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From the Editors’ Desk

Back Issues and Publication Schedule:

When Early Modern Japan resumed publication last year, two issues arose that we did not fully anticipate. The first was a large number of requests for back issues. As editors we were very pleased with the level of interest in EMJ that these requests revealed. At the moment, however, we have very few copies of back issues left. Other than file copies, most are completely gone. To ameliorate this situation, we plan to place earlier issues of Oboegaki (EMJ’s predecessor) and EMJ on our web site in the near future. Please check: http://emjnet.history.ohio-state.edu/.

On a different note, we found that a number of subscribers (especially libraries) were confused by our use of a new volume number. Where, they wondered, was Volume VI, Number 2? The answer was that VI:2 was never published. We also made a decision that for the moment, we would publish only one issue per year, but that all subscribers would continue to get two issues for their standard subscription. However, in addition to this misunderstanding, we found that our record-keeping software was also geared to subscriptions based on a two-issue volume. Consequently, in order to minimize our potential confusion over when subscriptions expire, we have numbered our last issue Volume VII:2 and this issue Volume VIII:1.

The editors would very much like to publish on a semi-annual basis. That, however, depends on the volume of suitable material that is submitted to us. EMJ provides a flexible forum in which to publish a variety of professionally oriented material that goes beyond standard scholarly articles and book reviews. Two examples appear in this issue: The review of early modern Japanese women’s history that begins in the next column, and the commentary on the NHK historical drama of the Akō rōnin. We encourage readers to submit manuscripts on current developments in the field in Japan, teaching and pedagogy, notices of books of interest, exhibitions and other fare that does not typically fall within the scope of other professional journals in the field. Editors’ e-mail and postal address are noted on the inside of the front cover of the journal.

The Study of Women in Early Modern Japan: An Introduction with Bibliography

Anne Walthall

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As a field, the English-language study of women in Japanese history is barely ten years old. This despite early attempts to trace the history of women in Japan, one by Mary R. Beard, The Force of Women in Japanese History (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1953) that includes a chapter on the Tokugawa period (pp. 94-140) and the other by Joyce Ackroyd, “Women in Feudal Japan” in Translations of the Asiatic Society of Japan 3rd series vol. 7 (1959). Following a hiatus of over twenty years, a few books and articles began to appear, heralded by Edwin McClellan, Woman in the Crested Kimono: The Life of Shibue Io and Her Family Drawn from Mori Ogai’s ‘Shibue Chusai’ (Yale University Press, 1985) and two special editions of the Journal of Family History in 1983 and 1986 containing articles on family composition drawn largely from demographic research. The first books on nineteenth century women such as A Daughter of the Samurai by Etsu Inagaki Sugi- moto (Doubleday Doran and Company, 1934) and Facing Two Ways: The Story of My Life by Baroness Shidzue Ishimoto (Stanford University Press, 1984) dealt almost entirely with life in the Meiji period. In these cases the focus was on individual women and the vicissitudes they had to overcome.

The 1990s has seen women's history go in a number of directions. Drawing on the work of Japanese scholars, several historians have suggested that relations between family members in peasant households showed a strong degree of interdependence between husband and wife and considerable flexibility in assigning gender roles. (For examples in English from the Japanese side, see Ueno Chizuko, “Genesis of the Urban Housewife,” Japan Quarterly (April-June 1987): 130-142 and Fumie Kumagai, “Modernization
and the Family in Japan” Journal of Social History 11.4 (1986):371-382.) One leader in the field, Laurel Cornell, published “Peasant Women and Divorce in Preindustrial Japan” in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 15.4 (1990): 710-732 that demonstrated how early modern patterns of divorce differed from their modern counterparts. On the other hand, Kate Wildman Nakai’s translation of Women of Mito reminds us that samurai household continued to practice sex segregation. In more recent years, other scholars have gone beyond issues of family composition to examine women writers and painters, medical practices, and sexuality. One recent trend has been the appearance of more work by Japanese scholars translated into English.

The following list is as comprehensive as possible, although I have omitted articles dealing with household size, household composition and the debate over infanticide. If I have inadvertently overlooked any articles, please inform me and the Early Modern Japan listserve. This is a field in which much of the most interesting recent work has been presented as conference papers rather than appearing in print. I urge my colleagues to remedy this situation at the same time reminding readers that the backlog of unpublished work makes any attempt to survey the field outdated as soon as it appears.

Bibliography


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**The End of History? Sunday Night on NHK**

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When I was asked to write a short piece about the reaction of people within my environment here at Kobe University to the year-long *rekishi taiga dorama* 歴史大河ドラマ, as NHK's Sunday night history extravaganza is known, I met with unexpected difficulties. Very few of the people I come into contact with have actually seen it.

This took me by surprise. After all, it is Japan National Television's (NHK) largest and most expensive production, running a full year every Sunday night at peak viewing time. The title and theme were well publicized in advance, and so were the actors selected for the various roles. The location for shooting frequently turns into a highly popular tourist site. When the subject was Nobunaga some years back, the 500,000th tourist to visit the set made the evening news. But the massive stone walls that Nobunaga erected to support the splendor of Azuchi Castle at Lake Biwa were virtually deserted when I visited them around that time. And no doubt this will remain so, unless those who want to erect a replica of the
much-decorated castle on what is left of the site have their way.

This year’s theme is the perennial favorite, the Forty-seven rōnin 浪人, or Akō gishi 赤穂義士, a story known to every child in Japan and often retold under the title of Chūshingura 忠臣蔵 in countless versions from dating from soon after the incident to the present time. (Even the all-female Takarazuka revue had a go at it some years back.)

Akō castle on the Inland Sea near Himeji, the home of the loyal retainers who sacrificed their lives to revenge their lord, was destroyed after the Meiji Restoration. Although the site owed part of its layout to the samurai-philosopher Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行, and despite its significance as the place where the rōnin absorbed Sokō’s teachings from which their loyal conduct grew, it was not thought worth preserving. What was left of the fortifications of this hira jō 平城, or castle built on flat ground, became the site for a new public school.

