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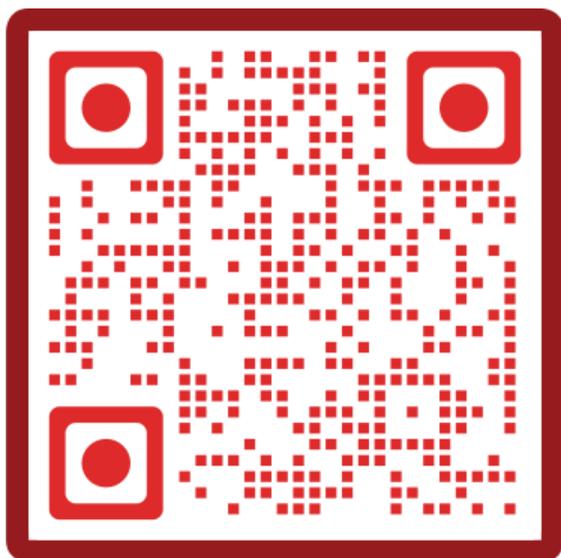
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A Welcome Note

Alexis Siemon, Managing Editor, Cornell East Asia Series

In June 2021, I became the new editor of the Cornell East Asia Series. Throughout its nearly fifty-year history, CEAS has published a wide variety of scholarly works in East Asian studies: monographs, translations, language textbooks, and even some videos of performance art. Today, the editorial board and I want CEAS to provide a home for daring and innovative scholarship, without losing sight of our traditional strengths.

CEAS is always interested in literature, poetry, religion, and media and cultural studies in premodern and contemporary East Asia. A few of our recent and forthcoming books include Ong Soon Keong's *Coming Home to a Foreign Country*, about overseas Chinese and the development of Xiamen; Scott Mehl's *The Ends of Meter in Modern Japanese Poetry*; and *Cultural Imprints*, Elizabeth Oyler and Katherine Saltzman-Li's edited collection of essays on war and memory in Japan's samurai age.

While we welcome work on any region of East Asia, I would especially like to read more proposals on Korea, Taiwan, Ryūkyū, Hong Kong, and Macau. CEAS is also looking for books that break down the regional boundaries in East Asian studies: work on migration and diasporas, cultural and intellectual exchanges, and transnational scholarship that places East Asia in a global context.

I am also excited to continue CEAS's tradition of publishing award-winning translations of East Asian literature and poetry. He Jianjun's bilingual edition of *The Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue* makes an ancient Chinese classic accessible to a modern audience, Roger Thomas's *Counting Dreams* translates the diary of the revolutionary activist poet nun Nomura Bōtō, and Glynne Walley's prizewinning Hakkenden translation, *Eight Dogs*, brings one of the monuments of Japanese literature to the English-speaking world.

I hope that students and scholars across the regions and disciplines of East Asian studies continue to read CEAS's monographs and translations. And I encourage anyone with a book idea, at any stage of the project, to reach out to me at kas578@cornell.edu.

THREE QUESTIONS WITH GLYNNE WALLEY

author of *Eight Dogs*, or “*Hakkenden*”

1. What’s your favorite anecdote from your research for this book?

I fell in love with this novel long before I read it. I remember finding an old edition of it in my university library and gazing, entranced, at the illustrations, which hinted at adventure and romance and magic. But it wasn’t translated, and while it’s mentioned in all the histories of Japanese literature, I could tell they hardly scratched the surface. My favorite moment was when, as a grad student, my language level reached the point where I could read it for myself. It turned out to be everything I’d

3. How do you wish you could change your field of study?

I’d like to see translations taken more seriously. There was a time when I would have said I’d like to see “translation” taken more seriously, but by now Translation Studies is well established as a field of theoretical inquiry and pedagogical practice. Still, I’m not sure I see that translating (pun intended!) into a greater respect for translations themselves. Hiring committees and tenure committees are perfectly happy to see candidates writing about translation, but producing actual translations

“I fell in love with this novel long before I read it.”

hoped it would be and much, much more.

2. What do you wish you had known when you started writing your book, that you know now?

I started this translation as part of the research that led to my 2017 Cornell East Asia Series monograph (*Good Dogs*). I learned so much through translating that part of me wishes I could have finished the translation before writing the monograph; then again, everything I learned through writing the monograph informs my translation, so another part of me wishes I could have finished this book (*Eight Dogs*) first. I guess that’s a paradox, but it’s also an illustration of how translation itself is a form of scholarship, not an adjunct to it.

is still, all too often, seen as peripheral to scholarship. It’s not. It is, or can be, central.

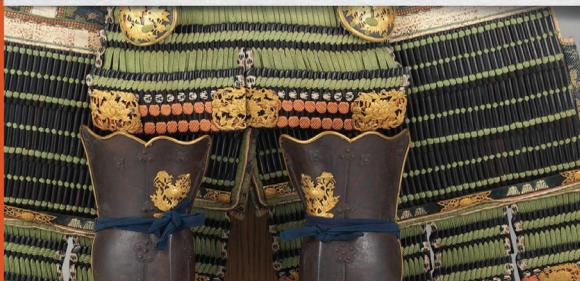
THE
EXCERPT



CULTURAL
IMPRINTS

WAR AND MEMORY IN THE SAMURAI AGE

EDITED BY
ELIZABETH DYLER AND KATHERINE SALTZMAN-LI



Introduction

Remembering the Samurai in Medieval and Early Modern Japan

ELIZABETH OYLER AND KATHERINE SALTZMAN-LI

This volume brings together the work of an interdisciplinary group of scholars to address the impact of war and war memory during Japan's "samurai age," the period of time lasting from the establishment of the first shogunate as a result of the Genpei War (1180–1185) through the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868. We offer studies of "cultural imprints," which we define as traces holding specifically grounded historical meanings that persist through time. Our selection of "imprints" includes literary works, artifacts, performing arts, and documents that were created by or about the samurai. We examine them for what they can suggest about how thinkers, writers, artists, performers, and samurai themselves viewed warfare and its lingering impact at various points over the seven hundred years during which they dominated political and cultural spheres. In spite of the historical reality of many wars throughout the medieval era (thirteenth through the sixteenth century) and none during the Tokugawa period (seventeenth through most of the nineteenth century, also known as the early modern period), the significance of war, experienced directly or through re-presentations in a variety of forms, cut across temporal demarcations within and between this divide. By drawing attention to specific but varied cultural practices related to war and memory, we highlight the overarching centrality in the cultural realm of representing and remembering samurai and the experience of warfare, its traumas and its glories. The chapters also gesture toward the formation of national

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identity in the modern age: samurai, banned as a class from the advent of the modern era, were nevertheless newly mobilized in the modern imaginary as a coalescing factor in the development of the Japanese nation-state. That they could play such a role rested on the very cultural centrality we claim for them and the widely shared notions regarding samurai that had developed over the samurai age.

Our focus on war and war memory places the chapters of this volume in conversation with the field of memory studies, in which scholars study acts of remembrance and forgetting, together with their causes and consequences. In examining specific imprints, we address memorializing and memory itself in their capacity for sense-making, identity formation, healing, and renewal. As we know, war trauma (all trauma) is not coterminous with its causal event. Its effects persist on trajectories through history, leaving a long-lasting wake in human memories that carry down through generations with social and political agency, and which often become memorialized in the kinds of artifacts explored in this volume. These artifacts are both a foundation and the products of what Maurice Halbwachs identifies as “collective memory,” a shared perception of the past that is “reconstructed on the basis of the present.” He emphasizes the importance of “collective frameworks . . . the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.”¹ What we call “cultural imprints” are components of these frameworks. Each instantiation, arising from a set of circumstances at a particular moment, gives shape to the past in service to the present, reflecting or responding to gradually solidifying ideas about the samurai during the long time frame in which power was consolidated under successive shogunates, each led by the victors of war.

