destructive or subversive, of or to the person; satiric or liberating; religious or aesthetic; particularly concerned with performance or theatre-studies; perspective changing and/or anarchic, yet so often healing the hurts of the authoritarian dominant norm. Metacommunication devices of framing and of destructive deconstruction are all bound up with more recent aspects of the ludic. Yet, if we follow Bakhtin in his notion of "legalized licentiousness" to legitimize order, we might well agree that "the frame of the ludic as liturgy tames the potential for true violence" (11). From the last point it follows that the "liminal" is continually transgressed as societies seek to loosen the boundaries between ritual and play, and as non-governmental alterity replaces morality in political spheres. The adopted political stance is tellingly related to Euripides's disturbing study of frenzy, *The Bacchae.*

Space to play and defy is related to coquetterie, the grotesque, cynicism, nihilism, and a forgetting that man's destiny is to "re-collect"—in Plato's terms—his divine status.

From this overview we progress to the various approaches to determining patterns in human play. The first is largely concerned with sport, now interpreted by Gunter Gebauer and Christopher Wulf as an institution akin to the theater and to ritual. And they tell us that "In a society that puts great stock in sport, agonal principles constitute part of the foundations of social relations" (47). The second, from Burkhard Schnepel, is concerned with the development of a typology of the Fool by identifying eight different types: the trickster, the parasite or court jester, the Groucho Marx type, the impudent nephew, the idealist, the idiot, the clown, and the divine fool. All of these were illustrated by historical and literary examples of memorable vitality, especially in relation to his dull neighbors. Thus homo ludens and homo sociologicus were presented as "two complementary and necessary aspects in the study of personhood and society" (72).

Essays toward the end of the book use material from the Indian subcontinent as well as ancient and modern Europe to deal with mythopoetic structures within literary cultures, performances in cultural contexts, and ethnographic and legendary materials. The fourth section, "Endgames," contains Bernhard Lang's essay on "Street Theatre and Symbolical Acts in Biblical Israel," and George Eisen's "The Game of Death and the Dynamics of Atrocity." Both of these argue that in the midst of atrocity and death, play exists. Both underscore Köpping's penultimate point in the Preface (xii) that it is a dubious practice to separate the ludic, the religious, and the aesthetic into different domains. For play is part of aggression and atrocity as much as it is of wisdom, of religion, and of metacommunication.

At almost every point, ultimate meaning of the play/game/fool nexus is left open-ended, as is appropriate to one of the most ancient, universal, and ambiguous cultural dilemmas of all human societies. Fascinating, paradoxical, seemingly marginal yet so often challenging the very assumptions on which that society is founded, play and the fool are both childlike and satiric, commentaries on the society and a mocker of chaotic values and customs in a time of transition, doubt, upheaval or death of spirituality.

Wise indeed was the editor to entitle this selection *The Games of Gods and Man.*

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JAPAN

MCARTHUR, MEHER. *Gods and Goblins: Japanese Folk Paintings from Otsu.* Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum, 2000. 96 pages. Color illustrations, bib-

liography, exhibition checklist, appendices. Paper US$28.00; ISBN 1-877921-16-5. (Distributed by University of Washington Press, Seattle)

The cover illustrations for this book may lead the reader to expect to find strange things in the book. The front shows the figure of a Buddhist priest but with horns (one of them even broken), bulging huge eyes, and a large mouth lined with rows of fierce teeth. On the back cover there is a picture of Daikoku, the god of good fortune, standing on a ladder leaning against Fukurokujin's head, which Daikoku is shaving. These pictures lead right away into the book's topic, gods and goblins, and suggest at the same time that these beings are not seen as fearful or awe inspiring but rather as similar to "human beings."

Gods and Goblins is the unusual catalogue to an exhibition of so-called *Ōtsu-e* that was held at the Pacific Asia Museum of Pasadena from May to November, 1999. Ōtsu, a city on the shores of Lake Biwa, was the last station on the old Tōkaidō before one reached Kyoto. *Ōtsu-e* are folk paintings produced in this city with a seemingly light hand and in great numbers for the travelers and pilgrims passing through to take home as a religious picture or a pleasant souvenir. They represent a very local tradition with a long history of more than four hundred years.

