Iowa Research Online
The University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

Department of Anthropology Publications

1-1-2006

Ema Shu's "The Mountain Folk": Fictionalized Ethnography and Veiled Dissent.

Scott Schnell
University of Iowa

Copyright © 2006 The Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture. Posted by permission.

Asian Folklore Studies, Vol 65:2 (2006), pp.269-321.

Hosted by Iowa Research Online. For more information please contact: lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Scott Schnell
University of Iowa

Ema Shū's "The Mountain Folk"

Fictionalized Ethnography and Veiled Dissent

Abstract

This article explores the use of literature as a source of historical and ethnographic data. It focuses on the writer Ema Shū and his massive historical novel *Yama no tami*, or "The Mountain Folk." The novel describes a peasant rebellion that engulfed the remote Hida region in 1869, just as Japan began to modernize. Ema first conceived the novel during the increasing militarism of the 1930s, and was himself subjected to police surveillance for his political activities. In response, he recreated himself as a folklorist, combing the mountain villages of Hida for ethnographic data. This allowed him to interview older residents about their experiences during the rebellion, which he then incorporated directly into his narrative. Through a presentation and analysis of several key excerpts, I will demonstrate that Ema's novel, though fictionalized, is nevertheless essential in recovering the lives and experiences of a remote mountain people and understanding their resistance to modernization reforms. I will also argue that Ema intended his novel not merely as an exercise in evoking the past, but as a veiled expression of dissent against the militarist Japanese government of his own era.

Keywords: Hida region—mountain folk—historical narrative—fictionalized ethnography—popular rebellion—veiled dissent

Asian Folklore Studies, Volume 65, 2006: 269–321

Anthropologists, historians, and folklorists alike struggle with the problem of recovering the past experiences of "ordinary" people—that is, those who constitute the vast majority in any population. Memories are selective and often suffused with nostalgia or disdain, neither of which is conducive to accurate accounting. Written documents are typically predisposed toward the perceptions of the literary elite or outside observer, and may therefore convey a narrow and biased perspective. To complicate matters, Scott (1990, 87) draws our attention to "the more profound difficulty presented by earnest efforts of subordinate groups to conceal their activities and opinions, which might expose them to harm." He coins the term "hidden transcript" in referring to the missing portion, suggesting that "official" accounts dissemble as much as they reveal. This coincides with Wood's (1990, 83) more general assertion that "only a small part of what takes place is observed; much less is recorded; and what has survived is surely not always the most important." Our understanding of the past, in other words, is based on partial evidence, using "partial" in both senses of the term.

Thus the problem that presents itself is how to achieve a more accurate understanding of conditions and attitudes as they actually existed—how, in other words, "to find ways of reconstructing not only the economic and social experience, but also the mind set, the values, and the world view of people who have left behind them no written record of their personal thoughts and feelings" (Stone 1987, 23). The solution may entail the use of sources that at first seem unconventional—at least from the perspective of the social sciences. These sources include the visual arts, ritual and dramatic performances, and, more specifically in terms of the present topic, fictionalized historical narrative.

The Meiji Restoration was a major turning point in Japanese history, marking the transition from a loose association of semi-autonomous feudal domains to a highly centralized government bent on instilling a sense of national identity under the nominal authority of the emperor. The changes were far reaching and dramatic, driven by a perceived threat from Western imperialism and the need to put Japan on an equal footing in terms of industrial and military capacity.

It is widely recognized that there was resistance to these changes, as exemplified most famously by the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. However, historical treatments focus almost exclusively on the "major players"—politicians, military leaders, and prominent ideologues. The impact on the lives of ordinary people has received considerably less attention, especially those living in rural areas far from the centers of power.

Shortly after taking control in 1868, the new Meiji leadership assigned twenty-seven year-old Umemura Hayami 梅村速水 to be the first governor of Hida, a remote mountain region that now constitutes the northern portion of Gifu Prefecture in central Honshū. The governor, inspired by youthful idealism, immediately initiated a number of dramatic reforms intended to "rationalize" the economy and enforce compliance with the administrative policies of the Meiji government. These efforts, however, were poorly received by the local population. The following spring while Umemura was away in Kyoto the people of Hida rebelled, smashing and burning various administrative facilities as well as homes belonging to Umemura's leading supporters. The violence quickly spread to engulf the entire region. Upon hearing news of the uprising, Umemura rushed back from Kyoto in an effort to reassert his control. Soon after crossing the border into Hida, at a place called Hagiwara, he and his retinue were intercepted by a mob of angry peasants, some of whom were hunters armed with muskets. During the fracas that ensued Umemura was shot, and later died in a Tokyo prison pending an official inquiry into his administrative policies.

This little known but highly compelling episode later became the subject of a lengthy historical novel entitled *Yama no tami* 山の民, or "The Mountain Folk," written by Ema Shū 江馬 修.[1] Ema (1889–1975) is numbered among the so-called "proletarian" writers who were addressing the plight of the Japanese working class during the 1920s and early 1930s. Though highly regarded within narrow literary circles, however, Ema's work remains rather obscure even in Japan and has never been translated into English. He enjoyed brief popularity early in his career for authoring a number of widely read but unremarkable novels. Later, however, he lost status as a writer due to his conspicuous turn toward Marxist ideology. "The Mountain Folk" was conceived shortly after this transitional period, and the initial version appeared at the height of Japanese military aggression on the Asian mainland.

The novel itself is not markedly oriented toward leftist political ideology. It does, however, question the morality of a centralized bureaucratic elite imposing its will upon a rural population with little regard for local attitudes and values. Perhaps its most distinguishing features are its well-roundedness in telling the story from multiple perspectives and the meticulous research upon which it was based. Ema rewrote the novel several times, each in an attempt to improve upon the historical and ethnographic details. This effort was to occupy him for

the rest of his life, ultimately resulting in a hefty two-volume narrative that some consider one of the great masterworks in modern Japanese literature.[2]

Yet Ema was more than a politically oriented writer of historical fiction. He had been born in the Hida region and was familiar with the Umemura incident from an early age. More significantly, during the course of many years conducting background research in the mountain villages of Hida, Ema transformed himself into an accomplished ethnographer. Indeed, "The Mountain Folk" contains a wealth of both historical and ethnographic information, and because of its "ground level" focus affords a far better understanding of the circumstances that led to the rebellion than standard history texts convey.

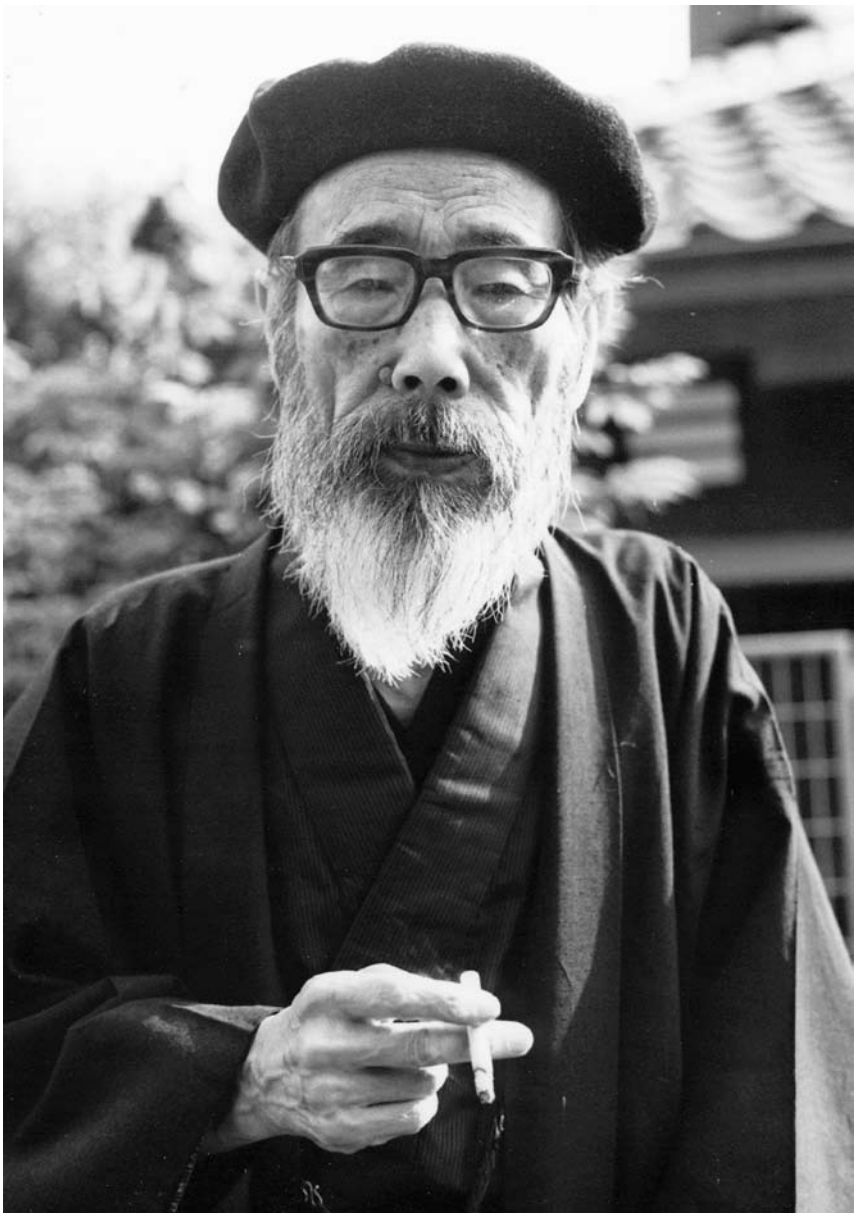
In the pages that follow I will introduce Ema as an important literary figure who has thus far been largely overlooked. Through an examination of "The Mountain Folk" I will underscore the importance of literature in social scientific research. More specifically, I will demonstrate that Ema's narrative, though fictionalized, is essential to recovering the lives and experiences of a remote mountain people and understanding their resistance to modernization reforms. Finally, I will argue that Ema intended his novel not merely as an exercise in evoking the past, but as a veiled expression of dissent against the militarist Japanese government of his own era—the late 1930s and early 1940s. These assertions will be illustrated with excerpts from the novel, appearing here in English for the first time.[3]

THE SETTING

Hida is a forested mountain region bordered on the west by the "Japanese Alps," a range of lofty peaks[4] that divide the main island of Honshū roughly into two halves. Rugged topography, distance from major urban areas, and heavy snowfall kept the region rather isolated until fairly recent times.

Japan's economy was traditionally based on irrigated rice cultivation, and the feudal government had sustained itself through an annual land tax extracted from the peasantry as a portion of the harvest. This made arable land a highly valuable commodity, while at the same time relegating mountainous areas like Hida to somewhat marginal status. The forested mountains, however, contained an abundance of high quality timber, and many of the native inhabitants were engaged in the timber industry or related occupations such as carpentry and charcoal production. In 1692, the Tokugawa *bakufu*, or military government, transferred Hida's reigning feudal lord to another domain and assumed direct control of the region, thereby appropriating its vast timber and mineral resources. Peasants located deep within the mountains were then allowed to fulfill their annual land tax obligations not by growing crops but by supplying timber to the castle towns and cities.

FIGURE 1: Ema Shū in 1973, at the age of 84. Photo courtesy of Amako Naomi.



Hida thus became one of the few provincial areas under the immediate supervision of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, and was no longer subjected to the billeting of large numbers of samurai retainers. This was fortuitous in that the samurai, an elite warrior caste that engaged in no productive economic activity, would have created a serious drain on local resources.

The provincial administrative offices were located in Takayama, which had originally developed as a castle town under its erstwhile warlord rulers. The castle was razed following takeover by the *bakufu*, but the town continued to function as the region's cultural, economic, and administrative center. Takayama was located at a comfortable distance from *bakufu* headquarters in Edo (now Tokyo), and the people of Hida were allowed a fair degree of autonomy as long as they continued to fulfill their annual land tax obligations. Of course, this also meant that corrupt officials, wealthy merchants, and prominent landlord households could more easily enrich themselves at the expense of others. As the old Chinese saying has it, "heaven is high, and the emperor far away."

