

attached to [...] trees to mark their sacred significance were an early form of Japanese banner [...]. This practice eventually evolved into the attaching of cloth banners to tall poles" (100). The cloths and banners mentioned do to some extent have a similar function, but how can it be demonstrated that banners "eventually evolved" out of those cloths? A similar but more complicated problem we find in the discussion of the *shishi mai* (lion dance) and its relation to *shika mai* (deer dance) or even *gongen mai*. First, Gonick mentions that *shishi* is sometimes translated as "lion-dogs" and writes correctly that "lions never inhabited Japan: the concept and popular dance were imported long ago from China" (124). However, in the concluding chapter she says that these "lion dances" "began as *shika odori*, or deer dances, and were performed in deer masks" (245) without any explanation as to how this happened if "concept and popular dance" were imported from China. Second, supposed there was such a development how did "deer" (*shika*) and "lion" (*shishi*) become related? According to the author portrayals of animals threatening the crops were used to appease them. Among these animals, the portrayals of deer and boar were "often transformed later into the more dramatic lion-dogs" (245). There is no concrete proof for any of the statements mentioned, but there is a hint of where part of the problem might have originated. Gonick says that the "term *shika* used to refer to all kinds of wild beasts, particularly wild boars" (126). The fact is, however, that the term *shishi* is used to refer to the meat of deer and wild boar (*inoshishi*) particularly in northern Japan, which happens to be one of the main areas of *shika odori*. In Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture, a center for this dance, although despite being called *shishi odori* it is written with the character for deer. How, then, is it that in an area already familiar with the term *shishi*, it was used for dances representing an animal that was in ordinary parlance referred to as *shika*? To my mind the simple assertion of a supposedly historical development does not solve this question.

Gonick makes a laudable effort to provide Japanese terms where it seems to be useful. Although it may be a burden to some, it is a helpful device for those with some knowledge of Japanese. Yet some of the transcriptions are not without problems. In the caption linked to a photograph showing banners at the entrance to a shrine it is said that the banners are inscribed with "Kaido jinja gozen mae." I am not sure what *gozen* should mean here, but a close look at the picture shows that the characters that are supposed to be read as *gozen* should most probably be read as something like *gohō*, since the second character in the combination is the character for "treasure" (*takara*) (103, Fig. 4.11). A misreading that results in mistaken information is found in the legend to Fig. 4.30. We are told that the horse banner is "inscribed with the name and crest (*mon*) of Aoiaso Shrine" (112). The crest is probably that of the shrine, but the name is not: it is the name of the banner's donor, a certain Nakamura Moriyoishi. In her description of the acrobatic performances of firemen during New Year the author refers to these performances as *dezomichi* (173 and 175). There is no such term. The performance she reports about is called *dezome shiki*, "ceremony of the first outing." In the interview with Mr. Hatanaka one gets the impression that he said that the number four is never used on *matsuri* garments because "four is *shin* in Japanese, which also means death" (147). It is true that the number four is not used, but its (Chinese) reading is not *shin* but *shi*, the latter being the same sound as that for the term meaning "death."

The points I have mentioned certainly do not detract from the fascination this volume will have for the viewers, but they are disturbing for the specialist. Yet, in spite of some problems, Gonick has to be commended for showing the beauty of the trappings of *matsuri* that many take for granted.

Peter KNECHT

HONDA KATSUICHI. *Harukō: An Ainu Woman's Tale. Voices from Asia.*

Translated by Kyoko Selden. Foreword by David L. Howell. Berkeley:

University of California Press, 2000. xxxv + 315 pages. Maps, line drawings, photographs, diagrams, glossary, list of English reference books, index. Cloth US\$50.00; ISBN 0-520-21019-0. Paper US\$19.95; ISBN 0-520-21020-4.

The volume under review is a translation of *Ainu minzoku* [The Ainu People] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1993) by the Japanese journalist and social critic Honda Katsuichi. The title of the translation refers to the central part of the book, which tells the fictive story of an Ainu woman living in eastern Hokkaido “several hundred years ago” (93). The English volume differs from the Japanese original in some important details. A Foreword, Translator’s Note, author’s Preface, Glossary, Index, a Bibliography of English Language Books on the Ainu, as well as two maps were added. Selection and arrangement of the numerous photos and drawings illustrating the book also differ from the original. Parts of the text were rewritten for non-Japanese readers, and in some instances the order of chapters and paragraphs was changed. And, as the translator notes, the number of Ainu terms used in the original was diminished “to reduce distractions for English language readers” (xxxii).

