

## Book Reviews

**Yugui Guo, *Asia's Educational Edge: Current Achievements in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005. xxiv + 265 pages.**

With a similar impetus as that behind Ezra Vogel's 1979 *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America*,<sup>1</sup> Yugui Guo has set out to provide a wake-up call to American educators and policymakers about the growth and encroaching strength of education and educational opportunities in Asia. His *Asia's Educational Edge: Current Achievements in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India* was undertaken both to provide a comparative analysis of the educational systems—including K–12 education, higher education, and international education—of these five economies and to ask whether the United States will be prepared to train its own students in science and technology fields as more and more Asians seek tertiary education, terminal degrees, and, ultimately, careers in Asia. “It is no secret that the United States has long relied heavily on foreign-born scientists and engineers and increasingly so in the closing years of the twentieth century,” Guo writes (p. 1). He asks: “Who will fill the gap left by foreign scientists and engineers [in universities, industries, and research institutes in the United States] should they become less available some day in the future?” (p. 9). Armed with an impressive arsenal of statistics, presented intertextually as well as graphically (via 102 tables and 58 figures), Guo predicts that, as opportunities increase in Asia, a smaller proportion of Asians will train for advanced degrees in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields in the United States. Moreover, of those who do, an increasing portion may opt to return to their home countries instead of remaining in the United States. A crisis could be in the making.

Following a brief foreword by William K. Cummings (a well-known scholar of international education at George Washington University) and a contextualizing preface, Guo, an independent specialist in international and comparative education, explains in his introductory chapter that the five economies of his study were the leading home nations and economies for foreign students enrolled in American universities in the 2002–2003 academic year. Taken together, students from India, Mainland China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan comprised 45.1 percent of the entire foreign undergraduate and graduate student population in the United States. His

second chapter considers challenges facing U.S. education in light of shifting political, economic, and demographic trends. Somewhat disappointingly, however, his section on “quality issues” with respect to U.S. education is informed entirely by quantitative data on standards and results of international assessments. Throughout the work, in fact, Guo seems to conflate “quality of education,” especially elementary and secondary education, with performance on standardized tests. Admittedly, results of recent international mathematics and science proficiency exams place students from Asian countries—notably South Korea and Japan—far ahead of their counterparts in the United States. This fact alone should be a cause for concern among American educators and education policymakers. But “quality of education” cannot be addressed or assessed entirely via quantitative measures.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Guo offers practically no information about the lived experiences of administrators, teachers (including training, qualifications, remuneration, expectations, work life), or students. Inclusion of even a limited amount of micro-level detail would greatly humanize the somewhat sterile, number-driven presentation.

In the five chapters that follow, one on each economy surveyed, Guo focuses on “the positive experience and practices in these foreign education systems in an attempt to convince the American people of the challenges posed by other nations and to provide implications for the United States in its reforms” (p. xxi). Each chapter opens with a useful “summary of findings” that highlights the history, administration, finance, and roles of the private sector and international education. Guo elaborates on these issues in the chapters themselves, wherein he also describes curricula and recent curricular changes, issues of access, and—in the case of China—projections on expansion through the year 2020. The uniformity of his presentation enables readers easily to compare the situation across countries, although, to minimize repetition, Guo occasionally does not comment on some features in subsequent chapters if they are similar to features described earlier (e.g., he describes entrance examinations and the non-formal education system for Japan in chapter 3 but not for South Korea in chapter 4). The author suggests that the recent successes South Korea and Taiwan have had in transforming “brain drain” into “brain gain,” especially with respect to scholars and practitioners in the various STEM fields, are bellwethers of a trend that will eventually be matched by China and India, which today have the world’s largest and second largest education systems, respectively.

Throughout the book, Guo demonstrates his belief that education is the key to economic development. He observes that “all of the five nations and economies view education as an integral part of their whole national development and assume great responsibility for the advancement of education” (pp. 229–30). His presentations suggest that investment in primary and sec-

ondary education can lead the economy, yet tertiary education, especially in resource-intensive STEM fields, follows the economy.

Across East Asia, Guo reveals remarkably similar approaches to education, underscored, perhaps, by a strong level of “cultural support” from Confucianism (p. 89): Respect is traditionally given to educators and educated individuals, the process of formal education itself is afforded enormous prestige, and students and parents alike have high expectations and are highly motivated. Guo later suggests that such internal motivation and high expectations for education are absent in the United States (pp. 244–45).

Across East Asia, the modern education systems have been highly centralized in terms of administration, finance, and curriculum, though a recent wave of decentralization has afforded more discretionary power to regional and local education boards. Schools are organized along a 6-3-3-4 track (primary school, junior high school, high school, and university), with various academic and vocational options along the way. Within the last twelve years, public schools in Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have shifted from six days of school per week to five-day school weeks; additional reforms have targeted the roles and relevance of entrance exams at various stages. In China, the role of adult education, where much recent growth has occurred, is undoubtedly playing a major role in the shift from elite to mass higher education.

Compared with the education systems of Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, the state of education in India is different yet also full of potential, according to Guo. The Indian system, which evolved structurally from the pre-independence British colonial model, involves a 10 + 2 system, with interstate variance regarding which years constitute primary, upper primary, and secondary stages. Indeed, the variations in structure, organization, and curricula among schools in different Indian states make generalizations difficult, even though the states share responsibility with the central government in providing free access to education to all. However, in his account of the Indian system, Guo’s presentation suffers from data that are admittedly “rather limited, fragmentary, and out-of-date” in comparison to those of the other economies portrayed in the book (p. 189). Guo explores the massive “brain drain” affecting India as well as the intriguing concept of an Indian “scientific diaspora” (pp. 222–25).

In a concluding chapter, Guo offers a summary of his comparative findings as well as some rather predictable implications for U.S. educators. He holds that the United States could benefit from expanding its non-formal and extracurricular education systems, intensifying the role of U.S. companies and industries in vocational and technical education, requiring foreign language training in elementary and secondary school curricula, and sending more U.S. students abroad for study. This last recommendation is particularly important because, as Guo notes, during the early 2000s, for every *one* U.S. student

studying in Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, or India, *thirty-one* students from those economies were studying in the United States!