Conditions changed dramatically, however, following the overthrow of the *bakufu* on 3 January 1868. Under the new Meiji leadership the feudal system was dismantled, and a centralized bureaucracy established in its place. When territorial boundaries were redrawn, the Hida region was initially designated a self-constituting prefecture with its administrative headquarters at Takayama. Now the local people were subject to the uniform policies of the imperial Japanese government. On 3 March of the same year, Umemura Hayami arrived in Takayama to implement these policies as Hida's first prefectural governor. His tenure would not last through the following spring, as he himself would be overthrown by a popular rebellion.

The Umemura Rebellion, as it came to be known, is not widely recognized outside the Hida region. Japanese historians, if they address the incident at all, treat it in the manner of a typical peasant uprising—a reaction to administrative policies relating to the taxation or distribution of rice. Part of the opposition resulted from Umemura's failure to honor a promise made by the interim governor Takezawa Kanzaburō 竹沢寛三郎. To encourage the peasants' cooperation during the transition to the new government, Takezawa had promised to cut their annual rice tribute in half.[5] Upon assuming control of Hida, however, Umemura immediately recognized that it would be virtually impossible to administer the territory on such drastically reduced revenue, and rescinded the order. From the perspective of the Hida peasantry, the central government—as represented by Umemura—had broken its promise.

But other than a few circumscribed areas, most of the Hida region was too rugged and cool for rice production. People living in the mountains surrounding Takayama subsisted by hunting and gathering combined with slash and burn cultivation on the steep mountain sides. They also sold charcoal and hauled

freight on pack animals. In some areas, particularly the Adano and Osaka districts southeast of Takayama at the foot of the mountains Norikura and Ontake, the people had long been employed as timber cutters for the Tokugawa *bakufu*. To prevent deforestation, and thereby ensure a sustainable supply of timber, the *bakufu* would periodically suspend the cutting operations. To help the people survive through these lax periods, the *bakufu* had established a rice distribution program called *yamagatamai* ("mountain region rice"), whereby the people living in the mountain regions received vouchers allowing them to buy rice that was considerably cheaper than that available on the open market.

Umemura canceled this social welfare program in favor of a free market arrangement. Likewise, the old custom of communal rights to forested mountain land was replaced by a system of private ownership, limiting access to a few wealthy landowners. He also encouraged the "reclamation" of forested mountain land—converting it into rice paddies, in other words. Finally, he ordered the members of each village to create a central storage facility and fill it with grain as a hedge against famine. On the surface this seems like a wise and benevolent policy, but among the villagers, many of whom had hardly enough grain to feed themselves in the present, it was perceived as yet another unreasonable burden.

It was not only the mountain villagers who were disgruntled, however, as restrictions were also applied to commercial activities. A newly created commerce department assumed direct control of all major industries, determining prices, inventory, and flow of goods. Tariffs were levied on the transportation of raw materials and finished products. Merchant households, many of whom had long sought greater security through diversification, were now limited to dealing in only one product or service activity.

In short, Umemura's economic reforms alienated the peasantry and townspeople alike. His only true support came from prominent households who viewed his policies as progressive, or who stood to benefit from the new economic opportunities they created. Even so, standard historical treatments portray the peasantry as being conservative and backward, not understanding the beneficial reforms Umemura was trying to implement.

"The Mountain Folk" addresses these economic issues in considerable detail. It goes beyond standard historical accounts, however, by revealing much more to the story—that the peasants were reacting against Umemura's attempt to regulate even the most intimate aspects of their daily lives, including established social institutions, religious practices, and sexual behavior. How could a novelist gain such insight into local attitudes and conditions, and how do we know that his impressions were accurate? A brief look at Ema's background will answer these questions.

THE AUTHOR

As the locus of Umemura's administrative headquarters, the town of Takayama figures prominently in the story of the rebellion as related in "The Mountain Folk." In fact Ema had been born and raised in Takayama. He consequently grew up surrounded by people who had directly experienced the rebellion. Indeed, his own father, Ema Yahei 江馬弥平, had served as director of the regional commerce department under Umemura, and was thus implicated in many of the reforms that incurred the people's enmity (Ema 1997a, i).

At the age of twenty, Ema Shū (at the time known as Ema Nakashi—see note 1) moved to Tokyo to study literature and pursue a writing career. Throughout the 1910s he published several novels in a style he has described as "democratic humanism." His novel *Junansha* ("The Sufferers") was recognized as Japan's best selling publication in 1916. (Natsume Sōseki had received the same honor in 1910 with *Sorekara*, and Nagatsuka Takashi in 1912 with *Tsuchi*). During these years Ema had little contact with his native Hida region, though the Umemura Rebellion remained etched in his consciousness. He determined to one day write a historical narrative based upon the incident (Ema 1997a, ii), quite likely motivated by the desire to vindicate his father's involvement in Umemura's reforms.

During the early 1920s, however, Ema became seriously disillusioned by the Japanese government's conservative, right-wing tendencies. A major turning point in his attitude was the so-called "White Terror" (*haku-iro teroru*) incident that occurred in the aftermath of the great Tokyo earthquake of 1923. Acting on rumors that ethnic Koreans[6] and anarchist Japanese were using the disaster as an opportunity to set fires and loot buildings, the police detained and later killed several leading dissidents. Bands of vigilantes also vented their frustrations by attacking resident minorities, leading to the massacre of Koreans and Chinese while the police stood idly by. Some estimates place the death toll of the massacre at over 3000 (Beckmann and Okubo 1969, 71, 407).

Ema's sense of revulsion toward such incidents led him to join the ranks of the proletarian literary movement. In fact he served for a time as editor of the movement's principle mouthpiece, the journal *Senki* ("Battle Flag"). Through this experience, Ema steeped himself in Marxist ideology and began using his prose to criticize oppressive political institutions, including militarist elements within the Japanese government. He soon found difficulty getting his work published, and the notorious *tokkō* (*tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*, the government's "special higher police" unit) began to monitor his activities.

Ema had come to recognize disturbing parallels between Japan's incursion into the Asian mainland and the early Meiji government's autocratic treatment of "peripheral" regions like Hida. It was at this point, around 1932, that he began working on a historical novel about the Umemura Rebellion from the

people's point of view. The initial results, however, were somewhat disappointing. Ema realized that he could not convey the life of the peasant while engaged in his rather privileged urban lifestyle. He decided to leave Tokyo where he had spent the preceding twenty years and move with his wife and children back to Takayama.

The move was motivated by other factors as well. The Japanese government was making greater demands of its people in support of its military expansion into the Asian mainland, and was wary of anything that might promote opposition or dissent. A sympathetic treatment of a popular rebellion would be particularly distressing, as it might encourage readers to equate the historical event with their own situation. Indeed, one of Ema's objectives in writing "The Mountain Folk" was to establish this very parallel. To avoid suspicion he assumed the guise of a folklorist, embarking on what an anthropologist would recognize as participant observation. "For a time," he recalls, "I gave up the pen, and immersed myself in researching local history and daily life in the farming villages. I traveled on foot from one mountain village to another, trying my best to associate closely with the peasantry" (Ema 1997a, iv). This put him in an excellent position to interview older residents about their experiences during the rebellion. He then incorporated their accounts directly into his narrative.[7]

But the role of folklorist was more than mere disguise. Through meticulous field research, careful observation and description, Ema transformed himself into a highly regarded ethnographer. His wife at the time, Ema Mieko 江馬三枝子, became an accomplished folklorist in her own right under the tutelage of Yanagita Kunio.[8] With Yanagita's encouragement the Emas together founded a journal called *Hidabito* ("The People of Hida"), which was devoted to Hida ethnology. From 1935 to 1944, Ema Shū served as the journal's editor. He was also a major contributor of its articles, many of them written under pseudonyms.[9]

Following Yanagita's methodological approach, the Emas trained a number of young accomplices in gathering ethnographic data, assigning each of them to focus on a different aspect of local culture. Their results were then published as articles in *Hidabito*, but also incorporated into an expanding manuscript that would eventually become "The Mountain Folk."[10]

The novel itself first began appearing as a series of monthly installments in *Hidabito* in January of 1935. These were enhanced and consolidated into monograph form at the same time that Japanese aggression was escalating into outright warfare on the Asian mainland. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, Ema was unable to find a publisher for the completed manuscript. Eventually he scraped together enough money to have the novel printed and distributed himself. It initially appeared in three parts, the first introducing the Hida region and Meiji political strategy (1938), the second describing Umemura's reforms and their impact on the peasantry (1939), and the third outlining the

events that led to the rebellion (1940). Throughout this first edition, Ema was obliged to use vague and circumspect language to avoid police interrogation and probable arrest. The final part, for example, is entitled *Tojō* ("On the Way"), rather than *Hōki* ("Revolt") as it later appeared.

In the democratic atmosphere that prevailed after the war, Ema immediately set about rewriting the novel, free of the cautious language he had earlier employed. The revisions would continue for many years. Altogether he produced four successive versions of "The Mountain Folk," each considerably expanded from its predecessor. The third, or penultimate, version (reissued in 1997 and the only one currently in print) appears in two volumes totaling 870 pages (see Ema 1997a, 1997b).[11]

What exactly does the novel tell us that we cannot obtain from strictly factual sources? In addressing this question, I would like to present some illustrative examples taken directly from the novel itself.

"FICTIONALIZED" ETHNOGRAPHY

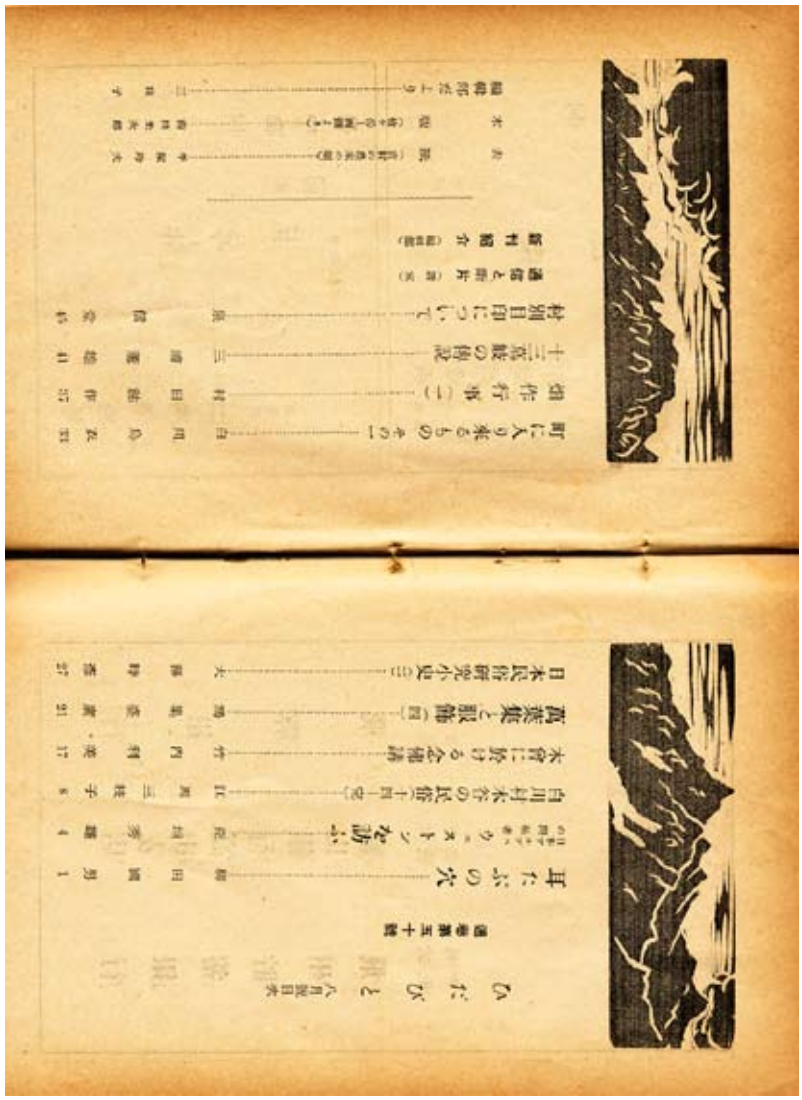
The young governor Umemura had been born of samurai descent in the Mito domain (now part of Ibaraki and Tochigi prefectures), and was steeped in the Mito school of Shinto and Confucian-based nationalism (see Koschmann 1987). He had little understanding of, and even less sympathy for, the attitudes and conventions of the local peasantry, whose earthy lifestyle he viewed with some disdain.

