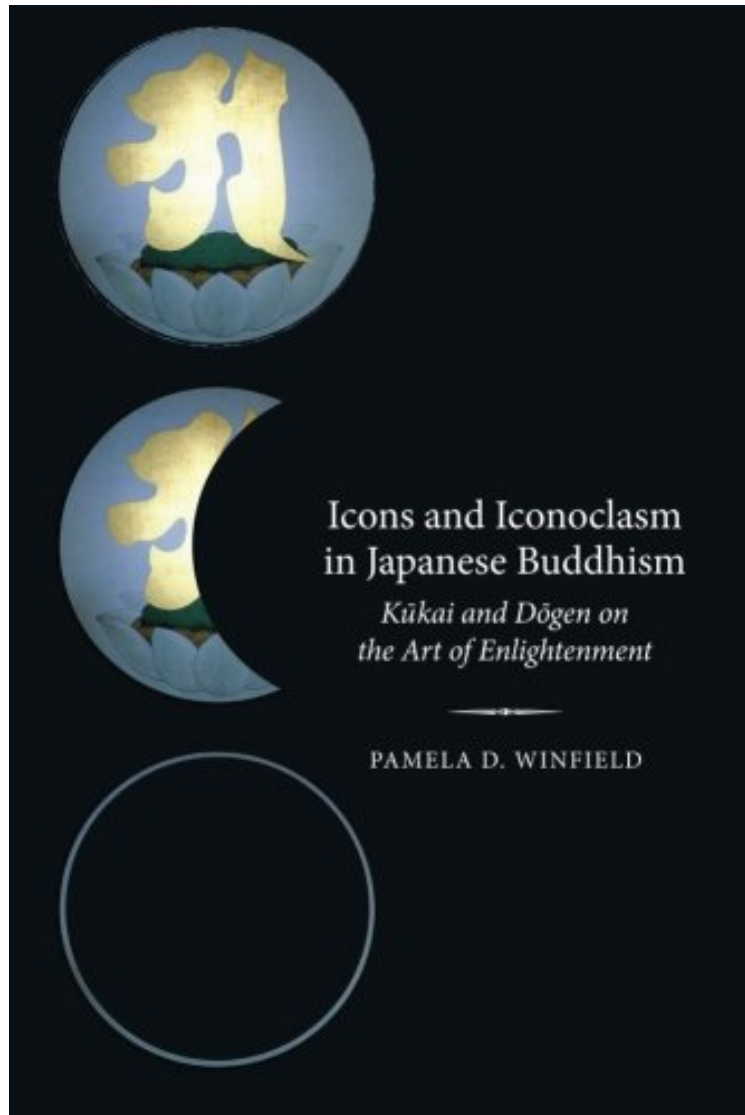


Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kukai and Dogen on the Art of Enlightenment

Pamela D. Winfield

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Pamela D. Winfield : Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kukai and Dogen on the Art of Enlightenment before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kukai and Dogen on the Art of Enlightenment:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. helpful comparisonBy Meigetsufine comparison of Dogen and Kukai...cleared up some misunderstandings...very helpful...well written

Winner of the Association of Asian Studies's Southeast Conference Book Prize (2014) Does imagery help or hinder the enlightenment experience? Does awakening involve the imagination or not? Can art ever fully represent the realization of buddhahood? In this study, Pamela D. Winfield offers a fascinating comparison of two pre-modern Japanese Buddhist masters and their views on the role of imagery in the enlightenment experience. Kukai (774-835) believed that real and imagined forms were indispensable to his new esoteric Mikkyō method for "becoming a Buddha in this very body" (sokushin jobutsu), yet he also deconstructed the significance of such imagery in his poetic and doctrinal works. Conversely, Dogen (1200-1253) believed that "just sitting" in Zen meditation without any visual props or mental elaborations could lead one to realize that "this very mind is Buddha" (sokushin zebutsu), but he also privileged select Zen icons as worthy of veneration. In considering the nuanced views of both Kukai and Dogen anew, Winfield updates previous comparisons of their oeuvres and engages their texts and images together for the first time. In so doing, she liberates them from past sectarian scholarship that has pigeon-holed them into iconographic/ritual vs. philological/philosophical categories. She also restores the historical symbiosis between religious thought and artistic expression that was lost in the nineteenth-century disciplinary distinction between religious studies and art history. Finally, Winfield breaks new methodological ground by proposing space and time as organizing principles for analyzing both meditative experience and visual/material culture. As a result, this study presents a wider and deeper vision of how Japanese Buddhists themselves understood the role of imagery before, during, and after awakening.

"Ambitious and scholarly... Winfield guides the reader with apparent ease... Icons and Iconoclasm feels like the start of a much broader discussion, not just of art in a conventional sense but also of how we might create, interpret, and inhabit ritual space." --Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly "Delightfully instantiates the converging trajectories of art history and Buddhist studies. At this intersection, each is more deeply informed by the other, and both are enriched. Winfield's study not only demonstrates the benefits of this conjunction of fields, but shows that no longer can Buddhist studies ignore art history, nor can art history remain uninformed by Buddhist thought." --Richard K. Payne, Dean and Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Buddhist Studies, Institute of Buddhist Studies "Pamela Winfield has written a very interesting and exciting book examining two major Japanese Buddhist thinkers. By focusing on the visual elements in their works in addition to the prominent texts of these giants, Winfield establishes a creative and constructive contrast between Kukai's 'unitive model' stressing non-dual union between the practitioner and ultimate reality and Dogen's 'purgative process' that highlights the individual's own experience of casting aside all distractions." --Steven Heine, editor of *Dogen: Textual and Historical Studies* About the Author Pamela D. Winfield is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Coordinator of Asian Studies at Elon University, NC. Her teaching and scholarship focus on the intersection of religious studies and art history, specifically esoteric and Zen Buddhist art and doctrine in Japan.