The leader of the rōnin, Ōishi Kuranosuke 大石内蔵助, and his followers, however, were not forgotten. In Meiji 30 (1897 - but some pamphlets have 1912) a shrine to Kuranosuke and his men was built within the outer walls of the castle, near the small wooden house and garden that purportedly was Kuranosuke’s home. New, larger – than - life-size stone figures of the rōnin – somehow reminiscent of the stone figures lining the road to imperial Chinese tombs – mark the approach from the parking lot to the sanctuary. The scene is made even more incongruous by stalls selling trinkets and second-hand goods, ranging from clothing to kitchenware, within the temple compound.

Erecting the shrine entailed further destruction of the original castle site, but eventually reconstruction of the main gates and other parts of the castle began, a process that continues today. Thus, by carefully limiting the angle of the camera, one of the main gates could be used in the NHK production to shoot the arrival of the young daimyo Asano Naganori 浅野長矩, as he first arrived from Edo after he inherited the fief.

The director also decided to shoot Naganori’s approach to the domain on location. There is, however, the problem that Banshū Akō 播州赤穂, as the town is generally referred to, has a good amount of industry, and the smoke from the tall chimneys is visible from a distance. But early Akō was well known for the baking of salt, and the process has been reconstructed in an open-air museum some distance away along the shore. Thus there was a good reason for the smoke in the distance as Naganori was heading for his castle, and, to make the point, the director has him carefully inspecting the smoking salt-burning huts, even before entering his castle after the long 640 km journey from Edo.

Not surprisingly the town of Banshū Akō is doing its best to draw maximum profit from the TV series. There were stalls within the outer castle grounds selling everything from the locally produced salt, fast food, pottery and the inevitable T-shirts, and postage stamps with the image of the modern-day NHK Ōishi Kuranosuke. The greatest attraction, however, was a large, multi-domed tent, erected with the assistance of NHK, whose contents one was able to explore at the cost of 700 Yen. It featured, among other things, a partial reconstruction of Edo Castle’s famous maisu no rōka 松の廊下, the gold-screened corridor where Asano Naganori drew his sword and wounded Kira Yoshinaka 吉良義央, an action which earned him the death sentence, and in turn motivated his loyal retainers to kill Kira. From time to time the painted golden fusuma 金襴 would draw apart to reveal on a film screen the dramatic action that took place at this location. A fair amount of space was also allotted to the final killing of Kira in what the pamphlet terms the kuraimakkusu kōna クライマックスコーナー. Again, the shōji of Kira’s snow-covered villa opens to reveal the bloody action on a large film screen. As the exhibit comes complete with its own home page I need say no more. (See URL: http://www2.memenet.or.jp/~akogishi/genroku/0-101.html).

With all this publicity, why then is it so hard to find people who watch the NHK Sunday history drama? It is obviously the fault of my environment. As one of my colleagues put it succinctly: “Educated people (interi インテリー) don’t watch that sort of thing.” But someone else conceded: “Last year’s drama on Tokugawa Yoshi-
nobu, the last shogun, was on an interesting topic, because relatively little is known about his person and his plans for reform of the country. But then they had the story told by a middle-aged woman, and it ended up with the silly story of that woman and her husband.” Others chimed in: “Yes, whenever that came on, I switched it off.” There was agreement that in an effort to get high ratings, NHK had sacrificed the original quality of its history productions. Clearly the popularity of the actors (“much too young” someone commented) was of greatest importance not historical authenticity, and it was also felt necessary that something “exciting” happened in every weekly episode. Secure in the company of his all-male colleagues (except for myself), one added with obvious disdain: “It’s all just made for women …” But even the wives of my colleagues don’t seem to watch the series (according to their husbands), mainly, it appears, since a much more interesting program on new exhibitions is being screened on Educational TV at the same time.

Not being an expert on the fifteenth shogun, Yoshinobu, and not having watched every episode, I would not like to comment on the historical authenticity of the performance. However, I did notice that Perry on his arrival in Japan in 1853 was reading the 1906 edition of Engelbert Kaempfer’s *History of Japan*. Well, I guess they should at least be given marks for trying …

If criticisms about the inclusion of fictional material and an undue amount of “popularization” are voiced about last year’s production on Tokugawa Yoshinobu, they are all the more pertinent to this year’s series on the 47 rōnin. The difference between the two begins with the credits. In the Yoshinobu production these were shown against a backdrop of early photos of Japan, or realistically produced scenes of the period. In the case of the rōnin series there are instead cartoon images of strutting peacocks, and flowers with blooms unfolding and the miniaturized figures of the rōnin dancing on their petals. (Yes, I am sorry, this is not a misprint.)

The story of the loyal samurai contains good material for a dramatic performance of several hours, but hardly enough for the fifty-plus episodes of the year-long NHK drama. Hence the NHK series begins with Tsunayoshi’s succession as the fifth Tokugawa shogun, over two decades before the final killing of Kira and the death of the rōnin. The popular image of the debauched “Dog Shogun”, moreover, provides plenty of dramatic material.

On the orders of his father, Tsunayoshi was educated not as a samurai but as a scholar, and was the first, and perhaps the only Tokugawa shogun who had some genuine interest in scholarly pursuits. Yet in the NHK series Tsunayoshi is portrayed as a raving madman, whose contorted features show an uncanny resemblance to that of the ferocious guardian kings at the entrance of temples. Whether angry or in deep sorrow over the death of his only son, Tsunayoshi’s behavior is violent, with his closed fan serving as his weapon physically attacking those who are in his presence. Also the other characters are badly overdrawn, with the “goodies” and “badies” readily identifiable. There is here no effort at historical authenticity: the purpose is obviously simply to entertain.

A producer shooting a prewar TV series once explained to me: it really does not matter what people wore at the time. What we need to use is clothing and props that immediately identify this as prewar scene in the viewer’s mind. Similarly the NHK series seems to be guided by what is popularly known about the period, as well as the viewer’s predilection for romance and violence, rather than any historical research.

With so little feedback on the topic from my colleagues, I tried my students. But, alas, this was even less successful. They did not even know that such a series was being shown. “Young people don’t watch NHK,” someone explained to me. I also made the startling discovery that out of some twenty students only one had heard of Kurosawa, and none of the film “Rashōmon”.

