problems. It is necessary to install the supplied fonts onto your hard disk or the text will not display properly, resulting in lost lines of text (including in the bibliography) and some navigational problems. Also, one may encounter difficulties getting the "Mark card" feature to operate successfully. (A help number to call is provided with the software.) These are minor irritations, however. As for content, there are a few concerns. An occasional non-Pinyin spelling for Chinese words slipped in. Nanking should have been Nanjing, for example, to be consistent throughout, and the bibliography, while comprehensive, should have included the important volume by Guisso et al., which employs the same title as this program and serves as a good supplement to it.[1] More substantively, many users may be misled by the incorporation into the package of a film on the Great Wall as it exists today. They may wrongly conclude that this is the original wall or that it resembles the Qin version. Instructors need to explain to their students that the mostly Ming dynasty wall they are seeing on their screens is a much later development.

If the producers' desire was to provide for the novice an interesting interactive learning package to stimulate the mind and increase curiosity about ancient China and its civilization, they have succeeded admirably. This reviewer hopes they will not abandon the project now that the technology has improved accessibility and broadened the appeal, and that they will continue to improve the product until it approaches the fully comprehensive learning package on this important period of East Asian history that it could still become. This can be accomplished by updating the materials to include more recent discoveries, such as the excavation of Pit #2 begun in 1994,[2] providing more data on the still images and their sources, improving the navigational aids, expanding the "Ask the Experts" section (identifying the experts better would help), including some hypertext primary documents from the Qin era, and updating and annotating the bibliography. Then, East Asianists would be looking at one of their first electronic textbooks!

Roland L. Higgins

NOTES

1. R.W.L. Guisso, Catherine Pagani, and David Miller, *The First Emperor of China* (Toronto: Birch Lane Press, 1989).
2. See "The Second Pit of Qinshihuang's Terra Cotta Army Undergoes Excavation," *China Today* (January 1995): 36-42.

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Comparing Cultures
Readings on Contemporary Japan for American Writers

EDITED BY MERRY I. WHITE AND SYLVAN BARNET
BOSTON: BEDFORD BOOKS OF ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, 1995
XIX + 475 PAGES

Comparing Cultures is no ordinary writing text. It could just as easily be titled *Japan: An Introductory Reader*. The fifty-plus essays and book excerpts, along with extensive chapter introductions by the editors, make this book an excellent introduction to Japan for advanced high school or early college students. And, as the editors intended, it presents an innovative approach to English composition.

The editors divide the book into two parts which total eleven chapters. Each chapter consists of the editors' introduction, a number of readings, and suggestions for writing. Part one, the first two chapters, prepares students to enter a foreign culture. The editors' introduction to chapter one includes a discussion of the ways people often view other cultures. In the extreme, the two sides are "people are all pretty much the same" and "it is impossible for an outsider ever to read another culture accurately" (p. 7). The editors take a middle ground, and they hope to persuade their readers to do the same. To make their point, they include "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," Horace Miner's famous spoof of an anthropologist's essay on American culture. Anthropology sharpened Miner's eye as he looked back on the U.S. So, too, the editors hope, students using *Comparing Cultures* will learn to view their own culture more carefully, as well as Japan's. As they state in the "Preface for Instructors," "We use a single culture, Japan, as an aid or foil to enable students to think and write about America with a fresh perspective" (p. v).

The second chapter of part one, "Thinking About Texts," presents the elements of a standard composition text: note taking, highlighting, and summarizing; journals, essays, and analyses. This chapter is supplemented by the appendix, "Doing Research," which explores additional writing concerns: using sources, conducting field research, and interviewing research subjects; audience, theses, and quotations. This aspect of the book benefits from the expertise of Sylvan Barnet of Tufts University, an author of many successful writing texts.

Merry White, associate professor of sociology at Boston University, uses her extensive background in Japanese studies to guide the editors in part two, "Readings for Cultural Comparison." Most of these nine chapters, which include growing up, courtship, consumption, and work, focus on life experience in Japan. Many of the readings, usually those written by journalists, refer to specific Japanese people and their lives: women in their twenties, homosexuals, *sumō* wrestlers, and company em-

ployees. Through these readings, students who have never been to Japan can gain the insights of a traveler.