This catalogue is "unusual" because it is much more than a simple list of the items exhibited accompanied with a brief explanation and preceded by a general introduction. It is a well-written account of the history of these paintings that considers their social environment, relates changes in their style to changes in taste and thought of the time, and which shows that the tradition is still very much alive today. In this manner the author successfully demonstrates the surprising consistency of the motifs used and of the style of *Ōtsu-e.* All together there may be more than one hundred motifs, but there is a certain core of a smaller number that reflects the prevailing taste of the buyers and also of the respective time. There are, therefore, noticeable variations, and yet the style preserves a certain basic character that make *Ōtsu-e* readily recognizable once one has seen a number of them. The consistency in style of these paintings prompts the author to raise some interesting questions concerning the meaning of such terms as "tradition" and "folk painting." She challenges the opinion of Yanagi Sōetsu who insisted that in order for paintings to qualify as "folk paintings" the anonymity of the artist is essential. She suggests with good reasons that despite the fact that *Ōtsu-e* artists are known and might even sign their works, as is the case with some painters who are presently active, *Ōtsu-e* do qualify as folk paintings because they appeal to mass taste, are produced in large numbers, and conform to a distinctive pattern. She further suggests that it is impossible to declare the end of a tradition, as Yanagi has done for the *Ōtsu-e,* if the people themselves continue it with the conviction that they are following such a tradition even when they experiment by introducing new features in order to make their works more attuned to the changing tastes of the public.

While she discusses the various features of the *Ōtsu-e,* the author quite naturally weaves into her text many aspects of Japanese culture and, therefore, helps the reader to appreciate these paintings within their cultural environment. In particular, I feel, there is one aspect found throughout this book, although it is not explicitly discussed: the playfulness and humor of Japanese folk religion. This is not to say that Japanese gods and goblins are taken lightly and are always considered to be playfully close to humans, but it seems to me that in representations such as the *Ōtsu-e* it becomes clear that these beings at times can seem very human without creating the impression that this would be an insult to their dignity. It is one way to bring the supernatural into everyday life in a manageable manner.

The text and the wonderful illustrations in this book make it a good introduction to Japanese folk religion. At the same time, its very useful appendices make it also a good

research tool for those wishing to pursue the topic further. The author offers not only an extensive bibliography organized according to period and language but also adds a list of the main characters that appear in *Ōtsu-e* with a short description of each and a list of the mainstream artists' works that feature themes of *Ōtsu-e*. Of all the appendices, the one with translations of the texts that appear on *Ōtsu-e* might eventually turn out to be the most appreciated because these texts offer a most useful gateway to the feelings of the common people. Those familiar with Japanese may sometimes feel that the translation falls short of rendering the nuances of the Japanese text, but this does not significantly detract from the charm, and certainly not from the usefulness and value of this fine publication.

Peter KNECHT

SCHNELL, SCOTT. *The Rousing Drum: Ritual Practice in a Japanese Community.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999. xi + 363 pages. Maps, illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. Paper US$33.95; ISBN 0-8248-2141-6.

I often talk to myself. So when I finished the last page of *The Rousing Drum* and uttered to myself, "Great book!" I was not unduly perplexed.

The stage for this pointedly human drama is the mountain-locked town of Furukawa. The timeline, which touches on the mythic past, begins roughly with the Meiji Restoration (1868) and extends to the present. The annually held Furukawa *matsuri* (festival), which is purported to evoke the rebellious identity of the region's inhabitants, becomes the primary catalyst whereby the town's residents, representing various sociopolitical and economic backgrounds, are pitched into direct confrontation. The merging of the various strata of local society in the liminal period of the *matsuri* culminates in one particular ritual component of the Furukawa *matsuri*, the "rousing drum" ritual. This ritual becomes the central focus for analysis and, according to the author's assessment, functions as a symbolic medium by which both unity and opposition are expressed.

The actual ritual object, a large drum that resembles a *mikoshi* (portable shrine), becomes the centerpiece of the ritual as it is paraded through the town. Schnell explains that Furukawa's individual neighborhoods sponsor smaller drum implements that are carried by teams of young men. The objective of these teams is to out maneuver the other teams, and then engage and "attack" the main drum structure. In conjunction with this activity, the inscribed symbolism of the ritual is claimed to have evolved an oppositional character. On occasion the liminality of the *matsuri* has propelled the participants to convert their normally hidden antagonisms into overt violence. Of course, the ritual's symbolic functional transformation is fully elaborated in the text while details are given of the *matsuri*'s development into its present form.

Avoiding the creation of a study that is simply synchronic, Schnell synthesizes a microhistorical and macrohistorical approach, purposefully integrating an ethnohistorical perspective into a study of ritual symbolism. Keynoting specific historical events at the local, regional, and national level, he describes how the citizens of Furukawa adapted to changing sociopolitical and economic conditions. A detailed account of the town and its environs is given, which maps the sociopolitical and economic boundaries. Bringing to the forefront issues concerning local and regional as well as economical and political identities, he compellingly sets the stage for a constructive discussion of conflict. It becomes readily clear how various sociopolitical issues became embroiled in the preparation and execution of the ritual itself.