Guo's book should provide a useful resource to scholars of Asia or international education. But, as is always the case when writing about contemporary issues, some of his information is already outdated. For example, the Japanese curricula Guo presents are from the early 1990s (before the elimination of Saturday schooling in 2002). Other developments have arisen since the publication of his book, such as the 2006 endowment of Vedanta University in the Indian state of Orissa.<sup>3</sup> When it opens, this institution will negate Guo's statement about the absence of private universities in India (pp. 206–7). Also, maintaining internal consistency when writing about contemporary issues can be difficult. On p. 6, Guo states (correctly) that the United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984, yet not until p. 34 does he inform the reader that the United States rejoined the organization in 2003. Including other "technical" information, such as dates for Japan's Meiji period (1868–1912) and India's independence (1947) would also help the general reader.<sup>4</sup> Finally, several tables are difficult to read (see, e.g., pp. 39, 48, 77, 83, 121, 160, 171, 205, 215–16). These minor flaws aside, Guo's book presents a useful macro-level snapshot of the education systems in Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and India at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

STEVEN E. GUMP

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ezra F. Vogel, *Japan as Number One: Lessons for America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>2</sup>With respect to the non-quantifiable dimension of primary and secondary education quality in China, see Yong Zhao, "China and the Whole Child," *Educational Leadership* 64, no. 8 (2007): 70–73.

<sup>3</sup>See Samantha Henig, "Indian Tycoon Makes Gift to Start University," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 28, 2006, p. A34.

<sup>4</sup>Guo eventually does provide the year of India's independence from Britain, but he waits until seven pages after initially mentioning the event.

**Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. xii + 385 pages.**

Richard von Glahn, the UCLA history professor who is well known for his work on Song–Yuan–Ming (960–1644) Chinese history, has written a study about the "sinister way" *zuodao* 左道 of Chinese folklore and religion that is

based on his research in China in 1991–92 and 1996–97. Von Glahn’s work is valuable specifically because he does not focus on the elite or institutional religions of China, as many scholars do. Instead, he emphasizes that Chinese religious culture is manifold and local; his attention is on “vernacular” religion, a term he prefers to “secular.” The work builds upon other recent studies of popular Chinese religion, including Terry Kleeman’s *Great Perfection*, a work devoted to a study of the rise and spread of Celestial Masters Daoism; Robert Hymes’ *Way and Byway*, which explores local religion in the Song Dynasty (960–1279); and Kenneth Dean’s *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China*, a work based on research in many of the same areas as von Glahn’s.<sup>1</sup>

Von Glahn uses the “sinister way” to refer to teachings and practices of Chinese *fangshi* 方士, whom he associates with sorcerers, conjurers, and experts in the mantic arts and their requisite techniques for dealing with ghosts, demons, and sinister spirits. Von Glahn aligns himself with the view that no clear separation can be made between institutionalized and elite religion in China, on the one hand, and diffused and vernacular religion, on the other. He therefore follows the stream of important work done by Kristofer Schipper (*The Taoist Body*) and Kenneth Dean (*Lord of the Three-in-One*).<sup>2</sup> However, von Glahn does not take any notice of the growing consensus that associates *fangshi* with *daoshi* 道士 or of the fact that their teachings form the basis even for classical works of Daoism, such as the *Daodejing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. Neither does von Glahn comment on Martin Palmer’s controversial work, *The Jesus Sutras*, which argues that Tang Dynasty (618–907) expressions of Christian–Daoist and Christian–Buddhist practices existed at Louguantai (near Xi’an).<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, von Glahn does a fine job of providing a rich array of Chinese folktales regarding ancestors, ghosts, and gods; the Han (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) dynastic cult of the dead; *shanxiao* 山魃 (mountain goblins); the plague demons and epidemic gods; and the cult of Wutong 五通. He makes references to most of the best-known sources but neglects some that surely would have been of great use to him: the *Spellbinding* text from the pre-Qin (221–206 B.C.E.) period, Ge Hong’s 葛洪 (283–343) instructions for making talismans to protect travelers in the mountains from *shanxiao*, the role of celestial diagrams in local religion from the Song to Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, and even the expression of local religion in the plays of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) dramatist Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550–1616).

Readers will find very informative the author’s data about popular images of the supernatural that are reflected in the material culture of China, including bronze artifacts, stele, paintings, and performance arts. Von Glahn understands well that an appreciation of the religion of the common people does not come merely from written texts. The culture embedded in objects also contains significant value in the study of folklore and religion.

The author offers a careful analysis and ample evidence for his claim that the two major moments of transformation of Chinese religion occurred during the Han Dynasty and the Song Dynasty. However, some readers will still argue that the rise of the Celestial Masters (a millennial movement in the second century C.E.) and the influx of Buddhism into China should not be overlooked as fundamental agents and processes of change.

Von Glahn divides his book into seven chapters. In discussing Han mortuary practices, he points out how fascination with ghosts became the basic trope of a genre of folklore known as *zhiguai* 志怪 (“annals of the strange”) literature (p. 73). He next explores folk traditions about changelings. Unlike many researchers, he is careful to provide the physics or “science” of ghosts and changelings in Chinese intellectual history. His fascinating discussion of the importance of the physics of the Wuxing 五行 (Five Phases) to such beliefs is one of the greatest strengths of the work. Another important inclusion von Glahn makes that many scholars omit is a discussion of the emergence of the ledgers of merit and demerit in the Yuan (1271–1368) and Song dynasties. This section would have been stronger, however, if von Glahn had shown how the transmission of the moral culture of China through these texts was closely linked with the village lecture system through the Qing Dynasty.

The final two chapters of the work are dedicated to a very detailed analysis of the development of the cult of Wutong. Von Glahn provides the basic structure of the Wutong folklore as follows: a person makes a pact to become rich with a *shanxiao*; wives and daughters are subsequently seduced and raped by the Wutong spirit; and, ultimately, tragedy and violence befall the family which gained the wealth, often with the wife/daughter wasting away (p. 187). The author shows how several aspects of the Wutong legend merged into the literary figure of the Buddhist bodhisattva Huaguang 華光, especially in theatrical performances and in the plot of the work *Journey to the South*. Von Glahn’s exploration of the Wutong cult is very engaging and nuanced, and, to some extent, it is the highlight of the book.

Overall, von Glahn has provided an informative work that traces many beliefs in Chinese vernacular religion and folktales. The inclusion of a considerable number of figures and tables helps readers gain a tangible picture of the vernacular gods in Chinese religion. The work includes most of the essentials that a scholar would expect: use of Chinese *pinyin* 拼音, a glossary of Chinese characters, a detailed bibliography, and a helpful index. Due to its subtlety and complexity in portraying its major themes, the book is best suited for graduate students and scholars whose fields are in Chinese religious culture, folklore, philosophy, religion, history, or anthropology.