As an example of this so-called earthiness, I turn first to a brief excerpt taken from near the middle of the narrative, shortly after Umemura had assumed the post of governor but before his policies had seriously begun to alienate the people. This particular episode takes place in the central river basin wherein Takayama lies—one of the few areas of fairly level ground in the entire Hida region. The focus is on the peasants during the busy rice transplanting season, which in Hida began in early June. As in other parts of East Asia, rice seeds were first germinated in closely packed nursery beds. When they had reached sufficient size, the seedlings were taken and replanted at measured intervals in flooded paddies, where their roots could expand and draw nutrients from the water. Transplanting was an important occasion, not only in terms of subsistence technology, but also in mobilizing labor exchange relationships and enacting folk analogies relating to reproduction and growth. The latter aspect associated fertility of the rice fields with that of human beings. This was expressed through the suggestive lyrics of *taue uta*, or transplanting songs, which were used to both coordinate and sustain the physical movements of the laborers.

One of the songs in the following excerpt refers to an old rural custom known as *yobai*, or "night crawling."[12] This generally involved a young man

FIGURE 2: Cover of Ema's folklore journal *Hidabito* (August 1938), commemorating publication of its fiftieth issue. The photograph shows a young farm woman from Miyamura.

FIGURE 3: Table of contents for the issue shown in FIGURE 2. Yanagita Kunio authored the first article and Ema's wife, Mieko, the third.



sneaking into the home of a young woman late at night with the aim of engaging in discrete sexual activity. At one time found throughout rural Japan, it continued to be practiced in some areas well into the 1930s. It was apparently accepted as an inevitable, if not openly condoned, facet of social interaction among young people prior to marriage (Koyama 1960, 1545; Smith and Wiswell 1982, 115–16; Akamatsu 1986, 179). The excerpt also alludes to cooperative labor arrangements, tools and techniques used during the transplanting procedure, and the attitudes and behavior of the people involved:

> Rice transplanting was now in full swing. Heading out from Takayama into the surrounding countryside, one could see young planting women[13] here and there bent over the flooded paddies, and laboring men incessantly milling about. Along with the lively commotion of boisterous men and women, relaxed and cheerful planting songs echoed continuously over the landscape.
>
> Village headman Joemon held vast tracts of land in Nada hamlet just north of town. The paddies surrounding his spacious residence alone required the efforts of more than ten women, working continuously from dawn to dusk for at least three days.
>
> This was the second day, and soon its labors would draw to a close. But with only two or three paddies left to plant, the work was suddenly halted by an unexpected downpour. The planting women wore hats made of red yew leaves, and straw mats to cover their backs, so a little rain was of no concern. But this sudden downpour was particularly intense, and in an instant their bodies were completely drenched. Then lightning flashed and thunder roared above them. At this point the women began to shriek, and one after the other scrambled up out of the paddies to take shelter under the broad eaves of the house….
>
> Old Heisaku, the "head tiller,"[14] straightened his slightly curving back, and, clasping his hands behind him, peered out at the rain with a look of concern. His broad mouth, surrounded by deep creases, held a blackened bean pipe and some lotus root. Unclasping his hands and snatching the pipe, the old man turned his head, its white hair protruding from under a towel, and in his deep bass voice called out to the women.
>
> "What a downpour! I wish I could say that the rain was welcome, but it looks like it might undo all our hard work by uprooting the seedlings. It'll let up soon, though. It's only saying you planting women deserve a break from your hard labors."
>
> Then he forced a loud laugh, revealing a row of strong-looking white teeth that belied his advanced age. Planting was an auspicious and important event, so as head tiller he had to act like a jester, his role being to

> ascribe a joyful and auspicious meaning to every occurrence no matter how troublesome or foreboding.
>
> The rain continued to pound the rice paddies with harsh vigor, but now appeared to be tapering off. The western sky gradually began to brighten and the light spread across it, until the slanting rays of the evening sun broke through once again near the crest of the mountains. The pouring rain, bathed by the sun's brilliant rays, consequently assumed a splendid rose colored glow. The fresh young faces of the planting women shone vividly in the same beautiful reflection (Ema 1997a, 358–61).

As the rain subsides, the men who assist in the transplanting resume their operations, dropping bundles of seedlings with a plop into each of the remaining paddies. The narrative continues:

> Seeing that most of the preparations had been completed, Old Heisaku turned half-smiling toward the women, and called out in a cheery and playful voice.
>
> "Okay you planting girls, are you ready to get on with it? This is the home stretch, so look lively! Come on then, if you please!"
>
> With no further prompting, the young women began to ready themselves. With their muddy hands, shrouded in dark blue forearm coverings, they drew up the strings of their straw hats, rolled up the hems of their linen kimono, retied their waistbands, then climbed with a splash down into the paddies. None used a reed mat to cover her back, as the mats were already drenched and heavy with water. In no time at all the ten or so women had arranged themselves in a line with their red sedge hats and elevated rumps suspended over the flooded paddy. Each held a clump of seedlings in her left hand, and with a deft movement of the right quickly placed the seedlings one by one into the soft mud, moving several places in one direction, then falling back a step. In this way they were able to plant each paddy in neat rows. This last effort would bring the day to a close, and they all became lively, competitively planting without stopping even to stretch their backs.
>
> The songs of the laboring men continued.
>
> > "If we all plant together
> > in a boisterous way,
> > the rice will catch our spirit
> > and itself begin to thrive.
> > Make me also your companion."

The fastest of the women finished planting her own section, and, rubbing her red cheek with the back of her muddy right hand, stepped over into the last unplanted paddy. She was a big-bottomed woman with stout legs, and at a glance one could tell she was a dependable worker. Upon seeing this young woman Old Heisaku straightened his back, raised his arms high in the air, and then as if striking up a work song yelled out in a loud voice.

"Well done! You're the number one planting girl alright! At last, the final paddy. Okay girls, hang in there a little longer. Just as we bear lots of children, our rice plants will yield lots of grain. Besides which this is a leap year, no? There's bound to be a bumper crop."[15]

Then suddenly in a hoarse voice he belted out a song.

> "This year is a leap year,
> when *women* do *yobai*.
> The child in her womb
> has a multitude of fathers."

Then the old man, looking quite pleased with himself, opened his big mouth and roared with laughter.

The fastest woman, while continuing diligently to plant, decided to tease Heisaku.

"What about you, old man! Have you got the energy to come to my place this evening?"

"Ah yes, I do indeed! Don't take me for a fool. Even at my age I've incredible vigor!"

"Haw, haw, haw! What a terror!" the women burst out laughing.

"Well then, you'd best all be on your guard!" said the old man, appearing more eager. All joking aside, this old head tiller was getting excited consorting with the young women.

"Oh yes, we're waiting!" shouted the first woman, unwilling to be outdone. "And be sure to bring your cane in case your legs give out!"

"Haha!" laughed one of the other women suddenly. "That I'd like to see—the old man going out for *yobai* with a cane!"

"What are you talking about?! Didn't I visit your place only last night? Have you forgotten already? What a poor memory! Of all the women around here, are there any that haven't fallen into my grasp?"

"With all these young men around, none of us is that desperate. Look, old man, if its young women you're after you'd better go get yourself reincarnated!"

The planting women of early spring were very assertive. Women, normally placed subordinate to men, were only at times like this treated with

> greater respect, and not just in earning wages equal to the males. The leadership once assumed by females during the time when agriculture first developed seemed only on planting day to reassert itself. Moreover, engaging in this kind of collective labor seemed to revive in people's hearts the bright and pleasant memories of a bygone era, when everyone worked cooperatively on land held in common by the village. Labor generated abundance, and transplanting in particular was a kind of labor festival. The planting women continued their work in that emancipated, free, and youthful spirit—singing, laughing, cracking jokes, and outdoing the men (Ema 1997a, 361–64).

The technical details of the transplanting operation will come as no surprise to ethnographers of Japan and other Asian societies. The songs, full of sexual innuendo, are also common knowledge. The most notable aspect of this particular passage is the assertiveness of the female characters, and the challenge it presents to the stereotypic image of Japanese women as being deferential and demure. In fact Old Heisaku's song suggests that women themselves could initiate *yobai* excursions during an intercalary year. The author provides no further explanation, so it is difficult to determine whether such a custom was actually practiced, but, given Ema's penchant for authenticity and detail, it is fairly certain that the song at least existed.[16]

In fact the entire rice transplanting episode is based on first-hand observation. The landlord Joemon's household was modeled on that of Kotaka Nui, one of Ema's key informants (see note 7). Ema reportedly sat on the veranda of her house and observed the transplanting work in progress, later incorporating what he saw into the story (Amako Naomi, personal communication, 2 June 1999). Thus it is quite likely that the rain storm and the sun's re-emergence happened precisely as Ema describes them. Likewise, the bawdy repartee between the transplanting women and someone like Old Heisaku may have been suggested by an actual exchange. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Ema was describing conditions as he observed them in the early 1930s, then interpolating back to 1868 (though farming methods would not have changed drastically during the intervening decades).

The final paragraph conveys Ema's socialist leanings in its celebration of productive labor, cooperation, and communal ownership of land, but it also addresses the status of women in an agricultural society and how it has declined over time. This is not just whimsical musing on Ema's part, but rather the product of serious archaeological and ethnographic research, as is clear from a factual article he wrote for the journal *Hidabito* (see Ema 1935).[17]

The article begins with the observation that transplanting was traditionally done by young women—the *saotome*. He cites an old saying from the vicinity of

Shirakawa that the Fifth Month (of the old lunar-solar calendar) is for *saotome* like the Twelfth Month is for Buddhist priests—a time when they are greatly in demand, in other words.[18] He says that up until the Meiji Period in nearby Miyamura one could still see "pretty young *saotome*" together in a line planting rice in the spring, and though the work has now been largely taken over by "uninteresting" men wearing gum boots, the earlier tradition has not completely disappeared. Even "today" (that is, in 1935), young women who participate in the transplanting earn the same amount as men, while in other activities their compensation is sometimes less than half. Why should this be? Ema maintains it is a holdover from a time long ago when women were held in even greater esteem. In Shirakawa transplanting women once earned twice what the men received and were treated with special deference. He cites a folk song from the village of Nyūkawa, describing the payment given to the *saotome* as "truly eye-opening" and a major expense for the employer household. As EMA (1935, 3) explains:

> It goes without saying that, in terms of growing rice, transplanting is an especially important form of productive labor. Moreover, this labor holds a kind of magical festival-like quality. That was true at least until the Meiji era. The *saotome* themselves were heroines in this productive labor, holding a status like that of priestesses on an auspicious festival day. The sexual freedom surrounding them was by no means simply a case of loose morality. It originated in the magical beliefs relating to bountiful productivity and abundance that were associated with agriculture. In light of the fact that *yobai* with a member of another village, ordinarily prohibited, was on that one night allowed,[19] we can conclude that this too was considered a kind of auspicious festival day behavior.

Ema then proceeds to pose the question: in light of the fact that women generally occupied a subordinate position in terms of both productivity and social status, why is it that on transplanting day alone the *saotome* held a superior position and were treated better than men? To answer this question, he tells us, we have to look even further back into the past at the relationship between women and agriculture.

He begins by presenting evidence from the Yayoi period (roughly 300 BCE–300 CE) that, even in Hida, agriculture had already existed in prehistoric times. This is followed by a description of some of the primitive agricultural tools that have been discovered, mostly axes, hoes, and sickles. He notes that, internationally, scholars tend to agree that in all parts of the world agriculture was originally conducted by women. He then makes the interesting assertion that in ancient times, even before the emergence of agriculture, the status of women is thought to have been superior to that of men. Clans were united through matrilineal

descent. At certain times and places women even held political control. Clay figurines dating from the Jōmon period (roughly 10,000 to 300 BCE) depict women with greatly swollen bellies, signifying pregnancy. From this he concludes that women were revered as symbols of fertility and abundance, and therefore occupied a superior social position. When agriculture was introduced, he continues, it is understandable that women, with their "mysterious" productive capacity, assumed the major role, especially in contrast with the hunting activities of the males. He then describes a number of ethnographic examples from other parts of the world where women assumed the major responsibility for cultivating the crops, adding that the deities associated with agricultural production are commonly found to be female.

