Sufis—two of Egypt but one a Saudi-based Mauritanian, one Libyan, and the prominent American Hamza Yusuf. Al-Azami notes that these scholars are mostly opposed to the peaceful protests and pressure for regime-change in their countries. He believes the nature of their positions cannot be explained by a kind of "political quietism" or pragmatic support of the current power for self-survival, but rather by the Islamic neo-traditionalists' contest with Salafi Islamist groups to be the dominant voice and leader of Islam.

While we usually associate the central players in defining Islamic normativity to be the *'ulama* (the scholars of Islamic law), various chapters in *Global Sufism* demonstrate that Sufi scholars are often assertive leaders in defining Islam. In chapter 6, Justine Howe unfolds the way in which the Webb Foundation in Chicago and the Chicago Mawlid Committee—neither one Sufi-organizations per se—have created a "third space" that attracts entire families, often of mixed ethnicities, to *qawwali*-esque (and hence "Sufi") commemorations of the birthday (*mawlid*) of the Prophet Muhammad, a controversial practice in some other circles. They seem to pursue a spirituality that is experienced as an embodied relationship with the "presence" of Muhammad. Besnik Sinani discloses myriad ways in which twenty-first century leaders of the Bā 'Alawi have been forceful agents in defining authentic/normative Islam, censuring ISIS and organizing conferences of scholars that are quite inclusive—with the exception of Shiite, Wahhabi-esque, and Saudi scholars. They present their own orders as holding all the most compelling facets of the traditions of Islamic authority. Howe, Sinani, and Joassin demonstrate that there are limits to Sufi leaders' liberality, making the general Sufi inclusiveness even more meaningful in what or who each movement chooses to censure.

From radio programs to Rumi to rap music, *Global Sufism* covers with depth and concision a rich amount of ground within its pages. Its case studies demolish simplistic platitudes of what Sufism is, must be, has been, or can be. It is therefore a useful resource for scholars and teachers of religious studies, new religious movements, Islam, and Sufism in particular.

Daniel Azim Pschaida, Gonzaga University

*Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements.* Edited by Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter. Brill, 2018. xiv + 620 pages. $240.00 cloth; ebook available.

This rather hefty handbook covers a geographical area of new religious movements that has only recently become the object of popular study among scholars of new religions. Some of the twenty-five different



Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/nr/article-pdf/24/3/147/451393/nr.2021.24.3.147.pdf by University of Vienna user on 05 February 2021

movements covered in the volume will be familiar to most readers of *Nova Religio*—Soka Gakkai, Aum Shinrikyo, the Unification Church, and Falun Gong being among the more obvious examples. Others, likely to be known to some Western scholars, include the Vietnamese Cao Dai, the Chinese Yiguan Dao, and the Japanese Tenrikyo, Omoto, Perfect Liberty Kyodan, Shinnyoen, and Rissho Koseikai. Yet other groups few will have heard of. The Korean New Heaven and Earth Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony receives only a passing reference. It has become internationally known, however, as Shincheonji, the group accused of introducing COVID-19 and spreading it throughout South Korea.

As with the novels of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky, some movements may at first glance appear to be new; but then one realizes that a different name or very different spelling is being employed. It can take a moment to equate Sai Gon with Saigon or, as it is now officially known, Ho Chi Min City; the Korean Messiah known to most Westerners as Sun Myung Moon appears as Mun Yong-myong; and I assumed that Taesunjillihoe was new to me, only to understand on reading the chapter that it was about a Korean religion I have visited on several occasions, Daesoon Jinrihoe.

The editors' introductory chapter discusses the problems raised in defining both East Asia and new religious movements. The discussion concerning what is meant by a new religion in such cultures raises questions that have all too often been brushed aside (or ignored through ignorance) in Western scholarship. Some academics are confused, perhaps, by taken-for-granted assumptions about the porous relationship (or lack thereof) between what are believed to be religions and what is seen merely as culture. By East Asian, they mean cultural and specifically religious commonalities of countries in so far as they share the vocabulary as well as the ideological and material heritage of the Three Teachings—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

Having a heritage of the Three Teachings does not mean that the movements may not include other influences. Many of the Japanese new religions have their roots in Shinto. Korea has given birth to a motley collection of groups that rely heavily on the Christian tradition. The wonderfully syncretic Vietnamese Cao Dai is known for its veneration of "Saint" Victor Hugo, Jesus, and Joan of Arc. The Chinese Quannengshen Jiaohui, better known in the West as Eastern Lightning or, more recently, The Church of Almighty God (CAG), believes in a female Jesus now on earth. It had millenarian expectations focused on the year 2000 according to the Julian calendar, and again, in 2012, according to the Mayan calendar. One of the movements which, like Falun Gong, has been designated as a *xiejiao* (commonly translated as "evil cult") by the Chinese Communist Party, CAG first came to international attention when some of its evangelistic members (wrongly, it



Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/nr/article-pdf/24/3/147/451393/nr.2021.24.3.147.pdf by University of Vienna user on 05 February 2021

has since been determined) were accused of murdering a woman who refused to disclose her mobile phone number in a McDonald's restaurant.

The volume is divided into four parts: Japanese, Korean, Chinese (including Taiwanese), and Vietnamese new religions, each part having an introductory chapter by a specialist in the region who provides a historical, political and cultural context within which to understand the variety of new religions in the respective regions. For example, the section on groups in Vietnam, perhaps the least well-known of the countries covered, discusses the emergence and the fate of new religions during the French colonial period, the Vietnam War, and under the current communist situation. Having been referred to as false, strange, and/or bizarre religions, these groups are now given less pejorative names by scholars. According to the 1992 Constitution, the Vietnamese are free to follow any religion or none, and all religions are equal before the law. They are, however, subject to mandatory state recognition and registration requirements; and those which find themselves labeled superstitions are criminalized by the Penal Code.

The volume contains a wealth of information. Almost without exception, the twenty-nine contributors are among the top experts in their respective fields. Even those who have visited new religious movements in the Far East cannot but be overwhelmed by the sheer variety of revelations, the imagination of founders, and, sometimes—though this should by no means be confined to the East—the incredible credulity of the men and women who follow them.

This is not an inexpensive book, but libraries should be firmly requested to stock it. No one who considers themselves a scholar of new religions should be unaware of (minimally) what they do not know about East Asian new religious movements, and here we are presented with an outstanding opportunity to ameliorate at least some of our blind spots.

Eileen Barker, London School of Economics / INFORM

*Global Trajectories of Brazilian Religion: Lusospheres.* Edited by Martijn Oosterbaan, Linda van de Kamp and Joana Bahia. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 248 pages. $103.00; ebook available.

In the last several decades, Umbanda, the ayahuasca traditions of Santo Daime and União do Vegetal, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, and other religions originating in Brazil have become global movements with practitioners in far-flung locales. Some initially were exported with Brazilian migrants and have remained largely diasporic movements within communities of Brazilians living abroad, but others have spread among non-Brazilians attracted to Brazil or Brazilian



Downloaded from http://online.ucpress.edu/nr/article-pdf/24/3/147/451393/nr.2021.24.3.147.pdf by University of Vienna user on 05 February 2021