Animated in part by what memory studies has brought to cultural historiography, we offer a rethinking of the long-term historical and cultural significance of the samurai. We examine how experiences of war are presented through our imprints, each a signpost in the ongoing formation of a collective memory with Japan’s warriors at its center. Jan Assmann addresses the cultural dimension of collective memory, what he terms “cultural memory.” Examining and defining cultural memory means “investigat[ing] the conditions that enable [the text of memorable events] to be established and handed down. It draws our attention to the role of the past in constituting our world through dialogue and intercommunication, and it investigates the forms in

1. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis Cosar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 40.

THE SAMURAI IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JAPAN

which the past presents itself to us as well as the motives that prompt our recourse to it.”² We explore such forms and motives in this volume, as well as what Assmann describes as the effects of the circulation of cultural memory, “disseminat[ing] and reproduce[ing] a consciousness of unity, particularity, and a sense of belonging among the members of a group.”³ Subjective responses figure and reconfigure memory, adding new layers according to changing circumstances without always erasing the old, and out of personal memories, group narratives arise.

The process by which individual memories of war contribute to group narratives has been traced by anthropologist Efrat Ben-Ze’ev, who has studied veterans’ memories of the 1948 Palestine war in relation to the national narrative.⁴ She stresses that individual memories differ in nature and purpose from national narratives, but that social cohesion is formed when singular narratives join together in various configurations and are transmitted over time. This process, also evident over the course of the samurai age, is not always organic but can also be directed through memory creation or revision, as some of our chapters highlight. While samurai behavior and values, transmitted through cultural production based in war memory, became crucial elements in the development of a national Japanese identity in the modern era, war-related cultural production created collectivity and group formations in earlier periods as well, as many of our chapters demonstrate.

Even as we argue for the long samurai age, we aim to break down the ahistorical, monolithic idea of the warrior through an examination of the changes and iterations of samurai existence over time as expressed by members of the warrior class itself, as well as by nonwarrior members of society. Interdisciplinarity is an important means toward this effort: gathering scholars from several fields who employ different methodologies brings in a range of perceptions that cut away at uniformity, but also allow us to argue for a long time frame of historical and cultural significance of warrior activity and sensibilities as carried out under fluctuating historical circumstances. In the early medieval era “samurai” referred to a small segment of fighting men who were also identified by other generally analogous terms (*musha* 武者, *mononofu* or *bushi* 武士, *tsuwamono* 強者). They were also often described in early tales as men following the “ways of the bow and arrow” (*yumiya no michi* 弓矢の道) or masters of “the twinned arts of war and letters” (*bunbu ryōdō* 文武両道). In the

2. Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), ix.

3. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 38.

4. Efrat Ben-Ze’ev, *Remembering Palestine in 1948: Beyond National Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

INTRODUCTION

Tokugawa period samurai was an official status within the fuller social organization. The term “samurai” therefore can be applied to men in several situations, and the chapters in this volume draw attention to the particularities of when and by whom the term is employed, and to what effects.

The scope of materials focused on samurai, and the significance of the warrior to collective identity and cultural production—mutually formative of each other—increased during the seven hundred years we examine. Over time, cultural expressions and records that originally concentrated on specific memories and commemoration in a religious context for individual war dead shifted to include the perceived experiences and challenges of warrior life that were increasingly cast in a shared humanity: by the mid-Tokugawa period a great variety of cultural practices and products paradoxically presented relatively consistent ideas about samurai conduct and social place and disseminated conceptions that became widely recognized. Borrowing from Assmann, we might say that our cultural imprints are constituents of “that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.”⁵ Preceding the relatively fixed image of the samurai in the modern era—conveyed largely through new media, particularly film, often under nationalistic impulses that made good use of “traditional” values of loyalty, do-or-die bravery, and unquestioned commitment—was the complexity of samurai identities in the samurai age and the cultural articulations through which ideas of the samurai were formed.

The Samurai

Men with specialized expertise in the military arts in Japan predate the samurai age by centuries. From earliest times, warriors bore arms in the name of and in service to a superior, and they appear in chronicles from the eighth century as protectors of the throne and subjugators of threats at the realm’s peripheries. Often called on to exercise these important duties, they came to the fore as a recognizable segment of society in the latter half of the Heian 平安 period (794–1185), when they were increasingly employed to suppress insurrections in the realm’s hinterlands and at its borders. They were, in the main, from the middle or lower ranks of the aristocracy, and they filled provincial government roles, including governors and officials serving under them.

5. Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies (Spring–Summer, 1995): 132.

THE SAMURAI IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JAPAN

As representatives of the central government in sometimes quite distant locales, provincial administrators were expected to keep order in the territories they oversaw, as well as ensure the safe transport of people and goods through those territories. Over time, these provincial responsibilities allowed certain families to build economic and geographic bases and rise to prominence as military clans. In the mid-tenth century, two men holding such positions led insurrections near the edges of the realm: Fujiwara no Sumitomo 藤原純友 in the western maritime provinces on the inland sea and Taira no Masakado 平将門 in the eastern provinces. They were put down by men of similar rank, in service to the emperor. A little over one hundred years later, warriors again clashed at the northeast extremity of the realm, and these clashes were brought to conclusion in favor of the throne by members of one of the most powerful of the military families, the Minamoto 源. These conflicts were early signs of changes to come in the status of warriors, and they also presaged the eventual winners and losers in the battles that ended the Heian period and led to the samurai age.

By the middle of the twelfth century, two families, the Taira and the Minamoto, dominated the role of the central government's enforcers, and when succession disputes rocked the imperial line in 1156 (the Hōgen Rebellion) and then again in 1159 (the Heiji Rebellion), members of these clans were called on to support both sides. The Taira consistently chose the winning side and rose to the highest status as maternal relatives to the sitting emperor, causing resentment among longstanding aristocrats. As tensions swelled, those aristocrats threw support behind the Minamoto, resulting in Japan's first major civil conflict, the Genpei War (1180–1185). The outcome was the definitive defeat of the Taira and the establishment by the victorious Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199) of his shogunal headquarters in Kamakura, a small seaside village at the time, some three hundred miles from the capital city (modern-day Kyoto). The establishment of the shogunate led to a system of bifurcated government, with the shogunal office and its samurai retainers increasingly taking on administrative duties, especially in the provinces. In one form or another, this system would dominate the political landscape of Japan until 1868, marking the boundaries of the samurai age, although Minamoto control ended with the generation following Yoritomo.

From Yoritomo's time, military rulers took great interest in cultural matters, both material and intangible. Yoritomo sponsored the rebuilding of Tōdaiji 東大寺, among the oldest and most prominent temples in the ancient capital of Nara, which had been destroyed during the Genpei War. Numerous new temples were constructed around his headquarters at Kamakura and elsewhere. He and his successors also nurtured strong ties with the aristocracy

INTRODUCTION

via traditional cultural practices, studying poetry and painting under the tutelage of established masters from the capital and learning the literary canon. At the same time, both aristocrats and warriors began to embrace performing arts originating in rural areas. Among these were narrative arts associated with recounting the Genpei War, a subject of inherent political and cultural import to the Kamakura shogunate. War tales (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語) flourished during the first centuries of warrior domination. The best known today is *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (Tale of the Heike), which narrates the rise and fall of the Taira clan during the late 1100s, and in which warrior vocation and encounters, on the battlefield and off, became the subjects of lyrical paeans and memorable stories. Other war tales closely connected to *Tale of the Heike* took form over the course of the Kamakura 鎌倉 and Muromachi 室町 periods, including *Gikeiki* 義経記 (Tale of Yoshitsune) and *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語 (Tale of the Soga Brothers). These tales, consisting of multiple variants of both oral-performative and written provenances, not only presented the first artistic descriptions of warriors but also set a foundation for later cultural definitions of the samurai. Several of the chapters in this volume address material rooted in the war tales, particularly the chapters that focus on the performing arts by Alison Tokita, Katherine Saltzman-Li, and the chapters on the noh play *Tomonaga* by Monica Bethe and Tom Hare.