QINGJUN LI

*Zhengzhou University & Middle Tennessee State University*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Terry F. Kleeman, *Great Perfection: Religion and Ethnicity in a Chinese Millennial Kingdom* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998); Robert P. Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>Kristofer Marinus Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, trans. Karen C. Duval (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup>Martin Palmer, *The Jesus Sutras: Rediscovering the Lost Scrolls of Taoist Christianity* (New York: Ballantine, 2001).

**Amy Borovoy, *The Too-Good Wife: Alcohol, Codependency, and the Politics of Nurturance in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. xvii + 234 pages.**

People who spend time in Tokyo learn to watch where they're walking when traveling home late at night. As unpleasant as it sounds, urban train stations often have puddles of the sticky results left by drunken riders who have gotten sick. These veritable minefields remind even the casual observer that drinking continues to be a key cultural activity and that the unpleasant results of alcohol are tolerated, if not excused. As anthropologist Amy Borovoy points out in *The Too-Good Wife: Alcohol, Codependency, and the Politics of Nurturance in Postwar Japan*, the vibrant clusters of social practices surrounding alcohol consumption in Japan are regularly believed to strengthen ties between co-workers, friends, and colleagues. Moreover, for many white-collar workers, drinking is part of the job, and mandatory carousing is justified as a surefire way to temporarily dissolve office hierarchies while simultaneously promoting more business deals. Drinking practices, though, are not limited to the business world: getting together for a drink is an important activity in many informal groups and clubs, as well.

Although important to her analysis, the culture of drinking is not ultimately Borovoy's target in *The Too-Good Wife*. Instead, she locates her ethnography within a mental health center in Tokyo designed to assist wives and mothers dealing with repercussions of alcoholism, as well as with "family problems" more generally. Borovoy beautifully describes how these women's attempts to be good wives and mothers expose contradictions and conflicts in the normative idealizations of femininity, creating complicated dilemmas the women discuss in group therapy sessions. Like women in other cultural contexts, these women are trying to support their husbands without furthering the alcohol dependencies from which these men suffer. In American self-help terminology, they want to support the men but not their addictions. However, as Borovoy describes, these dilemmas are com-

pounded by the histories and politics of being a wife in Japan. Specifically, wives and mothers have been imagined as infinitely enduring; they are idealized as fostering almost total dependence in their family members. Borovoy traces the shifts in these constructions of femininity, playing particular attention to the changing ideal of “good wives and wise mothers” (*ryōsai kenbo* 良妻賢母) and its contemporary versions. Although idealizations of women have changed, in Borovoy’s words, “managing family problems through attentive care and sheer endurance is explicitly considered the role of a wife and mother” (p. 3). In these ways, a wife and mother’s key characteristics are idealized to include endurance, patience, and constant support for dependent family members.

Because these constructs link being a good wife and mother with cultivating and supporting dependence, Borovoy was surprised to hear counselors and patients using the vocabulary of “codependence” to describe their family problems. According to this rhetoric, originally conceived in American Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, when family members assist addicts—by covering for them, cleaning them up, or lending them money—they enable the addictions. In these terms, it is possible to be a “too-good wife” if a woman helps a dependent husband to such an extent that he never needs to solve his own problems.

Although the term “codependence” might be recognizable to American audiences, the term does not hold similar self-help cachet in Japan. As Borovoy explains in a historical review of counseling and psychology in Japan, “dependence” or “the desire to be passively loved” (*amae* 甘え) are more familiar terms to describe intimate relationships. Key sociological or psychosocial works about Japanese society, such as Takeo Doi’s *The Anatomy of Dependence* and Chie Nakane’s *Japanese Society*, are framed around the idea that intimate relationships in Japan are built through such dependence.<sup>1</sup> One of the mental health center’s counselors commented on dependence in Japan when she said, “Japan itself was a ‘culture of codependency’” (p. 14).

Such hyperbole aside, the women in Borovoy’s counseling group are dealing with the aftereffects of both their husbands’ alcoholism and the nascent medicalization of their ways of being wives and mothers. In group conversations, women contemplate theories of codependency that suggest their spousal or maternal support could be causing the problems they’re trying to solve. Using the rhetoric of codependence, one participant describes her relationship with her alcoholic husband and son like feeling as if she’s “soaking in dirty lukewarm water,” a situation that, Borovoy explains, “has the markings of a warm, intimate family environment and was thus difficult to leave—and yet that was ultimately untenable” (p. 3).

Despite this example, few women easily accept the dictums of codependence. Because they find it hard to believe that a wife or mother’s endurance could harm someone she’s trying to help, this ethnography is a

detailed account of how women contest and partially accept codependence rhetoric. The rhetoric becomes particularly contested when women are struggling to help their children, rather than their alcoholic husbands, through problems. For instance, Borovoy presents the case of one woman who had to visit a juvenile delinquency office after her daughter got in a fight. While there, she was asked to fill out a form including a question asking if she had breastfed her daughter. Borovoy uses this example to demonstrate her point that the “women at the Center were often called upon . . . to intervene on behalf of their children or apologize for them . . . [and] the women continually asked themselves if they had done something wrong to make their children into substance abusers” (p. 153). In another case, Mizuta-san goes to visit her adult son who is living on his own, but, in her description of the visit during a subsequent counseling group session, she explains how much she is still looking after all his needs. Borovoy concludes: “Mizuta-san had taken in virtually every detail of her son’s life and environs, but surveillance of her son’s personal hygiene, the order of his space, and his schedule was not regarded as unusual for a mother. In fact, she told the story as evidence of her own ‘recovery’” (p. 152).

Indeed, despite the title, this book makes the case that being a too-good mother and a too-good wife can be very different experiences, and that although codependence rhetoric suggests a similar solution for both problems, the women at this center approach them very differently. For mothers trying to cope with and fix their children’s problems—including drug addiction and large debts—the practices required by codependency theories are *too-tough* love. As Borovoy astutely points out, denying their children all forms of dependent love would also mean that the mothers would lose the pleasure they find in being mothers, the “motherly love and intimacy” (p. 160). For these reasons, women at the Center find it easier to refuse to help their husbands than to help their children.

