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Editor's Foreward

ON BEHALF of the editorial board of *Religious Studies in Japan*, I am happy to announce that, as of the beginning of 2014, the second volume has now been published online. During the preparatory process, we received a number of submissions for this volume, as we did for the first volume published online in April 2012. Unfortunately, however, the peer review process left us with no papers to be published. As a result we have prepared this volume as a special issue featuring review articles and book reviews on selected books either in Japanese or in English.

As individual members of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies, as well as the association itself as an organization, we are witnessing—and in many cases personally experiencing—the growing opportunities to share scholarly ideas, exchange theoretical and methodological opinions, and work together in conducting research beyond national boundaries and linguistic differences. Nevertheless, there are still various cases of misunderstanding, an imbalance of information, or ignorance of current situations outside one's own country. As an academic journal we would like to be part of the positive trend of increasing internationalization and globalization. As some articles in this volume show, we have juxtaposed a Japanese book with a foreign one—though in the end we failed to pick up books written in languages other than Japanese or English—and asked a Japanese member of the association to review the foreign publication, and a non-Japanese member to review the Japanese publication.

The result is the volume seen here, and readers will be able to get some idea of the most recent ongoing issues in religious studies in Japan and on studies on Japanese religions. The books and subjects discussed herein cover Buddhism, Shinto, and Christianity, issues such as immigration and popular culture, as well

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as one of the most important topics of religious studies, the very concept of religion. Due to my own lack of knowledge on scholarship on Japanese religions in earlier periods, I could not select publications in these areas to be reviewed in this volume. Hopefully the next volume or later volumes will deal with those subjects.

The Japanese Association for Religious Studies has not yet officially decided how to go forward with this online journal project, but for the present I hope the association will publish its third volume in 2016 at the latest.

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15 December 2013