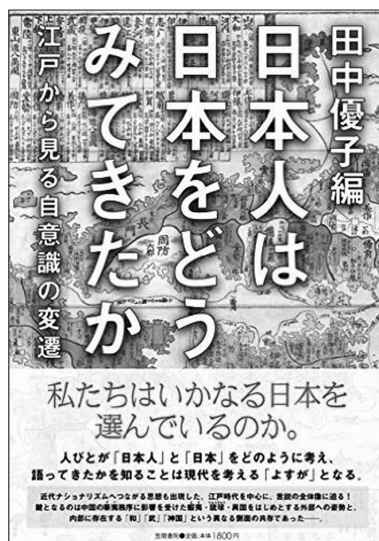


Review of *Nihonjin wa Nihon o dō mitekita ka: Edo kara miru jiishiki no henshen* (How the Japanese Have Viewed Japan: Changes in Views in the Edo Period), edited by Tanaka Yūko. Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 2015. [日本人は日本をどうみてきたか: 江戸から見る自意識の変遷/田中優子編. 東京: 笠間書院, 2015. 1,944円. 248ページ.]

The international popularity of Japanese food has become a topic of conversation. The Olympics are coming to Tokyo again in 2020. And there is a never ending stream of events bringing increased international interest in Japan. As a result, the number of foreigners who visit Japan has exceeded 20 million people per year, it is said. Yet despite foreigners' increased contact with Japan, their understanding of Japan has hardly improved. In fact, the more contact one has with Japan, the more difficult it is to know the true nature of Japan. When cultural essays take up the image of Japan, the task becomes especially difficult. There are many things that are quite ordinary for Japanese, but that become impossible for foreigners to understand. A book that shows once again how difficult it is for foreigners to discover Japan is the present *How the Japanese Have Viewed Japan*, edited by Tanaka Yūko.

The eighteen contributors form a magnificent research group. In the preface, Prof. Tanaka explains that the book is a new look at perceptions of Japan, the result of a group research effort at the Research Center for International Japanese Studies of Hōsei University. In answer to the call for an international approach to Japan studies, the book includes chapters by researchers from Korea and the Slovak Republic. As indicated by the subtitle, the book looks at the early modern era, starting with the Edo Period (1603–1867). The approach of the present work—looking at Japanese perceptions of Japan to develop a view of Japan—has been used by foreign scholars as well. As befitting a work of this many contributors, the book encompasses many fields. In the preface, Prof. Tanaka lists some of the fields covered: “the issue of a name for the county, relations with the rest of East Asia, the importance



of the Northeast and Okinawa for Japan, perceptions of Japanese territory as viewed from maps, images of Japanese and foreigners in illustrations, etc.” A fitting list of topics from such a splendid research group.

To organize these diverse images of Japan, the editor selected seventeen essays and five supporting articles called “columns” from the work of the group and gathered them into four categories (or parts of the book). In the category called “The Civilized versus Barbarian Order” 華夷秩序, she inserted seven essays (including her own) and one supporting article; in the category called “Country of Harmony” 和の国, she inserted two essays and two supporting articles; in the category called “Country of Martial Glory” 武の国, she inserted three essays and one supporting article; and in the category called “Country of the Gods” 神の国, she inserted four essays and one supporting article. Though the essays and supporting articles are not directly related, in reading this material, one begins to see that the last three categories has elements in common with the first category. The idea of civilized versus barbarian was obviously learned from that fount of civilization China. But the Japanese inverted this idea and saw their own country as the country of martial glory, the country of the gods, and looked down on other countries, much as the center looked down upon the periphery in China. A country of harmony, a term that calls to mind the vitality of Japanese groups, is a society in which relations among people are congenial. What seem like the three separate categories—a country of harmony, a country of martial glory, and a country of the gods—feed into and sustain the overarching category of a nation with a civilized, versus barbarian, order.

For Japanese, there is nothing strange about the names of these categories. Each of these categories forms the crux of a view of Japan. The reason for several categories is that individual Japanese have different views of Japan. In the case of the countries of the West, Christianity is probably central to most people’s perception of their country. In China, which boasts of a long cultural history, Confucianism or Daoism forms the basis of people’s perception of the country. This book paints a picture of divergent Japanese perceptions of Japan that even foreigners will find easy to understand.

Another point that I would like to make about this book is that it is possible simultaneously to hold the views of Japan that the Japanese inversion of the Chinese idea of civilized versus barbarian gave rise to native studies 国学 in the early modern period, that it provided the foundation for Japanese nationalism still with us today, and that it encouraged Japan’s militarization from the Meiji period (1868–1912) on. It is also possible to divide Japan into the central region and the outlying districts and to view the civilized center as looking down on the barbaric periphery (Ryukyu and Okinawa, the Northeast and Hokkaido). This disregard for the periphery recently resurfaced in the

issue of the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps base at Futenma to Henoko. Despite opposition from Okinawa Prefecture and Okinawa residents, the affected city of Nago and Nago residents, the central government persists with relocation construction in a manner reminiscent of civilized versus barbarian thought of the early modern period. And it is not just the government that looks down on Okinawa, but also, perhaps, residents of the central island of Honshu. The anger on the part of Okinawans lends historical substance to views found in the literature on the center versus the periphery. Thus we see that the notions of the country of harmony, country of martial glory, and country of the gods add substance to the notion of the civilized versus barbarian order as it operates in history.

Lots of familiar names appear in this work. For instance, there are *The Sino-Japanese Illustrated Encyclopedia Organized by Categories* 和漢三才圖會 compiled by Terajima Ryōan 寺島良安, the puppet play *The Battles of Coxinga* 國性爺合戰 by Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門, *The Illustrated Biography of Toyotomi Hideyoshi* 繪本太閤記 by Takeuchi Kakusai 武内確斎, and *Crescent Moon: The Adventures of Minamoto no Tametomo* 椿説弓張月 by Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 with prints by Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎. These are but a few examples of how this work seeks the image of Japan in source materials. I highly recommend this excellent collection, which presents one scholarly group's take on the state of international Japanese studies.

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