That said, the women are surprisingly unwilling to imagine leaving their husbands. In Borovoy’s counseling group of about forty women, only one eventually divorced, and the few women who left their family homes eventually returned. Borovoy offers two possible explanations for such patterns, both of which are plausible. First, homes and family lives offer women fulfillment, power, and friendship networks. Simply put, women get much more than a husband when they are wives. In Borovoy’s terms “marriage was both a source of discontent and [the women’s] salvation” (p. 106). Second, her informants were born in the 1930s and ’40s, and because the research was conducted in the early 1990s, the women were in their fifties and sixties. Age impacts these women’s aversion to divorce because their generational cohort’s relatively conservative ideas about marriage make them more inclined to stay in difficult marriages. Further, their ages and employment histories would make it hard to earn enough money

if they struck out on their own. Given the recent boom in media coverage and imagings of “later-life divorce” (*jukunen rikon* 熟年離婚), the difference fifteen years later is striking. Yet Borovoy, now teaching at Princeton, has successfully translated her 1995 Stanford dissertation into a text that remains very relevant today.

Ultimately, Borovoy has provided not only a rich ethnographic perspective on what it feels like to live in a family with problems but also a sound representation of contemporary moral discussions about what it means to be a good person, woman, wife, and mother in Japan. Interweaving perspectives from counselors and women in therapy with her own experiences as an American feminist and mother living in Tokyo, Borovoy spends considerable self-reflexive energy analyzing her own instincts and responses to what she’s heard. In all, *The Too-Good Wife* is a compelling ethnography of the lived debates surrounding personhood and family life in urban Japan.

ALLISON ALEXY  
*Yale University*

## Note

<sup>1</sup>Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence* (New York: Kodansha International, 1973); Chie Nakane, *Japanese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

**Sherry D. Fowler, *Murōji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. xiv + 293 pages.**

**Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. xiv + 409 pages.**

Of the two scholarly monographs published in 2005 with the word *rearranging* in their title or subtitle, both pertain to my former field of Japanese religion, and both are centered on religious sites that are familiar and meaningful to me. What a pleasure it was, then, to read these two books—both also impressive reworkings of the authors’ doctoral dissertations—and to be able to revisit my memories of pilgrimages to the Murō 室生 Temple in Sherry Fowler’s offering and the Kotohira 金刀比羅 Shrine in Sarah Thal’s contribution. Together, these works by Fowler, an art historian at the University of Kansas, and Thal, a historian at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, shed light on not only the histories of these two sites but also the

complicated history of religion in Japan vis-à-vis identity, association, representation, and interpretation.

At the heart of her lavishly illustrated *Murōji: Rearranging Art and History at a Japanese Buddhist Temple* (with seventy-nine monochrome and thirteen color plates, many taken by the author herself), Fowler considers the literal rearrangement (and re-identification) of Buddhist statuary in what is today known as the “Golden Hall” (Kondō 金堂) of the Murō Temple, located approximately 25 kilometers southeast of the city of Nara in present-day Nara Prefecture. Founded between 778 and 793, the forested mountain complex of Murōji preserves a large number of monuments from the ninth and tenth centuries in excellent condition. Although originally affiliated with Hossō Buddhism, Murōji became home to a type of Buddhism that included elements of Tendai, Shingon, and *kami* 神 (“god” or “deity”) worship. Fowler traces the complex association of the sacred mountain site with a rain-controlling Dragon King (Ryūō 龍王), “a creature that imbues the mountain with a numinous nature” (p. 41) and also serves to exemplify her themes of plurality of religious practice and multiple identities. Kūkai 空海 (774–835, also known as Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師), the founder of Shingon Buddhism, purportedly buried sacred relics from China on the mountain. The temple was officially declared Shingon in 1700 and remains so to this day, although it also benefited from its associations with Kōfukuji and the Kasuga Shrine in Nara City. Fowler traces the connection between Mt. Murō and (Kūkai’s) Mt. Kōya (in neighboring Wakayama Prefecture), and she offers an interesting investigation into the history of Murōji’s sobriquet as “Nyonin Kōya” 女人高野, or “[Mt.] Kōya for women,” which was used as early as 1681, because Mt. Kōya was off limits to female pilgrims until 1872.

Although one of Fowler’s foci is to present theories of Japanese art historians and offer her own hypothesis about the triad of Buddhist images displayed on the altar of the Golden Hall (a building that dates to the mid-to late ninth century), her discussion is not limited to the specifics of the site itself. Instead, Fowler relates her discussion to larger intellectual systems of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹, originating in the tenth century, in which each Buddhist divinity (the source, *honji*) was considered to assume forms of *kami* (the manifestation, *suijaku*), and *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合, a broader and more general amalgamation of *kami* and buddhas. Her method of analysis of the “composite identities” (p. 203) of certain icons, such as the Yakushi–Shaka main image in the Golden Hall, could easily be appropriated and applied to other images of uncertain representation. Especially interesting is her in-depth descriptions of “mandorlas” (*ita kōhai* 板光背, or wood-board nimbuses that frequently stand behind Buddhist sculptures), given that mandorlas “are largely unappreciated because they have been viewed as accessories to the sculptures they stand behind” (p. 148). Like the freestanding sculptures they frame, mandorlas could be—and often were—

moved. A circa 1915 postcard of sculpture in the Golden Hall (reproduced on p. 164) shows the mandorlas reversed from how they are currently positioned and demonstrates Fowler's use of historical material culture of the Murōji site.

One other particularly fascinating portion of Fowler's book considers the 1998–2000 rebuilding and restoration of the five-story pagoda at Murōji after it was severely damaged during a September 1998 typhoon. Standing only 16.2 meters tall, the pagoda, a national treasure, is the smallest full-scale five-story pagoda in Japan. I had visited Murōji and seen the pagoda just a few months before the typhoon; and I saw the restored pagoda, which now stands in a small clearing, in December 2000. But because I was not living in Japan during the interim, I did not have easy access to news about the rebuilding process after the disaster. Fowler's book provides a review of the technicalities of the rebuilding as well as information regarding Japanese scholars' revision of the date of the pagoda from either the eighth or ninth century to circa 800, secret images uncovered inside the pagoda, the rethatching of the roof (apparently only twenty artisans in Japan today are skilled in the traditional method of *hinoki*-bark thatching), and how the funds were raised not only for this restoration but also for a general restoration in 1560. The typhoon brought unanticipated public attention to Fowler's fieldwork site; and a companion book that focuses on the post-typhoon restoration could provide a fascinating exploration into not only the modern, technical side of a "traditional" craft but also the ways in which the media in contemporary Japan portrays religious history and the importance and meaning of national treasures.