I must admit that, being under pressure of time, I gave up at that point. There are obviously people watching the program (someone mentioned that it is very popular in Hawaii), but certainly few with a primary interest in history rather than popular entertainment.

I would like to end this with another observation on the popularity of Japanese history – or rather the lack of it – in today’s Japan.

When I was first asked to teach Japanese history to Japanese students I was looking forward to being able to pitch my lectures at a fairly high
level. After all, students had studied the subject for years at school, and the Japanese History section of most university entrance exams looks pretty daunting. I was surprised, however, to find that basic knowledge – such as the implications of the bakufu’s sakoku policy - were lacking. While all students study Japanese history in primary and middle school, it becomes an elective subject during the last three years at high school. University entrance exams generally permit a choice between World History and Japanese History, and with many believing that “kokusaika” 国際化 holds the key to Japan’s future, students often opt for the former. The result is that they might know the date of the French Revolution, but not that of the Meiji Restoration. But even those who do study Japanese History in their three years of high school often lack fundamental knowledge about the broader issues. The problem here is that at high school history is studied purely for the purpose of passing university entrance exams. Since these exams are marked by computer, questions must be of the “multiple choice” type, a format which favors examining knowledge of facts and figures, but makes it difficult to test the understanding of broader issues. For those with enough dedication, NHK educational television has some excellent programs that could fill the gap, but, like x-rated movies, these are usually shown after 11 p.m., and I am yet to meet someone who shares my enthusiasm for them. Maybe it requires the shock of seeing foreigners being more enthusiastic about Japanese history than the Japanese themselves, – as I believe was once the case with wood block prints – until the subject becomes popular again as a serious discipline of study, rather than the basis for soap opera plots of the NHK Forty-seven rōnin variety.

Book Reviews  書評


Perhaps the most arresting visual image in Constantine Vaporis’s detailed study of the early modern Japanese network of travel and transport is Felix Beato’s photograph of the Tōkaidō near Kanagawa from the 1860s.¹ This picture captures a wide, tree-lined, dirt road that could be mistaken for the path leading to a shrine or temple anywhere in Japan today, if not for the presence of nearly a dozen travelers and vendors in various postures of rest or mobility, and a lone samurai staring directly into the camera. The photograph is particularly powerful because of the juxtaposition of temporalities it represents: a scene from Japan’s pre-modern age is captured using a technology that is intimately associated with the mechanical reproduction of modernity. Another of Beato’s photographs is used to open the Edo-Tokyo Museum’s catalog on the system of alternate attendance, again bringing the modern Western lens to bear on the fading landscape of Tokugawa authority. This image, "Panorama of Yeddo from Otagayama [sic.],” 愛宕山 135-degree view of the tiled Edo rooftops, dotted by trees, fire watchtowers, and storehouses, but above all dominated by the long walls of the daimyō yashiki 大名屋敷. The photograph captures with mechanical accuracy a scene that no longer exists, emphasized by the diagram below the image that explicates Edo buildings in the picture as well as the location of contemporary landmarks: we learn that the Tamura family’s upper yashiki for example, was located near the location of the current JR Shimbashi Station. Anyone who has visited Shimbashi station, however, knows the landscape in the

knows the landscape in the photograph has completely disappeared, which only increases the power of the image as a record of an age, and a place, otherwise confined to descriptions in history books.

As the Edo-Tokyo Museum catalogue under review demonstrates, however, there is a wealth of visual and material source material for the study of the system of alternate attendance that has heretofore been largely ignored by historians. The catalogue, published to accompany an exhibition held at the Edo-Tokyo Museum between February 11 and March 23, 1997, looks at the relationship between the system of alternate attendance and the growth of the city of Edo, with particular focus on the daimyō who moved back and forth between the city and their home domains via the network of early modern highways. The book is rich in maps, photographs, paintings, documents, and models. The 170 pages of images and text are organized around fourteen brief articles in English and Japanese, supplemented by seven longer articles in Japanese, and a range of charts, graphs, and chronologies. Though containing little in the way of groundbreaking research, the catalogue brings together a wide variety of sources to illuminate a period and place that is, despite the numerous monographs and articles devoted to its contours, exceedingly difficult to visualize in all its complexity. The genre of the museum catalogue does not fit into one of the standard categories of historical monographs or reference books, but works such as the volume under review often contain valuable sources and important research that is otherwise not easily available.

The first section of the catalogue, "Sankin kōtai se to kyodai toshi Edo 参勤交代制と巨大都市江戸 [The system of alternate attendance and the Edo megalopolis]," outlines the basic details of the establishment of the system in 1635, the resulting construction of various mansions by the approximately three-hundred daimyō families who made the city their sometime residence, and precedents for this system in the administrative castle towns of the late sixteenth century. One of the most useful entries in this section is a large color reproduction of the Buke shohatto 武家諸法度 [Laws for the military houses] from 1635, next to a transcription of the text and a brief explanation. The original is clearly written, and would make an ideal introductory text for a graduate student seminar on early modern history, or could be shown as a slide in a discussion of extant documents and bakufu proclamations. Another short document that is reproduced in both original and transcribed form is the 1721 Ninzu kitei hōrei 人数規定法令 [Ordinance restricting the number of retainers in processions], an ideal text for illustrating changing bakufu policies vis a vis the domains, as well as an accessible source for the study of the language of central authority in the eighteenth century.

Travel to and from Edo was of course the center of the system of alternate attendance, and the second section, "Daimyō gyōretsu to kaidō 大名行列と街道 [Daimyō processions and highways]," deals with the structure of these large processions of warriors and attendants, as well as the routes used and costs incurred. The procession itself is the subject of several scrolls and screens reproduced in the catalogue, including a four-page, fold-out representation of the procession of Matsudaira Naritaka on his return to the Tsuyama domain from Edo. Printed directly below the painting is a diagram detailing every figure portrayed in the original, indicating titles and functions. Another scroll provides similar information for a Morioka domain procession with 650 members. A map supplements this scroll, indicating the route taken from Morioka, post stations encountered, and distance traveled each
day. The pages that follow are filled with photographs of extant examples of procession regalia, from lance-heads, arrows, scabbards, and sheaves, to mudguards, saddles, and equipment boxes. This section also reproduces a range of documents and other information to address the ways in which the system of alternate attendance served to control the daimyō both through forced expenditure on travel, and through elaborate rituals of attendance, gift-giving, and leave-taking.

