

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.

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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 micro-historical 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.

Numerous topics pertinent to the study of Japan (e.g., gender roles, generational differences, questions of identity, and changes in demographics) are all touched upon in this study. Furthermore, although it does not comprise a community study in and of itself, this book does offer a myriad of insights into the interworkings of a community. This study, to borrow the ideas of Redfield, elucidates the fact that the town of Furukawa's *matsuri* is one local expression of the culture and history of a greater Japan.

The reader is periodically reminded that when viewed in the light of a continuing history, perceived isolated events can emerge with quite different meanings. Ritual as defined by static repetition is the archetypical perception that Schnell attempts with much success to dispel. Employing vivid examples, he skillfully proves that the rousing drum ritual has indeed been engaged in a transformational process. Nevertheless, there seems to be minimal consideration that this ritual does maintain a highly repetitive aspect. By ensuring that no break occurs in the nighttime hours between the major daylight rituals, it functions to help define the liminal time of the *matsuri*. It thus would appear to fulfill its egalitarian role of beckoning the townspeople, from all socioeconomic classes, to participate beyond the normal boundaries of human routine; it serves to heighten experience in the sacred time and space of the *matsuri*.

In a chapter entitled "Matsuri as Communal Ritual," Schnell undertakes an explanation of the basic premises on which his analysis is developed. Concerning the rituals of *matsuri*, he contends that secular and religious categories combine. That is to say, a distinction drawn between religious ritual and "secular" ritual is unnecessary in the case of a Japanese festival. This argument is valid to a degree. Nevertheless, the religious elements of the Furukawa *matsuri* cannot be denied. Even in the case of the rousing drum ritual, the drum is considered a sacred object and is believed to act out the will of the deity. Therefore, regardless of the ambiguous aspects that the *matsuri* presents, the actors of the ritual are able to apply meanings that may range from the "religious" on the one hand, to the "secular" on the other. It is solely dependent upon the locus of their feelings and motivations. These motivations are dynamic in that the actors can move fluidly between either extreme, even encompassing both simultaneously. Thus I would maintain that simply because participants do apply religious meanings that these meanings should become equally significant factors in the analysis of the *matsuri*. Whereas the author does argue that *matsuri* remain fundamentally religious (14), his overall analysis suffers from chronic social reductionism, in that the validity of religious interpretations is relegated to subordinate significance in the face of "secular" reasoning.

It is explained that the townspeople violently protest the banning of the rousing drum ritual by the authorities as a reaction to "suppression of their symbolic medium of opposition" (217). The author does not even entertain the idea that they could have protested as a reaction to the restrictions imposed upon the sanctity of the *matsuri* itself (restrictions on religious freedom). Likewise, when his informants state that they participate to receive good fortune throughout the coming year, this religiously orientated explanation is firmly countered by a reasoning that is more sociopolitically attuned (104). Giving primacy to the sociopolitical meaning that is embedded in the performance will not allow for the complete meaning of the *matsuri* and its component rituals to be ascertained.

In regards to the *matsuri*, Schnell comments that "[w]hether the participants believe in the literal existence of this (supernatural) entity has little bearing, for it is as a *symbol* that its presence is being employed" (18; author's emphasis). I would hate to witness the conflict that might erupt if I told my dear Catholic mother that Christ Himself does not come down and enter the Sacrament of the Eucharist during the ritual of the Mass, that it is merely symbolization. She is aware of the symbolization, but she is also certain that it is *not only* symbolization. The religious consciousness of the participants plays a vital role in comprehending

ritual. It helps define their reality.

Within this study, the term “*matsuri*” is defined as a Shinto shrine festival that is “a communal celebration performed by the residents of a delimited geographical area in tribute to their local guardian deity”(14). It is explained that the performers in the *matsuri* as a whole, and more specifically the rousing drum ritual, were overwhelmingly the male members of the local community, and that they expressed sociopolitical opposition by means of ritual. Correspondingly, the female residents were relegated to a role of passive observation. Which leads us to ask, Is the need to express opposition merely a male social construction? Perhaps not, for the author qualifyingly speculates that observation can be participation (244). Obviously, then, the tourists that the *matsuri* attracts in its present-day incarnation should also be considered as participants. If so, his definition of *matsuri* is in need of correction.

Traditionally, this definition was appropriate in regards to Furukawa’s *matsuri* when generally both performers and observers were residents of the town. Still, the present *matsuri* fails to meet the restriction of “residents of a delimited geographical area” if participation is perceived as being more inclusive. The tourist who comes to the *matsuri* seeking spirituality under the pretext of recreation once again stresses the pertinence of considering the religious beliefs held by the participants.

It appears that the residents of Furukawa are extending their community, willfully or otherwise, to incorporate these tourists. In a sense, the traditional localized communal cosmology of Furukawa is once again being exposed to outside forces. This ongoing integration with external elements is reminiscent of the changes that Schnell documents as having occurred in the past, for example, the replacement of the local shrine’s deity with a nationally authorized one (196). In his final assessment, he recognizes this most recent form of conflict: resident insider versus tourist outsider.

My critique should not detract from the extreme value of Schnell’s analysis. Indeed, as he similarly attests to in his acknowledgments, consensus is not necessarily the most desirable result when attempting to understand human experience.

In sum, being filled with innumerable topics of interest, few of which could be addressed here, there is more than adequate reason to promote the reading of this book. Not only has Schnell uncovered an extremely engaging research object but he has also presented it in *The Rousing Drum* in a way that seductively elicits from the reader a desire to reassess the meaning of ritual attached to it by those most salient of historical actors—ourselves.

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UEDA, MAKOTO. Compiler, Translator. *Light Verse from the Floating World: An Anthology of Premodern Japanese Senryū*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. ix + 273 pages. List of sources, selected bibliography. Cloth US\$49.50/£31.50; ISBN 0-2311-1550-4. Paper US\$17.50/£11.50; ISBN 0-2311-1551-2.

The latest of Makoto Ueda’s many contributions to the study of Japanese literature, *Light Verse from the Floating World* provides a selection of poems graciously translated from the first collections of *senryū* compiled in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Usually translated as “comic poems,” *senryū* have never been granted the attention and esteem outside of Japan that have been accorded haiku. This is regrettable. One might even argue that the focus on forms such as haiku has skewed our image of Japan. Most frequently comic and satiric in