In addition to being attractively produced, the book is also extensively indexed and documented, pointing readers to numerous primary Japanese sources as well as secondary sources in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, English, and French. Almost refreshingly, though perhaps not fair to readers unfamiliar with the Japanese language, Fowler does not translate certain Japanese terms (such as the *-dera* 寺 and *-ji* 寺 suffixes for temple names or the term *koku* 石, which refers to an amount of rice). And although I prefer for Asian characters to be incorporated into the main text, one virtue of a separate list of characters (as has Fowler's book) is that it saves the student from having to make a study list of the more esoteric names and technical terms. One need only study the list, which can provide a useful test of comprehension in that it lacks English definitions. For the time-constrained reader, Fowler's brief introduction (seven pages) and even briefer conclusion (only five pages) offer an engaging foundational outline and summary, respectively, of the main ideas that are fleshed out in the five chapters of the book.

Just as Fowler's training as an art historian clearly shines forth in her text, so, too, is Thal's giftedness as a historian obvious in her *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–*

1912. In short, Thal tells a *very* compelling story about the reasons why and ways in which the attributes, affiliations, and even appellations of *kami* associated with one particular site on the island of Shikoku, Mt. Zōzu 象頭 (Mt. “Elephant Head”), have changed over time. Her work epitomizes the following point, made in 2006 by William Cronon (a colleague of Thal’s at Wisconsin): “historians have never abandoned [their] commitment to narrative storytelling as an essential rhetorical and analytical tool for conveying historical knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

Thal’s presentation is ultimately so successful because she continuously personalizes the narrative by invoking diaries, letters, inscriptions on votive tablets (*ema* 絵馬), and other historical documents that emphasize the lives and, perhaps most importantly, experiences of individuals with respect to the site she so thoroughly explores in her work. In her first chapter, for example, she describes a pilgrimage to the site undertaken in 1858 by a well-to-do, rural samurai named Nakahara Suigekka. By using his diary, Thal is able to describe what Nakahara saw, what he did, and how he felt as he journeyed from his home on the main island of Honshū to Mt. Zōzu, the site of the famous shrine to Konpira 金毘羅 (Japanese pronunciation of the Sanskrit Avatar *Khumbīra*), which was renamed Kotohira in 1868. With his servant, and in the company of numerous other pilgrims, Nakahara traveled by boat, horse, palanquin, and—ultimately—foot as he approached the sacred precincts, noting attractions along the way and stopping for breaks at teahouses and at an inn near the foot of Mt. Zōzu. At the shrine, he prostrated himself, offered thanks through prayer, and perhaps purchased a protective talisman or amulet. Like practically every chapter of the book, this one is supplemented with several of the forty-two monochrome images (maps, woodblock prints, photographs) that offer a fascinating then-and-now look at the site. Moreover, the figure descriptions are excellent, with cultural and historical information aplenty: One could learn a lot just by flipping through the book, examining the figures, and reading their captions.

In the Epilogue, as a fitting bookend and satisfying conclusion to her work, Thal recounts a visit she herself made to Mt. Zōzu in July 2003. Here she notes some of the transformations with an air of nostalgic regret, commenting, for example, that “prominent landmarks from the past have receded into obscurity” (p. 300). Her book serves to preserve what might otherwise be a series of “forgotten moment[s] in the history of the shrine” (p. 302).

Thal’s introduction masterfully sets out the purpose of her investigation and the theoretical framework she uses to organize the thirteen easily digestible chapters of her work. Her goal is “to understand the changing significance of the gods over time” in Japan (p. 1), especially from the late sixteenth century to the early twentieth century. As a historical investigation, the book is arranged chronologically. Her focused investigation offi-

cially begins in 1573, when the first shrine to the deity Konpira was constructed on the mountain, and continues until the death of the Meiji Emperor in 1912. In the interim, Japan—and, with it, understandings of Mt. Zōzu—are truly transformed. The shrine on Mt. Zōzu has a unique position “*within* history, not outside it,” Thal argues (p. 314, original emphasis). Throughout her work, she demonstrates the fascinatingly symbiotic relationship between politics and religion in Japan, how ritual landscapes were transformed through architecture and iconography, how shrine activities and growth were affected by economics, and even how religion affected national diplomacy. Although Thal’s examples center on one particular site, her analyses are relevant to religious sites all across Japan.

Especially fascinating are the central chapters (6–8) that focus on changes to the mountain and shrine in the years immediately following the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Here the reader witnesses how the creation of modern Shintō (as well as the nascent idea of “modern Japan”) affected the shrine complex on Mt. Zōzu: sites, buildings, and associations with Buddhism on the mountain were renamed (or, in the case of the bell tower and pagoda, destroyed) to affiliate with Shintō and align the complex with the nativist agenda that, simply put, sought to desyncretize Japanese religious expression by removing overt foreign influence. Previously sacred Buddhist images and texts, if not burned, were demoted to cultural artifacts that could be put on display and viewed, for a fee, as works of art. A hierarchical system of official shrines was established in 1871, resulting in fascinating struggles with rival shrines (most notably Ise 伊勢 and Izumo 出雲). Through its involvement with the Great Teaching Campaign, the newly renamed and revisioned Kotohira Shrine was transformed into a center of state indoctrination. And the Kotohira Shrine Reverence Association, established in March 1874 (and still in existence today), helped embody the nativist vision in the community and nation. Many of these decisions exemplify how, throughout history, priests associated with Mt. Zōzu made concerted, strategic efforts to raise the status of their shrine and to increase its income. Through “delicately negotiated alliances” (p. 249) toward the latter years of the nineteenth century, priests sought, for example, “to profit more directly from the pilgrimage business” (p. 248). Steamships entered the Inland Sea transport routes by 1871, affecting the ways in which pilgrims from outside Shikoku approached the island—and beginning a series of technological transformations to pilgrimage that have culminated with the possibility of virtual visits, via the Internet.<sup>2</sup>

The writing is lucid, clear, and well organized throughout. Without fail, Thal’s chapters begin with useful introductions that present her interpretations and highlight the development of her thematic, chronological organization; examples, information, and data that support her claims follow. Thal’s prefatory “Note on Pronunciation, Names, and Dates” (pp. xiii–xiv)

suggests—accurately, I believe—that her book will be read (and enjoyed) by more than just scholars of Japan and Japanese religion. And her “Glossary and Selected Biographical Dictionary” (pp. 373–81), although it lacks Chinese characters, provides a most useful resource, as does the thorough index. Finally, the importance of such histories is underscored by the numerous occurrences of “the late” as a preface to names in Thal’s Acknowledgments: As scholars and informants pass away, an additional responsibility of the historian is to ensure that her or his interpretations and representations of the landscape of history preserve and disseminate the perspectives of previous generations so that the landscape may be adequately revisited and revised—and its rearrangements contextualized and understood—in the years to come.