He concludes that the special treatment of the *saotome* at transplanting time is a holdover from the past when cultivation was done mainly by women. With the development of heavy iron tools like the plow and harrow, and especially the use of draft animals, the major role in cultivation was taken over by males, and females were relegated to ancillary status. Thus, as time progressed (EMA 1935, 5–6),

> women relinquished their mystical association with agricultural productivity and came to be seen as nothing more than ordinary labor. In poorer villages, even very young girls were sent off to do menial labor. Nevertheless, we must not fail to recognize that, in terms of the participation of women in agriculture, a special tradition dating from primitive times has continued on surreptitiously. Even now, though the original significance of women's cultivation has long been abandoned and its magical beliefs have vanished without a trace, glimpses of the ancient tradition in the local customs of the *saotome* must surely attest to this fact.

If all this seems highly speculative, it should be recognized that similar associations among agriculture, women, and fertility have been made in more recent years by such luminaries as Mircea ELIADE (1958, 257–58, 332–34, 354–56; 1978, 40–41) and Joseph Campbell (CAMPBELL and MOYERS 1988, 101–102). It is also important to note that Ema was an accomplished archaeologist, known to many people more by his archaeology pseudonym, Akagi Kiyoshi, than by his literary penname (see note 9). Most significantly in terms of the novel's authenticity is that the same research served as the basis for both the fictionalized episode in "The Mountain Folk" and the factual article published in the journal *Hidabito*. In fact parts of this same article later appeared in a folkloristic monograph entitled *Hida no onna-tachi* ("The Women of Hida"), purportedly authored by Ema's wife at the time, EMA Mieko (1942, 221–28).

POPULAR RELIGION

In attempting to restore the nominal authority of the emperor, the Meiji leadership tried to elevate Shinto to the status of a nationalist cult, but in so doing had first to purge it of the Buddhist elements with which it had become so intimately entangled. The peasants, on the other hand, drew no clear distinction between the two religions. Unlike the nationalistic State Shinto being propagated by the government, their brand of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism offered some relief from their suffering in this world by promising them salvation in the next. As EMA (1997a, 345–46) explains in his novel:

> Hida was a heavily Buddhist region. Of course, every village had its sacred grove and Shinto shrine, but these had fallen into disrepair, and in most of them the *shintai* [the symbolic embodiment of the deity] had at some point been replaced with an image of the Buddha. In fact a shrine would typically be cared for by a Buddhist priest…. True Pure Land Buddhism in particular had tremendous influence over the local population. Even the gentle, meek, and submissive Hida peasantry were continually grumbling about the unfairness and injustices of the *bakufu* and its regional administrators, occasionally inciting some futile act of opposition for which they would have to pay even with their own lives. But in the name of the Buddhist temple or its beliefs—no matter what burdens, no matter what services were exacted from them—they would never claim ill treatment. For example, if the main temple [Higashi Hongan-ji] in Kyoto or even its branch, Shōren-ji, in Takayama was collecting money for some reason, the local villages would invariably compete with one another in raising donations. If necessary they would even go so far as to mortgage their fields. Large contributions to the temple were a source of pride and honor, as well as assurance of happiness in the afterlife.

Umemura equated popular Buddhism with superstition. He resented the power the temple priests held over the villages. To him, contributions to the temples were a waste of valuable resources that would be better invested elsewhere. Particularly galling was the fact that people would willingly agree to make temple donations but resist paying their taxes to the government. He therefore issued strict orders prohibiting all "excessive" contributions to the temples. As EMA (1997a, 346) tells us: "[m]ore than the priests, this was a great injustice and indignity to the people."

The following excerpt contrasts the people's enthusiastic welcome of a visiting Buddhist dignitary with the resentment they harbored toward Umemura. The dignitary is Reijuin Shōshō, a revered teacher from Higashi Hongan-ji in Kyoto, whom the people refer to by his official title, *renshi* (EMA 1997b, 347–49):

> The villages were threatened by harsh times of change and enveloped by the utmost insecurities. Upon hearing that a *renshi* from the head temple was about to appear, the peasants were ecstatic. Even without the temple affiliation, a *renshi* was to them a kind of living Buddha. If he happened to discard a straw sandal along the road, people would scramble over one another to take possession of the item, preserving it forever as a treasured heirloom. If he bathed at an inn, they were even known to gratefully drink the dirty bath water. Shōshō in particular was the chief priest's younger brother, so the people felt like the Buddha himself had come to visit them in hell….
>
> There was great commotion in the villages. Especially for communities located along the road in southern Hida, there were continual meetings to discuss road repairs for the *renshi* and his entourage, the division of voluntary labor services, establishment of rest stops, and so forth. Then the local residents applied to the officials for permission to carry out their preparations. Umemura had no choice but to allow them to proceed.
>
> It was just at this time that he took [his retainers] Yasei and Yoshizumi and set out for the village of Kasamatsu under the pretext of inspecting the barley harvest. He saw that villages along the Mashita highway were busy with road repairs, mending the broken places and re-suspending damaged bridges. From healthy young men to old-timers, women, and even children—all had abandoned their work in the fields and come together to fix up the roads. Statues of Jizō[20] along the roadside had been adorned with bright red bibs, and *sakaki*[21] branches had been erected to purify the lavatories. The villagers were performing their labor service in a light-hearted manner, energetic and joyful, as if waiting for the arrival of a new bride.
>
> In keeping with the times, Umemura had just placed a strict prohibition on showy displays, and himself was accompanied by only two retainers, so he viewed this spectacle with exasperation and disgust. He turned to his servants and spat out a single phrase.
>
> "Ignorant! …Truly the ignorant masses!"
>
> When the peasants along the road recognized Umemura they prostrated themselves with both hands on the ground. At the same time their lively merriment and cheer seemed suddenly to vanish like a blown-out flame. In its place one could feel through the silence their restrained displeasure and hostility.

These last few sentences point to what SCOTT (1990) has described as a "hidden transcript." An objective account of the same situation would have described the peasants prostrating themselves before Umemura but not the animosities they harbored. Likewise, standard historical treatments of the Meiji Restoration

and its suppression of Buddhism focus on officials and priests, ignoring the impact on ordinary people (see, for example, GRAPARD 1984; KETELAAR 1990, BREEN 2000). Ema's novel supplies the missing narrative, steeped as it is in careful ethnographic fieldwork.

As an example of the kind of "thick description"[22] that Ema's work conveys, I would like to turn now to another excerpt taken from around the middle of the narrative. At this point, resistance to Umemura's policies are beginning to take shape, but have not yet coalesced into outright rebellion. This particular episode relates to the government's efforts at redefining Shinto as the ideological foundation of the state by eradicating the Buddhist elements with which it had become so intimately entangled.

> Harvest time had arrived, and with it the festival season.
>
> For the second year in a row conditions had been truly awful. On top of the weather being highly unpredictable, there had been heavy rains during the summer. Rivers in many of the villages had run wild, causing widespread damage to the fields. As a result, the crops had turned out very poorly, and the threat of famine seemed never far away. When at last the peasants tried to do the harvesting they became even more discouraged. And wherever one looked this autumn the mountains seemed strangely dark and dull, the changing leaves showing not the slightest brilliance. This was an omen that one could hope for no better the following year. With people so downhearted and the outlook so grim, it hardly seemed the time for a celebration. But as this would be the first opportunity since the emperor's restoration, Umemura had given his approval, within the limits of frugality, for the villages to go ahead with their festivals. And so to brighten their spirits—as well as pray for a change in fortune—the villagers were determined to make their festivals as lively as possible.
>
> Here is what happened in one secluded hamlet in the village of Kuguno.
>
> It was the eve of the festival for the local guardian deity at Hakusan Shrine, and so this was the night for performing the final inspection. "Inspection" referred to rehearsing a kind of sacred dance called *torigeuchi*, which was characteristic of festivals in this region. After a late meal, the young men who were to perform the dance, dressed in ordinary work clothes, began one by one to assemble at the home of Niemon, whose turn it was to be in charge (EMA 1997b, 24–25).

The scene now switches to the interior of Niemon's spacious house, where the women of the village are busy preparing the festival feast, and the men are arriving to practice their *torigeuchi* dance.

These days, whenever more than two people gathered together the talk inevitably evolved into grumbling and resentment over Governor Umemura and his policies. For more than ten nights already the men of the village had been gathering here by Niemon's fire to practice for the festival, but whenever anyone happened to mention the new government they would forget all about the time and place and soon be absorbed in lively discussion. On one occasion they had abandoned their practice session altogether—the political concerns of the peasantry had grown that serious. During times of revolution the intimate relationship between politics and everyday living comes conspicuously to the fore, and people display great sensitivity to even the most trivial of political issues.

One night the topic had been the commerce department.

"Today when I went into town," one of the young men confided, "the merchants were all moaning about the commerce department. They said it had snatched all their business away as if it meant to see them starve."

"Maybe so," another peasant responded, "but the annoyances of the commerce department are not confined to the merchants. In relation to us peasants, too, such measures are unwarranted. In the first place, what is the commerce department's top priority? They issued an order that we buy our silkworm cards from them alone, and so having no alternative, we went there to buy them. It's much more expensive than buying from the peddlers of Shinshū.[23] Even so, we are not allowed to buy from the peddlers."

"That's how it goes. When the commerce department buys things from the villages the price is really low—for oil lanterns and such. If you sell them in another province you can get fifteen *kanbun*. But now you can't sell to anyone but the commerce department, and they only give you ten. All the government does is steal our profits."

"The commerce department gets fat while the villages grow thin."

"You got that right. Then when you go to the commerce department and try to get some official there to sell something for you, they make you feel ill at ease so there's no way to break through. That Ema Yahei is a pain in the ass. He plants himself in that department head chair of his and just sits and glares at us."

Next an old man dropped his voice a bit and said, "Listen, this is something you should be careful of repeating, but I heard Umemura is using the commerce department to take in more than 10,000 *ryō* per month. He always says its to enrich the province and help the people, but he's really just lining his own pockets. Word has it that somewhere over in Ibi[24] he's secretly hidden a fortune worth tens of thousands of *ryō*."

Such closely whispered rumors made a deep impression on all those seated around the open fire. Each was taken not as a simple rumor, but as

an indisputable statement of fact. It was as if the greater the injustices they attributed to Umemura, the more satisfaction they derived.

On another evening, complaints and criticisms of the agricultural reforms poured forth again. Needless to say, even more than the commerce department, the agricultural reforms were having a major impact on the livelihood of the peasants, so there were plenty of grounds for disgruntlement and complaint. The matter of constructing a village storehouse had been bad enough, but after the harvest there was the problem of having to create new rice paddies. The officials in charge of the reform effort were always coming around to inspect the villages, and when they arrived at a place they would designate a certain area as a proposed land clearing site. Then they would erect a sign there saying "proposed clearing area." The owner of that land, or perhaps the village as a whole, had until the next spring to finish the clearing. Otherwise the land would be confiscated by the regional headquarters.

"They tell us 'It's for the enrichment of the province,' 'It's for the benefit of the villages,' but this land clearing is really just Umemura's secret scheme to increase the amount of the rice tax he collects."

Such was the general thinking of the peasantry.

"Land clearing area!" they would exclaim, "The rice tax was already too heavy, and there aren't nearly enough people to do the work—we should be *reducing* the number of rice paddies."

"All they say is 'land clearing, land clearing,' but you can't have rice paddies without water. The authorities give no thought at all to water usage, as if all you had to do is cut down the trees and dig up the earth and you'd get rice paddies. I don't care if they do take some of our land, you can count me out of any land clearing."

This would lead to merciless cursing and criticizing of the various agricultural reform officials.

On this night, however, a new revelation—one that nobody had ever imagined—lay in store. That very morning, Niemon had gone to take care of some business just over the pass in neighboring Miyamura, and had come back with the following story. Two or three days earlier Governor Umemura had appeared unexpectedly at Minashi Shrine in Ichinomiya, mounted on his favorite black and tan horse and accompanied by two retainers. Then, with the shrine's priest Mōri leading the way, he proceeded to conduct an inspection, beginning with the shrine building and continuing on through the innermost door to the sacred image itself. He wanted to determine what kind of deity was being worshiped there, but nobody seemed to have any idea. This he considered an outrage—not to be able to identify the deity at a shrine as old and venerable as Ichinomiya! It would

have been sacrilegious to settle on an identity through some kind of vague guesswork. In the end, therefore, Umemura had left them saying: "I will have to consult the shrine authorities, of course, but if possible I want to have this shrine dedicated to Mito Rekkō."[25]

But no one in Miyamura had any idea what kind of deity this Mito Rekkō was. They thought maybe it was a Christian deity. To have a Christian deity enshrined at Ichinomiya was a very serious matter, and so the entire village was in a terrible uproar.

