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Satomi Ishikawa
Seeking the Self

Individualism and Popular Culture in Japan

Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien, 2007.
253 pp., 12 ill.

Worlds of East Asia. Vol. 8

*Edited by Robert H. Gassmann, Eduard Klopfenstein, Andrea Riemenschneider,
Pierre-François Souyri and Nicolas Zufferey*

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This book is about the self in contemporary Japan. In contrast to Euro-American cultures, in which the self is considered to be the essence of personhood, in Japanese culture the self is constantly reconstructed in relation to others. This particular self is studied by examining the ways popular culture is consumed, with a special focus on manga, the Japanese word for comics and cartoons.

The first part of the book contains an ethnographic research in which the author investigates the relationship between popular media and the search for self-knowledge. In the second part a historical analysis traces the development of self-seeking in Japan since the country's modernisation period.

Contents: Consuming Commonality: Manga, Otaku, Tamagocchi – Consuming Empathy – Making a Japanese Individual: the 1970s and the '80s – From National to Cultural *Japaneseness*: the Postwar Period up to 1970 – The Emergence of national *Japaneseness*: from the Meiji Period to 1945.

The Author: Satomi Ishikawa studied Chinese Studies at Ochanomizu University in Tokyo and Anthropology of Media at the School of Oriental African Studies in London. Later she worked as a freelance translator for international broadcasting services. Having lived abroad for many years, she became interested in her native culture and conducted her doctoral research in East Asian Studies at the University of Cologne, where she received her Ph.D.



PETER LANG

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Judith Fröhlich

Rulers, Peasants and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Japan

Ategawa no shō 1004-1304

*Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien, 2007. 223 pp.
Worlds of East Asia. Vol. 12*

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This book provides new insights into the creation and use of written texts in medieval Japan. Drawing upon lawsuits from Ategawa no shō in central Japan between the early eleventh and early fourteenth centuries, the author analyses the use of writing by various social groups – temple priests, warriors and peasants. Though these social groups had different levels of literacy and accordingly followed different communicative traditions, their use of writing had common features. In the semi-literate society of medieval Japan the dissemination and reception of written texts took place primarily through speaking and hearing. Documents of the medieval period therefore had a distinctly oral characteristic. Priests, warriors and peasants all alluded to motifs in their legal pleas that were in essence given by the oral world of tales, legends and gossip. By showing that literacy was not in conflict but interacted with orality, the author uncovers an important aspect of the use of the written word in medieval Japan.

Contents: Orality and literacy in the Medieval Period – The History of Ategawa no shō – Representing Land and Creating a Written Tradition: The *Goshuin engi* of Kōyasan – Documentary Proof and Oral Testimony: The Litigation of 1275 to 1276 – Peasants Vocalising Resistance: The Katakana Petition of 1275.

The Author: Judith Fröhlich was born in 1973. She studied History, Japanese and History of Art at Zurich University. In 1999 she graduated with a master thesis on the social and economic history of medieval Japan. In 2004 she completed her Ph.D. thesis on which this book is based. Her current research is about national identity and the perception of the West in nineteenth-century Japan.



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