STEVEN E. GUMP

*University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>William Cronon, “Getting Ready to Do History,” in Chris M. Golde, George E. Walker, and associates, *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 327–49: 333.

<sup>2</sup>See <http://www.konpira.or.jp>, the first official shrine Web site in Japan (launched in January 1996).

**Yuji Ichioka, *Before Internment: Essays in Prewar Japanese American History*. Edited by Gordon H. Chang & Eiichiro Azuma. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. xxviii + 360 pages.**

Yuji Ichioka (1936–2002) has prepared a brilliant volume of essays on Japanese-American history in the 1920s and 1930s. *Before Internment* is a sequel to Ichioka’s 1988 work, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885–1924*. Carefully edited by two gifted historians, Gordon H. Chang and Eiichiro Azuma, this posthumous work examines the cultural divide between and the intergenerational experiences of the native-born *issei* 一世 (*lit.*, “first generation”) and American-born *nisei* 二世 (*lit.*, “second generation”) communities between the end of World War I in 1918 and the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Ichioka’s essays introduce us to a kaleidoscope of individuals and topics which, when read together, present an intense look at the problems and conflicting issues facing Japanese immigrants and their children in the pre-World War II era. They had to confront intense pressure from a predominantly white society—one that overwhelmingly rejected them on racial grounds. “This racial animus toward the Japanese, unlike that toward the blacks, included a white fear that Japanese had superior traits, which made

them formidable opponents against whom Americans could not compete” (p. 25).

Ichioka brilliantly places the *issei* and *nisei* within the context of the anti-Japanese era in which they lived. “On the one hand, Japanese immigrants constituted a powerless racial minority. Denied the right of naturalization, they were unable to participate in the American political process in order to defend themselves. On the other hand, the anti-Japanese forces commanded overwhelming power and influence. They included among their number organized labor, the American Legion, various nativist groups, local Granger organizations, many local and state politicians, and much of the news media. In the face of such racist opposition, often of a violent nature, Japanese immigrants could only appeal to an abstract sense of American justice and fair play” (pp. 252–53).

*Issei* and *nisei* also had to contend with conflicting loyalties between their country of origin and their new home in the United States in a period when these countries were spiraling toward war. Many influential Americans shared a distrust of Japanese Americans, fearing that they were a potentially subversive element in American society that would come to the aid of Tokyo in the event of war. Ichioka demonstrates that some of these fears were not unfounded, because a number of Japanese Americans supported—and in a few cases even worked for—their mother country before and after Pearl Harbor.

The focus of the book is predominately on the *nisei* generation that grew up between the wars. Ichioka studies in detail the attempts by *issei* and by the Japanese government to teach *nisei* about their native culture and language. They created Japanese-language institutes and offered scholarships so that *nisei* could tour Japan. However, as a whole, *nisei* were far more influenced by the American culture(s) and values that they encountered in public schools. Ichioka notes that these schools “so successfully socialized the Nisei to American values that the Nisei became largely acculturated to American culture and society” (p. 46). As a result, many *nisei* faced an intense cultural dilemma in the days before Pearl Harbor, when Japan was fighting a brutal war in China: “Issei leaders expected them to champion Japan’s case in China and chastised them when they did not. On the other hand, if they stood up in defense of Japan, their loyalty to the United States came under a cloud of suspicion, making any public rationalization of Japan’s side in the Sino-Japanese War [1904–5] impossible” (p. 46).

Ichioka demonstrates the complexity of Japanese-American life and relationships between Japan and the United States through a series of beautifully researched portraits of individuals. We meet Dr. Honda Rikita (1893–1941), a former Japanese soldier and physician who later set up a highly successful medical practice in Los Angeles. His suicide—while undergoing FBI questioning after Pearl Harbor because of his alleged pro-Japanese

sympathies—gave the Japanese great ammunition to substantiate their portrait of the United States as a racist society. We are introduced to the infamous 1941 Tachibana Espionage case as well as the case of Kazumaro “Buddy” Uno (1913–54), a *nisei* who migrated to Japan in the 1930s to become a pro-Japanese journalist and propagandist. We also encounter Louis Adamic (1898–1951), an American writer who embraced the inclusion of all minorities into the American mainstream, including Japanese. And we meet James Yoshinori Sakamoto (1903–55), a journalist who initially sought to build a bridge between the United States and Japan but who then became a fervent American nationalist after Pearl Harbor.

Ichioka was well prepared to write this book. A founder of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and adjunct professor of history at UCLA for many years, he coined the term “Asian American” in the late 1960s to unify previously diverse Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino groups. His first book, *The Issei*, received positive reviews and several awards; *Before Internment* is a most fitting sequel. Ichioka was unable to finish the work before his sudden and untimely death, and Chang and Azuma decided not to tamper with the integrity of Ichioka’s work, even if it was only about 90 percent finished. With more time, I am certain that Ichioka would have resolved the only real flaw of the book: a rather annoying repetition of various incidents and biographies. An introduction and an epilogue by the editors place the book in the context of the times and remind the readers how lucky we are to be able to access Ichioka’s unfinished masterpiece.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX  
*Mary Baldwin College*

**Ellen Gardner Nakamura, *Practical Pursuits: Takano Chōei, Takahashi Keisaku, and Western Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. xiv + 236 pages.**

The study of *rangaku* 蘭学 (“Dutch studies”) is a rather small field in English scholarship, focusing largely on the exchange of Western medical knowledge between Europe and Tokugawa (1600–1868) Japan. Most histories have centered on the intellectual discourse of *rangaku*, suggesting that those engaged in its study comprised a small, elite group who tried to understand principles that they often could not grasp. Within the last decade, however, several works have reevaluated the implications of Western medicine beyond this small group of intellectuals. Ellen Nakamura provides such a work in *Practical Pursuits: Takano Chōei, Takahashi Keisaku, and Western Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Nakamura’s main point is that study of Western science was a dynamic activity that brought together

physicians from all over Japan during the nineteenth century to overcome social problems in the nation's rural and urban areas.

