

Western studies on medieval Japanese religion in five clearly demarcated chapters dealing with the Kumano pilgrimage as geographic space, as a variety of Tendai Buddhism, as a promise for rebirth after death, as a locus of imperial empowerment, and as a way for women to be part of the Buddhist universe.

The only objections to the book that can be raised concern matters that lie outside the scope of this exemplary monograph. While Moerman, for example, refers to the fact that Kumano Buddhism represents a layer of religious activity that covers a previous layer of imperial appropriation of the Kumano region as described in the chronicles of the early Nara court, he never explains what it was in Kumano that needed to be covered up so badly, first with a layer of imperial ideology, and then, if that were still not enough, with a layer of *honji suijaku* Buddhism on top. It is not very difficult, however, to imagine what this was, and Moerman himself spends quite a few pages of his chapter “Mortuary Practices” describing the local custom of voluntary suicide, known as *Fudaraku tokai*, or “Crossing the Sea to Mount Potala.” We have records dating back to the eighth century about sacrificial volunteers who were sent out from the beach at Nachi into the Kuroshio current to drift away to a certain death at sea and a supposed rebirth in paradise. How such voluntary suicides may have been in Kumano’s pre- or protohistoric eras is suggested by a tale from the *Uji shūi monogatari* about a Fudaraku pilgrim who, at the last moment, had a change of heart. The crowds that had gathered to worship him, writes Moerman, “expedited his rebirth by pelting him with stones, till in the end. . . his head was split open” (p. 117). In other words, what we are really talking about is human sacrifice.

It is surprising that, as a historian of religion, Moerman never makes the connection of the Kumano cult with clear traces of human sacrifice, sword worship (*Takakuraji*), and other early metallurgical traditions. At the other end of Moerman’s chosen time frame, there is another curious lacuna in his presentation. After giving much attention to the painting that forms the point of departure and much of the gist of his book, Moerman never explains to us exactly who the people were for whom these paintings were made—that is, the Kumano Buddhist nuns (*bikuni*) of early modern Japan. That, of course, would have involved expanding the temporal boundaries of his argument somewhat, but it would have provided his reader with a much better understanding of the social function of the painting, for which he has spent so much effort in providing an exegesis.

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Gendering Modern Japanese History. Edited by BARBARA MOLONY and KATHLEEN UNO. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005. x, 632 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$25.00 (paper).

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It has been a little over fifteen years since Gail Bernstein’s edited volume *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University

of California Press, 1991) launched several waves of English-language scholarship on the history of Japanese women. Yet, as Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno acknowledge in their introduction to *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, there is much more work to be done. This long-anticipated volume provides an excellent survey of recent scholarship on the history of gender in modern Japan, and it begins the process of reshaping a scholarly discourse that has too often made the term “woman” interchangeable with “gender.” Particularly noteworthy in this volume are the essays that examine gender through the analytical lenses of class, ethnicity, and culture.

In sixteen essays divided into five sections, *Gendering Modern Japanese History* surveys the influence of sex and gender on the history of Japan since the nineteenth century. The first three essays, grouped in a section titled “Gender, Selfhood, and Culture,” include Martha Tocco’s essay, which argues that educational practices during the Tokugawa era established important precedents for women’s education, such as the pedagogical focus on domestic roles and the establishment of private academies for women, which are generally thought to be inventions of the Meiji era. Donald Roden’s essay examines how manifestations of heroic manliness in Meiji, exemplified by both the long-dead *shishi* (men of high purpose) and the person of Saigō Takamori, contested attempts to popularize notions of civil deportment by men of “culture and enlightenment,” such as Fukuzawa Yukichi. Finally, Barbara Sato’s essay explores the role of women’s publications in popularizing notions of self-improvement among middle-class women seeking to become the “ideal woman” during the 1920s.

Mark Driscoll’s essay, in the second section, “Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality,” insightfully analyzes the role of sexologists in the construction of male sexuality during the interwar era. The essays of Gregory M. Pflugfelder and Sumiko Otsubo, which round out this section, stand among the best in the volume. Pflugfelder, whose early work recovered the history of male–male sexuality in modern Japan, focuses this essay on the role of women’s educational institutions in the development of “schoolgirl intimacy” during the early twentieth century. Pflugfelder’s incisive analysis of this provocative topic suggests interesting directions for further work. Otsubo’s essay makes a unique addition to the discourse on women’s reproductive rights by examining how an organization of elite and middle-class women sought to use the new science of eugenics as a means of establishing a legal context for women to regulate men’s sexual role in marriage. While Otsubo’s essay does not fully examine the significance of the negative impact of women’s participation in the interwar-era eugenics campaigns, her essay is invaluable for its recognition that women were both victims and perpetrators of the eugenics laws of the prewar era.

Barbara J. Brooks’s well-crafted essay in the third section, “Gender, Empire, and War,” explores the important subject of the extent to which representations of sex and sexuality played a role in the construction of distinct identities for Japanese women living in the colonies of Korea and Manchuria. Brooks suggests that magazines published in and about Japanese women living in the colonies helped in the construction of gender roles in Japan’s imperial outposts. I was particularly

intrigued by the essays of Theodore F. Cook, Jr., and Haruko Taya Cook. Drawing on both new and previously published materials, Theodore Cook constructs a fresh examination of the role of soldiering in state-sponsored masculine projects intended to bolster war efforts from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Haruko Cook's essay, on the other hand, examines how the wartime state manipulated the mass death (*gyokusai*) of women at Saipan in propaganda at the end of the war. Her examination of the state's representations of the mass suicide/murder of civilian women at Saipan as a means to provoke similar responses in Okinawa is simply bone chilling and should become required reading for every student of modern Japan.

Essays on the postwar corporate New Life movement by Andrew Gordon and the prewar textile labor market by Janet Hunter, in the fourth section, "Gender, Work, and Economy," enhance the value of this volume by focusing on the crucial issue of gender and employment. W. Donald Smith's essay on Korean women employed by the coal mining industry in Japan makes a particularly important contribution to both this collection and the fields of Japan labor and women's studies. Despite occasionally awkward prose, Smith is to be commended for an essay that underscores the crucial role of Korean labor in the building of modern Japan.

The collection concludes with the fifth section, "Theorizing Gender," which includes an essay by Molony on the role of the women's rights movement in defining modernity during the late nineteenth century, and an essay by Uno that examines how the rhetoric of "good wife/wise mother" became an essential tool for colonial expansion. Ayako Kano's essay surveys the intellectual debates about feminism during the 1980s, and Setsu Shigematsu explores the work of pop artist Uchida Shungiku in the context of three decades of feminist debates about the intercomplicity of art, capital, and sexuality in Japan. The last four essays are all essential reading, and I was particularly impressed with Shigematsu's deft navigation of the complexity of meanings conveyed by and about Uchida's highly controversial 1993 novel *Fazā fakkā* (Father Fucker), among other works that transgress many perceived norms of sexual and social propriety.

In sum, this is an excellent collection of essays, but it is not without some limitations. Only a minority of essays engage topics pertaining to men and masculinity, which is less a criticism and than an indication of how the field of Japanese gender studies can expand. Equally important, it lacks a substantial concluding essay that might have situated the volume in a theoretical framework, informed by contemporary gender studies outside the Japan, as a means of suggesting new directions. That said, this is a well-crafted volume and one I look forward to assigning in my courses on the history of gender in modern Japan.

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