The main body of the text is divided into three parts. In the first part, “Ainu Moshir” [The Homeland of the Ainu], Honda depicts the natural environment of Hokkaido before the advent of civilization, discusses the origins and the history of the Ainu, and portrays their myths, beliefs, rites, customs, and their forms of oral literature. For this as well as the latter two parts, he drew on research by Ainu and other (presumably, mainly Japanese) scholars in addition to oral accounts by surviving elders (xxxiv). The second part contains the story of Harukor, an Ainu woman portrayed as living in a river community in eastern Hokkaido sometime before the Japanese intruded on Ainu life in this part of the country. Honda lets his protagonist tell her story in the first person, emulating the Ainu oral tradition of *uwepeker*, a folktale serving “to instruct or reveal some kind of life wisdom” (90). Harukor’s story is interwoven with several *yukar* (epic poetry that is musically chanted) and other oral art forms. The third and shortest part of the book relates the story of Harukor’s son. It is intended as a link between the legendary age of Harukor and the historical “period of aggression,” periodized by Honda to start with the Koshamain War (1456–1457) and last until the Meiji Restoration (1868) (xxiv, 273). For this part, Honda chose the Ainu oral form of *upashkuma* which, in contrast to *uwepeker*, transmits stories of things that actually happened, often histories of particular persons or families. As I am not an Ainu expert, I cannot judge whether the author succeeds in conveying a sense of the actual difference between the two art forms of *uwepeker* and *upashkuma*. The English translation largely fails to transmit the stylistic variations of the Japanese original but, then, this is a general difficulty with translating from Japanese into European languages.

On the whole, this is an attractive volume, in a literary, visual and, with some reservations, also in a scholarly sense. The scholarly value is greatly enhanced by historian David Howell’s foreword, which points to some problematic aspects of Honda’s text and offers a “more detached” (xii) view of Ainu history. While respecting Honda’s concern “to undermine his readers’ prejudices” (xii), and his “implicit critique of contemporary Japanese society and government” (xiii), Howell also observes that the author “constructs the history of the Ainu largely in isolation from their relations with the Japanese state, particularly from their role as agents in dealing with that state. Honda’s Hokkaido is an idyllic island in which the Ainu have attained a harmonious relationship with nature; he portrays Ainu culture as unchanging and the Ainu themselves as passive victims of Japanese aggression” (xii). My perspective is similar to Howell’s in that I intend to discuss some of the discursive implications of Honda’s book. Although I am to review the English translation of the book, for this part, I

will focus on the Japanese context of *Ainu minzoku*. My main concern is with the entanglement of ethnicity and gender, which constitutes the framework as well as the core of Honda's narrative.

To explain why the protagonist of his story is a woman, Honda maintains that "it was women rather than men who truly sustained Ainu life, preserving and handing down traditional culture, particularly language" (93). Honda's intent is to convey a sense of Ainu daily life as it used to be and, as Howell notes, to reinterpret daily life as "the arena in which culture is produced" (xxxv). Honda also points to the value of "a folk culture based on memory," in an age in which "most peoples have lost significant things in the process of gaining the ability to write" (85). His portrayal of women as the bearers of this culture thus implies the high value of the female roles reconstructed in the story of Harukor. However, by connecting "woman" and "tradition" Honda ends up participating in a conservative discourse. Many of the female tasks depicted in Harukor's tale—such as child rearing, spinning, weaving, cooking, preserving food, and preparing medicine—correspond with a modern gendered division of labor associating women with the domestic, "reproductive" realm. According to Honda, women did join in some of the men's activities, like fishing, but in that case, the men seem to have taken the lead. Also, both men and women were involved with retelling the myths and legends conveyed in *yukar*, *uwepeker*, and other oral traditions, but women were more concerned with telling these to children and other family members at home whereas men's performances were dominant on official and festive occasions involving the whole community. Furthermore, in his portrayal of Harukor and her female friends and relatives as well as in the *yukar* and *uwepeker* imbedded in Harukor's story, Honda reinvents a universal feminine psyche including traits like naivety, affectation, jealousy, and sentimentality. Here, too, we may ask ourselves whether these are not—partially, at least—projections of modern stereotypes.

Another element of Harukor's story that clearly reproduces modern "traditions" is that of the patrilineal family housing three generations under one roof. This allows Honda to depict what, in present-day Japanese terms, constitutes an ideal, nostalgic kind of family life. Such a rendering of the Ainu family of the past is inconsistent with the first part of the book where Honda deconstructs nostalgic memories of wife and mother-in-law living under one roof to be an invented Ainu tradition: "An examination of various papers, reports and oral traditions suggests that early Ainu society was based on nuclear families. What today's [Ainu] grandmothers think of as the "old days" when wife and mother-in-law lived together are, perhaps, the days after the Shisam [=Japanese] influence began" (63). In his account of traditional Ainu life in part two, Honda thus reinvents modern gender stereotypes and role expectations which have long been called into question and are about to crumble, even in Japan. Here, Honda constructs a hermetic utopia, a counter-world to modern Japan not only in the sense of an intact natural environment and of humanity living in harmony with nature, but also with regard to social values and norms. Ultimately, Honda's vacillation between attempts at deconstructing the patriarchal family and his reaffirmation of traditional family values can be seen to reflect his own (and not only his!) ambivalence in this matter. The turn to fiction in the central part of his book frees Honda from having to present and discuss contradictory evidence. The story of Harukor produces an illusion of reality, in spite of some footnotes pointing to the fact that this is a construction based on selections and rejections (as in the case of regional variations in gender roles; for example, 148, note 39).

