

Cold War Crucible pursues this argument across a time period stretching from 1946 to 1952. The first section explores the role played by local agency, and frustrations, in carrying forward agendas more frequently associated with high politics: anti-communism, Japan's Reverse Course and anti-Americanism. In the second section, the author argues that social forces emboldened by Cold War rhetoric became political forces in their own right, pushing governments toward confrontation with one another and their own populations. The final section demonstrates that "domestic purges" (p. 277) and "social warfare" (p. 278) occurring on both sides of the ideological divide were manifestations of the same underlying phenomena: prewar social dynamics, imagined Cold War "realities" and state-sanctioned policies of domestic repression.

Contrary to what its subtitle suggests, the book is not about the Korean Conflict, and most chapters do not engage with that subject much at all. Rather, it is a fine contribution to the growing subfield of what might be called "early Cold War social history": scholarship which, by treating the late 1940s and early 1950s as a single period, decentres elite-centred Cold War narratives by bringing them into dialogue with grassroots experience, legacies of prior decades and the dynamics of intermediate zones which, like Asia, existed between the superpowers' core territorial regions. Nevertheless, its relentless argument that the Cold War amounted to a socially imagined and constructed "reality" (a word encrusted with scare quotes throughout), while provocative, may not appeal to all readers. It provides scant evidence to suggest that social imaginaries alone pushed the observable events of the period forward. The historiographical strategy of treating "the center of power, not as the *origin*, but a *part* of social and cultural events" (p. 277) seems to rely on referring to elite politics only when they appear vulnerable to grassroots challenges. Nor does the emphasis on discourse and imagination explain how even local events unfolded as they did. Even on the ground, fantasies of order created real instances of persecution and terror. While Masuda acknowledges such outcomes, it is somewhat reductive to explain them as logical outcomes of some mutually imagined need. (An example: "even if it entailed the killing of tens of thousands of people, and however cruel it was, [China's] *Zhenfan* movement did provide a sort of 'order' to an unprecedented degree through the purification of society and settlement of social confusion and conflicts", p. 256.) By sidelining political leaders and focusing instead on popular forces in the aggregate, *Cold War Crucible* suggests that the period's historical reputation for social repression was both richly deserved and primarily attributable to local self-interest, prejudice and groupthink.

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JAPAN

Precarious Japan, by Anne Allison, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2013, 256 pp., US\$23.95 (paperback)

In *Precarious Japan*, anthropologist Anne Allison paints an evocative picture of poverty and insecurity in contemporary Japan. In Chapter 2 she traces the growth in precariousness to the "liquidisation" (*ryūdōka*) of what she calls the "family-based production model" following the collapse of the bubble economy in the 1990s. This model, she argues, drove economic growth and ensured social stability in the boom years of the postwar from the mid-1950s

through to the 1980s. It was based on a gendered division of labour in which male household heads worked as primary wage-earners in stable jobs while women, youth and the elderly supplemented the household income by working for low wages for sub-contracting firms. The collapse of this model, Allison argues, has produced much of the precariousness visible in contemporary Japan.

Allison demonstrates that it is not only stable employment opportunities that have become precarious since the collapse of the bubble economy but also the ties that bind the individual to the broader community. She utilises anti-poverty activist Yuasa Makoto's (2008) argument that poverty is caused not only by a lack of money but by a more general lack of *tame* ("reserves"). These "reserves", which include savings, inner strength, family relationships and community connections, help us to survive in times of crisis. Increasing numbers of people in Japan are finding that their reserves have dried up, leading to an increase in what Allison calls "social precarity". Without *tame*, a single stressor, such as the loss of a job, can cause a cascading series of crises leading to homelessness, chronic unemployment, substance abuse and even suicide.

Allison paints a poignant picture of the plight of the growing ranks of the unemployed, the homeless, the elderly and the mentally ill in contemporary Japan. In doing so, however, she relies too heavily and too uncritically on sensationalist coverage of these issues in the mainstream media. This sensationalist reportage, as sociologist Shibuya Nozomu (2010) and anti-poverty activist Matsumoto Hajime (2008) point out, can serve a disciplinary function. The constant repetition of horror stories about poverty in the mainstream media encourages already overstretched workers to work even harder to secure the few stable jobs that are still available.

