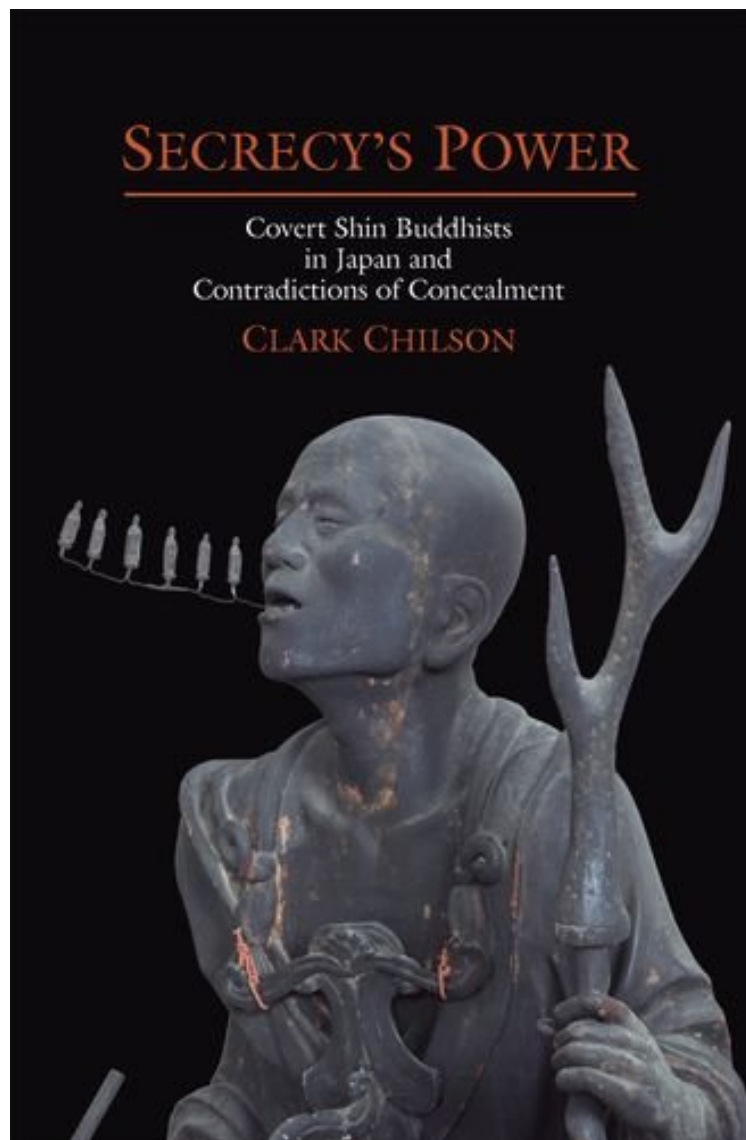


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## Secrecy's Power: Covert Shin Buddhists in Japan and Contradictions of Concealment (Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture)

Clark Chilson

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Clark Chilson : Secrecy's Power: Covert Shin Buddhists in Japan and Contradictions of Concealment (Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secrecy's Power: Covert Shin Buddhists in Japan and Contradictions of Concealment (Nanzan

Library of Asian Religion and Culture):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. secrecy can be unhealthy By Joe P. Szimhart Informative and well researched. This study offers insight into any sect or group that cherishes secrets that can not only offer a kind of protection from unwanted eyes and a "structure" for belief, but conversely can become a trap, a self-sealing strategy that fears possible exposure to disconfirming information. Secrets can make insiders feel special and that in itself can become an elitist position that may have no grounds for belief. Chilson does not avoid evidence that persecution may have driven some Pure Land Buddhist sects to secrecy in pre-modern times, but it appears that secrecy now serves a different, often unhealthy purpose when persecution is practically nil.