One function of the *Tale of the Heike* and other war tales was to serve an elegiac role, preserving the memory and soothing the spirits of the war dead. Proper care of these spirits was essential for a society holding a general concern about the possible destructive intentions of malevolent spirits toward the living. Within the religious context, foreshortened lives raised the possibility of posthumous regret or anger that required appeasement, even beyond the usual placation practiced for any dead, resulting in war tales and other artistic forms of memorialization. These memorializing genres and religio-cultural practices and beliefs—including those underlying many noh plays—contributed strongly to the early formation of warrior identity, celebrating and commemorating the individual, but always in terms of his role as an actor in larger webs of culture and community.

The thirteenth through sixteenth centuries continued to be rocked by military conflict. A military clash between emperor and shogun (the Jōkyū Disturbance, 1221), and two attempted invasions from the continent by the Mongols (1274 and 1281) dominated the thirteenth century. The fourteenth century was equally momentous: the Kamakura shogunate fell in the third decade, to be replaced by a branch family of the Minamoto, the Ashikaga (who established their power base in the Muromachi district of Kyoto, giving rise to the name of the period during which they ruled), and a rift between branches



CULTURAL IMPRINTS



THE ENDS OF METER IN MODERN JAPANESE POETRY



COUNTING DREAMS

WAR AND MEMORY IN THE SAMURAI AGE
EDITED BY
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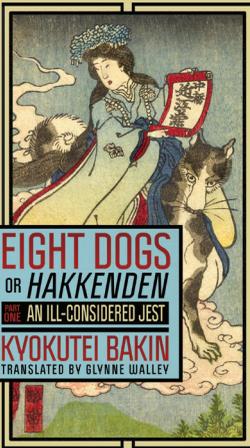


TRANSLATION AND FORM
SCOTT MEHL



THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE LOYALIST
NUN NOMURA BOTO

ROGER K. THOMAS



EIGHT DOGS
OR *HAKKENDEN*
FROM AN ILL-CONSIDERED JEST
BY **KYOKUTEI BAKIN**
TRANSLATED BY GLYNNE WALLEY



COMING HOME TO A FOREIGN COUNTRY

XIAMEN AND RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE,
1843-1938

ONG SOON KEONG



THE PITFALLS OF PIETY FOR MARRIED WOMEN

TWO PRECIOUS SCROLLS

OF THE MING DYNASTY
INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATIONS, AND ANNOTATIONS BY
WILT L. IDEMA



FROM COUNTRY TO NATION

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES, *KOKUGAKU*,
AND SPIRITS IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY JAPAN
GIDEON FUJIWARA



SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS OF WU AND YUE

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION
OF *WU YUE CHUNQIU*
JIANJUN HE



DISRUPTIONS OF DAILY LIFE

JAPANESE LITERARY MODERNISM
IN THE WORLD

ARTHUR M. MITCHELL



THREE QUESTIONS WITH WILT L. IDEMA

author of *The Pitfalls of Piety for Married Women*

1. What's your favorite anecdote from your research for this book?

The stories translated here are moving stories. That's why they remained popular for centuries. Even after reading, translating, and re-reading these texts, some scenes can still move me to tears.

2. What do you wish you had known when you started writing your book, that you know now?

When you start out on a translation you have read the original repeatedly and you think you

3. How do you wish you could change your field of study?

One of my aims is to enhance our understanding of the full extent of the variety and richness of Chinese literature by drawing attention to the manifold traditions of verse narrative and prosimetric narrative. I believe that translation is one of the most suitable means to introduce Western readers to the thematic and formal diversity of these genres and that their contents confront us with aspects of Chinese culture in past and present that often remain untouched in male elite literature.

“When you start out on a translation you read the original repeatedly and you think you are prepared for the job.”

are prepared for the job, but doing the job you are time and again surprised by the limits of your knowledge as you are confronted by details that continue to elude you despite all modern reference works.

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THREE QUESTIONS WITH JIANJUN HE

author of *Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue*

1. What's your favorite anecdote from your research for this book?

I cannot think of fun anecdote except that I mock at my own research as a “grassroots project.” That is, my university’s library collection on premodern China is probably fewer than what I have in my computer and it also does not have access to data base on Chinese academic journals. Since there is no handy resource from my own institution, I often have to mobilize my friends and colleagues in China to find secondary literature concerning the Wu Yue Chunqiu for me. I joke this as

3. How do you wish you could change your field of study?

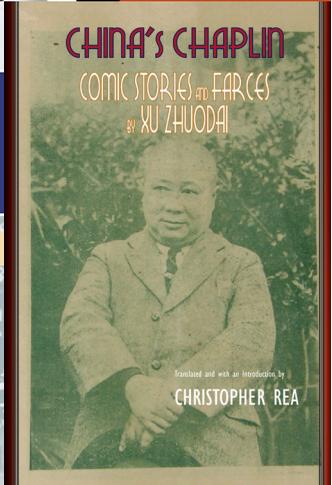
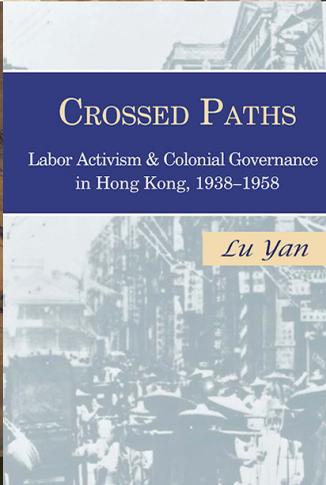
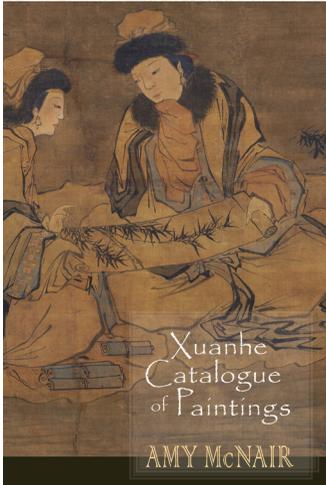
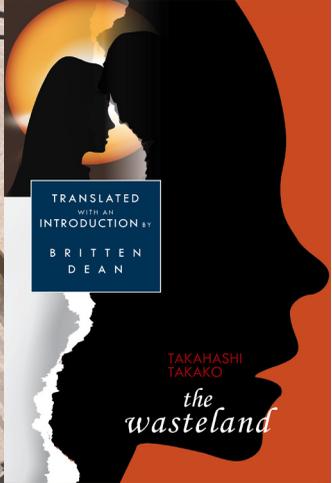
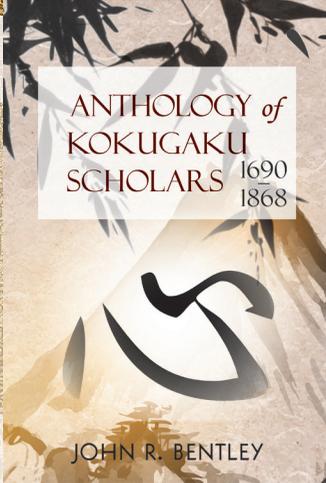
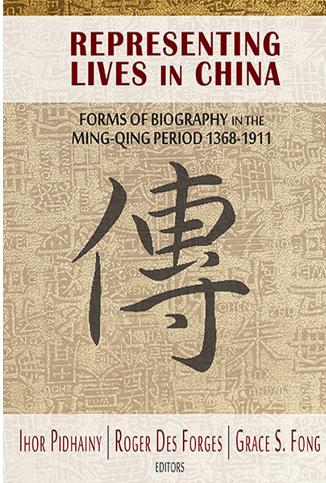
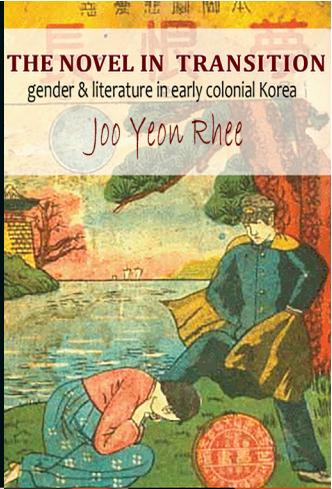
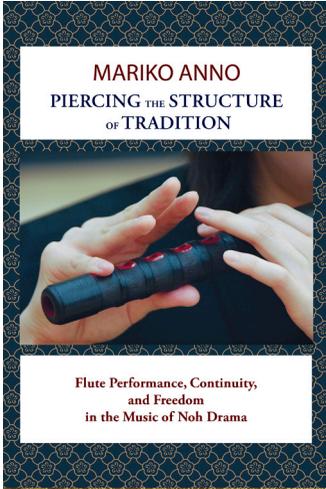
I do wish translations will make more texts available for researchers and will attract more studies in the field of early China.