Thereafter Niemon said "I had heard that Umemura hated Buddhist priests. Now he's even finding fault with the sacred image at the famous Ichinomiya. Come to think of it, Umemura acts a lot like a Christian himself. These new ways of doing things lately, they must all be a kind of Christian politics."

"Of course—*Mito Rekkō*." Now there's a Christian-sounding name. That must be it. But then, if it's Christian, isn't it prohibited?"

"That was during the time of the *bakufu*. Who knows now but maybe the emperor himself is a Christian. If that's the case, then we're in for some trouble."

"What can Umemura be thinking?" Niemon said quietly. "We're talking about the old and venerable Ichinomiya-sama.[26] All this fuss about whether the deity enshrined there is called this or that—isn't 'Ichinomiya-sama' good enough? Ichinomiya-sama is a miracle-performing deity; everyone knows that. This is really inviting divine retribution."

"Won't the retribution fall on Umemura too?" someone said in a sharp tone.

"He'll surely be in for the biggest punishment of all. No matter how great the authority of a prefectural governor, to replace the sacred image of Ichinomiya-sama with a Christian god is a very serious matter. Look, in due time what will happen to Umemura? Soon he'll meet his day of reckoning. No matter what he does, he's inviting an untimely death."

"That's just what he deserves."

"All that aside," said Niemon, "the people of Miyamura are all in an uproar worrying that if their sacred image is taken away they won't be able to celebrate their festival."

"If Umemura makes them miss out even on their yearly festival—now that's a serious matter. If it comes to that, will the villages just sit idly by and take it?"

By this time over twenty men had gathered, and the whole group now moved to the practice area in the next room. This room had a boarded floor measuring over ten *tsubo* [about thirty-three square meters]. Atop a blackened iron lamp *akashi* [pine root chips] burned brightly, silently

belching smelly black smoke and casting a flickering light all about the room. Each of the men took up a thick, massive gong and held it in front of his chest, suspended from both shoulders by a heavy woven strap made of pressed hemp. In their right hands they held wooden mallets, and together they formed a circle. At its center stood three others, each with a *shime-daiko* [two-headed, bound drum] suspended from his neck by a colored rope. With a drumstick in either hand, they held their drums in position high in front of their chests. On the actual day of the festival, this group of *torigeuchi* performers would all be dressed in kimono bearing the same pattern—a phoenix and dragon in black and red on a white hemp background. But, this being only a practice session, everyone was clad in ordinary work clothes.

Two so-called *kane daishō*, the leaders, held an especially big and heavy gong of about one foot in diameter. One of them clanged out a signal. After the first three or four notes, the others were able to determine which song was being played out of the ten or more in their repertoire, and all joined in, striking their gongs in harmony. At times the whole group would bend at the waist and bow low to the ground, then rise back up to face the ceiling with one arm extended as high as it would go, then turn slowly in a circle. The drums, too, kept up a continual accompaniment, though one could hardly hear them with the many gongs reverberating so boldly. Now and then the young men in a leisurely voice would sing out the refrain:

"*Saaaaa, iiiiii*."

The dance was something they did every year and had practiced diligently, so the rehearsal was progressing very well. Though primitive, dull, and leisurely, the familiar old clang of the gong…when they heard the sounds of the rehearsal echoing off the evening mountains, blending with the sound of the river and permeating through the village, the young women thought pleasantly of how they would look the next day dressed in their best clothing, with young men fawning all around them. And the children in the midst of their dreams were already taking on the happy mood of the festival.

Niemon was left alone by the open hearth, half falling asleep as he tended the cooking fire. But as soon as he heard the sound of the gongs his heart too began to move pleasantly along with their rhythm. In his youth he himself had performed the *torigeuchi* for more than ten years, so he was very familiar with its intricate patterns, and each was interwoven with a colorful richness of unforgettable memories of the festival from long ago. It seemed that the way of playing the gongs had not changed a bit in thirty or forty years, and that the time-honored tradition had been faithfully passed down. Even so, for the performance as a whole he was certain that in the

old days it had been more relaxed and slow. The pace of the melody seemed to have gradually increased, in accordance with the times.

"People nowadays, their spirits have grown restless."

This he muttered to himself unconsciously as he sat before the fire.

Suddenly the outer door slid open and the headman Chōsaku came in. He appeared to be very agitated and, standing there on the *doma* [earthen floor][27] was saying something in a loud voice. But Niemon could not hear him over the clanging of the gongs. He raised himself heavily from the floor and went over to the entrance.

"What's that you say?"

"An official from the government office in Takayama just showed up, along with a *yamabushi* [mountain ascetic]. They say they want to inspect the sacred image of Hakusan Shrine."

"Eeh? The sacred image …inspect it?"

Just then the incident at Ichinomiya flashed through Niemon's mind.

"Anyway," Chōsaku said excitedly, "will you get the key to the shrine building and come along with me? The officials are waiting for us there."

"Yes, of course. This is a bit of trouble!"

It was unavoidable. Niemon went into the room where the Buddhist altar was located and took the key to the shrine from a drawer in the altar itself. Then he set out along with Chōsaku, without saying a word to the practicing group.

Though the moon shone brightly as before, the evening was enveloped in a milky haze that shrouded the mountains. As a result, the moon on around the thirteenth bore a faintly iridescent halo, and only a few large, gold-colored stars sparkled like droplets through the depths. The houses of the village and a few scattered clumps of trees seemed to float like black shadows, giving the impression of walking along the bottom of the sea, and the roar of the river echoed from the midst of the haze.

Niemon and Chōsaku hurried off along a narrow, grass-covered path, with the dew moistening their feet. The insects were chirping feebly. The thick, dampish haze was filled with a sweet, smoldering fragrance—someone in the village must have been burning rice chaff to make ash.

With the sound of the gongs from his own house echoing in his ears as if chasing after him, Niemon spoke quite anxiously.

"What's going on here, coming to inspect the sacred image on the eve of our festival?"

"I wonder if by any chance the deity Hakusan has offended Umemura. I hope nothing happens to interfere with the festival tomorrow," replied Chōsaku, sounding very agitated himself.

The sacred grove lay just ahead, appearing a bit blurred in the luminous milky haze. Along the path leading into it stood a pair of tall, vertical festival banners, one on either side, not making a sound. Once inside the grove there was no wind, and the dew fell in big drops from the twigs on the trees. The shrine compound was dark and a bit overgrown, but in the slivers of moonlight shining through the trees it was evident that it had indeed been swept clean, as would be expected on the eve of the festival. In the bluish moonlight, a pair of ghostly flying squirrels flitted like shadows from one dark tree limb to another, as if they had been startled by the sound of the footsteps.

The so-called shrine was nothing more than an old, rectangular, box-like structure, standing by itself in the midst of the grove, consisting of only an entrance and two small rooms with no hall of worship. A large paper lantern bearing the words *goyō* [official business] had been placed near the stairway, and beside it sat two officials who had been dispatched by the government. One of them was a regional administrator of around thirty years of age who wore a short sword and *hakama* [skirt-like pantaloons]. The other was a very thin and bony *yamabushi* who looked to be about sixty. Even in the dark one could tell that his hair was streaked with gray, and around it was a white headband tied in the back and bearing the mark of the emperor in deep red. He wore a rust-colored robe made of hemp, and in his right hand was a mysterious-looking long white pole which he grasped like a walking stick.

Niemon went and bowed low before them in a greeting of respect. "Thank you for the trouble you've taken to come here."

"This is Niemon, who is in charge of the key," said Chōsaku by way of introduction.

"Hurry up and open the inner shrine," said the administrator, rising to his feet and picking up the lantern.

"We're here to inspect the sacred image," the *yamabushi* added solemnly as he took his own time to rise.

Niemon respectfully obeyed, climbing the steps to the shrine building. Then he inserted the key in the lattice door and slowly pulled it open. The interior consisted of a narrow-boarded floor with a number of unfinished wooden offering trays piled in a heap in one corner. A dusty smell hung over it all. On a platform straight ahead was a small and simple-looking shrine box. Niemon kneeled directly in front of it, briskly clapped his hands, then earnestly bowed in prayer. He took his time in doing all this, being certain to show the proper respect and dignity in front of the officials. Then once again he slowly applied the key and with some effort slid apart the small, tightly fitting doors.

The administrator extended the lantern, and under its light the *yamabushi*, with his fierce, deep-set eyes under white, bushy eyebrows, peered into the interior. There in the center, barely six inches tall, stood an unvarnished, crudely made image of Amida Buddha wearing an awkward, expressionless face.

"What the hell is this?!"

So saying, the *yamabushi* reached out with his long, bony right arm and, as if removing some defiling object, grasped the Buddhist statue and pulled it away. Then he hurried out of the shrine building and down the stairs.

"*Yamabushi-sama*," the astonished Chōsaku called out, making as if to chase after him. "Are you taking away our sacred image?"

"Sacred image?" answered the *yamabushi* with a harsh and irritated look. "What sacred image? This is nothing but a Buddhist statue. To call it a sacred image is completely absurd, and besides that a sacrilege."

"We're taking this back to our headquarters," the administrator said bluntly as he took the Buddhist statue from the *yamabushi*.

"Then …is our shrine to be left without a deity?" asked Niemon timidly.

The administrator responded in a tone of severity, as if to utter the strictest reproval. "How can we be leaving you without a deity when you had no proper deity to begin with? We will soon be issuing our formal judgment, but in the meantime your festival tomorrow is strictly prohibited. If there is no sacred image, there can hardly be a festival in its honor. Any violation of this order will be severely punished, so be sure that you comply."

Then the officials took the confiscated Buddhist statue along with the "official business" lanterns and quickly made their way out of the grove—on to their surprise inspection of the next village.

Niemon and Chōsaku trailed after them to the edge of the grove, but there they came to a halt and, as if in a daze, turned to face one another.

"Well, this is a terrible thing that has happened. What on earth are we going to do?" Chōsaku said this with a deep sigh, then turned back to look at the shrine. The little building with its doors wide open, its sacred image seized and taken away, now sat idly like a spiritless corpse in the midst of the moonlight filtering through the trees.

Niemon stood for awhile with his head hung in silence, then quietly wiped a tear from his eye.

"They may have taken away our sacred image, but somewhere in this world there is surely a deity. Their recklessness is bound to bring its retribution, though it won't be directed against us who have done nothing wrong. Even so, what are we going to tell the people of the village? The

young ones especially will be very disappointed—to be deprived even of their festival that comes but once a year."

The sound of many gongs joining in unison came echoing through the milky white mist, as if the young men were practicing with even greater exuberance (EMA 1997b, 25–35).

This particular episode highlights a number of interesting conditions. Foremost among them is the visiting officials' utter disregard for the concerns and priorities of the local people. Their callousness is amplified by the fact that they and the villagers look at the essence of the festival and the identity of the guardian deity from completely different perspectives. To the officials, the festival is a *sairei*—a solemn religious performance—whereby the people reaffirm their allegiance to the emperor. Consequently, the symbol of the deity housed within the shrine must conform to certain standards, as mandated by the state. Departures from the norm are considered sacrilegious and, by extension, an affront to the state's authority, which the shrine must now come to represent. To the local people, however, the festival is a long awaited celebration—one of the few opportunities they have to enjoy and revitalize themselves. The shrine itself is an expression of their communal identity, which is rooted in the local landscape. It matters little what the deity is called or whether its image is Buddhist or Shinto, as long as its sacred presence is assumed to be watching over and protecting them. The fact that Niemon keeps the key to the shrine in the drawer of his household Buddhist altar further conveys a sense of how closely entangled the two religious traditions have been.

Equally apparent is the peasants' increasing frustration and growing animosity toward Umemura. They clearly view his administration—an extension of the Meiji government—as an intrusive presence that restricts their ability to decide for themselves what to grow and where to sell their products. Their resistance to creating new rice paddies is particularly telling. Paddy construction itself is only the beginning; rice production requires considerable time and effort, and is more susceptible to the vagaries of nature than dry-field crops like millet, barley, and buckwheat. This is especially true in the mountains of Hida.

