazz, and monuments-and examines how each artistic practice has responded to a historic moment of oppression. He finds that these artistic silences incorporate and convey obfuscated and hybridized religious ideas from Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Shinto, indigenous religions, and contemporary spirituality. While silence is often thought of as the binary opposite and absence of sound, Esaki offers a theory of non-binary silence that articulates how multidimensional silences are formed and how they function. He argues that non-binary silences have allowed Japanese Americans to disguise, adapt, and innovate religious resources in order to negotiate racism and oppressive ideologies from both the United States and Japan. Drawing from the fields of religious studies, ethnic studies, theology, anthropology, art, music, history, and psychoanalysis, this book highlights the ways in which silence has been used to communicate the complex emotions of historical survival, religious experience, and artistic inspiration.

"Esaki has found a balance between rock solid academic writing and prose that retains life and personality and humanity, essential for exploring the topic he chose. Esaki not only makes an invaluable contribution to scholarship in religious studies and Japanese American studies, he sets a model for how we can approach these beautifully multifaceted presentations of religious resistance, no matter their context."--Kimberly Rae Connor, author of *Imagining Grace: Liberating Theologies in the Slave Narrative Tradition* "Esaki provides deeply nuanced readings of silence within the experiences of Japanese Americans and their encounter with racism, violence, and oppression. The focus on religion and the arts enables Esaki to unfold and to skillfully navigate the spaces between resistance and accommodation. A highly original study that deserves wide readership."--David K. Yoo, author of *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* "In this original, helpful, and judicious work, Esaki pushes us to rethink silence and vulnerability as strength; equally important is the fact that it does so without 'neat' solutions or triumphalism, but only a realistic sense of struggles for survival in the midst of racialized oppression. This is a major-in fact, path-breaking-achievement in the study of Asian American history and religious studies."--Tat-siong Benny Liew, Class of 1956 Professor in New Testament Studies at College of the Holy Cross "Esaki's book is groundbreaking and a joy to read! This is an important book for anyone who is a scholar of cultural studies, immigration, race, or American history." --Stephanie Mitchem, author of *African American Folk Healing* "This fascinating, nuanced study of silence as non-binary communication makes a compelling case for its capacity to transcend words. Through the specificity of Japanese American experiences, Esaki enables us to understand silence in trauma, political resistance, aesthetics, and spirituality and to value vulnerability as awareness of radiant presence in creativity, beauty, and art." -Rita Nakashima Brock, co-author of *Saving Paradise* "Enfolding Silence plumbs the depths of silence and reveals its complex nature and startling expression. Through a thought-provoking and sophisticated analysis of the Japanese American cultural arts, Esaki evokes the spirit of a people and their complex language of survival, resistance, and hope. Provocative and profound."--Jane Naomi Iwamura, author of *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture* About the Author Brett J. Esaki is Assistant Professor of American Religions at Georgia State University.