“My university’s library collection on premodern China is probably fewer than what I have in my computer.”

“grassroots movement” styled research.

2. What do you wish you had known when you started writing your book, that you know now?

I did not know that John Largerwey’s 1975 dissertation on the WuYue Chunqiu, including a partial translation of the text, is only available in the form of microform.

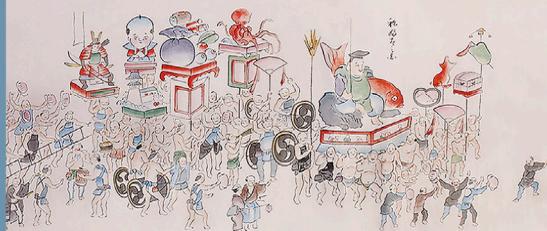


THE
EXCERPT



FROM COUNTRY TO NATION

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES, *KOKUGAKU*,
AND SPIRITS IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY JAPAN
GIDEON FUJIWARA



Introduction

There was a fascinating group of intellectuals in the nineteenth century who lived in the “country” (*kuni*) of Tsugaru, otherwise known as Hirosaki domain, on the northeastern fringe of Japan’s main island of Honshu. They consisted of scholars of various backgrounds—merchants, Shinto priests, domainal samurai, and one female painter—who became posthumous disciples of the late Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843), a man who had disseminated his teachings from his academy in Edo, present-day Tokyo, and engaged in *kokugaku* or Japan studies, the study of classical texts to glean an ancient Japanese Way.¹ Led by Tsuruya Ariyo (1808–71) and Hirao Rosen (1808–80), these intellectuals from the north imagined a dual identity

1. The Japanese term *kokugaku* has been variously translated into English as nativism, National Learning, and exceptionalism. I prefer to translate *kokugaku* as Japan studies, given that this school covered diverse fields—including philology, poetry, literature, myth, history, ethnographic studies, spirituality, and religious practice—and people in the early nineteenth century used various terms for it aside from *kokugaku*. Broadly speaking, *kokugaku* refers to the study of Japan. Specifically, it refers to the study of classical texts to glean an ancient Japanese way. During the Tokugawa period, the *kokugaku* school emerged from its earlier roots of Japanese studies more generally, partly in reaction to officially sponsored Neo-Confucianism as well as the Confucian Ancient Learning school *kogaku*, the latter of which influenced *kokugaku* scholarship in terms of its methodology. *Kokugaku* studies began primarily as literary and philological studies in Japan in the seventeenth century, but became increasingly religious and ideological in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as greater attention was devoted to identity formation based on myth and history, which essentialized Japanese

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that combined the local identity of their native Tsugaru with a renewed national identity for Imperial Japan. The juxtaposition of these two “countries” (*kuni*)—Tsugaru and Imperial Japan—affords us a nuanced look at how these individuals experienced a multilevel transition of community from early modern to modern times.

This book tracks the emergence of the modern Japanese nation in the nineteenth century through the history of some of its local aspirants. It tells the story of intellectuals on the periphery of the nation trying to secure a place for their community in a transforming Japan. Its protagonists are *kokugaku* scholars from Tsugaru, who wrote of their local “country” on the northeastern edge of the main island as being a part of the sacred “nation” of Japan. Following the “opening” of Japan from 1853 to 1854, Hiraō Rosen, a merchant-class ethnographer and *kokugaku* scholar, visited the northern port of Hakodate in 1855 where he discovered a Japan situated within a world that included Americans, Europeans, and Qing Chinese. This led him to reorient his native Tsugaru’s place within the spiritual landscape of an Imperial Japan blessed by the gods, and to assert the reality of the spirit realm. His fellow aspirants were also active through 1868 and the Meiji Restoration. Fellow merchant Tsuruya Ariyo used poetry to link their sacred country to an enjoyable afterlife; a samurai fought and died for the emperor in the Boshin civil war; and Shinto priests used ritual to deify this fallen warrior along with the spirits of other loyalist martyrs. While Rosen and his Hirata school commoner-fellows celebrated the rise of Imperial Japan and the contributions of both Tsugaru and their academy, their resistance to Western ideas and institutions, as embraced by the Meiji state, ultimately resulted not in the community they envisioned but rather in their own disorientation and estrangement.

In the title and throughout the book, I primarily rely on the Japanese term *kokugaku* to refer to this school and its intellectual tradition, while occasionally referring to it as “Japan studies” and its practitioners as *kokugakusha* or “Japan studies scholars.” In doing so, I acknowledge the limitations of translating *kokugaku* as “nativism” or “National Learning,” as explained in the scholarship to date.² Indeed, no translation can fully and accurately

identity as sacred and unique. Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 1990), 9.

2. I also acknowledge Mark McNally’s argument for the use of “exceptionalism” to highlight the primary objective of some *kokugaku* scholars who asserted that Japan, its people, and culture were exceptional, unique, and superior in the world, as opposed to identifying this school’s activities with the specific cases of anti-foreign “nativism” that surface in mid-nineteenth-century Japan and the United States. Mark Teeuwen, “Kokugaku vs. Nativism,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 61,

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represent the depth and variety found within this intellectual tradition, and even “*kokugaku*” is a problematic and anachronistic label, projected back in time to name this school from its beginnings in the early Tokugawa period. As documented in the following pages, students of this scholarly tradition in Tsugaru and across Japan referred to their work by multiple names, including “Ancient Learning” (*inshie manabi*), “Imperial studies” (*mikuni manabi*), “Loyalist studies” (*kingaku*), and “*kokugaku*.”³ Nevertheless I argue that the growth of scholarship to date on the subject in Japan and globally allows us to refer to this intellectual tradition as *kokugaku* or Japan studies, while recognizing the above trends, problems, and debates within the growing historiography.

On Nation, Community, and *Kokugaku*

Scholarship has examined *kokugaku*, literally the “study of the country, or nation,” primarily in the singular context of Japan. In this regard, Ernest Gellner’s assertion that “it is nationalism which engenders nations” suggests to us one interpretation—which has been dominant to date—that focuses on how *kokugaku* scholars conceived principles about the “nation” prior to the rise of the Japanese nation in modern times.⁴ However, the scholarship and life experiences of Japan studies scholars of the Hirata school in Tsugaru demonstrate a more complex “imagining of community”—in the words of Benedict Anderson—on multiple levels not limited to the “nation,” and this book demonstrates the “style” in which these individuals conceived of their specific communities on multiple levels.⁵ Informed by Prasenjit Duara, I also challenge the linear, teleological history that privileges the “nation,” and introduce the Tsugaru *kokugakusha* as “historical actors” who appropriated “dispersed meanings” as their own in identifying with and mobilizing various representations of nation or community.⁶ Anthony D. Smith’s insight on the inner “antiquity” of modern nations is useful for understanding *kokugaku* and

no. 2 (Summer 2006): 227–42. Mark Thomas McNally, *Like No Other: Exceptionalism and Nativism in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015).

3. Moreover, “Ancient Learning” or *kogaku* written with the same Chinese characters can refer to either a specific Confucian school or *kokugaku* itself, rendered as *kogaku* and *inshie manabi* respectively.

4. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 55.

5. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2016), 6.

6. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17.