Ethnographic details add depth and authenticity to the narrative. The *torigeuchi* folk dance, for example, conveys a vital sense of the festival *as experience*. My own interviews with local residents confirmed that the description of the dance is highly accurate,[28] and that villagers in those days used to gather to practice at the home of a prominent resident. Likewise, the burning of chaff to make ash seems like a trivial aside, but, as many readers will recognize, the sweet smell it produces is quite evocative of autumn in the countryside. Furthermore, ash was used to leach the acids out of wild ferns and nuts, thereby rendering them edible, so Ema is indirectly acknowledging the extent to which the mountain

dwellers depended on foraging. Again, these details were drawn from Ema's own participant observation (albeit more than sixty years after the fact).

Though the village characters are most likely composites, Ema often cites the actual names of people and places. Members of the Mōri family, for example, did indeed serve for generations as head priests of Minashi (more commonly referred to as Suimu) Shrine in Ichinomiya, and Kuguno is an actual village where Ema had lived and worked for a time as a substitute teacher (see Ema 1989, 79–80). Particularly interesting is Ema's allusion to his own father, Yahei, as director of the commerce department. This underscores the complicated issues the author himself confronted in presenting this story. In keeping with his own political convictions he was sympathetic to the plight of the common people, but as the son of one of Umemura's most trusted associates he was at the same time aware of his family's background as members of a privileged elite. The result is a complicated narrative that offers several different perspectives on the issues it addresses.

As for the confiscation of Buddhist images, local residents were widely agreed that it happened, though they were uncertain that it happened the way Ema describes. There are many stories of Buddhist images being buried in rice paddies or hidden away in the forest to keep them from the officials, but the details are difficult to corroborate due to the passage of time. It is certain, however, that an inspection of shrines was conducted, beginning with Ichinomiya, and that most were found to be in violation of official standards (see Tsuji, Murakami, Washio 1983, 42–44).

KAPPAYA ORAKU

Umemura also tried to regulate morality based on his own samurai values. This included the prohibition of illicit sexual behavior, which he perceived to be rampant in and around Takayama. It was not merely the ubiquitous custom of *yobai* that he found so disagreeable, but adulterous activity in general. As Ema tells us in the novel (1997b, 64):

> From the day he took office, Umemura Hayami determined not only to restore the authority of the imperial government but to instill the proper morality—"respect and virtue" in the words of the imperial court. At the same time he endeavored to strictly control adultery among men and women. This policy remained unchanged from beginning to end, but with the coming of autumn the control became increasingly rigid….
>
> Whether in town or village, illicit relations between men and women were commonplace. When Umemura took over, he proclaimed that in all of Japan there was no other place where morality had declined so much

> as in Takayama. Needless to say, this was a gross exaggeration of the kind common in those possessed of such zealous spirit. But it was a fact that this region too had been swayed by the decadence of the close of the feudal period. Umemura was bound and determined to regulate this kind of lewd conduct. For this purpose he did not rule out the use of severe measures.

The "severe measures" included punishing a few unfortunate offenders as examples to the rest. In one notorious incident Umemura had a sixteen year-old girl bound to a bridge in Takayama and displayed there in public for three days.[29] The girl was known as Kappaya Oraku 合羽屋おらく; her crime had been consorting with a married man named Yoshizumi Hironoshin, who was one of Umemura's lieutenants.

The following excerpt takes place while the punishment is being administered. It describes the curious mixture of revulsion and morbid curiosity with which the people viewed the incident, and how it served to coalesce the animosity toward Umemura (Ema 1997b, 93–94).

> Compassionate people not only refused to go look at the girl being punished; they tried to prevent others from doing so as well. But for the average person curiosity proved stronger than pity or compassion. All day long a wall of people stood in front of the exposition area.
>
> Rumors began to circulate among them.
>
> "I heard that putting Oraku on display like this is Lord Umemura's revenge for being jilted."
>
> "I heard that this summer Umemura got one look at Oraku wearing a *yukata* [light cotton kimono] and fell head over heels! Then sometimes he would summon her to his headquarters and try to win her affections. But see, since she was mixed up with that rake Hironoshin she refused to give in no matter what. I even heard Umemura tied her to a post and made her submit to his will. They say the deepest attraction turns to the most bitter hatred—Oraku must have been quite an attraction."
>
> The gossip took various forms, but as for the part about Umemura subjecting Oraku to public display in retaliation for her having refused his advances, all were in agreement. In no time at all the rumor was taken as absolute truth; with perverse delight it was embellished and eagerly conveyed. In this way the people were stirred to greater enmity and hatred toward the tyrant Umemura. (The surprising thing is that this groundless rumor was faithfully passed on for more than fifty years, and that local historians have treated it uncritically as established fact.)

The parenthetical aside is an interesting and unusual addendum in a purportedly fictional narrative. Indeed, presenting Umemura as being motivated by jealous rage would undoubtedly have been more entertaining for the reader. At this point, however, Ema is not concerned with embellishing the story but with presenting the facts as he knows them to be. His research revealed no evidence in support of the contention, so he reported it for what it apparently was—a groundless rumor.

Returning now to the narrative, we find Oraku on the third and final day of her ordeal, when, Ema (1997b, 95–96) tells us,

> the throng of spectators rushed in from early morning so as to engulf the plaza at the foot of the bridge. The gossip had instantly spread to the villages of Hida, causing the peasants to pour forth. Some of them had made a special trip from deep in the mountains several *ri* distant [one *ri* equals about four kilometers]. With the exception of those who had come merely to sell rice and firewood, most headed straight for Daikan Bridge. While being jostled by the crowd, they peered at Oraku out there on display, blinking their eyes and sighing repeatedly. Then they headed on to Shōren-ji [temple] to toss in their offerings and heartily chant the nenbutsu.[30] After this they walked leisurely back into town to use the public facilities. Before heading for home, some of them went back to the bridge for another peek, but most stopped in at some eatery or tavern to gossip about Oraku over a drink.

Though little known in other parts of Japan, the Oraku incident is well remembered in and around Takayama. Ema's description is historically accurate, as it is based on eyewitness accounts he had heard from his mother and from other people in Takayama while he was growing up.

The scene now changes to one of Takayama's many drinking establishments that caters to the peasantry. Here we meet a character named Gorōsaku, a kind of peasant everyman who reappears throughout the novel. He has just been to the site of Oraku's punishment and is obviously disturbed by its impact on her reputation. His concerns do not stop there, however, as he makes clear while talking to some other peasants over a bottle of *sake* (Ema 1997b, 103).

> Gorōsaku took the cup brim-full of *sake* and tossed it down in one gulp, then, just as if he had swallowed some bitter medicine, knitted his brow and pursed tight the wrinkles on either side of his mouth. Suddenly he spoke out in a tone full of resentment, violent and rough.
>
> "You know, controlling adultery is one thing. That has only to do with the behavior of men and women. But there seems to be something going

on here that is even more serious than that. The rice allowance for example. It's already the Twelfth Month and the rice allowance hasn't been granted. Everybody's worried that it may be abolished. If the worst should happen and it comes to that, then it's a life-or-death matter for the villages. A disturbance is bound to break out."

All the other peasants nodded gravely to show their assent, though not a word came from their mouths. No matter how serious the situation, it was strictly forbidden to say anything against Umemura's administrative policies. In fact they were a little uneasy simply being party to such a discussion. But Gorōsaku went on, his voice rising to a more violent pitch.

"Maybe I'm just a fool who can't understand, but does it make any sense to you—I mean the way Umemura is handling the government?! He thinks up one innovative reform after another, all in the name of helping the villages. But when the authorities carry them out, they end up doing nothing but to make matters worse. The commerce department, the agriculture department, the prefectural militia—has any of them been of benefit to us? I don't know if Umemura has gained anything, but for us they have only made our lives bitter. Why couldn't he have treated us just a little more favorably? The Restoration wasn't supposed to be this way.

Gorōsaku's angry tirade, while a bit melodramatic, nevertheless conveys the desperation that eventually led the masses to rebel. It also suggests that the peasants were not simply being resistant to change; rather, they were reacting against the failure of Restoration leaders to live up to their promises. Moreover, the open castigation of Oraku may be seen as an allegory for all of Hida, being forced to submit to the new regime. This perhaps explains why the peasants found the act so abhorrent—it symbolized the coercive policies of the central government being administered through Umemura. Hida, and perhaps all of rural Japan, is here associated with the female in relation to the patriarchal, dominant, male culture of the central government and its samurai-derived ethics. This line of reasoning adds greater significance to the rumor about Umemura having punished Oraku because she had rejected his advances. Again, using Oraku as a symbol, the rumor parallels the fact that Umemura had been "jilted" by the people of Hida. He was trying to implement policies that he believed would ultimately serve the people's interests, but they resisted his efforts and rewarded him only with enmity. This, in turn, caused Umemura to resent the people and become even more adamant in instituting his reforms. Thus the rumor is "true" in an allegorical sense.

Here also is a demonstration of the power of events to mobilize opinion, much like the rape of a twelve-year-old girl by American soldiers in Okinawa in 1995 mobilized a massive protest against the American military presence. Many

Okinawans had been ambivalent about the American military prior to the incident but turned decidedly against it in the aftermath. It is noteworthy that the Oraku episode marks the close of the third part of Ema's novel, setting the stage for the fourth and final part, entitled *Hōki*—"Revolt."

On a more personal level, the peasants' fear of being overheard by the officials as related in the novel reflects Ema's own experience of police surveillance and interrogation during the late 1930s. In an autobiographical account, Ema describes not only his being detained and questioned, but also how the police would clandestinely follow him to remote mountain villages while he was conducting his fieldwork. After Ema had left a peasant's house the police themselves would enter and demand to know the nature of the ethnographer's inquiries. Many of Ema's informants eventually asked him to stay away, as they feared repercussions by the police (Ema 1989, 216–17).

THE *DEEP* MOUNTAIN FOLK

Ema Shū has described the Hida region as "a land of mountains and still more mountains," adding that *all* the people of Hida were, without exception, mountain folk (Ema 1942, 342). Even so, it is clear from his narrative that he recognized significant variation *within* the region as well, from rice growing basins like Takayama to villages located deep within the narrow valleys and at higher elevation where rice could not be grown.

One of the most compelling episodes in the novel derives from Governor Umemura's attempt to quell a conspiracy brewing in the mountains of the Adano area, southeast of Takayama. The people of Adano had long been employed as timber cutters by the Tokugawa *bakufu*, in exchange receiving rice vouchers through the *yamagatamai* program. As we learn in the novel, Umemura discovers the conspiracy early on and sends a squad of soldiers, led by Yoshida Chūtarō, out to the Adano villages to round up and arrest the instigators. Adano was at that time one of the most remote areas in the entire Hida region. Many of its people supplemented their meager incomes by working as ox drivers (*ushikata* or *ushiboi*), transporting commodities back and forth across the mountain passes between Hida and neighboring provinces. The townspeople in Takayama considered the area wild and forbidding. I had heard from my own informants that parents in Takayama used to discipline their children by threatening to send them off to Adano to be ox drivers (*Adano no ushiboi ni suru zo!*). Ema had apparently heard the same thing, as he refers to it in his novel (1997b, 134).

Like Umemura, the soldiers are outsiders. Most have been recruited from Ibi in former Mino Province, a lowland area consisting largely of broad plains devoted to irrigated rice cultivation. They are completely unfamiliar with the mountainous landscape and the local people. Their mission, which takes them

deeper and deeper into the snowy mountains, unfolds as a kind of odyssey—a transformative experience in which the true condition of the mountain folk is gradually revealed to them and their own purpose called into question. EMA (1997b, 181) describes what the soldiers experience as they enter into this alien world.

> Villages were rare. [The squad] might happen upon two or three small, broken down old farmhouses, seemingly about to be caved in by the snow, or maybe five or six of them clumped together, sometimes along the road, other times at the base of the mountains. Whatever the case, each house would have a dark stable next to the entranceway with a small, spotted cow inside, munching on fodder or lowing. These must be the homes of the ox drivers. In front of the house there would be a garden near the road, and a rough wooden fence made of poles five or six inches thick and running low along both sides through the entire length of the village. This was to keep the cows from treading on the garden. Women and children dressed in rags and *monpe* [loose work trousers]—their pale yellow faces registering looks of surprise and fear, not to mention intense curiosity—would watch the squad's progress both coming and going. Even the cows would stick their heads out of their dark, cellar-like stables, to gaze intently with their soft black eyes at the parade of soldiers.