While Allison attributes the growing precariousness of contemporary Japanese society to the breakdown of the "family-based production model", a more historical approach might have prompted her to consider the fracturing of other postwar institutions such as religious organisations, socialist and communist parties and trade unions. These institutions provided a degree of representation and support to the excluded during much of the postwar. This omission reflects a more general failure to connect contemporary precariousness with the historic class struggles that shaped the institution of work in Japan. The vicious attacks on organised labour that occurred in the late 1940s and 1950s produced the "family-based production model" with its illusory sense of security centred on the family unit. The collapse of this model reflects not only the abandonment of workers by corporations and the state but an exodus from its strictures by workers themselves.

Allison highlights a number of interesting and important projects via which the precarious are self-organising in response to poverty and social exclusion. Detailed interviews with activists such as Yuasa Makoto and Amamiya Karin convey some of the creative responses to precariousness that are emerging in Japan today. Yet Allison tends to present these examples in isolation, giving little sense of the breadth and power of today's anti-poverty movements. She is relatively dismissive of the "precariat" protest movement, which is relegated to a footnote (p. 213), although activists such as Amamiya herself regard it as a critical part of their activism. As a result we are left with an unnecessarily bleak portrait of contemporary Japan.

Despite these problems, however, *Precarious Japan* is an important work that draws attention to the very real problem of precariousness in contemporary Japan. Allison approaches her sources with a high degree of humility and compassion. She excels in posing questions rather than pretending to provide definitive answers, and demonstrates an awareness that "truth" itself is always precarious.

References

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Hokusai's Great Wave: biography of a global icon, by Christine M. E. Guth,
Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015, 272 pp., US\$20.00 (paperback)

The main purpose of Christine M. E. Guth's new book, *Hokusai's Great Wave: Biography of a Global Icon*, is neither to explore the interpretation of Hokusai's print art nor to celebrate his talent or success. Rather, this monograph is a study of the globalisation of early modern visual arts. Through a rigorous analysis of the reproductions and adaptations of Hokusai's wave in the world, Guth examines the highly complicated process by which Hokusai's motif crossed national and cultural borders and the boundaries of genres and media to become recognised as a global icon. Guth tackles a vast number of examples, ranging from impressionist paintings, commercial posters, and manga to fashion products, daily products and street graphics.

"The Great Wave" cannot be reduced to a single interpretation or a simple form. Guth explains that it is the diverse connotations of the wave that facilitated the circulation of the image and the production of adaptations beyond Japan. Guth's study emphasises how the interconnectivity of people and cultures leads the cultural product to take on additional contexts and the image's semiotic richness expands its performativity and its space for interpretation. As the author implies, Hokusai's motif's pervasiveness reminds us of Iwabuchi Koichi's discussion about Japan's successful export of popular culture to East and Southeast Asia because of its "deterritorialisation" (*mukokuseki*). Yet, the significance of Guth's study lies in her emphasis on the productivity of the global flows of people and cultures rather than on the scale of Hokusai's image's distribution. Guth also stresses the ambiguous location of originality in the cross-cultural space, because the reproductions and adaptations of Hokusai's wave more often than not take a new life rather than being treated as imitations of an original.

Chapter 1 begins with a brief outline of Hokusai's life, and traces the process of the dissemination of his famous print series of Mount Fuji in nineteenth-century Japan. Guth explains that the success of Hokusai's work lies in the interplay of the familiar motif of Mount Fuji and the unfamiliar techniques imported from Europe. She shows how the hybrid use of the motif, material and techniques highlighted Japan's increasing connectivity with the outside world, which prompted viewers' interest in imagining broader landscapes beyond Japan.

Chapter 2 shifts to the circulation of Hokusai's great waves in Europe and America since the mid-nineteenth century, following the early introduction of Hokusai's *Manga*, vast collections of illustrations. Guth elaborates how Hokusai's great wave, carrying diverse images, has been translated in different cultural contexts and reproduced in various media.

Chapter 3, focusing on US–Japan relations since the opening of the ports in 1853, traces the shift of the forms and meanings of "The Great Wave" in the US and discusses how the shift reflects the political and economic relationship between the two countries. Guth explains that while Hokusai's wave was often employed as a device to portray Japan as an exotic other, such exoticisation ultimately prompted Japanese artists and American resident artists with a Japanese

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