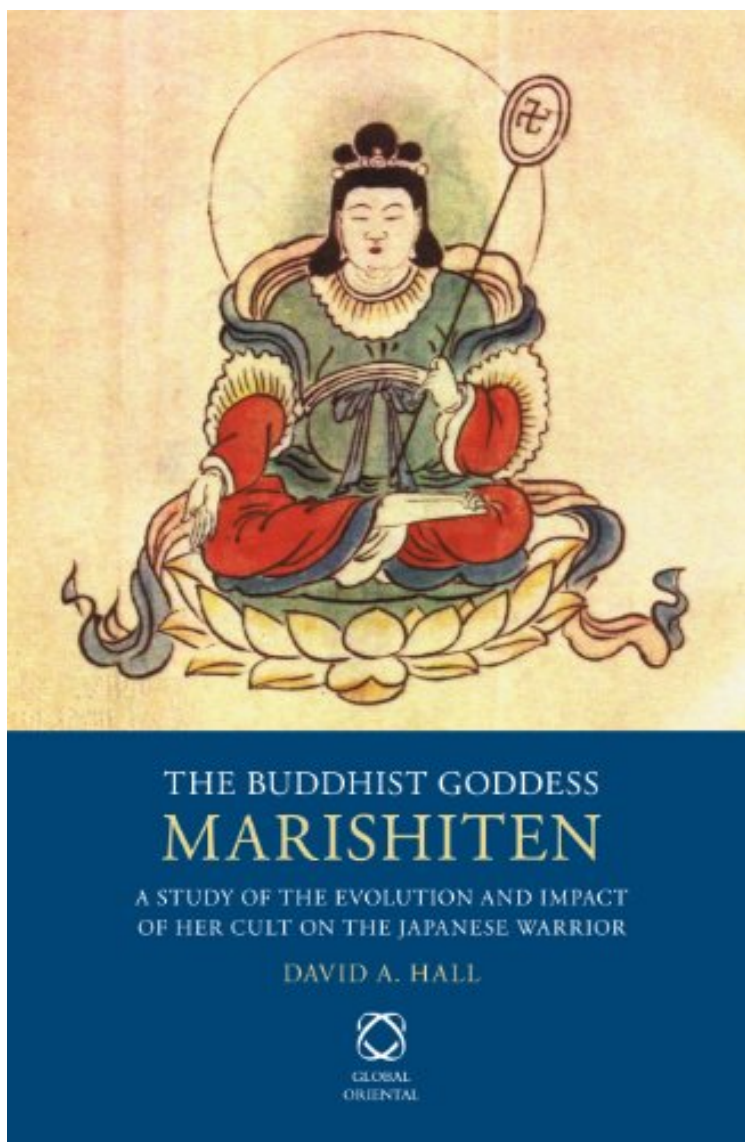


[Mobile book] The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten: A Study of the Evolution and Impact of Her Cult on the Japanese Warrior

## The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten: A Study of the Evolution and Impact of Her Cult on the Japanese Warrior

David a Hall

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**David a Hall : The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten: A Study of the Evolution and Impact of Her Cult on the Japanese Warrior** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten: A Study of the Evolution and Impact of Her Cult on the Japanese Warrior:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth itBy Nathan ScottThis is a really valuable book that is well

written by a uniquely qualified instructor. Well worth the price for the quality and depth of information provided. Thank you sir. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Expensive and perhaps too academically focused.