Finally they reach the home territory of the conspirators. The captain Yoshida's approach is typically heavy-handed. Before entering the first village, he orders one of his soldiers to fire a shot in the air to signal their arrival. The thunderous report echoes through the mountains, scaring the birds and causing the cows to bellow. Children cry out in alarm, and dogs emerge from out of nowhere to bark at the intruders. Yoshida divides the squad into groups of three or four, telling them to inspect every house and drag out the men. The soldiers break into the houses without removing their shoes. The people inside huddle around the open hearth, cowering in fear and chanting the nenbutsu. There are women, children, and a few old men, but the younger able-bodied men are nowhere to be found.

Assuming the fugitives have all run away, Yoshida has no choice but to push deeper into the mountains. In village after village the scene repeats itself. There are women and children but no men. The soldiers' frustration is vented on the villagers, first in the form of derogatory comments, later escalating into physical abuse. They note that there must be men nearby judging by all the dirty little brats running around. They joke that the fathers must have been monkeys.

As nightfall approaches they happen upon another cluster of houses. This time Yoshida orders no warning shot, nor is there a search of the houses—only

an attempt to find lodging. They notice a large house that appears to function as a *tonya*, or wholesaler. Yoshida and his lieutenant Araki go in alone. The author describes the layout of the house: a wide *doma*, or earthen-floored entryway, with the horse stall on the left and the raised boarded floor of the living quarters on the right. The *daidokoro*, or cooking area, lies straight ahead and a fire is burning in the open hearth. Around the fire sit "four or five" women: there is an aged grandmother, a fifty-ish "wife" (*kaka* in the local dialect), a homely looking *yome*, or "young bride," and two daughters, aged sixteen and thirteen. Again the men are conspicuously absent.

When Yoshida and Araki step inside, they can see the fear and confusion in the faces of the women. The wife offers words of welcome but with no hint of warmth in her voice. She says if they want a place to stay there is a temple further on—that she has no *futon* for them. But Araki says they only need a fire—they can sleep anywhere. He asks her to bring them some *sake*. She answers that there isn't any. He says surely there must be at least some *dobu*, or home brew, that peasants always have *dobu*. But there isn't even that. Yoshida accuses her of holding out on them and threatens to search the house. She tells him to go ahead and search but he still won't find anything.

Then the "young bride" takes over. Her name is Tsune. Ema describes her homely appearance, comparing her face to a *shishi* [lion-dog] mask.[31] He notes, however, that in contrast to the other women there is color in her cheeks. She starts heating the water while the wife sets out the dishes. The older daughter, Hatsu, distributes tea cups. It is at this point that a kind of revelation unfolds, as Yoshida asks Tsune for something to eat (Ema 1997, 196–200):

> "Hey sister,[32] if it's not too much trouble, boil up a little rice for us to eat. We're all starving to death."
>
> "Did you bring some rice with you?" Tsune asked him nonchalantly.
>
> "If we had brought any with us I wouldn't need to ask you. Look, we came here from Takayama on urgent business. We don't expect to eat for free. The government will pay you back."
>
> "But we got no rice," answered Tsune in a coarse and inhospitable tone.
>
> "Mm. No rice, huh? You think you can just stand there and tell us there is nothing to be had? You must be hiding it all, along with the men."
>
> Yoshida stared at Tsune with a menacing look. But Araki spoke in a calm voice, as if to intervene.
>
> "If you don't have any yourselves, there must be some elsewhere in the village. Maybe you could go and borrow it."
>
> "Nobody's got any. Our house here, we're the best-off in the village."
>
> A smile appeared on her homely face as she continued. "See, we got no

rice fields round here. Can't grow one grain of rice. We got to bring it in. But this year there's no *yamagatamai*. Haven't even seen any rice."

Hearing the word *yamagatamai*, Yoshida and Araki glanced at each other.

And then, showing a bit of sympathy with her visitors, Tsune turned to consult with the wife.

"Hey Ma, these fellows say they got no rations."

"That's a shame. If only we had even some millet around."

"Have you got millet?" asked Araki.

"Yes, yes, millet is fine. We're not asking for a feast," added Yoshida.

"We got no millet either," the wife replied, lowering her eyes apologetically.

Araki's eyes flashed as he drew his dark lips into a frown. He glanced at the captain, then turned his gaze toward the women, and in a threatening manner as if he could barely contain his anger, said to them,

"Mm, do you mean to tell us you are like saints, living on nothing but cloud and mist?"

Tsune suddenly understood the confusion. A polite smile appeared on her homely, *shishi*-mask looking face, and in a frank and simple manner she explained:

"We can grow millet alright, though the whole village don't make more than ten *koku* [roughly 2 cubic meters]. Most of it we have to sell off, so there ain't enough left to live on. Here in our house we had a little left over but then we ran out…."

"If that's the case then tell us," Yoshida scolded harshly in his nasally voice, "what is it all of you are living on? You can't continue to live with nothing to eat."

At that Tsune let out a deep sigh and lowered her eyes in silence. Then the wife came to her side, and with a woeful look of resignation began in a low voice to intervene.

"Sister, bring them some of what we've been eating. Let them try a little. If it suits them alright they can eat that."

"Okay, but I don't think these gentlemen can eat it."

With a sullen look of surrender the young woman stood up. She went over in front of the kitchen cabinet, pulled out a big brown wooden bowl, and brought it back. Without a word the wife took it and placed it in front of Yoshida. Inside the wooden bowl were fifty or sixty flattened reddish cakes. Apparently this is what the household had planned to eat the following day.

"What have we here? Now don't these cakes look tasty," Yoshida said

with hesitation and, pushed on by his hunger, impulsively took one into his hand. "How do you eat them?"

"You gotta heat 'em up," Tsune told him, placing five or six of the cakes in a row at the edge of the fire. "You gentlemen prob'ly never had these *hoya* cakes. When times get like this, *hoya*'s all we ever eat."

"What's *hoya*," Araki asked.

"You don't know 'bout *hoya*? Why, it's all that bluish grass that looks like a bird's nest stuck way up there in the chestnut trees."

"Oh yeah, you mean the mistletoe," said Araki. "Pheasants love its berries. They say if you want to shoot a pheasant, look under the *hoya*. Even so, I didn't know that humans ate it. Though I have heard that they eat *hoya* during times of famine. Why on earth would you make cakes out of *hoya*?"

As Tsune roasted the *hoya* cakes one by one, she explained how they were made. First of all, when you have gathered a bunch and brought it in, you take just the twigs and boil them well. Next you pound them in the mortar, then take out the grinds and polish them. Then you mix in some buckwheat flour or millet flour and make them into cakes. But then she told them an important fact. From long ago *hoya* was generally a famine food, and even then used only as a last resort. The reason was that *hoya* is poisonous. So as you continue to eat it, your face grows transparent-looking and bluish white like a silkworm just before it spins its cocoon. In the end your whole body swells up and you die. She told them all this then laughed as if to belittle herself.

"If you eat too much *hoya*, you get what's called *hoyanuke* [*hoya*-blanched]. Your face turns all blue."

"But your face is pink," Araki teased her.

"I'm a special case. But look at my mother- and sisters-in-law—they all got blue faces."

Yoshida and Araki took another look at the women. They had noticed right away that the wife's face was sickly pale. And the daughter Hatsu had a kind-looking, oval-shaped face, with narrow eyes under arched brows, and a small mouth, but she too had an eerily pale and transparent looking color. Her little sister was the same. The women, being so rudely scrutinized, unconsciously turned their heads away, but suddenly a little blush came into Hatsu's face.

A fragrant scent arose as the *hoya* cakes roasted.

"Captain-sir, will you try one?" said Araki as he picked up a cake, blew off the ashes and handed it over to his superior.

"Yeah, it smells pretty good."

Yoshida took the cake in his fingertips, looked at it a while, then took a bite. But suddenly he stopped chewing. A look of disgust spread across his

face. His whole mouth had turned pungent and the saliva begun to gather. With a grimace he impulsively spit the contents into the open hearth.

"This is terrible. What in the world are you feeding me?"

In a huff he threw the rest of the cake out onto the *doma*.

"Is it really so bad? Here, let me try one."

At first Araki pondered the flavor with a strange look on his face, but then he proceeded to chomp it all down.

"Captain-sir, this isn't that bad."

"Nah, I can't eat that. Hey sister, I've got to have rice. How far do I have to go to get hold of some?"

In fact it is under the pretext of going to another village to bring back some rice that the younger women of the household are able to escape their likely molestation by the soldiers, who have managed to scrounge up a few bottles of homemade rice wine and are now developing other appetites. Later we find that the village men are hiding up in the forest, in a hut they use while hunting game.

The point of all this is clear. The villagers have become dependent on the *yamagatamai* program and are unable to sustain their current population without it. Umemura has terminated the program; thus they are starving. This reveals a gross misunderstanding on the part of government officials who, hailing themselves from lowland regions, have assumed that the villagers can simply "reclaim" more land from the forest to feed themselves.

As with the previous two examples—the privileged status of transplanting women and the folk performances at the local festival—the same ethnographic data that informed Ema's fictionalized account of the soldiers' excursion through Adano served as the basis of a factual article, this one originally appearing not in *Hidabito* but rather the mountaineering journal *Yama to keikoku* ("Mountains and gorges," see Ema 1943). The article is interesting in that, using Hida as an example, it rebuts a number of misconceptions about mountain-dwelling folk, especially in relation to their diet, and challenges the notion that all rural Japanese eat rice as their staple food item. It also counters the tendency to romanticize or "poeticize" mountain life, as is clear from the opening statement (1943, 341):

City people who yearn for the mountains often tend to poeticize the lives of the mountain folk. Of course, there is indeed a deep and beautiful poetry to their lives, and I myself am second to none in my affection for it. But city people do not know the realities of life in a mountain village. Their poeticizing, a product of the imagination based on lack of knowledge, has no depth or power. From the standpoint of someone who has been in daily

contact with mountain villagers, it amounts to nothing more than a caricature of their lives.

To make his point, Ema has decided to focus on food because it is so fundamental to people's existence. He starts out by challenging the notion that rice constitutes the staple grain in mountain villages, noting that outside of Takayama, only 23 villages (of the total 415) are predominantly rice growers (1943, 342). Furthermore, people who occupy the mountains do not rely on one staple grain but rather utilize a wide variety of food resources. In fact, he says, they eat practically anything they can find. It could even be said that the mountain people are still following a "primitive" foraging lifestyle. He then describes some of the principle food resources in the Hida region, one of which is horse chestnuts (*tochi*). In former times, on a pre-established day, all the villagers went to the mountains together to gather chestnuts, then divided them equally among themselves. Gathering independently was not allowed. He notes that the custom holds even to this day (1939) in Shirakawa. The same is true of acorns in the Ontake area. They are gathered collectively on a pre-established day and individual gathering is prohibited. Here he provides statistics on the quantities gathered and consumed. The usual way of eating them was to grind them into flour to make cakes (*dango*). This was true at least until the mid-Meiji period (that is, the late 1800s).

Then he relates his most startling discovery. While walking through the villages at the base of the high mountains he met an elderly resident who told him that the people there used to eat *hoya* as a regular part of their diet. Ema explains to his readers that *hoya* is a parasitic plant that grows on oak and chestnut trees. He had known that, all over Japan, people would resort to eating *hoya* during times of famine when there was nothing else to consume. Over time it makes the face grow pale and bluish and the legs and arms bloated, sometimes resulting in death. Indeed, *hoya* is generally considered a last resort, but this elderly informant was implying that it was a regular part of their diet. This basically meant that the people of these villages were constantly living under conditions of famine. Ema concludes that "[t]his is the wretchedness of life for villagers deep in the mountains" (1943, 345).

Here we can see that Ema's description in the novel of the revelatory journey of the soldiers deep into the mountains essentially recreates his own discoveries while conducting ethnographic fieldwork. In fact the earlier excerpt, the one describing what the soldiers saw and how they themselves were viewed with surprise and curiosity by the local residents—even the cows—might well have been Ema's own experience as he walked from village to village.

Finally the article turns to the consumption of game animals. Ema notes that, as elsewhere, the consumption of four-legged animals is abhorred, and that

this is especially true in Hida where the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism are so prevalent. But among the people dwelling deep in the mountains for whom food is scarce, game animals are readily and widely consumed. This realization, he reminds us, is a product of his own fieldwork and "careful investigation" (1943, 346). Common game animals include wild boar, deer, bear, and serow (*kamoshika*). He notes that even today, where he lives in Hida, people often share wild boar meat with him. In fact it is so widely consumed that there is even a special kind of plate called a *shishikuizara*—a wild boar-eating plate. Monkeys are eaten as well. One elderly woman told him that monkey meat was delicious. But others said that when they saw a monkey arm hanging over the fire they were somewhat loathe to eat it, as it so closely resembled a human arm.

