

WALTHALL, ANNE, editor and translator. *Peasant Uprisings in Japan: A Critical Anthology of Peasant Histories*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. viii+268 pages. Index. Paper £10.25 (UK and Eire), US\$14.95 (other countries, except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-87234-3. Cloth £28.75 (UK and Eire), US\$41.50 (other countries, except USA, Canada, Australia); ISBN 0-226-87233-5.

The title of Anne Walthall's book is misleading. While the introduction does provide general background information on peasant protest in early modern Japan, the text consists of translated narratives of uprisings, the intention being to allow the peasants to speak for themselves. And instead of relating peasant protest to the Meiji Restoration and beyond, the author attempts primarily "to understand what people thought—their assumptions and values, their definition of the central issues of family, sexual activity, alliance formation and its obverse, the fear of strangers—and how these changed over time" (222). As such, the book is of value to anthropologists as well as historians, and to scholars interested in both the tales people tell and the power people wield.

The introductory and concluding essays are substantial. Walthall provides the sort of socioeconomic background helpful in contextualizing the vast unexplored literature of peasant narratives. Appearing in a variety of motifs, the peasant histories were written for almost all the large peasant uprisings. In unpublished form they spread widely within peasant society; moreover, they were copied repeatedly and handed down from one generation to the next. Conventional historians, interested in "factual evidence," have often refused to accept these texts on their own terms, but it is precisely the fictional and fanciful aspects of the narratives that the author wishes to highlight in this book.

Walthall has painstakingly translated five texts, selected to give an overview of the variety of the peasant narratives produced. They are arranged chronologically, covering the period between the mid-seventeenth century and the end of the Tokugawa period in 1868. They include details on religion, folklore, money, and women; information on daily life and social practices; and of course, particulars on the motives and politics of peasant protest. According to the author, the narratives "provide perspectives on the totality of the peasants' worldview and suggest ways that social concerns changed over time and varied according to class" (23).

The first of the book's five narratives presents the story of Sakura Sōgorō, the famous peasant martyr of the mid-seventeenth century who became the archetype of self-sacrifice on behalf of the community. During the Tokugawa period his story was told in nursery rhymes, songs, stories, and plays. The particular text Walthall has chosen to translate comes from the late Tokugawa period, by which time Sōgorō had clearly emerged as the patron saint of protest. The second narrative deals with an uprising in the Tsuyama Domain of western Japan that took place in 1726. This "history," written shortly after the event, describes in sympathetic terms how "the four orders of people in Mimasaka ran riot." The third narrative is based on an incident in 1764 in which peasants marched on Edo to protest a change in the transportation system. The history was "recorded" in 1874, more than a hundred years after the event, and, with obvious reference to conditions prevailing in the early years after the Meiji Restoration, stresses the dilemma of village officials caught between their communities and a ruling class unable to guarantee public order. The fourth text, "A Tale of a Dream from the Fox Woman Plain," tells the story of an 1804 riot in

which poorer peasants carried out campaigns of property destruction against their wealthy neighbors, who were condemned for their selfish behavior. The version presented was transcribed in 1863 and includes a series of related folktales which were appended to the main text by creative copyists over the decades. The final text describes a 1866 uprising in which peasants demanded reforms in domainal policy and attacked the village elite in the process. The unique feature of this tale is that it is centered on the women of the village, particularly the daughters of one of the ringleaders of the revolt.

Walthall's introduction to each text shows how the peasants sought to retell and, in a sense, recreate the past to represent their contemporary concerns and fears. She wishes to restore to light the various narratives of the underground heroes of Japan's early modern period, of men whom the ruling authorities tried to erase from popular memory. Hers is a new and exciting approach to understanding the mentality of the common people in premodern Japan.

The texts and the methods used in analyzing them should be especially instructive to students of folklore and historical anthropology. According to Walthall, folktales and histories of peasant uprisings share similar structures. Both mix facts with fiction and "provide a means to express the frustrations and resentments that seethe beneath the surface of apparent harmony" (18). Like folktales, the histories were used by peasants as a means to shape their experience. "Writing these histories was not simply an intellectual exercise to fit local happening into the literary mold of the times, but an articulation of a worldview that deliberately centered peasant life as the object of concern" (20).

In *Peasant Uprisings in Japan*, Walthall makes a major break with previous studies of popular protest in Japan. The author writes in line with affirmative post-modern theories of scholarship that stress the unsystematic, heterological, and local. Instead of the grand narrative, she is concerned with the "mini-narrative," with the experiences of people normally relegated to the periphery, and with previously disqualified modes of knowledge. A central concern of the book is to "bring peasants marginalized in the official discourse to center stage" (31).

Anne Walthall has successfully crafted her own ways of reading these texts of peasant protest in early modern Japan, but she is careful to remind her readers that she, as author, does not have the final say. The translations of peasant histories provide fascinating material that will enable scholars in a wide range of disciplines to come up with their own interpretations.

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#### KOREA

HOWARD, KEITH. *Bands, Songs, and Shamanistic Rituals: Folk Music in Korean Society*. Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, 1990 (second edition). xv+295 pages. Color plates, maps, figures, musical transcriptions, bibliography, glossary, list of proverbs. Paper, no price given.

This book is a musical ethnography of Chindo, an island off the southwestern end of the Korean peninsula. Based on Howard's 1985 Ph.D. dissertation, "Bands, Songs,