Shin has long been one of the most popular forms of Buddhism in Japan. As a devotional tradition that emphasizes gratitude and trust in Amida Buddha, it is thought to have little to do with secrecy. Yet for centuries, Shin Buddhists met on secluded mountains, in homes, and in the backrooms of stores to teach their hidden doctrines and hold clandestine rites. Among their adherents was D. T. Suzukis mother, who took her son to covert Shin meetings when he was a boy. Even among Shin experts, covert followers were relatively unknown; historians who studied them claimed they had disappeared more than a century ago. A serendipitous encounter, however, led to author Clark Chilson's introduction to the leader of a covert Shin Buddhist group one of several that to this day conceal the very existence of their beliefs and practices. In *Secrecy's Power* Chilson explains how and why they have remained hidden. Drawing on historical and ethnographic sources, as well as fieldwork among covert Shin Buddhists in central Japan, *Secrecy's Power* introduces the histories, doctrines, and practices of different covert Shin Buddhists. It shows how, despite assumptions to the contrary, secrecy has been a significant part of Shin's history since the thirteenth century, when Shinran disowned his eldest son for claiming secret knowledge. The work also demonstrates how secrecy in Shin has long been both a source of conflict and a response to it. Some covert Shin Buddhists were persecuted because of their secrecy, while others used it to protect themselves from persecution under rulers hostile to Shin. *Secrecy's Power* is a groundbreaking work that makes an important contribution to our knowledge on secrecy and Shin Buddhism. Organized around the various consequences concealment has had for covert Shin Buddhists, it provides new insights into the power of secrecy to produce multiple effects even polar opposite ones. It also sheds light on ignored corners of Shin Buddhism to reveal a much richer, more diverse, and more contested tradition than commonly is understood.

A work of staggering scholarship, *Secrecy's Power* an undertaking requiring a mind-bending grasp of Japanese religious terminology and nomenclature represents a milestone in the study of covert Buddhist groups, not so much for what it tells us, but for what it pointedly omits. -- Japan Times Chilson skillfully weaves issues related to concealment into the fabric of each chapter, explaining how the case studies he presents illustrate this or that function or consequence of secrecy. This book will be of particular interest to those researching or interested in Jodo shin shu (Japanese True Pure Land Buddhism), secrecy in religion, secret societies, Edo-period regulation of religious groups, modern Japanese religion, and religious identity. New Books Network In this extraordinary book, Chilson has lifted the veil of secrecy of one of many covert Shin groups, the Urahomon. [This book] provides new and fresh insight into the power of secrecy to produce multiple effects. It also sheds light on an ignored dimension of Shin's history as a means of revealing a much richer and diverse Shin Buddhist tradition than has been to this date understood. -- Religious Studies (41:1, 2015)-- "Japan Times" "A work of staggering scholarship, 'Secrecy's Power' - an undertaking requiring a mind-bending grasp of Japanese religious terminology and nomenclature - represents a milestone in the study of covert Buddhist groups, not so much for what it tells us, but for what it pointedly omits." -- Japan Times "Chilson skillfully weaves issues related to concealment into the fabric of each chapter, explaining how the case studies he presents illustrate this or that function or consequence of secrecy. This book will be of particular interest to those researching or interested in Jodo shin shu (Japanese True Pure Land Buddhism), secrecy in religion, secret societies, Edo-period regulation of religious groups, modern Japanese religion, and religious identity." -New Books Network "In this extraordinary book, Chilson has lifted the veil of secrecy of one of many covert Shin groups, the Urahomon. [This book] provides new and fresh insight into the power of secrecy to produce multiple effects. It also sheds light on an ignored dimension of Shin's history as a means of revealing a much richer and diverse Shin Buddhist tradition than has been to this date understood." -- Religious Studies (41:1, 2015)-- "Japan Times" Chilson, however, has succeeded in writing an engaging historical and ethnographic account that meaningfully relates his findings to theoretical concerns in the study of secrecy and covert religious groups more generally. This brief review can reveal only a few of the many fascinating insights this book contains.-- "The Journal of Religion" "This is an intelligent book, well-written and meticulously researched, which merits a wide readership.-- "Journal of Religious History" A work of staggering scholarship, *Secrecy's Power* - an undertaking requiring a mind-bending grasp of Japanese religious terminology and nomenclature - represents a milestone in the study of covert Buddhist groups, not so much for what it tells us, but for what it pointedly omits.-- "Japan Times" In this extraordinary book, Chilson has lifted the veil of secrecy of one of many covert Shin groups, the Urahomon. [This book] provides new and fresh insight into the power

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