Another major daimyō expenditure was the maintenance of multiple residences in Edo, a subject addressed in the catalogue’s third section, “Edo no daimyō yashiki [Daimyō residences in Edo].” Here maps, models, and souvenir doroe are used to illustrate the differences between upper residences, located closer to Edo Castle to facilitate interactions with the bakufu and shogun, and the more spacious middle and lower residences located farther out from the center. In an interesting technique employed several times throughout the catalogue, doroe representations of daimyō residences are displayed next to recent photographs of the same locations, from roughly the same perspective. The contrast created by this display could potentially be a good resource for the study of the transformation from Edo to Tokyo, and an instinctively interesting visual comparison for students with little background in the changing landscape of early modern and modern Japan.

Another topic addressed in this section is the phenomenon of daimyō purchases of land from peasants to supplement their bakufu-granted holdings, a system implemented in 1685, banned in 1717, and reinstated in 1785. These residences and refuges, known as kakae yashiki, were built in villages outside of the original boundary of Edo city, and contributed, the catalogue argues, to a drastic expansion of the Edo suburbs. Numerous maps, paintings, and documents are used to illustrate this, including a chart of the distribution of kakae yashiki throughout surrounding communities. Paintings and photographs are again used to great effect to illustrate the lavish gardens and tea houses that dominated residences both in and outside of Edo.

The fourth section, “Edo no tsutome to kurashi [Working and living in Edo],” focuses on the duties of daimyō and their various functionaries in Edo, jobs ranging from providing security for Edo Castle to involvement with fire prevention. A range of texts and maps documenting the duties of the Komuro domain daimyō are displayed, including a reference book for the operation of a guardhouse, and various plans for gate duty. A picture scroll illustrates a procession of the Yonezawa daimyō and his retinue in full fire-fighting regalia. A series of picture scrolls is also used to show family retainers at work and play in their Edo residences, particularly the jōfu, retainers who stayed in Edo maintaining and managing the daimyō yashiki while the lord had returned to the domain. These paintings are important for their various portrayals of activities from daily life, and their intimate “inside look” at the lives of one sector of Edo citizens. In one image a doctor and an acquaintance eat, drink, and gesture in the midst of a lively discussion; another shows a tea gathering with four participants. Chess games, drinking parties, poetry exchanges, and solitary study are also shown.

Perhaps the most interesting topic addressed in this section is that of the rusui, the domain retainers who resided in Edo, negotiated with the bakufu, and gathered information. The catalogue reports that these diplomatic officers were granted powers above and beyond their status as mid-level warriors, such as the right to move freely in and out of resi-
dences, and to obtain outside lodging. More importantly, they formed associations that grew increasingly powerful as the period progressed, organizations that were to some extent outside the boundaries of daimyō and bakufu authority. Even from the brief review of rusui-related materials presented in the catalogue, it seemed to me that this topic is a dissertation waiting to happen. Sections from a variety of sources from the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries are reproduced, ranging from satirical political texts written with rusui-supplied information, to diaries and activity logs. A study of the rusui and the particular intersection of domain and national politics they represent, not to mention the larger landscape of the increasingly literate urban society they inhabited, would be a major contribution to the field.

The catalogue's fifth section, "Edo kara Tōkyō e[From Edo to Tokyo]," briefly considers the impact of the end of the system of alternate attendance on the city of Edo, and the subsequent transformation of Edo into the capital city Tokyo. Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa photographs of daimyō residences appropriated for government administration are displayed, as are prints and photographs showing the remains of Edo extant in Tokyo today. This section is followed by two essays, one of which is an interesting summary of the system of alternate attendance by Yamamoto Hirobumi 山本博文, "Sankin kōtai no jittai to igi 参勤交代の実態と意義 [The reality and significance of the system of alternate attendance]." Yamamoto argues that though it is often said that the system of alternate attendance served to squeeze the daimyō financially into submission to Tokugawa authority, this was not the reason the system was established. Rather, it served the purpose of ritually enforcing the allegiance of regional rulers to the bakufu. Yamamoto also argues that because daimyō were born and raised in Edo, they felt an intimate connection to the city that could not be replaced by their later activities in the domains that were nominally their real homes.

This raises one of the problems with the catalogue, the fact that the authors center entirely on the movement towards Edo with little attention to the movement away from it. The unique role of the city as a center for the consumption of goods and resources from all corners of the nation is addressed, but the spread of culture, technology, and information back to the domains, and the subsequent adaptations and reinventions that took place at the local level, are lost under the shadow of "the Edo megalopolis." It is perhaps unfair to expect a single catalogue to address the whole range of affects and effects of a system as complex as the system of alternate attendance, particularly from a museum that explicitly focuses on the Edo-Tokyo phenomenon. But it seems increasingly clear that to understand the makeup of Edo and its diverse inhabitants, we must also examine the multidirectional links with domain capitals, cities such as Osaka and Kyoto, and the defining peripheries of the early modern state, Ezo and Ryūkyū.

In the end, however, it is more effective to evaluate this collaborative work for what it is than to criticize it for the many things it is not. The book efficiently approaches a major topic -- the relationship between the growth of Edo and the system of alternate attendance -- and provides an impressive collection of primary texts, visual sources, and material objects to illustrate several basic but important points in the history of early modern Japan. The catalogue has great potential as a pedagogical resource, providing high-quality reproductions of maps, charts, scrolls, photographs, and other information not easily available elsewhere in one volume. The mix of various media also provides an opportunity for teachers and researchers of
history to experiment with reading and interpreting material and visual sources in addition to the documentary sources that are considered the heart of the historical enterprise. The same care must be exercised in reading objects as is required in reading a text, of course, and it is important to avoid fetishizing the various relics of the past portrayed in this book's pages as more honest or authentic simply because they are old. These precautions aside, this catalogue, along with numerous other recent museum publications in Japanese history and culture, should be a standard tool in the research and pedagogical arsenal of any scholar of early modern Japan.

