H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Stephen Vlastos, ed. *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998. xvii + 328 pp. $25.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-520-20637-3; $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-520-20621-2.

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Published on H-Japan (September, 1999)

In this volume, Stephen Vlastos and his colleagues demonstrate that many prominent Japanese "traditions" were in fact created during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Japan underwent the arduous, and at times traumatic, experience of modernization. Inspired by the work of scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm, the authors seek not simply to debunk common misconceptions, but rather to historicize the invention of tradition and ascertain its social and political effects. Scholars such as Carol Gluck, Takashi Fujitani, and Helen Hardacre have already applied this analytical method fruitfully to the study of the modern imperial institution and State Shinto. This volume, however, shifts the focus to the cultural domain, with essays grouped around the themes of harmony, village, folk, sports, gender, and history. The authors seek in particular to elucidate the relationship of invented traditions to social conflict and national identity within a capitalist modernity characterized by destabilizing, rapid change and uneven development. They do not limit their inquiry to elites seeking to mask real power relations, but also shed light on the activities of marginal groups attempting to articulate "counterhegemonic cultural identities" (p. 5).

Part One, on harmony, includes essays by Andrew Gordon on changing representations of a paternalistic "Japanese-style labor management," Ito Kimio on evolving images of Shotoku Taishi and the concept of *wa*, and Frank Upham on the notion of a Japanese cultural aversion to litigation. Upham's essay demonstrates most forcefully that political elites "have reified one among many historical processes as 'tradition' while denying equally valid ones" and have developed institutions to reinforce their chosen tradition (p. 58).

Part Two features essays by Irwin Scheiner on contested ideas of community, Stephen Vlastos on interwar radical agrarianism, Louise Young on the Manchurian colonization movement, and Jennifer Robertson on recent attempts to "make" native places (*furusato-zukuri*) in localities marginalized by urbanization and capitalist development. Of particular interest is Vlastos' suggestion that "tradition" held little positive meaning for *nohonshugisha* such as Tachibana Kozaburo, who rejected both the "feudal" past and capitalist present in favor of a utopian vision of classless farming communities. Nonetheless, writes Vlastos, radical agrarianism hinged upon a fundamentally conservative conception of property and gender relations that made it amenable to cooptation by military champions of the Showa Restoration.

Nostalgia seems to be the more prominent motif in invented traditions of the village, as seen in Robertson's essay and in Scheiner's discussion of the imaginings of nativist historian Irokawa Daikichi. Nowhere, however, are the political implications of nostalgia more striking than in the work of Japan's pioneering ethnologist, Yanagita Kunio. In Part Three, Hashimoto Mitsuru and H. D. Harootunian describe Yanagita's invention of an abiding folk, the *jomin*, who "successfully remained unaffected by the ravages of capitalist change" (p. 145) and whose existence could be affirmed in custom and religious observances. Although Yanagita bitterly decried the desolation wrought by industrial growth, these authors suggest that native ethnology provided a means for integrating an imagined holistic past into the modern nation-state and economy –for promoting what Harootunian calls a "gemeinschaft capitalism" (p. 150).

In Part Four, Inoue Shun and Lee Thompson discuss the parallel creation of traditional and modern elements in the martial arts (*budo*) and sumo, both of which laid claim to the title of Japan's "national sport" (*kokugi*). Although these stimulating essays do not consider how the invention of national sports influenced traditions of masculinity in modern Japan, the two essays in Part Five fo-

cus on efforts to create traditions through the gendering of specific spaces. Jordan Sand's study of the invention of domesticity in the late-Meiji years highlights the activities of self-consciously middle-class intellectuals often inspired by Protestant ideas of social reform, and the architects who made such changes possible. Crucial to this project was the institutionalization of regular family gatherings around a shared dining table large enough to accommodate only members of the "intimate family circle" (p. 201). Table-centered intimacy of a different kind figures prominently in Miriam Silverberg's discussion of efforts by cafe waitresses (*jokyu*) to renegotiate gender relations and erotic performance within the "modern" cafés of interwar Japanese cities. Yet whereas the middle-class home (*katei*) was able to coexist fairly smoothly with more conservative formulations of a patriarchal household (*ie*), the *jokyu* could not escape the realities of economic and gender domination, backed by increasingly blatant state repression. Ironically, the cafe waitress has now become part of a different kind of tradition: a historical narrative that has masked her subjectivity by reducing the modern experience to the formula "*ero-guro-nansensu*."

The final section treats the construction of history. Ka"ren Wigen traces the creation *ex nihilo* of a Shinshu regional identity based on arbitrarily defined prefectural borders. Andrew Barshay argues that through their analysis of a "Japanese type" of capitalism grounded in "semi-feudal" social relations, Koza-ha Marxists such as Yamada Moritaro lent unwitting support (as did Yanagita and the native ethnologists) to conservative elites bent on appropriating the past to promote a "tradition of noncapitalist capitalism." (p. 243) Carol Gluck then leads the reader on a whirlwind tour through the hall of mirrors that reflect for modern Japanese the Edo that they desire to find: feudal or post-modern, rural or urban, industrious or playful. In his afterword, Dipesh Chakrabarty raises probing questions concerning the tenability of an analytical dichotomy between invented tradition and reality, the coexistence of "past" and "present" temporalities within a single modern subject, and the importance of the training of the senses in the creation of tradition and national identity.

The essays in *Mirror of Modernity* inform each other in interesting ways, leading the reader to explore the connections and disjunctures among the various "traditions" offered for analysis. I found myself, however, wishing for greater attention to a number of significant subjects. How, for example, were traditions of masculinity forged from a combination of images of the past and new institutions of socialization? How might the invention of tradition approach be applied to the shifting modes and meanings of *enka*, from Meiji agit-prop to Showa shmaltz, to further our understanding of the formation and mobilization of subjectivities? Most notable in their absence from this volume are the yakuza, who, whether described as a pathological vestige or a noble heritage, have self-consciously represented themselves and been portrayed in popular culture as guardians of "traditional values," including, as the Kobe earthquake showed, community solidarity. Finally, although Young and Silverberg clearly address the relationship between the Japanese metropole and its colonial possessions, closer attention to modern Japan's imperial condition would have expanded our understanding of the dynamics and implications of the invention of tradition.

Such demands aside, *Mirror of Modernity* is a stimulating, coherent collection that raises many questions concerning the experience of social change, the formation of culture, and the distribution of power in Japan. This volume will be a welcome addition to graduate-level syllabi, and a number of the essays are equally suitable for use in advanced undergraduate classes.

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Citation: David R. Ambaras. Review of Vlastos, Stephen, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan.* H-Japan, H-Net Reviews. September, 1999.

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