uments give us an invaluable opportunity to glimpse the past, but they also tend to present an imbalanced view in which problems are over-represented, while normality is often not recorded. In this sense, the reposts from the defeated Republican officers are bound to show the criticism and the bitter recriminations of any mauled army in retreat. At the same time, the tone among the almost always victorious Francoist is going to be optimistic. This perspective seems to be missing in this book, perhaps because Seidman, in his desire to debunk pro-Republican myths, not only uses uncritically those military reports, but also the works of Francoist historiography, especially those produced by two Francoist officers, J. M. Martínez Bande and R. Salas Larrzábal. They are competent but heavily biased historians who, in line with the Francoist mythology, present the war of 1936–1939 as the fight between Christian order and Marxist chaos, or as genuine, gentlemanly Spanishness pitted against the worst spurious foreign and local mobs.

The Republic had serious internal problems during the war and it did not overcome them; in fact, many become worse. To present those problems, as Seidman does, without an attempt to establish a link to the unfolding process of military defeat, can lead to visions that reflect mostly the situation at the end of the conflict but poorly earlier moments of the struggle. The Republic ended in chaos and despair, no doubt. But was that fact the cause or the consequence of defeats on the battlefield? Seidman seems to assume it to be the cause, but there are reasons to be cautions about this. From a military point of view, the main serious problem of the Republic was that (unlike, for example, the North during the American Civil War) it never had time to create and deploy an army of manoeuvre capable of taking the initiative. Was this because of the people's lack of fighting spirit or their leaders' incompetence (accusations of this in the North were frequent until Grant took command), or rather because the rebels (unlike the South) got the right foreign assistance at the right time? The growth of defeatism and individualism in Republican Spain cannot be separated from the unavoidable reality of defeat. In a civil war especially, military and social forces never work in one direction alone. This is the missing element of complexity in this excellent, irreverent, but uneven book: an explanation not only of why the (true or not) defiant Republican Spain of 1936 was defeated, but also of how three years of defeats changed Republican Spain.

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Robert Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds. — *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001. Pp. viii, 266.

The religious function of art objects within the context of early medieval Japanese Buddhism forms the crux of this book edited by Robert Sharf, a Buddhologist, and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, an art historian. This volume demonstrates the successful marriage of distinct disciplines coming together to arrive at a deeper understanding of the human regard for images, particularly religious ones. Japanese art history, an

extremely conservative field that has been dominated by connoisseurship studies, will be particularly spurred by this important book. It should be noted, however, that, of the four authors, only Karen Brock is an art historian by training; the others are Buddhist specialists. This book is important to those who study the social history of material culture.

This volume was based on a conference, "The Japanese Buddhist Icon in its Monastic Context", held at McMaster University in Hamilton in March 1994, which presented new trends in art historical and Buddhist scholarship. In his introduction, Sharf presents the importance of images in Buddhism, which he claims has been belittled by the Judeo-Christian attitude towards idolatry prevalent among scholars in general. Furthermore, their study has been stifled by the very nature of Buddhist scholarship, which emphasizes textual and doctrinal research, while art historians, following in the wake of European art history as established by Wölfflin, are possessed by iconographic and stylistic issues. This divergence of interests has affected the study of Buddhist images, which this volume seeks to reinstate to their ritual context as living images.

A specialist in the study of the Jôdo Shinshû sect, James Dobbins centres his work on portraits of the founder, Shinran (1173–1263). With precision and clarity, Dobbins analyses icons of Amitâbha Buddha, the central deity of Jôdo Shinshû worship, whose radiant power is transposed to icons such as inscriptions of the name of Amitâbha, and the very body of Shinran, who is considered an incarnation of Amitâbha. Thus the portrait of the founder is worshiped not only as Shinran, but Amitâbha himself; Dobbins calls this "the transposition of iconographic symbols" (p. 22). This is an excellent case study of how one religious sect regards the founder, the deity, and their relationship with icons.

Continuing her work on the production and reception of art in the context of the Kasuga cult at the Buddhist temple of Kôzanji in Kyoto and the monk Myôe (1173–1232), Karen Brock has produced a paper that directly shows the influence of native deities, called *kami*, on the practice of Buddhism in Japan. Her work is based on temple archival materials, both textual and pictorial, which are knitted together to produce a fascinating and detailed history of how one monk used indigenous beliefs to assure his own position in society and promote Buddhism and its icons. Rather than studying the masterpieces of Buddhist art at Kôzanji, Brock studies "paintings [that] are marginalized", ones that do not eclipse the larger issues of significance and meaning to Myôe and his community (p. 52). Clearly this is the new art history that does not privilege great monuments, but investigates all manners of visual culture.

In contrast to Brock, Paul Groner is a Buddhologist, whose experience with images is clearly as material manifestations of belief. His paper focuses on Eison (1201–1290), founder of the Shingon Ritsu sect, and his relationship with images. Those images associated with Eison and his followers are installed with objects such as relics, copies of sutras, lists of followers, and mystic syllables (*dhârani*) that are intended to "empower the images" (p. 125). The intent of Eison's image production was to create a karmic connection for himself and his followers with the living deity, for in his mind the Buddha maintained a living presence in this world through the existence of icons and relics with *dhârani*. Groner further investigates the portrait

icon of Eison kept at Saidaiji, Nara, which is highly realistic and also empowered with religious objects. The image served to help people in their remembrance of the founder, who is also empowered to aid them.

Lastly, Sharf's article on the Shingon mandalas and visualization is the most contentious in the book. He claims that the truism that mandalas are mnemonic supports intended to aid the believer in visualizing the deity in the mind is unsupported by evidence in ritual texts. Rather than examining the problem through the scholastic texts, Sharf turns to liturgy and ritual manuals. He is one of a small handful of non-Japanese who have witnessed a Shingon invocation ritual, which invites the deity to manifest in the body of the practitioner. His conclusion is that the invocation ritual is less concerned with visualizing the deity in the mind than thinking about and concentrating on the deity (pp. 180–187). The problem, according to Sharf, lies in the understanding of the word *kan* (Chinese, *guan*), which English translators have incorrectly rendered as "visualization", thus leading to the misunderstanding of the function of the mandalas. For well over 80 years, scholars have propagated this misinformation, so no doubt Sharf will find his opponents among the scholarly community. Though not a student of Shingon or esoteric Buddhism, I find his arguments, using evidence from actual practice and ritual texts, quite compelling. No doubt, Sharf's work will be studied and debated among Buddhologists and art historians for many years to come.

This small volume is one of the best collections to be produced in East Asian studies in the last few years. Often collected volumes are gatherings of disparate research loosely bound by a common theme, but here the editor has taken a strong hand to unite a selection of authors with an astute introduction and careful editing to produce a book with a coherent purpose. Other would-be editors in the field can learn from this work.

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Tom Warner — *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. Pp. 430.

Over the past few years, the issue of gay and lesbian rights has come to the forefront of Canadian political discourse. Recent court decisions concerning adoption rights, the Surrey School Board's banning of books from its libraries, and same-sex marriage have created a great deal of controversy and have raised questions concerning the process that has led to such tumultuous change over a relatively short time span. Indeed, only 35 years ago, same-sex sexual relations were still prohibited under the Criminal Code.

The history of Canada's gay and lesbian communities is still a relatively new and sparsely populated field, with few active practitioners in Canadian universities. Moreover, most of the current literature on the history of gays and lesbians in Canada has been written not by historians, but by activists, political scientists, and soci-