By Bernard Kwan

The book is published by Global Oriental, which is an imprint of the Dutch Publishing House - Brill, and occupies a unique space in that it published many esoteric books on the Japanese martial arts and East Asian history, including those by Roald Knutsen - "Discovering Budo", "Tengu" and "Sun Tzu and the Art of the Medieval Warrior in Japan". Thus the binding and printing of the book conform to the highest standards on acid free paper, which went a little ways to justifying the US\$153 list price (gulp!) for the book. This is the second book that I have bought that was written by David A. Hall, and interested readers can refer to my review on the Encyclopedia of Japanese Martial Arts. In reviewing this book I found that many of the things that I wrote in my previous post still hold true. Professor Hall is a man of enormous erudition, and the book contains a selective bibliography of twenty dense pages, ranging from primary Buddhist sources, primary canonical sources, and primary martial arts texts in their original Chinese or Japanese and interviews, and secondary sources in English and other European languages. Again providing an invaluable resource for my own research in martial studies. The work has been a work in progress and I believe it started as a PhD thesis in 1990s which then evolved into a chapter in the famous work *Koryu Bujutsu: Classical Warrior Traditions of Japan* and then into this final form. With this in mind, one has to emphasize that this is an academic work and is written in a way that may not be appealing to the lay reader, with copious footnotes and annotations. Indeed for a large portion of the book, the work delves into the minutiae of ritual and analysis of the texts which reference the Goddess Marishiten and I found myself glossing over much of this space, even though some of the mantras, seed syllables and mudras would actually reward a closer reading. However, I believe the work to be valuable for it contains three important sections. The first is the general introduction on the Goddess tracing her development from antecedents in India and her transmission to China and Japan, and in the process absorbing the identity of the Buddhist Goddess Candi and even transforming into the Goddess Dou Mu who was a favourite of the militant Wudang Mountain Pole Star sect. This section provides the lay reader with a background in the development of the Mahayana and Tantric Schools and the various ritual and dharani (spells) that were used to protect the believers from harm or fear. The deity(ies) - spiritually awakened beings - eased the suffering of devotees and placed them on the path to their own eventual enlightenment. But even though the stated aim of the Goddess was to bring non-Buddhists to the path of the Bodhisattva, she was even in India primarily worshipped by professional combatants and later worshipped in Japan as a protector in battle. This section is well written and highly accessible to the general reader with a little background in Buddhist history. The second part of the book deals with the texts and ritual and as I mentioned above is really for specialists. But the third part of the book is of great interest to those who practice Japanese martial arts, as it deals with the role of Marishiten and the Japanese warrior. Indeed the Goddess Marishiten played an important role in many of the *heicho* (volumes on strategy) that constituted many of the important schools in feudal Japan. The book then goes into detail into her role in a number of important *ryuha* such as the Nen-ryu, Tenshinsho-den Katori Shinto Ryu and Shinkage Ryu. This is of interest as it gives a insight into some of the inner teachings of these *Ryuha* and how many of these teachings involved rituals and spells that were meant to grant certain powers and protection to the warriors who trained in these arts. Finally the last part of the book, reflects upon Marishi's significance in the Japanese arts and here David A. Hall provides a brilliant psychological analysis that tries to demystify and explain how the rituals aimed to cultivate certain mental states in the warriors who practiced them, and how these psycho-physical states improved the soldiers efficacy in a combat situation. Indeed the emphasis was to cultivate states of selflessness (*muga*), invisibility and coolness in battle (*fudoshin*) and intuition and awareness (*kan* and *ken*). Later this emphasis shifted in peacetime to trying to cultivate a more expansive awareness, a calm mind and intuition through Budo and correspondingly, the influence of zen meditative practice began to replace the role of Marishi in many *Ryuha*. This section ranges widely, over areas such as "battle rage" and PTSD and is invaluable for anyone who has an interest in the study of violence, indeed Rory Miller's classic "Meditations on Violence" comes to mind when reading this section. As I came to the end of the book, I found myself asking as to whom it was targeted and find it hard to give an unreserved recommendation. The best part of the book, which is the final section is an expanded version of the chapter in *Koryu Bujutsu*, edited by Diane Skoss and I would heartily recommend buying that book for both the chapter and its own merits. But as for this one, I would find it hard to justify the price as much of the book is really beyond (and uninteresting to) the general reader. Nevertheless I am deeply grateful to David Hall for his tireless research and contribution to the field of martial studies.

In *The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten*, David A. Hall provides an in-depth exploration of the Buddhist cult of the warrior goddess *Mari*; its evolution in India, China, and Japan; its texts and their audience; its rituals; and, finally, its efficacy as experienced by the Japanese warrior class--the bushi or samurai. In examining the psychological effects of these rituals on the Japanese warrior this volume moves beyond a narrowly focused examination of a religious cult. David A. Hall convincingly explains how these rituals aimed at preparing the warrior for combat and acted as an antidote for the toxicity of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when the warrior returned from the battlefield.

From the Back Cover In *The Buddhist Goddess Marishiten*, David A. Hall provides an in-depth exploration of the Buddhist cult of the warrior goddess *Mrc*; its evolution in India, China, and Japan; its texts and their audience; its rituals; and, finally, its efficacy as experienced by the Japanese warrior class--the bushi or samurai. In examining the psychological effects of these rituals on the Japanese warrior this volume moves beyond a narrowly focused examination of a religious cult. David A. Hall convincingly explains how these rituals aimed at preparing the warrior for combat and acted as an antidote for the toxicity of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when the warrior returned from the battlefield. Dr. David A. Hall has trained in Japanese martial arts for over forty-five years. Here, in addition to his martial arts experience, he draws on his military, academic, and religious expertise to explore aspects of Japanese combative culture previously inaccessible to most people. Trained as a Navy Hospital Corpsman, David Hall was attached to Third Marine Division during the Vietnam War Era. He was later ordained as a Tendai Buddhist priest (1978), and integrated his religious training in Japan with graduate research at U.C. Berkeley, earning a doctorate in Buddhist Studies with a related field in Military history in 1990. Dr. Hall continues to teach and train in classical Japanese martial arts. He is currently a professor and Director of CyberWatch at Montgomery College, Maryland, USA.

About the Author David A. Hall, Ph.D. (1990), U.C. Berkeley, is Professor and Director of the CyberWatch Center at Montgomery College, MD. He has published translations and articles on Japanese Buddhist and warrior culture including *An Encyclopedia of Japanese Martial Arts* (Kodansha, 2012).