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The cover drawing of Esenbel's Even the Gods Rebel depicting a Japanese farmer carrying a spear and clad in traditional protest garb. For many readers, the drawing will evoke the image of a desperate peasant on the verge of a vengeful, destructive act against those who have engineered his exploitation. Indeed, the uprising described by Esenbel in this book—the 1871 Nakano uprising—was intensely violent and destructive: in addition to razing over five hundred residences and commercial establishments in the town of Nakano, bands of villagers set fire to the prefectoral office compound and brutally murdered two government officials. Government reprisals were also harsh: over a hundred protestors were imprisoned or exiled, and twenty-eight were executed. Culling information from confessions and other first-hand accounts, Esenbel reconstructs the narrative of this uprising and recaptures the sense of drama, expectation, anger, and betrayal that surrounded it.

However, Esenbel's account of the uprising itself comprises only about one-fourth of the book. The remainder is devoted to a detailed description of Takaino, the village that led the uprising. In particular, Esenbel focuses on the integration of Takaino into the commercial market, exploring the impact of that integration upon the economic and political life of the village during the century preceding the 1871 uprising. And for much of that period, Takaino was at peace. In fact, the pervasive image of the Takaino villager in Esenbel's book is not that of a defiant, spear-toting rebel, but a calculating, prosperous farmer with a hoe in one hand, an abacus in the other, and a considerable wad of cash in his pocket. While Esenbel's narrative of the uprising is gripping, it is this "background" discussion of commercial development in Takaino that provides the forum and the evidence for Esenbel's main arguments, and enables her to connect the details of the uprising to the larger debates in the historiography of Tokugawa and Meiji Japan.

The first such debate concerns the impact of the commercial market upon the Japanese farm household and village community. Esenbel takes issue with scholars who see this impact in terms of impoverishment and social dissolution. Employing the argument of Samuel Popkin (and also echoing the scholarship of Susan Hanley and Kozo Yamamura on Tokugawa economic development), Esenbel depicts Takaino villagers as "rational peasants" who freely sought out the opportunities provided by the commercial market in search of surpluses not available in a subsistence economy. She finds evidence of certain trends often cited as proof of rural immiseration—for example, high rates of tenancy and the decreasing size of landholdings by the majority of villagers. However, she argues that in Takaino, these
trends simply reflect the increasing numbers of villagers who were able to earn income from by-employment production or skilled labor in a commercial economy. Furthermore, Esenbel maintains that this involvement of Takaino villagers in the commercial market did not result in the village's dissolution, countering the common assumption that late-Tokugawa rural conflict signified the breakdown of rural communities along class lines. Family, lineage, neighborhood, and village ties remained powerful in Takaino, and actually served as the organizing principles for conflict. In fact, Esenbel contends that community solidarity in Takaino had, if anything, been strengthened in late Tokugawa, due to the fact that small landholder/tenants and nouveau riche landlords were able to wrestle control of village governance from traditional elite families of samurai descent. This political coalition of class enemies, bound together against a common foe, reorganized village government along more inclusive, more democratic lines, thus warding off some of the class conflict that erupted in other areas of Japan.

But if household incomes were growing and community structures remained intact, why did the villagers of Takaino rebel? Esenbel answers this question by placing episodes of conflict in the context of a larger, continuous process in which Takaino residents negotiated with authorities to maintain favorable tax conditions. Violent uprisings were merely a last-ditch maneuver in this negotiation, employed only when other strategies failed to produce results. Usually, such measures were not necessary. Esenbel argues that peasants successfully "nibbled" away (in James Scott's words) at harsh tax conditions, winning significant concessions from local government on tax conversion rates, payment schedules, and other factors critical to the calculation of the overall tax burden. Thus Esenbel rejects the concept of "exploitation" when discussing Tokugawa rural society, attacking another pillar in what she calls the "impoverishment/exploitation/social dissolution" model of rural conflict. Not only does the word disguise the fact that the surpluses of farm families were, according to Esenbel, actually increasing, but it also misrepresents the nature of the Tokugawa political order, which was highly decentralized, allowing commoners a great deal of agency in manipulating the system to their own advantage. Villagers were not simply victims of policy, Esenbel argues, but actively contributed to its formation and revision. Furthermore, Esenbel maintains that villagers' ability to influence the conditions of rule only increased during the political chaos of the Bakumatsu period.

However, soon after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the new government began to take steps not only to increase villagers' tax burden, but also to tighten central control over local taxation. These steps threatened to limit the ability of Takaino villagers to maneuver for more favorable tax conditions. Takaino villagers responded with rebellion, a strategy that had met with great success in the Tokugawa period. What they did not realize, however, was that the Meiji government no longer recognized the legitimacy of this tactic, and had no intention of participating in any sort of negotiation with villagers over tax conditions. The loose and flexible "arrangement" (in Esenbel's terms) that villagers had enjoyed was over, thus instantly changing the meaning of their rebellion and turning them into enemies of the state. Esenbel repeatedly stresses, however, that the protestors had no revolutionary aims. They made no demands for rights or privileges they had not already possessed under the Tokugawa order: they wanted only to return to previous tax arrangements. Esenbel characterizes the uprising as a "reactive conflict," using Charles Tilly's term to describe a defensive
protest against new incursions by the modern state. Takaino villagers' rising expectations, created by years of growing surpluses from the commercial market and by peasants' increasing leverage in their negotiation with authorities over local tax conditions, met up against the aims of a central government that was determined to standardize local tax conditions to its own advantage.

Scholars of peasant protest will undoubtedly debate some of Esenbel's conclusions. In particular, some will see her portrait of the late-Tokugawa peasant household economy as too rosy, despite her attempt to dispel such notions in her concluding chapter (p. 257). Indeed, regardless of one's position in the "growth vs. immiseration" debate, any discussion of the benefits of participation in the commercial market should also include a clear recognition of the new anxieties produced by the reliance of farm households upon that market. Such a recognition is especially important in an analysis of late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji rural uprisings, which were informed so deeply by a sense of unprecedented crisis and vulnerability. On the other hand, these factors have already been well-documented by scholars of rural protest, so one cannot fault Esenbel for downplaying them in order to emphasize less-explored factors—such as rising incomes and family and community networks—that also influenced some late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji uprisings.