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community, by showing how the premodern identities of *ethnies*, or ethnic communities, including their symbols, myth, memory, and territorial associations were fused with modern civic elements to generate the modern nation.⁷

This book sheds light on the ways in which intellectuals from diverse social backgrounds studied, imagined, and experienced a multiplicity of community, which included but was not limited to the “nation” of “Japan.” As demonstrated in debates between Luke Roberts and Mark Ravina, the early modern notion of community was multidimensional and multileveled and encompassed the “country” of Japan, which converged to varying degrees with the “countries” of the provinces and domains within the *bakuhau* system, the shogunate-domain political structure founded by the Tokugawa, and an emerging Imperial Japan centered on the emperor.⁸ Roberts presents the compelling case of the economic sovereignty of domains such as Tosa and its influential role in shaping the modern nation, while Ravina shows how Hirosaki officials acted with the autonomy of a “country” until their domain was eventually “destroyed internally by imperialism.”⁹ J. Victor Koschmann demonstrates how the ideology of Mito reformists affirmed the hierarchy of loyal service from domains to shogunate to imperial court, as well as asserted the domain’s autonomy as a “microcosm” that seriously challenged Tokugawa authority.¹⁰ Kären Wigen shows how Tokugawa state leaders and Meiji-era reformers appropriated the classical map for the purpose of administrative reform, while local literati made maps of the entire *kuni*, or province, of Shinano in Central Japan, envisioning it as a locus of identity.¹¹ Kawanishi Hidemichi chronicles how modern Japan, in its construction of a nation-state, cast the northeastern region of Tohoku to the periphery as a “backward” “outland,” and sheds light on the diversity found within the region and larger nation.¹² Further, Kawanishi, Namikawa Kenji,

7. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1999).

8. Luke Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain: The Merchant Origins of Economic Nationalism in 18th-Century Tosa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Ronald P. Toby, “Rescuing the Nation from History: The State of the State in Early Modern Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 197–237. See also Luke Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012), 41–52. *Bakuhau* is a compound term derived from *bakufu*, which means shogunate, and *han*, which means domain.

9. Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 209–10.

10. J. Victor Koschmann, *Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790–1864* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

11. Kären Wigen, *A Malleable Map: Geographies of Restoration in Central Japan, 1600–1912* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

12. Kawanishi Hidemichi, *Tōhoku: Japan’s Constructed Outland*, trans. Nanyan Guo and Raquel Hill (Leiden: Brill, 2015). See also the Japanese original, *Tohoku: Tsukurareta ikyō* (Tokyo: Chuo koronsha in 2001).

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and M. William Steele critique the nation-state, as they study local history within a global context, shedding light on multiculturalism and recognizing subjective agency in minority groups within Japan.¹³

This book seeks to further our understanding of community in Japan, not as a monolithic entity, but as a collection of converging, multilayered parts. Scholarship to date has offered us various insights on the relationship between *kokugaku* and the nation. Susan Burns, writing in 2003,¹⁴ describes how *kokugaku* scholars imagined Japan in their readings of mythical texts before the emergence of the modern nation. Peter Flueckiger in 2011¹⁵ shows how Confucianists and *kokugakusha* utilized politicized poetry as a means to express their visions of an idealized society. In his monograph of 2013, Michael Wachutka¹⁶ chronicles how *kokugaku* scholars contributed to the formation of scholarly societies, as well as national studies of history, literature, and language in modern times. However, these works have focused on *kokugaku* thought primarily as it pertains to the singular community of “Japan,” and none has yet incorporated the above-outlined historiography, which reveals the dynamics and conflicts between the multiple layers of community not limited to the nation.

Scholars of Hirata *kokugaku* who have focused on local communities have regarded the local scene as a source of disciple-recruitment as chronicled by Itō Tasaburō in 1966;¹⁷ agrarian villages linked through Hirata nativist ideology to the Ancient Way as shown by Harry Harootunian in 1988;¹⁸ or a stage for disciples participating in a social movement surrounding the Meiji Restoration as demonstrated by Anne Walthall in 1998.¹⁹ This book examines how the local scene of Tsugaru was very much an “imagined community” and source of identity in its own right for Hirata disciples who inhabited the region and were active in local society. Whereas Wilburn Hansen in 2008²⁰ explores

13. Kawanishi Hidemichi, Namikawa Kenji, and M. William Steele, eds., *Rōkaru hisutorii kara gurōbaru hisutorii e: tabunka no rekishigaku to chiikishi* (Tokyo: Iwata shoin, 2005).

14. Susan Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

15. Peter Flueckiger, *Imagining Harmony: Poetry, Empathy, and Community in Mid-Tokugawa Confucianism and Nativism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

16. Michael Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-Period Japan: The Modern Transformation of ‘National Learning’ and the Formation of Scholarly Societies* (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2013).

17. Itō Tasaburō, *Sōmō no kokugaku* (Tokyo: Masago Shobō, 1966). I cite from the reprinted edition, *Sōmō no kokugaku* (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1982).

18. Harry D. Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

19. Anne Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

20. Wilburn N. Hansen, *When Tengu Talk: Hirata Atsutane’s Ethnography of the Other World* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008).

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Atsutane's ethnography of the other world, the current study considers the relationship between Hirao Rosen's ethnographic studies and Hirata *kokugaku* to shed light on the interplay between various layers of "countries"—local, foreign, and national. The spirit world of *yūmeikai*—a major subject of focus for Mark McNally in 2005²¹—is examined here with an emphasis on how it connected local Tsugaru to the larger spiritual landscape of Japan.

The early 2000s ushered in a revival for studies in Hirata *kokugaku*, spearheaded by scholars working with the National Museum of Japanese History and then museum head Miyachi Masato who hosted a Special Exhibit in 2004 entitled "The Meiji Restoration and Hirata *Kokugaku*." With the generosity and cooperation of the Hirata family descendants who administer the Hirata Shrine located in Yoyogi, Tokyo, that venerates Atsutane, these scholars have introduced to the public over ten thousand pieces of new historical materials—including diaries, letters, memos, artistic images, and artifacts—surrounding Atsutane; his head school, the Ibukinoya academy; and his national network of students. Analyses of these new materials have yielded a more nuanced perspective on Hirata *kokugaku* in the context of early modern Japanese society.

Endō Jun's monograph of 2008 was the first to study the new materials, and helped to place Hirata religious thought and practice within Tokugawa society, shedding light on the school's relationship with the Yoshida and Shirakawa Shinto houses and their priesthoods.²² In 2012, Nakagawa Kazuaki offered new insights on the Hirata family and disciple communities during Atsutane's lifetime and beyond into Meiji, drawing on analyses of texts and letters.²³ Later that same year, Yoshida Asako traced the social history of books and publishing within the academy to demonstrate the spread of Atsutane's thought among his followers throughout Japan.²⁴ Endō, Nakagawa, and Yoshida have each introduced new sources and reevaluated Atsutane's writings and the importance of his work broadly in terms of society, religion, publishing, and intellectual history in Tokugawa Japan. My book builds on this new research to focus in depth on the case of Tsugaru and the north—which have received limited attention to date—and to contribute new insights to the broader narrative. In 2015, Miyachi shed light on the thought

21. Mark McNally, *Proving The Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005).

22. Endō Jun, *Hirata kokugaku to kinsei shakai* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2008).

23. Nakagawa Kazuaki, *Hirata kokugaku no shiteki kenkyū* (Tokyo: Meicho shuppankai, 2012).

24. Yoshida Asako, *Chi no kyōmei: Hirata Atsutane wo meguru shomotsu no shakaishi* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2012). See also her *Hirata Atsutane: Kōkyō suru shisha, seija, kami gami* (Tokyo: Heibonsha shinsho, 2016).