I am not in a position to challenge the accuracy of the facts that make up Harukor's story. Neither do I criticize Honda for his choice of a fictional form (after all, it is fascinating to read!). Rather, I regret that he did not come up with a more emancipatory tale, which may well have been possible to reconstruct from the sources. The problems that arise from

Honda's utopia are manifold: to Japanese readers, the ideal to adhere to with regard to their own society is presented in terms of the "traditional" family and "traditional" gender roles. But not only are Ainu women and—by implication—Japanese women relegated to the unchanging realm of tradition. The implicit portrayal of Ainu culture as female, intended to underscore the image of peacefulness, harmony, and closeness to nature, is in line with European stereotypes of "the Savage" or "the Orient" and, in the modern context, reinforces the image of the Ainu people and their culture as passive and backward-looking. What it means for the identity of present-day Ainu (some of whom are probably among the readers of Honda's book; after all, Japanese constitutes the mother tongue for most of them) to have their culture presented in exclusively "traditional" terms has been discussed by various scholars, most recently with regard to the controversial 1997 Ainu Cultural Promotion Act: "There is...the danger that only those few people practicing officially recognized 'traditional culture' will be regarded as 'real Ainu'" (SIDDLÉ 2002, 414).

It is difficult to assess the ramifications of Honda's interpretations for contemporary Ainu women. Historian Kojima Kyōko has pondered on the gendered implications of constructions of Ainu culture as "in harmony with nature" (*kyōsei*). She follows Catharine MacKinnon in pointing to gendered differences of power within minority cultures, putting minority women in tension to affirmations of ethnic, or cultural, identity. At the same time, Kojima asserts that transmission and revival of traditional handicrafts play an important role for the formation of Ainu women's ethnic identity (KOJIMA 2000, 13). Indeed, affirmations of "tradition" seem to be strong among Ainu women activists (for example, KEIRA 1995, TOZUKA 2001). In writings by Ainu women, there seems to exist less of a refraction of this kind of traditionalism than among feminists from some other minority groups in Japan, for instance, Koreans and *burakumin*. Some women belonging to these groups have started to seriously question the patriarchal structures inherent in their own cultures (for example, MORI 2001 and CHON 1999, 2001). An inquiry into why such differences exist may throw light on the specific situation of the Ainu minority as a whole.

In conclusion, I would like to concede that *Ainu minzoku*, particularly in part one, but also in the story of Harukor, succeeds in questioning contemporary Japan, its society, its government, and its history in ways that go far beyond the simple scheme of "back to tradition" or "back to nature." In some instances, Honda reverses the hierarchy between Japanese and Ainu implicit in dominant discourse by characterizing Ainu as more civilized than Japanese. One striking example is a story told by Ainu midwife Aoki Aiko, one of the elders whom Honda quotes as an informant. Aoki relates that she once accompanied her mother, who was also a midwife, to a poor Japanese family which was not able to pay the midwife anything for her services and, to Aoki's dismay, offered them tea cooked in the same bowl that had been used to wash the newborn child (68–69). Here, assumptions of social status as well as ascriptions of purity and impurity are being reversed. Moreover, the midwife's ethic is explained to be one of universal love, a detail that may well be understood to imply a contrast to the parochial self-righteousness of the Japanese colonizers (69).

Where the Ainu are portrayed as being close to nature or peace-loving, Honda's interpretations clearly defeat the common *Nihonjin-ron* rhetoric which asserts that peace, harmony, and closeness to nature constitute the essence of Japanese culture. In this type of discourse, Japan is imbued with "female" values as opposed to the West, which is constructed as aggressive or, implicitly, "male." By projecting "femaleness" on a culture which has been oppressed by Japan like no other, Honda forces Japan to confront its own aggressiveness, or "maleness."

Honda's effort to write from "something akin to an Ainu perspective" (xxxiv), including his calling Japanese people by the Ainu term *Shisam* ("neighbor"), underscores the independence and subjectivity of his actors. Howell is right to comment that Honda "constructs the

history of the Ainu largely in isolation from their relations with the Japanese state.” However, the emphasis on separateness also serves a purpose, namely, to prevent the Ainu from meeting the same fate as Okinawa: to be co-opted as the “cradle of Japanese culture.” At the same time, using the word *Shisam* allows Honda to assert the equal coexistence of different groups of inhabitants of Japan, among them Ryūkyūan Japanese, Korean Japanese, Ainu Japanese and *Shisam* Japanese (15), thereby challenging, above all, the superiority of the *Shisam*.

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DELL'ORTO, ALESSANDRO. *Place and Spirit in Taiwan: Tudi Gong in the Stories, Strategies and Memories of Everyday Life*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002. xix + 300 pages. Tables, maps, photographs, glossary, bibliography, index. Hardcover £55.00; ISBN 07 0071 5681.

In *Place and Spirit in Taiwan*, Alessandro Dell'Orto attempts to contribute towards an anthropology of place from the perspective of Tudi Gong in Taiwan. Tudi Gong is the most basic Chinese god of locality. He is characterized by his multilocation. That is, he can be seen almost anywhere on the island of Taiwan—in homes, shops, restaurants, urban neighborhoods, rural villages, or even in cemeteries. He is watching over and protecting soil and people