In making this point, Nakamura focuses upon Takano Chōei 高野長英 (1804–50), a well-known scholar of *rangaku*, and on his close relations with local doctors in the village of Nakanojō in Kōzuke (present-day Gunma Prefecture). Scholars have largely concentrated on Chōei because of his work *Bojutsu yume monogatari* 戊戌夢物語 (The tale of a dream). Chōei wrote this work after hearing about the harsh treatment of the American merchant ship *Morrison*, driven away from Japan by canon fire in 1837. In this work, Chōei openly criticized the shogunate's "shell-and-repel" policy, earning for him a reputation as more of a political activist than a physician. Nakamura moves away from this portrayal of Chōei and *rangaku* and focuses on the social networks established by Chōei and other physicians within rural communities that allowed for the spread of Western medicine outside Japan's major metropolitan areas. As Nakamura asserts, Chōei did more than simply translate books; he used the knowledge gained to solve problems facing society (p. 23).

In chapter 1, Nakamura provides a biography of Chōei and discusses the social aspect of doctors in Japan during the early nineteenth century. Chōei followed in the footsteps of his adoptive father and grandfather, becoming a physician who diligently studied Western medicine. Being from a middle-ranking samurai family, he relied heavily upon the financial assistance of others. A portion of this assistance came from three physicians from Kōzuke with whom he, in turn, shared his knowledge. Principally in this way Chōei and the physicians of Kōzuke were brought into a tight bond.

Nakamura provides readers a fairly detailed account of the social world of the Tokugawa-era physician. Her description of the physician's social environment—including medical training, various physician ranks, and methods of payment for services—allows the reader to develop a clear picture of what it was like to be a physician in the Tokugawa Period. Within this world, Chōei and his physician-associates of Kōzuke were by no means elite physicians, as they were not the personal physicians of high-ranking officials of the shogunate. However, as part of a localized elite that attempted to solve social problems, they enjoyed the respect of the local population.

The relationship between Chōei and the Kōzuke physicians is further explored in chapters 2 and 3, which together serve as the heart of Nakamura's work. Chapter 2 discusses the significance of Nakanojō as a link in the medical-social network and shows how the existing and expanding economic and social networks contributed to it. Nakamura describes Nakanojō as an ideal location for the spread and adoption of Western medicine because it possessed several thermal springs, an assortment of mountain herbs, and ready access to drugs and other commodities due to its position as a

market site and post station. In 1833, Chōei gave a series of lectures in Nakanojō based on his work *Seitsu igen sūyō* 西説医原枢要 (Fundamentals of Western medicine). Nakamura then questions (without answering) whether these factors made Nakanojō a rural center for Western learning (p. 95).

Chapter 3 examines two of Chōei's works, *Kyūkō nibutsukō* 救荒二物考 (Treatise on two things for the relief of famine) and *Hieki yōhō* 避疫要法 (Methods of avoiding epidemic diseases). She considers how these works attempted to address the problems of famine and epidemics. Set against the backdrop of the Tenpō 天保 famine (1832–38), *Kyūkō nibutsukō* discussed the planting of a special type of buckwheat and white potatoes as a means of fighting against starvation with “practical knowledge.” Nakamura suggests that this work was an attempt to get local farmers to try something new and to demonstrate the usefulness of these two crops, particularly the use of potatoes (p. 120). *Hieki yōhō* provided a hybrid of Western- and Chinese-style medicines that were designed to prevent or limit the harmful effects of disease. The work included steps in hygiene, patient care, and visits to infected patients. Nakamura asserts that these and other works were published in order to relieve the suffering of the people (p. 115). This claim insinuates that these physicians were not motivated by personal objectives but, rather, always placed the betterment of their community first. Idealistic though it may seem, Nakamura does provide material that suggests such a motive, since these physicians were apparently adopting these “practical” approaches in order to solve problems.

The last chapter focuses on one of the Kōzuke physicians, Takahashi Keisaku 高橋圭作 (1799–1875). Keisaku was a wealthy farmer who worked part time as a local country physician while maintaining other official duties within the community. Nakamura's purpose in examining Keisaku is to demonstrate how local physicians were connected to other physicians through a series of social networks that served as a means for transmitting Western knowledge. The reason for her choice of this particular person seems to be because of his extant diary that provides a rich amount of information. Nakamura uses this diary to demonstrate that Keisaku was able to maintain strong ties with other physicians in different areas by sharing books. In addition, Keisaku also had several ties through his various village duties, poetry circles, and religious and cultural activities. All of these activities allowed him to establish a strong social network that helped facilitate the exchange of Western knowledge. More importantly, Nakamura asserts that it would have been impossible for Keisaku to consider his work as a country physician separate from his other duties and roles throughout the community (p. 170). In this chapter, then, Nakamura demonstrates that a vast social network existed and that Western knowledge was indeed a topic of interest at the local level, countering previous scholarship that suggests otherwise.

Nakamura provides a solid work that demonstrates the importance of *rangaku* outside major cities, schools, and the works of famous scholars. The one small problem with this work is that Nakamura states that she intends to examine “the social impact of Western learning at the level of everyday life” (pp. 1, 175). However, her work clearly focuses on those few physicians who were generally local elites. Nakamura states that the *Kyūkō nibutsukō* and *Hieki yōhō* were aimed at wealthy farmers and physicians, and even though she insinuates that they would pass this information on to those of the community, she still does not demonstrate how Western learning was used on an everyday level among commoners. Despite this small qualm, Nakamura delivers a solid work that makes extensive use of primary sources and secondary sources in both Japanese and English. The book is also well suited as an introduction to the study of *rangaku*. Overall, this book is a gem in the small field of English scholarship on *rangaku* and will hopefully spawn future works that further illuminate the field.

