

local histories to recognize the presence of multiple and varied actors, we again can contribute to telling the story of Japanese history in a less deterministic way that places more emphasis on variation in both process and outcome, and hence provides an image that is less predetermined and perhaps more human.

In discussion during and after this symposium, Professor Donald Hata, California State University, Dominguez Hills, has noted that the images we create of Japan's history bear on the way in which Japanese immigrants to North America are perceived. A sound understanding of Japanese history helps us to understand the Nikkei residents' experience as they adapted to and became more fully assimilated in their new homeland. A greater sense of diversity in the Japanese historical experience can help break down the sense that Japanese immigrants were all part of a "perfect minority" and increase our understanding of Nikkei as having diverse experiences. Such a new direction helps to correct a stereotyped image of Nikkei as seen from without, and consciously cultivated by many Japanese-Americans themselves.⁵²

Whether in the restricted field of Japanese history, in the broader application of our subject to the fields of public images of Japan, the Japanese and Japanese - Americans, or in the field of public education, continued studies of the sort presented here

⁵² Comments during discussion of the papers presented in this symposium, private discussion following the session, "The Diverse Japanese: Local History's Challenge to National Narratives," 114th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, IL, January 7, 2000, and personal e-mail communication of 27 February 2000. Professor Hata specifically noted parallels in the use of shrines as described by Professor Thall and the use of shrines in Garden, California. He also mentioned efforts of some Japanese-American leaders encountered in the course of research (his own or that of acquaintances) to deny the presence of prostitutes in the Japanese-American communities of the nineteenth century and intermarriage with blacks as part of an effort to bolster the image of Japanese Americans as a "perfect minority."

have a substantial and positive role to play in helping improve our appreciation of the diverse Japanese.



Two wooden Buddhist sculptures by Enkū 円空, d. 1695.

**Book Introduction: Questioning
Edo as a Free-Sex Paradise**
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For those interested in the ever-expanding discourse in early modern Japanese gender and sexuality issues, it seems that the temperature has risen a few degrees over the past year. In English, Timon Screech has published *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Images in Japan, 1700-1820* (Honolulu: U Hawaii P, paper ed. 1999) to supplement the version translated into Japanese by Takayama Hiroshi, *Shunga: Katate*

de yomu Edo no e 『春画一片手で読む江戸の絵』 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998), and Gregory M. Pflugfelder provides us with *Cartographies of Desire: Male-Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600-1950* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: U California P, 1999). In Japanese, Iwanami Shoten's venerable quarterly *Bungaku* 『文学』, in its 1999 Summer issue (Vol. 10, No. 3) dedicated to *Hyōshō to shite no shunpon* 表象としての春本 ("Erotic Books as Emblems"), features a *shunga* illustration as its first-ever color frontispiece. This issue also provides not one, but two *zadankai* panel discussions, the first, on *Shunpon bunka* 春本文化 (The Culture of Erotic Books), by five males: Hanasaki Kazuo, Nakano Mitsutoshi, Yamaguchi Masao, Asakawa Shōichirō, and Nobuhiro Shinji (moderator), with the second, on *Shunpon/Shunga kenkyū no rinkai* 春本・春画研究の臨界 (Criticality in Shunpon and Shunga Studies), by five females: Ueno Chizuko, Tanaka Yūko, Saeki Junko, and Sumie Jones (moderator). One of many thought-provoking elements from the latter takes up Screech's thesis that erotica was consumed by men as an aid in masturbation and turns it on its head, exploring the notion that women were also busy reading "with one hand" while the other was busily engaged in self-gratification. A few months later, Tanaka expanded on this theme with a book-length examination of dildos in early modern Japan, *Harigata: Edo donna no sei* 『張形—江戸をんなの性』 (*Harigata: Female Sexuality in Edo*, Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1999). Of course, all of this discussion, study, and publication is directly related to the recent relaxation of censorship laws governing images of pubic hair, and the subsequent release of multi-volume anthologies of early modern block-printed erotica. (The proliferation of contemporary pornographic texts in Japanese and images over the Internet provides yet another subtext for all of this interest.)

In the wake of all of this publishing, Koyano Atsushi 小谷野敦 has taken the bold step of critiquing what he refers to as the "praise" of sexual practices in the early modern period. In his book, *Edo gensō hihan—"Edo no seiai" rai-sanron wo utsu* 『江戸幻想批判—「江戸の性

愛」礼讃論を撃つ』 ("Critiquing the Edo Fantasy: Shooting Down the Discourse in Praise of 'Edo Sexual Love'," Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1999), Koyano attempts to stifle what he sees as a "love fest" of praise for a view of sexuality in early modern Japan that he considers uncritical, fad-driven, and highly distorted. In his "Afterward" Koyano states that he first realized he couldn't believe the claims on Yoshiwara as a cultural mecca, and by extension, the idealized view of early modern Japan promoted by the "Edo Boom-ers" when he learned at an exhibition at the Edo-Tokyo Museum that Yoshiwara courtesans' (=prostitutes) average age of death was 23 (p. 200). It seems to Koyano ironic that the same "leftist" scholars who have so severely criticized the official cover-up of the "Comfort Women" issue, would turn around and embrace early modern Japanese sexuality, and its visual depiction in books and prints, in such a broadly uncritical manner.

Koyano's study is worth reading, given that he reviews many of the classic studies of early modern Japanese culture of the past twenty years. One way in which he connects individuals to schools of thought is reflected in how he presents a kind of "genealogy" of these studies, by relating two works he views as the most groundbreaking to the female author and her male mentors. In the first case he identifies Tanaka Yūko with Hitotsubashi professors Hirotsue Tamotsu and Matsuda Osamu, while in the second he connects Saeki Junko with her Tōdai professor, Haga Tōru. (Note that Koyano himself undertook his graduate study in the same Tōdai Faculty of Comparative Literature and Culture as had Saeki in the previous decade.) However, at the same time, the first half of his book seldom rises above the level of personal invective, while the second half, which presumably presents examples of early modern Japanese cultural studies as they "should" be done, falls far short of the insights and conceptualizations explored in the various books Koyano criticizes so severely in the first half.

Koyano raises serious objections to the tendency to idealize Japanese sexuality, especially in the early modern period. It is now up to the historians, including those in literature, art, and thought, to reconstruct and conceptualize a more accurate, albeit complex, view of social interaction, and its presentation in early modern Japan.