Scholars might also take issue with Esenbel's estimation of the extent of villagers' negotiating power within the Tokugawa political order. She discusses this negotiation in terms of mutual compromise between government and village society, but in Esenbel's account it seems as if the government is doing all the compromising. Though perhaps overstated, her point is a crucial one: governments cannot simply dream up systems of domination and exploitation with only their own maximum possible benefit in mind. Or rather, governments can dream up such systems, but their implementation always involves some degree of compromise with local practices and interests. Esenbel demonstrates convincingly that such a compromise did occur between villagers and government, thus allowing villagers to have a voice in the ongoing process of creating tax policy. Of course, it was the ruling authorities who determined the boundaries of any negotiation—for example, they decided which issues were negotiable, and also identified the legitimate techniques of negotiation. Furthermore, as Herman Ooms has argued, Tokugawa villagers' willingness to press for their interests within those boundaries often worked to encourage the legitimation of the overall structure of status inequality. Nevertheless, given the obstacles to successful collective pressure by Tokugawa villagers, we should perhaps marvel at the effectiveness of popular opposition. In fact, while Esenbel maintains that this dynamic of negotiation ended when the Meiji state consolidated its rule—she notes sadly that the new state's uncompromising stance toward the 1871 Nakano uprising signified the end of any sort of reciprocal arrangement—I would argue that the negotiation between villagers and the state continued throughout the Meiji period. The terms of the negotiation had changed radically, but local society nevertheless continued to influence the direction of state policy and the overall process of state formation.

Esenbel's account of the "failure" of the Nakano uprising and the end of the feudal arrangement is significant, for it highlights a distinction between her perspective on the Meiji Restoration and that of the dominant strain of postwar scholarship influenced by modernization theory. In many ways, Esenbel's book echoes the major themes of modernization theory, for it adopts a positive view of the impact of the
commercial market on Tokugawa village society, pointing to growing surpluses, the maintenance of communal harmony, and a rising standard of living. Most modernizationists argue that these "early modern" developments, in turn, made possible a rapid yet consensual process of change in the Meiji period: in other words, Japan's dramatic transformation during the Meiji period resulted from a cooperative relationship between a modernization-minded government and an already-modernizing populace. Esenbel, in contrast, identifies both a source of fundamental discontinuity between Tokugawa and Meiji and a major point of conflict between the Meiji state and the Japanese people. This source of discontinuity and conflict was the entirely new relationship between state and society enforced by the Meiji government. In Esenbel's narrative, the flexible Tokugawa order, which allowed peasants to influence local administration, stands in contrast to the intrusive, uncompromising Meiji state that suppressed the Nakano uprising. In this sense, her portrayal of the Tokugawa-Meiji transition resembles the tragic narrative of loss and betrayal one often finds in the work of Marxian or "People's History" (minshūshi) historians, except that she rejects the notion of the Restoration as a failed or betrayed revolution. Rather, the tragedy in Esenbel's narrative is the passing of the Tokugawa order and its systemic values of flexibility, local agency, and compromise: Esenbel repeatedly uses the term "feudal" (perhaps too unproblematically) to describe the Tokugawa period, but the term's connotation is quite positive. Esenbel does not discuss the Tokugawa-Meiji transition in such explicitly positive or negative terms; nevertheless, the implicit narrative behind her analysis is worth pointing out, if only because it represents an unusual mixture of elements from very different historiographical traditions.

If there is a flaw in this book, it is Esenbel's tendency to overstate her revisionism. Although her perspective on rural uprisings is quite similar to that of James White, her book does contain a healthy dose of original and provocative ideas. However, her desire to set up her own argument in categorical opposition to what she calls "mainstream scholarship" sometimes prevents her from engaging the ideas of individual scholars in a more meaningful way. For instance, while she accurately identifies the "exploitation/impoverishment/dissolution" model used by many Marxian scholars to analyze rural conflict, she lumps the work of William Kelly, Stephen Vlastos, and Anne Walthall into this category without recognizing the important ways in which these scholars depart from this model. These scholars would also be surprised, I'm sure, to be grouped (not explicitly, but de facto) with "mainstream scholarship" that strips peasants of agency by reducing their actions to larger structures. But these shortcomings in Esenbel's discussion of the existing literature on rural conflict do not substantially detract from her own research, which is solid and careful. Her case study of Takaino village and the Nakano uprising provides us with valuable insights into the critical issue of the commercialization of the household economy and its relationship to rural uprisings.

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In this work, Marleen Kassel discusses Hirose Tansō, who established the Kangien academy in Hita, Kyushu, in 1817. In the course of his career at Kangien, Tansō taught some 3,000 students,
one third of which were Buddhist clergy (among whom were two nuns, his only female students). The Buddhist component of this school is not insignificant because a tight monastic regimen of communal living regulated the life of the students within and outside its precincts with a daily schedule (suspended one holiday a month) starting at 6:00AM and consisting mainly of six hours lecture and discussion time, three or four hours of tests and three hours of study. A complicated point system of the students' scholastic progress and a close monitoring of their behavior through, among other things, a numerical record keeping of one's moral performance, entered daily in ledgers of merit and tallied monthly, and regular evaluations of one's spiritual profile capped this system. Students were boarded, commuted or passed through for brief periods of time, about fifty percent staying less than three years and very few completing all the levels of instruction.

Such information, which the author provides in Chapter Six, constitutes the most interesting part of this book. And yet, not much if anything is new -- except some mistakes, as we shall see -- for anyone who has read Richard Rubinger's forty-page chapter devoted to Kangien, its institutional setup, curriculum, rules and regulations and student body in his Private Academies of Tokugawa Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). A brief concluding chapter attempts to positively assess the academy's legacy in terms of contributions to Japan's modernization. The argument, or, since declarations replace arguments proper, the thesis is that this academy was, on the one hand, typical of the kind of thought and educational policy that fed into Meiji developments, but, on the other hand, at the same time quite exceptional: its student body was larger than most other private academies, it had an egalitarian admission policy but was merit-based in its educational structure.