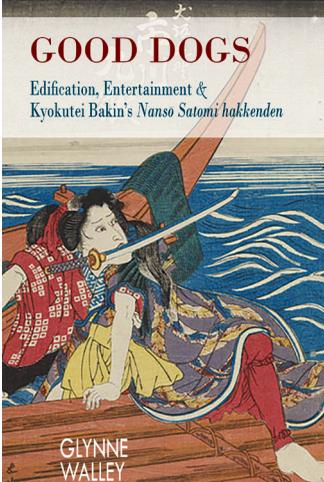
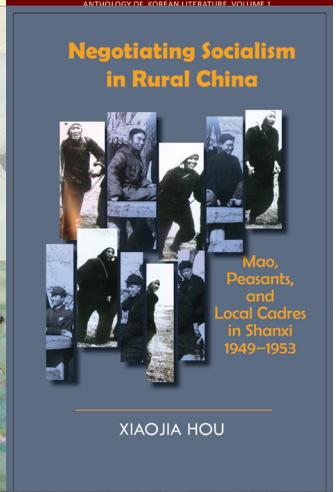
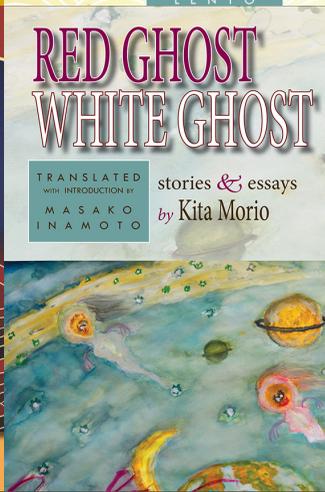
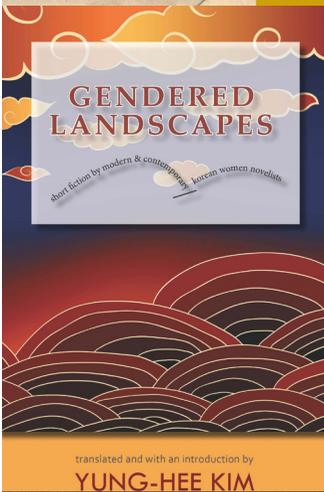
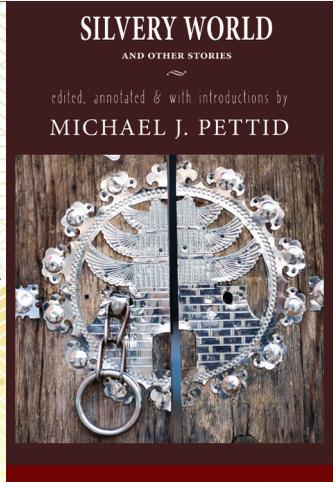
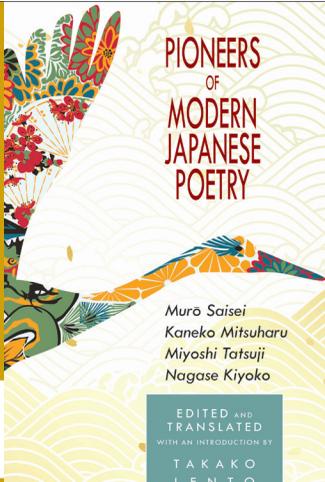
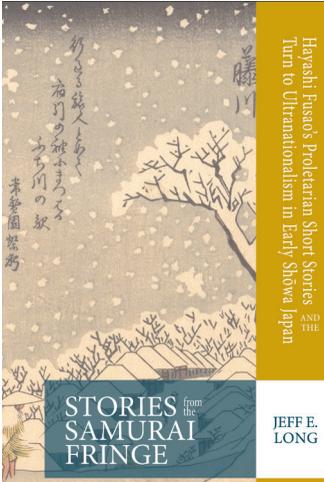
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and actions of disciples in Nakatsugawa in contemporary southeastern Gifu and the surrounding area, famous as the stage for the historical novel *Before the Dawn* (*Yoake mae*), in which followers of Hirata *kokugaku* and Revival Shinto (Fukko Shinto) pursued visions of a new era of imperial rule during which they demonstrated political subjectivity at the “grassroots” level.²⁵ Miyachi calls for intellectual histories to be written that are not limited to the canon of major thinkers, but which focus on the subjectivity and personalities of those who adopted and practiced this thought. I too draw on the new Hirata materials to document the reception of Hirata *kokugaku* and its practice in Tsugaru, and to contextualize this discourse of Tsugaru and Japan within their sociohistorical context.

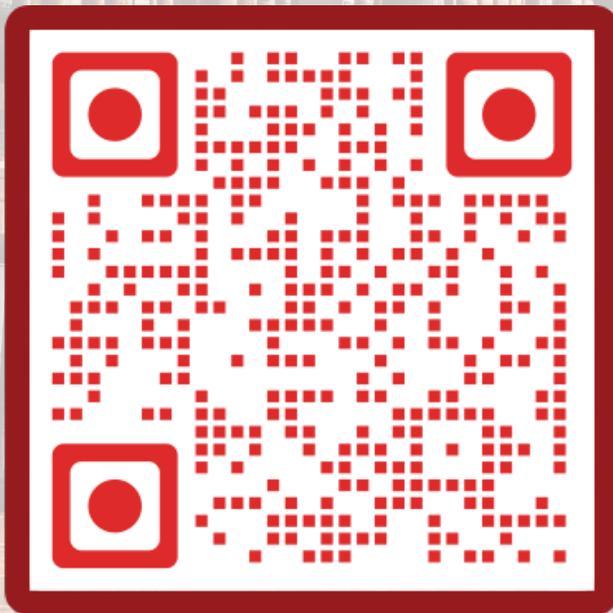
This book bridges the gaps between separate bodies of scholarship on nation, multilayered community, and *kokugaku* by demonstrating how a diverse group of intellectuals not only studied and imagined Japan as a monolithic entity, but how they studied and engaged multiple “countries”—local, national, and foreign—while experiencing the transformation of community in nineteenth-century Japan. In relative seclusion, many *kokugaku* scholars imagined the Japanese “self” and foreign “others” based on the minimal number of sightings of foreigners in Tokugawa society possible under the state’s restrictive foreign policy. Hirao Rosen’s personal observations of Westerners and Qing Chinese in Hakodate after Japan was “opened” therefore reveal unique perspectives and experiences of community in a more global setting.²⁶ The arrival of US Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794–1858) and the resulting treaties and opening of Japan’s ports significantly increased contact and relations between Japan and Western countries. As well established in recent decades, however, Tokugawa Japan was part of a larger regional order of commercial and diplomatic relations, and not fully isolated under a simplistic *sakoku* (closed country) policy. This book takes a fresh new perspective in examining the dynamic interplay between “countries” in transition from early modern to modern times as expressed through poetry and prose, artwork, historical writing, armed combat, and the carrying out of both religious ritual and reform.

25. Miyachi Masato, *Rekishi no naka no yoake mae: Hirata kokugaku no bakumatsu ishin* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2015). Also see chapter eight for my reference to Shimazaki Tōson’s novel, *Before the Dawn*.

26. See Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nihon to Higashi Ajia* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1988); David L. Howell, “Foreign Encounters and Informal Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 295–327.



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SCAN ME

THREE QUESTIONS WITH ARTHUR MITCHELL

author of *Disruptions of Daily Life*

1. What's your favorite anecdote from your research for this book?

One day, in the periodicals annex of the Waseda Library in Tokyo, Japan, I was scrolling through newspaper microfilm to research coverage of an earthquake that struck that city in 1923, when suddenly the library itself began to shake, setting my large monitor atremble. Reading those articles, I had transported back in time to relive the meanings of that disaster, how incommensurable it was, how sudden, how for many Tokyoites it signified the loss of thirty years of progress. It was funny and

3. How do you wish you could change your field of study?

Japan studies has grown into a big tent of creative scholarship and expansive critical scope. But I would like to see the further growth of critical race studies in this field. This is not just a call to interrogate the racial underpinnings of US academia's study of Japan (which has been done to some extent), but to reverse the disassociation from race within Japan that helps to maintain its status as a nation "worth studying." Japan is fascinating precisely because of the complexity it exhibits regarding

"I would like to see the further growth of critical race studies in this field."

bizarre to be brought back from this trance into the present by the jostles of another earthquake.

