

dehistoricized notion of culture as ethnic consciousness that he elaborated in "*Iki no kōzō*"; and finally to his later writings, such as "*Nihonteki seikaku ni tsuite*" (Concerning the Japanese Character), written in 1937, which placed culture entirely at the disposal of the state and thoroughly aestheticized politics.

One might wish that Pincus had paid more attention to the philosophical essays on contingency (*gūzensei*) that Kuki wrote beginning in 1929, although—or, indeed, because—one suspects that their inclusion might have complicated her explanation of his intellectual political trajectory. She also could have been more explicit regarding the politics of liberalism in the 1930s, which would have helped clear up the hint of ambivalence behind her dismissal of the "internationalism" and "individualism" in "*Nihonteki seikaku ni tsuite*" as mere gestures, seemingly incidental, or even contradictory, to his emphasis on the state. Yet, her conclusion rings true: "As in Germany, Japanese liberalism found its refuge and its defense in a hermeneutically elaborated realm of cultural freedom and expression, a realm that elicited a devotion almost religious in nature. It was this culturally distended form of liberalism . . . that so easily allied itself with the emerging idiom of Japanism" (p. 244).

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A Poisonous Cocktail? Aum Shinrikyō's Path to Violence. By IAN READER.
Copenhagen: NIAS Books, 1996. 116 pp.

The Japanese religious group Aum Shinrikyō is now chiefly known for the sarin gas attack several of its leaders launched on the Tokyo subway system in March of 1995. That attack resulted in twelve deaths, injured over 5,000 and brought Aum world-wide attention. Less than a decade earlier, the group had begun as a small yoga-practitioners circle led by the partially blind Matsumoto Chizuo, later known as Asahara Shōkō. In this short study, Ian Reader aims at providing a historical overview of the group, with particular attention to "the question of why Aum Shinrikyō, a seemingly idealistic new religion which preached the virtues of asceticism and renunciation, became a murderous movement" (pp. 8–9). The book moves from a discussion of the gas attack and its aftermath, through four chapters which treat Aum's founder and the historical vicissitudes of the group, to a concluding chapter in which Reader sums up his argument concerning Aum's path to violence and compares Aum with two other groups that he sees as illustrating similar dynamics, the Rengō Sekigun, a faction of the Japanese Red Army, and the Rajneesh movement.

Reader's treatment of Aum has many strengths. The author uses media sources cautiously, characterizing their portrayals of Aum as containing "partial truths and partial misrepresentations" (p. 4). He points out, for example, that the media has often presented Asahara as "an embittered youth at war with Japanese society from early on" (p. 18), but reminds us that, to date, there have been no in-depth psychological studies of him. Reader is good at suggesting the attraction that Asahara and Aum might have held for some, especially young Japanese, taking note of Asahara's criticism of Japanese society as materialistic and corrupt, his call to the ascetic life, his promise of enlightenment and supernatural powers, his utopian visions, and his own unique appearance. The volume also provides detailed information about key moments in Aum's brief history and, in chapter 3, Reader presents brief summaries of three of Asahara's works published between 1992 and 1995. As regards the central

issue of Aum's use of violence, Reader identifies a number of contributing factors, all of which led the leadership to isolate itself from the world and to adopt increasingly hostile measures in responding to it. These factors include Aum's original character as a world-rejecting religion, the anxiety within Aum's leadership over the group's failure to win large numbers of followers, the dismal loss of Aum's "Party of Truth" in the 1990 election, continuing attacks on Aum in the media, the unchallengeable power Asahara wielded as guru and the increasingly specific nature of his predictions of Armageddon which, if unrealized, would call his claimed divine authority into question. Given the evidence of criminal acts committed by Aum leaders that has already been gathered, we can add to this list the further isolating and bonding effect of that behavior itself.

Students of the Aum affair will doubtless want to debate Reader on several issues. Space limitations permit me to raise only one general point here. Reader defends Aum against those who argue that "because it committed violence and engaged in military-style activities," it was not an "authentic" religion (p. 94). While surely correct in that defense, it is noteworthy that Reader never brings the intensely self-serving behavior of Asahara and his top aides into full focus. Before embarking on his career as founder of Aum, Asahara was arrested for selling a fraudulent cure for rheumatism; after he became Aum's guru, he remained married, ate whatever he liked, enjoyed special accommodations, and took sexual advantage of some female members, all the while demanding of his followers a strict ascetic life. Asahara and his inner disciples made false claims about the properties of Asahara's DNA, charged exorbitant fees for religious initiations that involved the drinking of his bath water and blood, exhibited extreme jealousy towards rival religious groups, responded aggressively (sometimes with lawsuits, sometimes with acts of murder) to those who criticized Aum, used dummy corporations to acquire weapons or materials to build them, and defined as "altruistic" work that first and foremost benefitted Aum. While Reader mentions most of these points here and there in his study, he holds back from drawing any conclusions about Aum's leaders based on them.

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Troubled Industries: Confronting Economic Change in Japan. By ROBERT M. URIU. Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1996. xiii, 285 pp. \$42.50 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).

The use and abuse of industrial policy in postwar Japan is a matter of more than academic concern: it has become a major preoccupation in American foreign policy. How autonomous are bureaucrats in formulating industrial policy? To what extent does the "iron-triangle" linking business, bureaucracy and politicians operate in smooth and insulated fashion and to what extent is it disrupted by international pressure and by internal disputes, within and between the three groups? What options do declining industries in Japan have and to what extent do they respond to the challenge of managing decline with a political response, in the process formulating and shaping industrial policy? These are the issues—important for both policy and analysis of Japan—taken up by Professor Uriu in this informative monograph.

The book is divided into three parts. The first lays out a set of hypotheses guiding discussion of the issues: bureaucrats are not autonomous; much industrial policy is