Kassel singles out three men whom Japanese historians have identified as having been historically significant products of the academy. The first is Takano Chōei, who, however, learned his main trade in Nagasaki and built a medical career in Edo. The second is Omura Masujirō, a scholar of Dutch Learning, who opened his own military academy in Edo and became military advisor to Chōshū. Given these two men's careers, one should not be surprised at Kassel's evaluation of Chōei, which certainly applies as well to Masujirō, that "There is no evidence that his tenure at Kangien had any particular lasting influence on him" (p. 147). The third figure, Chō Sanshū, made it into Meiji and drafted a good part of the Fundamental Code of Education (Gakusei) of 1872, served in the Ministry of Education, and, as imperial tutor, molded emperor Taishō's mind.

Any attempt to make special claims for a specific Kangien impact on Meiji developments must fail and be watered down to general statements about the values of hard work, frugality, discipline and the like. Kassel takes that direction after futile attempts at shoring up the record of historical influence and winds up qualifying, but only mildly, her final evaluation of Tansō's legacy, which "In the end ... served both to ease and to hinder Japan's transition to modernity" (p. 152).

It is also important to know that neither of the three men Japanese historians have singled out to argue Kangien's importance were in any way judged by Tansō to be among his favorite students. In addition, Kassel makes surprising disclaimers when she states without much ado about Tansō's achievements that "The discrepancy that exists between his theory and practice is not really significant in the overall scheme of things" (p. 118) or, on the regular written character and academic evaluation, that "This system . . . is an interesting idea, but was never actually practiced" (120).

Kassel's avowed aim in writing this book is to be found elsewhere. She states that it "is limited to Tansō's philosophical and practical goals" (p. 6). Part III of the book serves this purpose well. Here the reader will find thirty-six pages of translations, that include Section 5 on the educational system of Tansō's 1840 work on statecraft, Ugen (Roundabout Words), and his 1829 Yakugen (Essential Teachings) whereby one can have direct access to a brief selection of Tansō's writings on philosophy and education through a well-executed translation. Part I is devoted to presenting three "settings" (historical, educational and intellectual) for understanding Tansō and his work. The Historical Setting "introduces Tansō as the scion of an important merchant family that functioned also as the official money lender to the Tokugawa intendant in charge of Tokugawa
territories in Kyushu -- Rubinger has already provided all the details. It includes a brief summary of Ugen, Tansō's essay on statecraft that runs through the usual list of ills of the time. In "The Education Setting" Kassel provides a general introduction of some aspects of private academies in the Tokugawa period and traces the development of the Kangien academy; again overly familiar territory. These are rather short chapters, as are those of Part II, which introduces Tansō's philosophy centered on a reverence for Heaven, which, as far as I can judge, is an original contribution, and his educational system.

"The Intellectual Setting," constituting about one third of the book, is by far the longest chapter. Kassel here states that "Describing just what Neo-Confucian [sic] is, and in what ways Hirose Tansō was an actor on the Neo-Confucian stage, is the task at hand" (p. 51). Does the author succeed better at this task than in her strained assessment of Tansō's legacy?

Kassel rushes us through a considerably extended line of "orthodox" Neo-Confucians in Japan and China that runs from Chang Tsai through the Ch'eng brothers, Chu Hsi, Wang Yang-ming, Lo Ch'in-shun and on to Nakae Tōju, Kumazawa Banzan, Yamazaki Ansai, Kaibara Ekken (who "included the humble masses within the scope of Neo-Confucianism" [p. 70]), Ogyū Sorai (through whose school, "After an early history of prosperity and diversity, Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism met with greater acceptance" [p. 73]), Kokugaku, what Kassel labeled the Orthodox Chu Hsi School centered in Osaka, and Mito Learning. Kassel here summarizes the summaries scholars like Wing-tsit Chang, Theodore de Bary, Minamoto Ryoen, Testuo Najita, and others have made of these thinkers.

Why this genealogical procedure? In this reviewer's opinion, an understanding of Tansō's thought does not require rehearsing author by author (and greatly simplifying) what others before Tansō may have written. This becomes necessary, however, if one's aim is to trace a rather amplified "Neo-Confucian" tradition and to position Tansō within that tradition, which is ultimately Kassel's purpose.

Having spread her Neo-Confucian net so widely, Kassel has to account for what other scholars may consider to be an incongruous collection of fish that they certainly would set out to assort further. Yet, none are rejected. The argument for variety within a commonality is stated as follows: "Philosophers considered to be part of the Neo-Confucian school of thought are an extremely diverse group who are united by the issues they address" (p. 52). This is surprising. One would rather think that it is the way they address issues rather than the issues themselves that make scholars Neo-Confucian or not. Could one call Neo-Confucian anyone addressing issues like statecraft, or Heaven, or fate that are discussed up and down Chinese history? Confusing? Certainly. Everything and everyone ultimately turns out in the end to be Neo-Confucian. What Kassel has to say about Sorai, for example, shows how unreflectively she uses the term.

Sorai "expanded the concept of learning to be something that addressed society in general ... [and] the scope of political theory beyond that of early Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism" (p. 71). A few pages later comes the statement, quoted earlier, that Sorai was at the source of late Tokugawa's greater acceptance of Neo-Confucianism after it had already prospered and diversified initially. Anyone even slightly acquainted with Maruyama Masao's work, still standard in the field, would be surprised at such an interpretation of Sorai that is even logically puzzling. Still further, on page 79, some scholars could claim affiliation with two apparently separate traditions: Sorai and Sung Neo-Confucianism. Now the qualifier "Sung" is introduced, making Sorai, by implication a non-Sung, yet still "Neo" Neo-Confucian. Tansō, an avowed eclectic, is said to be heir to the Neo-Confucian tradition, and his eclecticism is limited to selecting his methods from within that tradition (p. 85) -- which hardly meets the definition of eclecticism as used for late Tokugawa thought. Even the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 is said to "emanate from the Neo-Confucian tradition" (p. 151).