2. What do you wish you had known when you started writing your book, that you know now?

I wish I had known how to write a book. At least for this academic, writing a first book was the slow, laborious, uphill struggle of figuring out what a book was, groping in the dark to discover my idea, determine my values, and find my voice. In retrospect, writing this book seems to have been a tremendous act of blind faith. Those that aided along the way—friends, mentors, advisors, then readers and editors—helped to make a dream come true.

dynamics of race ideology. And studying Japan on these terms promises a more comprehensive view.

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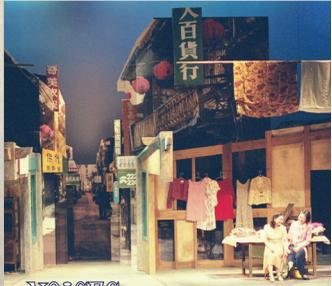
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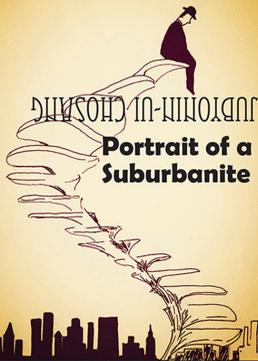
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VOICES of Taiwanese Women Three Contemporary Plays



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Like Clouds or Mists Studies and Translations of 10 Plays of the Genpei War

THE
EXCERPT



THE PITFALLS OF PIETY
FOR MARRIED WOMEN

TWO PRECIOUS SCROLLS
OF THE MING DYNASTY

INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATIONS, AND ANNOTATIONS BY
WILT L. IDEMA



Introduction

Piety in women may be a virtue, but taken to extremes may easily lead to tensions between children and parents, and between husbands and wives, with terrible consequences for all parties concerned. Even when piety attracts the attention of the gods, the immediate result may be negative rather than positive for the families concerned. This volume offers translations of two rare narrative precious scrolls (*baojuan* 寶卷) of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the *Precious Scroll of the Red Gauze* (Hongluo baojuan 紅羅寶卷) and the *Precious Scroll of the Handkerchief* (Shoujin baojuan 手巾寶卷), which portray how a wife and mother's piety results in the disruption of her family and terrible misery for her children and her husband; it is only after many years of suffering that these families are reunited and collectively ascend to heaven. If these precious scrolls were written in praise of piety, they equally disclose the many pitfalls of this virtue. In telling their tales, these precious scrolls draw on a wide variety of popular motifs; with their coincidences, miracles, and divine interventions in daily life these texts at times read like gruesome fairy tales. As examples of a highly developed genre of prosimetric storytelling of the Ming, they should appeal to all students of Chinese literature and folklore, and as accounts of female piety in the context of family life they should be informative for students of premodern Chinese religion.

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Buddhist Preaching and Storytelling: Transformation Texts and Precious Scrolls

Buddhism has always been a proselytizing religion. Those who have cut off all attachments and left the household and its attendant obligations and affections in order to free themselves from the unending cycle of death and rebirth still need support from donors to survive during their remaining years on earth. The story of the first donation of a monastery and the lavish gifts to the Buddha and his disciples has continued to be one of the most popular legends throughout the later history of Buddhism.¹ *Jataka* (tales on the earlier lives of the Buddha Śākyamuni) relate that in his prior incarnations the Buddha was willing to give away not only his own wife and children but even his own body to those in need. Because of their reliance on the gifts of food and other goods from pious donors, monks and nuns never tired of spreading the four noble truths among the surrounding lay populations, teaching the virtue of lay piety not only by the recitation of sutras but also by singing songs and ballads and by telling stories in a fetching manner. According to the first Chinese collection of biographical sketches of eminent monks, when a good preacher speaks about

death, he makes the heart and body shiver for fear; if he speaks about hell, tears of anxiety gush forth in streams. If he points out earlier karma, it is as if one clearly sees one's deeds from the past; if he predicts the future consequences, he manifests the coming retribution. If he talks about the joys [of the Pure Land], his audience feels happy and elated; if he discourses on the sufferings [of hell], eyes are filled with tears. At that moment the whole congregation is converted and the whole room overcome with emotion; people throw themselves down on the floor, bang their heads against the ground, and beg for grace; each and every one snaps his fingers; everybody recites the name of the Buddha.²

Eminent monks drew huge crowds and managed to appeal to all layers of society, adapting subject and manner of presentation to the composition of their audiences; doing so, they engendered strong if not violent emotions.

Buddhism first entered China in the first century AD and established itself as a common aspect of Chinese culture and society by the fourth century at the latest. By the eighth century, Buddhist monks and nuns developed a considerable variety of genres, now collectively known as “transformation texts”

1. Mair 1983, 31–86, “Sariputra.”

2. Huijiao 1992, 512–13.

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(*bianwen* 變文), for preaching to lay audiences.³ These genres ranged from formalized sutra explanations to expositions on the life of the Buddha, and also extended to long and short stories on pious monks and devout laywomen. Many of these genres used a prosimetric format, that is, they were written in a constant alternation of prose and verse. These texts likely drew on the rich mural paintings that ornamented monasteries and nunneries for illustration, and some may have been accompanied by depictions of episodes as shown on illustrated scrolls.⁴ One of the most popular themes in Buddhist *bianwen* was the story of Maudgalyayana (Mulian 目連) saving his mother from hell.

In the earliest Buddhist tradition Maudgalyayana stands out for his exceptional magical powers. In the Chinese tradition Mulian maintains his magical powers but is better known for his filial piety toward his parents. When Mulian, following the death of his father and mother, has become a monk, he finds out that his father is staying in heaven but that his mother has been relegated to the “prisons in the earth” (*diyu* 地獄) where the souls of the dead are judged. Passing through the courts of the underworld that meticulously keep track of each person’s virtues and vices, good deeds and sins, the souls of the dead are either assigned to interminably long periods of gruesome torture in one of the hells or allowed to be reborn. Their manner of rebirth is determined by the amounts of good and evil karma they have accumulated during their lifetime by their deeds, words, and thoughts. Only rarely will human beings be allowed to be reborn immediately in human shape (whether as man or woman); more commonly they will be reborn on one of the other five paths of rebirth, for instance as an animal or a hungry ghost. When Mulian searches the earth prisons for the soul of his mother, he eventually locates her in the Avici hell, the deepest layer of hells. With assistance of the Buddha and the combined power of the Sangha (the community of monks) Mulian eventually is able to deliver his mother from hell, even if initially only in the shape of a dog and a hungry ghost, but eventually she is allowed to join her husband in heaven.⁵ The sins that are mentioned as causing her banishment to the Avici hell upon death are listed as the refusal to feed monks with vegetarian food and her own indulgence in meat, but implied in the manner of her punishment is the sexual nature of her crime—women pollute the gods by the blood they shed in menstruation and childbirth and are sinful by the nature

3. The meaning of the term *bianwen* has been much discussed. Most scholars now understand “transformation” to meaning a manifestation of a Buddha or deity, so a miracle.

4. Mair 1989. On the use of pictorial aids in the performance of transformation texts, see Mair 1988. The earliest general anthology of *bianwen* texts in English translation was Waley 1960.

5. Mair 1983, 87–122, “Maudgalyayana, Transformation Text on Mahamaudgalyayana Rescuing His Mother from the Underworld. With Pictures, One Scroll, with Preface.”

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of their body unless they are able to “slay the red dragon” by a strict abstinence from sexual activities and a devout regime of religious exercises, such as sutra reading, reciting the name of the Buddha, practicing seated meditation, maintaining a vegetarian diet (including abstinence from alcohol and pungent spices), and making regular donations to monks and nuns.⁶

The texts on Mulian saving his mother from hell probably were intended for performance on the occasion on the Yulanpen Festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the date that was believed to mark the moment his mother was freed from her underworld punishments. This festival is still widely celebrated throughout East Asia. In China it is also known as the Ghost Festival because families make offerings for the posthumous well-being of the deceased.⁷ Other bianwen texts too may have been related to major ritual events, but we also have numerous shorter texts known as *yinyuan* 因緣 (tales of causes and condition) that may have been suitable for performance at any occasion when pious donors made a major donation. Many of the tales in this later genre deal with the sufferings and deliverance of laywomen who eventually reach enlightenment, and such tales may have targeted a female audience.