But a person does not come to understand Japan merely by meeting Japanese. The student needs a context through which to view the culture. *Comparing Cultures* provides this context by including a number of good academic pieces written by well-known scholars of Japan. William LaFleur contrasts Japanese and American attitudes on abortion; David Plath explains old age and retirement. Even some old standards appear: Chie Nakane on hierarchy, and Ruth Benedict on child rearing. In addition, many of the pieces from magazines and newspapers, written by writers such as James Fallows and Donald Richie, take a scholar's analytical approach.

The editors' essays at the beginning of each chapter also place the readings in a context of the scholarly and popular debates on Japan. Before the Ruth Benedict excerpt, for example, the editors explain: "While her description of infant care and training is somewhat outdated, . . . still the underlying cultural values such as early social learning and early training in gender-specific roles are relevant today" (pp. 75-6). The essay before the chapter "Women's Roles" outlines two images of the new Japanese women: the "quiet revolutionary" as described by Sumiko Iwao and the "victim of the system" (p. 157). These introductory essays will help students put the readings in perspective, as will the questions/assignments before each chapter and following each reading. As the editors explain in the "Preface for Instructors," their goal is to assist students "to examine thoughtfully their own experiences as Americans" rather than to assist them "to become experts on Japan" (p. v). For instance, in the chapter "Leisure and Entertainment," the editors suggest the following:

> Write a guidebook entry to some part of your neighborhood—for instance to golf courses, places of worship, health clubs, bowling alleys, pizza parlors, or colleges. Alternatively, if you are aware of anything in the United States that is somewhat comparable to an *onsen* [Japanese hot springs resort], write an entry for an American guidebook (pp. 313-14).

The value of these kinds of writing exercises in a course on Japan, however, is limited. I find more useful assignments that take the reader back to the text. For instance, from the last chapter "Notions of Nation":

> The selection turns on the fact that Kondo is initially assumed to be a native Japanese by those Japanese among whom she is doing anthropological research. Ann Allison (p. 314) also does anthropological research—in a Japanese hostess bar. Speculate on how Allison's experiences might have been affected had she looked Japanese. Or (drawing on Allison and the selections in Chapter 5) imagine how Kondo's research in a hostess bar might have proceeded (p. 418).

In the end, the editors provide about four or five questions/assignments per reading. And if that is not enough, the separate "Editors' Notes" for instructors contains one-page summaries of each reading, along with suggestions for discussion and writing. There is something here to satisfy everyone.

Most of my criticisms of the book result from my desire to use the book in a different way than the editors intended, i.e., as a Japanese Studies, rather than a composition, textbook. The "Annotated Bibliography for Further Reading," included only in the "Editors' Notes" for instructors, is very brief and contains many references already given elsewhere in the book. The "Note on Names and Pronunciation" may help the non-Japanese-speaking reader, but the book fails to include macrons to distinguish between long and short vowels, a crucial aspect of correct Japanese pronunciation. Another concern is the variation in the readings. While many of the authors are familiar names in the field of Japanese Studies, their approaches to Japan greatly vary. Some write for a scholarly audience; others for the foreign population in Japan; still others for an American audience of non-specialists. Their work comes from sources such as *The New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Time Magazine*, and *Mangajin*, not to mention various university presses and popular publishing companies. Even with all the explanatory comments by the editors, students will need help sorting out opinions that are passing trends and those that have had a more long-lasting influence on our understanding of Japan. The quality of writing also varies. Writers such as James Fallows present appropriate models for composition students. But for the most part, writers on par with George Orwell and E.B. White are absent. Lastly, the editors might have made better use of Japanese literature. They limit themselves to a tenth-century piece by Sei Shōnagon and a short story by Kazuo Ishiguro, the Japanese writer living in England whose 1989 novel *The Remains of the Day* became the movie.

So as not to appear too critical, let me add that I plan to use *Comparing Cultures* in my introductory course on Japan. I think the book will give students a picture of Japan that does not come across in the more specialized books I assign such as Mary Brinton's *Women and the Economic Miracle* and Andrew Gordon's *Postwar Japan as History*. As much as I would like to jump into these more scholarly works, I realize that my students also need to explore Japan for themselves. Thinking back on my first trip to Japan as a student in my early twenties, I remember most vividly the challenges Japan presented to my naive ethnocentrism. Many of the characteristics of human nature that I assumed were universal seemed different in Japan. In those first few months in Japan I learned more about myself and my own culture than I did about Japan. I hope I can provide a similar experience for my students, and I am sure White and Barnet's book will help.

Gary DeCoker

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