

tracing the development of the principal role, the *shite*, back to *kamigakari*, the divine possession typical of Japanese shamanism.

Ortolani makes a refreshing point in his chapter on Kabuki, which begins not with the usual reference to the actress Okuni but with a consideration of the *kabuki-mono*, a band of masterless samurai and the offspring of important samurai families. The group's violent actions, with their potentially revolutionary implications, led to the execution of a *kabuki-mono* in 1612 (155). Ortolani credits the strict policy of social stability enforced by Tokugawa Ieyasu and his immediate successors with affecting "the very life and development of the theatre."

In addressing the issues implicit in the title "Contemporary Pluralism," I expected the author to give a fuller treatment to the underground theater movement. Ortolani devotes only six pages to the topic, however. This area should have been addressed more fully, since the energy to build the Japanese modern theater of the future will undoubtedly come from the groups of artists either belonging to the *angura* movement or opposing it and just about everything else.

Chapter 12 is devoted to tracing the history of Western research on the Japanese theater. It comprises, in effect, an annotated, well-organized bibliography that provides a very useful overview of what has been done so far. This, in addition to the book's extensive regular bibliography, should help any readers who aspire to go further in their study of the Japanese theater. The compilation of these references was an extremely time-consuming task, expertly executed and effectively presented.

In spite of this reviewer's deep appreciation of the valuable work presented in the book, it should be pointed out that it is not without flaws. Let me cite some of the misstatements, although the total number is small. Presenting a reading of *saibaraku* (20) where *saibara* 催馬樂 was apparently intended only aggravates the already complex issue of dealing with this form. The leader who spearheaded the reorganization of *gagaku* and *bugaku* performers into two groups, Kyoto and Edo, was not Toyotomi Hideyoshi, as Ortolani states, but Tokugawa Ieyasu (43). Ortolani also says that *gagaku* and *bugaku* are now studied in "Japanese universities such as the Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku and Kokuritsu Ongaku Daigaku" (43); the latter should be Kunitachi Ongaku Daigaku. He also speaks of "the luxurious, marvelously equipped Asahi-za theatre in Osaka," when what is meant is the National Bunraku Theater, opened in 1984 (214).

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RUCH, BARBARA. *Mō hitotsu no chūseizō: Bikuni, otogizōshi, raise* もう一つの中世像: 比丘尼・御伽草子・来世 [Another perspective on the Japanese medieval world: Buddhist nuns, children's stories, and life after death]. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1991. xx+276+xii pages. Color plates, illustrations, key word index. ISBN 4-7842-0663-9. (In Japanese)

Barbara Ruch, professor of Japanese Literature and Culture at Columbia University and director of the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies, is one of the leading authorities on the study of medieval Japanese culture. Her many original contributions, particularly in the area of popular literature, religion, and cultural history, were formally recognized in 1991 when she was awarded the first Minakata Kumagusu

Prize for the Humanities. *Mō hitotsu no chūseizō* is Ruch's most recent book, and the one that provided the deciding factor in her selection for the Kumagusu Prize. Composed of eight of her essays, it is an excellent introduction to her creative, interdisciplinary approach to the complex and fascinating subject of medieval Japan.

The "other perspective" presented by Ruch differs from that of previous scholars in at least two ways. First, it endeavors to avoid several historical concepts that, Ruch feels, have given rise to misrepresentative stereotypes of the Japanese medieval era: *gekokujiō* 下剋上, referring to what she terms the "myth" of the commoners' usurpation of power during that period; and *ankoku jidai* 暗黒時代 (the dark ages) which, she says, is a European loanword rather gratuitously applied to the period in Japan between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. Second, it attempts to reappraise an area of Japanese cultural history which scholars have heretofore tended to dismiss as unworthy of academic consideration: the personages of medieval popular culture (the "stepchildren" of Japanese cultural studies, as Ruch calls them) who were central in shaping the clear cultural consciousness that emerged in medieval Japan. Fortunately for the scholar, this era left a rich store of historical source material, including paintings, sculpture, and literature, and it was Ruch's unearthing and original interpretation of much of this material that helped earn her the Minakata Kumagusu Prize.