This extensive and varied bianwen literature from the eighth to the tenth century remained unknown for most of the next millennium, because even though book printing was very much a Buddhist invention, bianwen texts were not picked up by the flourishing print industry of the Song dynasty (960–1279), which was primarily geared toward the needs of the students in the state examination system (this became a major means of entrance into the state bureaucracy during these centuries as well as a mechanism to confirm the status of local elites). The rich bianwen literature only became known again following the accidental discovery of a walled-up library cave at Dunhuang around the year 1900. This cave, which had most likely been closed shortly after the year 1000, contained nearly fifty thousand manuscripts as well as a few printed books.⁸ The rich and often unique contents of this cave were quickly scattered all over the world, with major holdings now in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Beijing, and it took scholars many years to fully realize the special nature of the bianwen texts included among these manuscripts.

Even though we have one or two prohibitions of bianwen performances from the Song, this did of course not mean that monks and nuns stopped

6. Cole 1998.

7. Teiser 1988.

8. The earliest dated printed book that has been preserved is a copy of the Diamond Sutra (Jingang jing 金剛經). See Wood and Barnard 2010. For a study and translation of the Diamond Sutra, see Mu Soeng 2000.

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preaching. But we have to wait until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries before we once again encounter vernacular prosimetric texts composed with a lay audience in mind. By this time such texts were no longer designated as *bianwen*, but came to be known as “precious scrolls.” The earliest text that is occasionally called a precious scroll is the *Xiaoshi Jingang keyi* 銷釋金剛科儀 (Ritual amplification explaining the Diamond Sutra; also known as the *Jingang jing keyi* 金剛經科儀 [Diamond Sutra ritual]) of 1242, an edition of the Diamond Sutra with vernacular commentary. The Diamond Sutra, a short Mahayana sutra that had been translated by Kumārajīva (344–409/413), promised unlimited merit to all who read, recite, copy, and multiply its contents. By the Tang dynasty (617–907) it had already established quite a reputation for its capacity to work miracles, creating a veritable cult, especially among lay Buddhists. The many miracles that were credited to the veneration and recitation of the Diamond Sutra were recorded in several collections of wonder tales dedicated to this sutra from the Tang dynasty, and a large selection of such wonder tales is included in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Extensive records of the Taiping era), a huge compilation of anomaly tales that was edited in the final years of the tenth century.⁹ The Diamond Sutra was widely used in funerary ritual, as it stressed the illusory nature of the body, but many wonder tales also told of devotees who had died but were allowed to return to earth because of their veneration of the sutra. The Diamond Sutra also held that in the mind there is no fundamental difference between male and female, which may explain its attraction for female believers. As a primarily liturgical text, the *Xiaoshi Jingang keyi* remained highly popular throughout the Ming dynasty and the subsequent Qing dynasty (1644–1911), but also remained atypical for the genre of *baojuan*, to the degree that one may wonder whether it should even be included in the genre.¹⁰

If one excludes the *Xiaoshi Jingang keyi*, the earliest preserved precious scroll is a text that is once again devoted to the tale of Mulian delivering his mother from her punishments in hell. This long precious scroll most likely was composed in the first half of the fourteenth century and has been partially preserved in a large and beautifully illustrated manuscript dated 1372 that derives from the court of the Northern Yuan dynasty. Yet another also partially preserved illustrated manuscript of this text was produced in 1440 for an imperial concubine of the Ming.¹¹ The tale of Mulian, in various adaptations, would

9. Ho 2019.

10. Overmyer 1999, 34–38.

11. Berezkin 2013c, 109–31.

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remain an important topic in precious scroll literature throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties and into modern times.¹²

Female Piety in Precious Scrolls: Miaoshan and Woman Huang

While the tale of Mulian told how mothers could be saved by their sons, some other early narrative precious scrolls taught women how they could save themselves from the cycle of life and death. In his pioneering study of Chinese premodern popular literature, Zheng Zhenduo (1898–1958) in 1938 characterized these works as follows: “They describe how one woman is firmly devoted to the Way, suffers misery and misfortune, but does not swerve from her path despite a hundred frustrations and has the lofty spirit of sacrificing herself for her faith. Their texts may not have been written very well, but this type of theme is rarely encountered in our literature.”¹³ Probably the most outstanding examples of this subgenre are the *Precious Scroll of Incense Mountain* (Xiangshan baojuan 香山寶卷) and the *Precious Scroll of Woman Huang* (Huangshi baojuan 黃氏寶卷), which both would appear to have been in circulation in their earliest versions at least by the end of the fifteenth century. Both texts are referred to in sources of the first half of the sixteenth century, and both are mentioned in the anonymous vernacular novel *Plum in the Golden Vase* (Jin Ping Mei 金瓶梅), which probably was finished in the 1580s. If the *Precious Scroll of Woman Huang* provided the model for later works in the genre on the pitfalls of piety for married women, the *Precious Scroll of Incense Mountain* focused on the tribulation of a devout girl who refuses to marry, a topic that also would be taken up in many later precious scrolls of the Qing dynasty.¹⁴

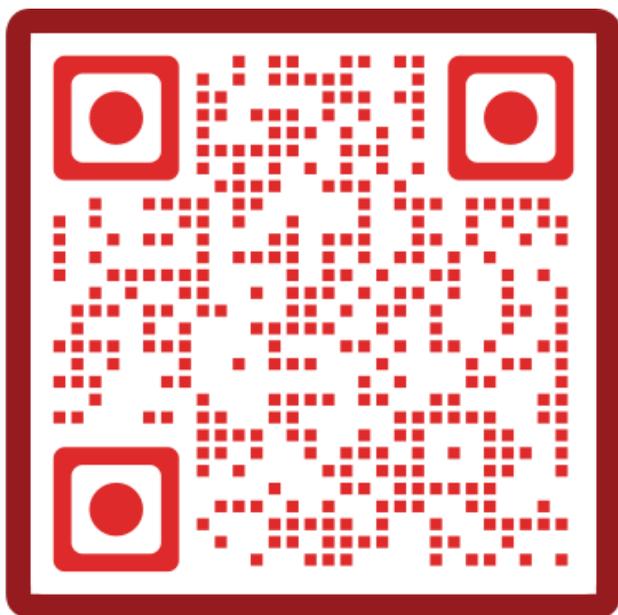
12. Berezkin 2017 discusses this text and later adaptations of the legend of Mulian in the precious scroll genre. For a full translation of one of the later precious scroll adaptations of the Mulian legend, the *Precious Scroll of the Three Lives of Mulian* (Mulian sanshi baojuan 目連三世寶卷), see Grant and Idema 2011, 35–145. For a detailed discussion of yet another Qing dynasty adaptation, see Johnson 1995, 55–103.

13. Zheng Zhenduo 1959, 327. Also see Che Xilun (2002, 20–22) for a short characterization of this type of precious scroll.

14. As an example one might mention the *Precious Scroll of Liu Xiang* (Liu Xiang baojuan 劉香寶卷), which tells the story of a pious girl who while still at home convinces her parents to abandon their sinful business of selling meat and wine and to open a vegetarian tea shop. When she is married to the son of a locally prominent family and refuses to consummate her marriage, her mother-in-law first subjects her to all kinds of abuse and then throws her out of the house; the mother also forces her son to marry a second wife. Liu Xiang is reduced to begging but eventually establishes herself as a religious teacher. Her husband, by now a successful bureaucrat, during an illness witnesses the sufferings of his deceased mother and other relatives in hell, and together with his second wife commits himself to the study of Buddhism under Liu Xiang’s guidance. Precious scrolls on Liu Xiang were already in

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