THOMAS W. BARKER  
*University of Kansas*

**Peter Pagnamenta & Momoko Williams, *Sword and Blossom: A British Officer's Enduring Love for a Japanese Woman*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006. xii + 345 pages.**

*Sword and Blossom* is a love story between a late Victorian British Army officer and a Japanese woman he met while serving in Japan; the story is based on letters primarily written by the British officer. Authors Peter Pagnamenta and Momoko Williams provide us with an excellent look at early twentieth-century life in Japan and a fascinating analysis of the British–Japanese military alliance that made this relationship possible. Following the fortunes of the British officer, Brigadier General Arthur Hart-Synnot (AHS), takes readers on a historical tour of the Second Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902); reviews life at the front in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5); involves us in tours of duty in Hong Kong, India, Burma, and Japan; and gives us a front-row seat to the horrors of World War I in France. Masa Suzuki, who met AHS at the Officer's Club in Tokyo in 1904, gives us a clear view of family life and the status of Japanese women in the late Meiji Period (1868–1912).

After the ratification of the Anglo–Japanese alliance in 1902, the British sent ten promising young officers to Tokyo to learn Japanese so that British and Japanese military officials could begin conversing with each other. AHS volunteered for the mission and soon became amazingly fluent, acquiring near-native writing and speaking ability. A genuine scholar, he de-

veloped a deep appreciation for Japanese history and culture when he met Masa, a clerical worker at the Officer's Club who was the daughter of a lower-middle class tradesman. Masa and AHS were immediately smitten and were soon living together in AHS's small, private apartment.

Because AHS was proficient in Japanese, he and Masa developed a hot-and-heavy correspondence through which the two shared their love and made fascinating observations about their lives and times that will surely fascinate today's readers. AHS provides brilliant depictions of the Russo-Japanese War and colonial postings in India, Burma, and Hong Kong. We even view English gentry life at AHS's family estate in Ireland and witness the destruction of the House by the Irish Republican Army during the Irish Civil War of 1916. Fortunately, AHS was stationed in Japan for long intervals between other assignments and was thus able to live with Masa. Their love relationship endured, despite the racial prejudice and social snobbery they experienced. They became parents of two boys (one died very young), and Masa even joined AHS in Hong Kong while he was posted there for two long tours of duty. AHS begged Masa to marry him, but her family wanted her home to care for her aged mother and feared that she would be racially stigmatized abroad. Masa's refusal, despite her intense love for AHS, was a move she would later deeply regret.

Like the *Madame Butterfly* story, this relationship was ultimately doomed. AHS always came back to his Masa, but his military duty and other assignments meant long, painful separations as well. AHS was considering retirement from the army in 1914 and a permanent life with Masa and her boys in Japan, but World War I got in their way. He was severely wounded and had both his legs amputated. He needed daily care and could not make the long boat trip to Japan. Luckily for him, he was able to marry his older British nurse who cared for him until his death in 1942. Masa was heartbroken that her lover married someone else; but they eventually reconciled, and he maintained his financial support for her up through the start of World War II.

Kiyoshi, the surviving Anglo-Japanese son of AHS and Masa, grew into a brilliant athlete and scholar-author. He even met his father in France shortly before World War II when both were living there, but Kiyoshi died a tragic death at the hands of the Russians at the end of the war. Masa died in the 1960s.

Both Masa and AHS saved each other's letters, but Masa's letters were lost during World War II. AHS's letters to Masa, however, survived, and authors Williams and Pagnamenta combed hundreds of them to provide a marvelous picture of this relationship as well as an excellent history of this critical period. The book is clearly and beautifully written. The only drawback is that, because her letters did not survive, Masa emerges as a rather hollow individual: we see her only through AHS's eyes. This book would

serve as a great supplement for a course on modern Japan or early modern Asia. After all, who can resist a love story—especially one when, reading it, so much else will be learned?

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX  
*Mary Baldwin College*

**Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period Through the Nineteenth Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. vii + 257 pages.**

Recently I received an assignment to write a series of encyclopedia articles on early Korean history. Lacking any recent books on the subject, I Googled the topic and found reference to this very new book by Michael Seth, a colleague who teaches Asian history at nearby James Madison University. I hastily ordered a copy. When it arrived a few days later, I used it as one of my key references for the encyclopedia work.

As one would expect of such a work, Seth's "concise" history—though 257 pages is not exactly "concise"—is packed with information. He begins with a short description of prehistoric Korea and essentially ends his work in the 1870s, just before Japanese and Russian intervention destroyed the unity and calm of the late Chosŏn period (1392–1910). Nine chapters give equal and ample coverage to the major periods of Korean history, including a superb twenty-six-page analysis of "United Silla." What is somewhat surprising, though, is that Seth chooses to end his work in the 1870s, giving little attention to the coming of the West and the collapse of the last dynasty. Of course, the collapse of Korea is tied much more to the modern period, but a few concluding pages (or perhaps an epilogue) on Korea up through 1910 or 1945 would give students some sense of the conditions of the Korean peninsula as it is brought into the twentieth century—historical territory with which students should already be somewhat familiar.

Seth's work is intended to be a text for undergraduate or graduate students. I teach introductory history courses on Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Korean history to undergraduates, and what I find lacking in each instance is a basic, solid text specifically written for the nineteen- or twenty-year-old student. Such a text would contain not only an intelligent yet basic introduction to a territory's history but also in-depth sections on philosophical theories (e.g., Confucianism), politics, society, and the nation's interactions with its neighbors and other foreign states.

I am happy that Seth's *Concise History* meets all of my criteria beautifully. It is written in a crisp, lively manner that is both highly professional and scholarly yet clear and interesting. He handles critical historiographi-

cal issues in a clear, understandable manner and skillfully discusses the structure of Korean society. Especially effective is his discussion of the role of the *yangban* 兩班 (literary and martial classes of Confucian scholars who were part of the ruling elite prior to 1910). Seth's discussion of the Japanese invasions of Korea under Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536/37–98) between 1592 and 1598 clarified many misconceptions I held concerning those tragic events. Finally, Seth includes a superb annotated bibliography. I plan to give copies, as a model of the form, to my senior seminar students so they can grasp the concept of annotated bibliographies.

Indeed, many other histories of Korea cover the early period, and I have tried to read many of them—but most are poorly written and just plain boring. Seth has organized a coherent, highly analytical work that is a perfect tool for both the student and intelligent reader. In short, this book belongs in every academic library. What Bruce Cumings has done for modern Korean history, Michael Seth has done for traditional Korea. We should be thankful for this book and the contributions it makes to the field.

DANIEL A. MÉTRAUX  
*Mary Baldwin College*