Kassel is aware that the usefulness of the term Neo-Confucian has been seriously questioned in the 1990s but she brushes the debate aside and opts to use the term "in its broadest sense" (note 1, p. 85). Unfortunately, this blurs things and hinders rather than furthers any attempt to understand thinkers in their own right, especially
avowed genuine eclectics like Tansō. Almost all scholars in late Tokugawa were playing with parts of a Confucian repertoire that they combined with elements from Shinto and even Western Learning. To reduce all this "in the last instance," so to speak, to Neo-Confucianism is doctrinaire and unwarranted.

A number of factual mistakes further mar the general understanding of Tokugawa Japan. Mixing up modern prefectures and feudal domains, Kassel assumes that Tokugawa Japan had sixty-eight domains when she twice states that Kangien students came from sixty-four out of sixty-eight domains (pp. 1, 37). Mixing up early with late Tokugawa, the author also asserts that early Tokugawa would have had 1,493 private schools and ten times as many temple schools (p. 28). No reference is given for these statistics. Ronald Dore gives a rough ("largely worthless") estimate of 10,000 (not 15,000 as Kassel would have it) for the end of the period "of which only 400 date from before 1800" (Ronald P. Dore, Education in Tokugawa Japan [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965], p. 253). Readers will be mistaken if they assume that Yamazaki Ansai's Kimon school (referred to in pages 65 and 70), with its focus on "Principle," is the same as (rather than the opposite of) which Abe Yoshio singularly has called the "Kimon School," a loose term misleadingly capitalized in note 39, page. 89, under which Abe Yoshio grouped together scholars from various Schools slanted to privilege "Material Force" as opposed to "Principle." The sense of philosophical orthodoxy is said to have been diminishing only to be reasserted in the second half of the eighteenth century (p. 24). Quite the contrary is true. It was not "heterodox" teachings (whatever that may mean in a Tokugawa context) that were spreading in the eighteenth century, but a sense of hermeneutic and doctrinal exclusivism that was forging then for the first time a notion of orthodoxy as a political weapon in an academic turf war. In other words, an early sense of "orthodoxy" was not weakened; it just grew throughout most of the eighteenth century.

What one assumes to be the absence of professional editing has resulted in awkward sentences and a good number of mistakes in the bibliography, which was also in need of updating. Works by Peter Bol published in 1982 and 1992 or Benjamin Elman (1984, 1990) that considerably refined our conception of the term "Neo-Confucianism" are absent. Reference is made to Cynthia Brokaw's 1987 article on "ledgers of merit," but not to her 1991 book on the subject. Peter Nosco's 1978 Ph.D. dissertation Remembering Paradise is there, but not his 1990 book by the same title. Overall, this leads me to conclude that this study should have been judged to have been several steps away from deserving to see the light of published day.

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As is true in Western language studies, Japanese images of early modern urban areas have largely been based on examination of Japan's "three great metropolitan centers", Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Watanabe sets out to address this imbalance in scholarly studies by examining smaller urban areas, both those that were castle towns and others that were not. He also examines some rustic urban areas that were not formally classified as towns (zaikata machi 在方町). He is partly concerned with examining what features distinguished these towns (if any) and the ways in which commoner residents in these communities were organized.

After an introduction, the book is divided into two parts. Part I looks at residents' groups and concentrates on analysis of Kusukabe (Musashi province), Kōriyama (Mutsu province) and Sendai. A "supplement" for chapter 3 serves not only as a summary, but also provides Watanabe a venue in which to compare and contrast the three
Part II explores rank-order consciousness primarily in Moriguchi (in Settsu province, a zaikata machi), Kōriyama (a zaikata machi which is formally re-classified by authorities as a town), and Sendai (a castle town).

Watanabe frames his final conclusions in terms of different “visions” of towns. On the one hand, there is the vision of the domain authorities, on the other those of the townsmen, suggesting that a good fit between those visions made for a more peaceful urban order. Going beyond this concern for commoner-domain relations, Watanabe suggests that townsmen’s visions of themselves changed as towns were re-classified as urban areas by domain authorities, a change that reflected a rise in social standing as well as a promotion within domain administration.

**Book Notice:** The Early Modern Order and the Daimyo House Disturbances

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While studies of samurai from ancient times are slowly growing in Western scholarship, much of interest has yet to be introduced in the Western literature, especially for the early modern era. Among those subjects, the great household disturbances, primarily of the seventeenth century, certainly must rank high. These disturbances pitted cliques of retainers against each other and the daimyo. Study of them illuminates the process of domain formation, the reorientation of warriors to peacetime lives, the roles of samurai cliques in domain politics, and the establishment of stable domain administration. This study touches on many facets of these issues.

Study of these incidents is not a new subject in Japan. Fukuda begins by reviewing the literature on these disturbances, with an emphasis on developments since the 1960s. Part I begins with an overview of the very early kinsei order, taking the Keichō-Genna era as a transition, one that looks at the emergence of the samurai concern with bun (文, literary arts such as calligraphy), and even the transformation of martial arts to emphasize falconry and horsemanship, the development of house laws, and other attributes that contributed to internal stabilization.

Part II begins the actual examination of oie sōdō. Fukuda focuses primarily on single case studies in her explanation of the key types of disturbances, events that she classifies by period. For the Keichō-Genna era’s conflicts between relatively autonomous major retainers (kashin), she focuses on the Mogami Disturbance; for the Kan’ei era when key issues centered on reform of retainer fiefs, she explores primarily the Kuroda Disturbance. For the late 17th century she focuses on the Echigo Disturbances indicating that these disturbances tended to avoid involving the shogunate in the dispute settlement process. This latter characteristic distinguished late period disturbances from those of the first two eras.

**NOTE:** *EMJ* welcomes submission of short book notices that introduce recent work by Japanese scholars to our readers. Please send submissions to Philip C. Brown, Department of History, Ohio State University, 230 West 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210 or contact him by e-mail at brown.113@osu.edu.
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