The first essay of the book, "Mō hitotsu no chūseizō o motomete" ("The search for another perspective on the Middle Ages"), introduces the author's main research themes and methodology. Her search is for the *kokumin kyōtsū no bunka* 国民共通の文化 (the common popular culture), "the manifold expressions of culture which the majority of people in a particular historical period, irrespective of age, gender, or class, regard as important and feel a profound sense of sympathy with" (5); her approach is to abandon "fossilized concepts such as class, gender, and social position" (6) and uncover "the core attitudes, mores, and activities familiar to the entire population." In the course of her explorations she examines a number of previously neglected areas: Buddhist nuns and nunneries, as exemplified by the abbess Muge Nyodai (1223-1298); the life-styles, interests, and values of the working people (particularly women) as seen via scrolls, *Nara ehon* 奈良絵本 (illustrated children's stories), and *rakuchū raku-gaizu* 洛中洛外図 (illustrations of the sights and customs of Kyoto); and the heretofore poorly researched "people's poet" Akashi Kakuichi (d. 1371), whose *Heike monogatari* was quite influential in the subsequent development of Japanese literature.

The second essay, "Nara ehon to kisen bungaku" (*Nara ehon* and the literature common to the upper and lower classes), uses the largely unresearched literature of the period between Murasaki Shikibu (eleventh century) and Ihara Saikaku (1642-93) as a window on medieval Japanese culture. Medieval literature, says Ruch, had the nature of a performing art, providing the public with a certain right of veto. Hence surviving works were generally of broad popular appeal, and in that sense comprise the foundation of Japan's national literature.

The third piece, "Sekai no naka no otogizōshi," (*Otogizōshi* in the context of world literature), contends that the true nature of the *Nara ehon* stories has remained largely unexplained because of the lack of comparative studies with contemporary works from other parts of the world. Ruch answers part of this need through an interesting study of the Japanese story *Koatsumori* 小敦盛 and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

"Bijitsu, bunjutsu, majutsu" (Art, literature, and magic) deals with the textual and pictorial analysis of the medieval novel. Ruch calls for a broader, more interdisciplinary approach than that used traditionally, in which separate specialists carry out independent analyses of the text and illustrations. The two aspects form an integrated whole, Ruch points out, and must be studied as such.

“Chūsei no yugyō geinōsha to kokumin bungaku no keisei” (Traveling entertainers and the development of popular literature) examines the rise during the Muromachi period of the popular literature which was to change the course of Japanese literary history. The bearers of this new cultural form were the minstrel monks (*biwahōshi* 琵琶法師), picture-scroll storytellers (*etoki* 絵解き), blind women (*goze* 瞽女), and other traveling entertainers active in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—secular and religious figures who helped shape the moral and aesthetic sensibilities of the Japanese people.

The next essay, “Kaigai ni okeru etoki no kenkyū” (An investigation of *etoki* in other lands), is, as the title indicates, a study of literature analogous to the *etoki* in other regions of East Asia.

“Raisaikan no henyō—chūsei nihon no bungaku to kaiga ni okeru jigoku, gokuraku, rokudō” (Changing views of the afterlife: hell, paradise, and the six paths as represented in Japanese medieval literature and art) analyzes the evolution of Japanese afterlife concepts following the introduction of Buddhism. Citing the limitations of traditional, doctrinal approaches to such research, Ruch turns to literature (mythical records, the *Manyōshū*, the *Genji monogatari*, *Nō* drama) and popular Buddhist artwork (*tenjukoku mandara* 天寿国曼荼羅, *raigōzu* 来迎図, *jigokue* 地獄絵, *gakizōshi* 餓鬼草紙) to illustrate the shift in thought as Buddhism gradually penetrated the fabric of Japanese culture. Ruch contends that the original Japanese afterlife view, “devoid of any concept of paradise as reward or hell as punishment” (228), was not so much supplanted as supplemented and enriched by Buddhist thought. Buddhism, with its eclectic nature, soon accommodated itself to Japanese tastes, its adaptation aided by its similarity to many elements of Japan’s native shamanistic traditions.

The final essay, “Yatate no osame” (Setting down the brush), briefly summarizes several of Ruch’s present themes of research. These include the *etoki* of the Korean peninsula and the phenomenon of certain religious images common to quite disparate cultures.

The respective essays form in total a coherent overview of Ruch’s academic work: her methodology, her use of research material, and her conclusions on many aspects of medieval Japanese culture. I should not neglect to mention that the book is also a pleasure to read, keeping the reader ever curious as to what conclusion the author will reach. Even when Ruch leaves the final judgement to the reader, her insight, profound scholarship, and international outlook are unfailingly stimulating, presenting Japanese readers in particular with a fresh perspective on the culture and history of their own country. This is a work certain to spur academic efforts on the part of Japanese scholars.

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