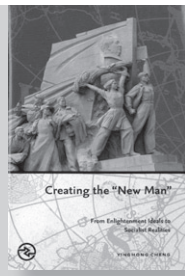


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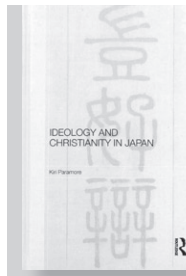
Creating the 'New Man'. From Enlightenment Ideals to Socialist Realities
Yinghong Cheng
University of Hawai'i Press. 2009.
ISBN 978 0 8248 3074 8

THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING undesirable traits from the human temperament to create a 'new man' has been part of moral and political thinking worldwide for millennia. During the Enlightenment, European philosophers sought to construct an ideological framework for reshaping human nature. But it was only among the communist regimes of the 20th century that such ideas were actually put into practice on a nationwide scale. In this book Yinghong Cheng examines three culturally diverse sociopolitical experiments – the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, China under Mao, and Cuba under Castro – in an attempt to better understand the origins and development of the 'new man'.

This book's fundamental concerns are how these communist revolutions strove to create a new, morally and psychologically superior, human being and how this task paralleled efforts to create a superior society. To these ends, it addresses a number of questions: What are the intellectual roots of the new-man concept? How was this idealistic and utopian goal linked to specific political and economic programmes? How do

the policies of these particular regimes, based as they are on universal communist ideology, reflect national and cultural traditions? Cheng begins by exploring the origins of the idea of human perfectibility during the Enlightenment. His discussion moves to other European intellectual movements, and then to the creation of the Soviet Man, the first communist new man in world history. Subsequent chapters examine China's experiment with human nature, starting with the nationalistic debate about a new national character at the turn of the 20th century; and Cuban perceptions of the new man and his role in propelling the revolution from a nationalist, to a socialist, and finally a communist movement. The last chapter considers the global influence of the Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban experiments.

Creating the 'New Man' contributes greatly to our understanding of how three very different countries and their leaders carried out problematic and controversial visions and programmes. It will be of special interest to students and scholars of world history and intellectual, social, and revolutionary history, and also development studies and philosophy.

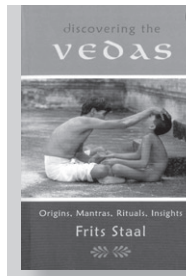


Ideology and Christianity in Japan
Kiri Paramore
Routledge/Leiden Series in Modern East Asian Politics and History. 2009
ISBN 978 0 415 44356 2

IDEOLOGY AND CHRISTIANITY in Japan shows the major role played by Christian-related discourse in the formation of early-modern and modern Japanese political ideology.

The book traces the historical development of anti-Christian ideas in Japan from the banning of Christianity by the Tokugawa shogunate in the early 1600s, to the use of Christian and anti-Christian ideology in the construction of modern Japanese state institutions at the end of the 1800s. Kiri Paramore recasts the history of Christian-related discourse in Japan in a new paradigm showing its influence on modern thought and politics and demonstrates the direct links between the development of ideology in the modern Japanese state, and the construction of political thought in the early Tokugawa shogunate.

Demonstrating hitherto ignored links in Japanese history between modern and early-modern, and between religious and political elements, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Japanese history, religion and politics.



Discovering the Vedas. Origins, Mantras, Rituals, Insights
Frits Staal
Published by Society for Japanese Arts; Penguin Books India. 2008
ISBN 978 0 14309 986 4

IN THIS UNPRECEDENTED guide to the Vedas, Frits Staal, the celebrated author of *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar* and *Universals: Studies in Indian Logic and Linguistics*, examines almost every aspect of these ancient sources of Indic civilization.

Staal extracts concrete information from the Oral Tradition and Archaeology about Vedic people and their language, what they thought and did, and where they went and when. He provides essential information about the Vedas and includes selections and translations. He sheds lights on mantras and rituals that contributed to what came to be known as Hinduism. Significant is a modern analysis of what we can learn from the Vedas today: the original forms of the Vedic sciences, as well as the perceptive wisdom of the composers of the Vedas. The author puts Vedic civilization in a global perspective through a wide-ranging comparison with other Indic philosophies and religions, primarily Buddhism.

For Staal, originally a logician, the voyage of discovering the Vedas is like unpeeling an onion but without the certainty of

reaching an end. Even so, his book shows that the Vedas have a logic all of their own. Accessible, finely argued, and with a wealth of information and insight, *Discovering the Vedas* is for both the scholar and the interested lay reader.

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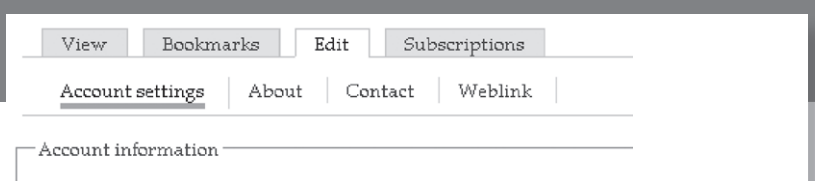


Fig. 1.

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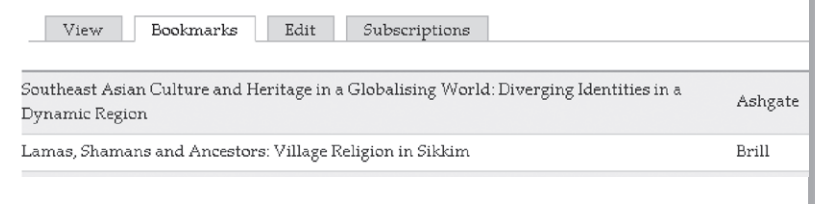


Fig. 2.

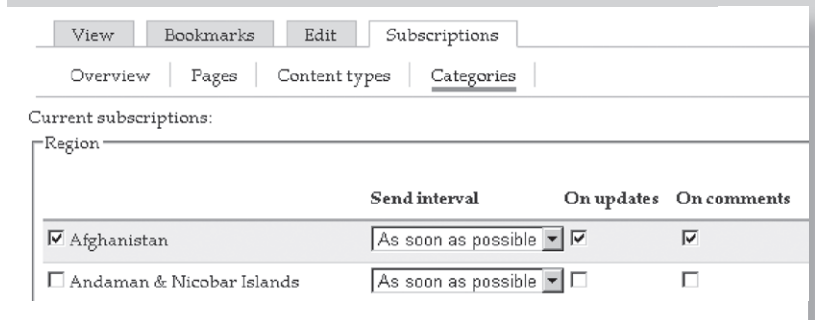


Fig. 3.