THE NOVEL AS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCE

Turning now to a consideration of the novel's ethnographic potential, I would like to address one further aspect of the rebellion—the key role played by local bands of fire fighters known as *hikeshi*. Continual threat of fire made the neighborhood fire brigade a powerful and important presence. When fire broke out there was no time for deliberation, and the orders of the fire chief were to be obeyed without delay. As a logical extension of their duties, brigade members also assumed the role of protecting their communities from other perils, and until the Meiji Restoration served as a combination of local militia and neighborhood police. Of course, one of the basic features of the state level of political organization is to assume exclusive title to the legitimate use of force, and Umemura soon took steps to establish his own prefectural militia. This alienated neighborhood fire brigades all over Hida, as it essentially robbed them of one of their most important and prestigious roles.

Elsewhere (Schnell 1999) I have described the long standing rivalry between Takayama and the somewhat smaller and more rustic town of Furukawa, where I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork over a period of several years. As Hida's second major town, Furukawa is often characterized as the "younger sibling," seeking to emulate Takayama's grandeur but at the same time resentful of having to always remain in its shadow. In talking with local residents, however, I was told on numerous occasions how Furukawa's fire brigade had bravely taken the lead in intercepting Umemura on his return from Kyoto. This was a matter of considerable pride among the people of Furukawa, as it represented one of the few instances in which they managed to surpass their more prestigious upstream neighbors. But was the story true, or had it been fabricated by local residents to boost their self-esteem? I began to search for corroborating evidence. My search revealed that while Furukawa's leading role is briefly acknowledged by local historians (see, for example, Ōno 1971a, 1971b; Gotō

1983, 126; Hishimura 1994, 147), by far the most detailed assessment appears in Ema's fictionalized narrative, "The Mountain Folk."

The author describes how, in Umemura's absence, fire brigade members met secretly in the forests outside Takayama to decide what to do (Ema 1997b, 305): "This time, in addition to the Takayama contingent, a large number of Furukawa firemen were also involved. They were particularly rough and aggressive; now that the governor was away, they asserted, it was time to join with the peasants and incite the rebellion." When the rebellion actually does break out, Ema (1997b, 361) notes that "over 200 members of the Furukawa fire brigade bravely took the lead, brandishing torches and blowing horns made of conch shells." Later on, following their return from the skirmish at Hagiwara, Ema describes the difference in attitude between the two contingents (1997b, 371):

> To put things simply, the Furukawa fire brigade was highly motivated and aggressive, while its Takayama counterpart was passive and reserved. This was clearly evident during their recent encounter with Umemura. In particular, when Umemura was besieged at Hagiwara, the Furukawa firemen had taken the lead and fought with zeal, while the Takayama firemen had continually lagged behind, assuming the role of bystanders. This angered the Furukawa contingent, and led to incessant violence [between the two brigades]. They were often seen fighting in the streets [of Takayama], right before the eyes of the townspeople.

This reveals Furukawa's resentment toward not only the governor Umemura, but the town of Takayama as well, and is an important factor in understanding the traditional animosity between the two communities. Ema's account makes the story of Furukawa's leading role more credible because his own research was informed mainly by people living in and around Takayama—his story is told from *their* perspective, in other words, rather than that of the Furukawans.

I would like to use the following excerpt to weave together the points I have made thus far. This brief episode takes place just as the rebellion is about to begin. It involves another recurring character named Tōbei, who lives in the village of Matsumoto just downstream from Takayama. One night he witnesses a strange spectacle (Ema 1997b, 309–12):

> Tōbei of Matsumoto village woke with a start from a drunken slumber. It was still the middle of the night. He thought he had heard footsteps sneaking across the boarded floor. Straining his ears to listen, there was no mistaking that someone was walking about the house. "Who's there?" he called out in a loud voice.

The footsteps suddenly paused. His aging wife lying by his side turned over, annoyed. "Aah, you startled me! What are you shouting about?"

"I just heard footsteps on the boarded floor."

"Its only a *yobaido* [a person, typically a young male, doing *yobai*]. When you've got daughters what can you expect?"

So saying, his wife soon resumed her peaceful snoring.

Tōbei was not a cantankerous sort. It was just that a few years ago he had had a bag of rice stolen, and since then had become very apprehensive about nighttime visitors. Ordinarily he would have gone back to sleep upon determining that the intruder was not a thief; this time, however, he had to visit the outhouse, and noisily got up to go outside. At this point the *yobaido* hurriedly ran from the house.

"Hoho! These young fellows are lively!"

His breath still smelling of *sake*, Tōbei stepped into his sandals at the *doma* and went out into the front garden.

It was pitch dark with not a star in the sky. The waters of the Miya River, rushing by only two or three hundred meters away, made a thunderous roaring sound.

Trembling from the cold, Tōbei finished his task and started back into the house. But just then something made him stop short in his tracks. Down by the road along the bank of the river, several dozens of beautiful reddish lights were proceeding in a line in the direction of Takayama. Each was reflected in the dark flowing water, shimmering as radiantly as a fireworks display.

"Hoho! The foxes are really lighting things up!"

This, he felt certain, must be a "foxfire."[33] He had seen foxfires two or three times in the past, but never such a spectacle as this. He gazed trance-like at the strangely beautiful sight. A foxfire was ordinarily pale blue and much more faint, and continually flickering off and on again. But these lights burned brightly, even shedding sparks, and they shone steadily as they proceeded on in the direction of Takayama. Indeed, this was certain to be the work of exceedingly wise old foxes!

Tōbei was about to call for his wife and children, as it would be a shame to keep all this to himself. But then suddenly a strange thing happened: the line of lights began to break apart, forming into four or five separate groupings. Then one of the lights flew into the air, spewing sparks. It traced a small parabola out over the river and vanished in the darkness. At this point all the other lights proceeded one by one to fly out into the darkness, likewise shedding sparks and disappearing in the river. This too was a beautiful sight. Tōbei couldn't help gasping in admiration as he watched, transfixed by the mysterious antics of the aged foxes.

> The mass of reddish lights, which until just a moment ago had shone so beautifully, now in an instant grew increasingly few until finally not a single one remained unextinguished.
>
> Then there was only darkness.
>
> Tōbei strained his ears. Though far away, he thought he could hear some kind of muffled noise—perhaps human voices, perhaps not. The roar of the river was too loud for him to be certain—it was only a feeling.
>
> The next day Tōbei related the story of the previous night's magnificent foxfire display to every villager he encountered. But no one else had been looking outside. Tōbei had always been a big talker and, especially when he had been drinking, was inclined to make up pointless stories to amuse his listeners. For this reason no one took his excited account very seriously. And, even if it had been true, a foxfire sighting was nothing so unusual to the average peasant.
>
> Two or three days later, after the rebellion had started, the villagers recalled the foxfire incident they had heard about from Tōbei. Then they realized that this had been no mischief caused by aged foxes. In truth, it had been members of the fire brigade from Furukawa gathering together that night in a prearranged rendezvous. Then, just when Tōbei saw them from afar, they all began to cast their torches into the river so as to steal surreptitiously into Takayama.

This excerpt contains several points of ethnographic interest. It suggests first of all that parents were not overly disturbed by the practice of *yobai*. In fact Tōbei is clearly more concerned about his rice supply than his daughter's association with the intruder. There is also the description of the "foxfire" phenomenon, and the suggestion that such sightings were not infrequent. Finally, there is again an acknowledgment of the leading role played by the fire brigade from Furukawa in inciting the rebellion. What I found most compelling, however, was that, according to Amako Naomi 天児直美, Ema's biographer and constant companion during the last few years of his life (see Amako 1985, 1989), the author had heard this account from a local resident and incorporated it directly into the novel (personal communication, 26 July 1995).

Throughout the course of its development, Ema strove to extend the novel's depth and authenticity through additional field research. In fact he was in the midst of yet another revision at the time of his death in 1973. As in the Tōbei episode cited above, he often wove his informants' accounts directly into the narrative, thereby affording the local people a prominent voice in the final product. It is this fact in particular that makes the novel so valuable as an ethnographic resource.

THE NOVEL AS VEILED PROTEST

As for the actual rebellion—the climax of events—I will leave that for readers of the novel itself to discover, as I would not like to spoil the ending of a good story. I will turn instead to a consideration of the ulterior motive mentioned at the outset; in other words, Ema's use of "The Mountain Folk" to register dissent.

Skilled storytelling offers a convenient disguise for expressing dissatisfaction with the status quo. The message may be conveyed allegorically, either in the form of a parable in which objections are directed toward an imaginary yet structurally similar situation, or by alluding to an actual incident in another time or place so as to avoid direct reference to immediate conditions. The authors are thereby able to veil their subversive messages and escape censure by the authorities.[34] This is the strategy Ema adopted in opposing the militarist Japanese government of the 1930s and early 1940s.

By describing incidents in which centralized authority is placed in opposition to local needs and attitudes, "The Mountain Folk" draws interesting parallels between the Meiji government's treatment of the Hida peasantry following the Restoration and Japanese incursion into the Asian mainland several decades later. Indeed, Ema suggests through his narrative that the former led directly to the latter, eventually culminating in the tragedy of the Second World War. The following excerpt, appearing near the end of Part I, makes the point quite explicitly. It describes the musings of Takezawa Kanzaburō, the man who had been appointed by the Meiji government as interim authority in the Hida region prior to Umemura's arrival. The narrative has Takezawa gazing up at two lofty peaks, Mt. Fune and Mt. Kurai, where he hopes to reconstruct an ancient shrine to the Shinto deities. This leads him to envision his own role in the formation of a new Japanese nation state (Ema 1997a, 267–68):

> His eyes were forever drawn to these two mountains, particularly the summit of Mt. Kurai. It was not just the Shinto shrine he intended to build there, however, that occupied his thoughts. Rather, as if in a trance he was picturing how, with the shrine as the nucleus, he would extend his control over this majestic mountain region, and from here move steadily toward the realization of a modern Japan. In reality, what would actually emerge was an offensive Japan made evil by a dogmatic Shinto-based military regime. Yet caught up in this vision his heart was inspired, as if by some miraculous mythical episode. For in complete ignorance of Japan's present condition and the general state of the world, he could not foresee what the future held in store—an invasive drive toward global conquest in the name of a deified emperor.

Thus while it is set in the Hida region several decades earlier, Ema intended his novel partly as an indictment of Japanese imperialist aggression. As he himself notes in an autobiographical account, "'The Mountain Folk' was, for me, an individual yet whole-hearted act of resistance against war and fascism" (Ema 1989, 230). In other words, the novel became an outlet for feelings and opinions that could not be aired in public. Thus, notes Ema, "while witnessing the people being duped by the military and worked into a frenzy over fleeting military victories, I could lock myself up in my study and continue writing about a popular revolutionary movement, thereby unleashing my own internal resistance" (Ema 1989, 234).

CONCLUSION

I have asserted that Ema's novel contains a wealth of ethnographic information and tells more about the conditions that led to the Umemura Rebellion than standard history texts convey. It also constitutes an interesting use of literature as a form of popular dissent and offers hope of recovering what Scott (1990) has termed the "hidden transcript," in this case referring to subversive political attitudes among the Hida peasantry. Finally, by revealing the conflicting values of local mountain villagers versus those of the centralized bureaucratic elite, it challenges assertions "that the Japanese constitute a culturally and socially homogeneous racial entity, whose essence is virtually unchanged from prehistorical times down to the present day" (Dale 1986, xi; my page numbering).[35]

Yet "The Mountain Folk" is still at base a novel, drawn heavily from the creative imagination of its author. Does this undermine its potential as a source of information? It does, of course, include a considerable amount of improvised dialogue as well as speculation on the thoughts and feelings of its characters. But it also provides detailed descriptions of the local environment, housing, subsistence technology, food preparation, tools, clothing, social relations, religious beliefs and practices, and the attitudes and concerns of the ordinary people of Hida. These data were gained through direct observation, informant interviews, and personal experience—precisely what we refer to as ethnographic fieldwork. The credibility of this data is enhanced by Ema's meticulous research and obsession for authenticity. He was, after all, a veteran ethnographer known more at one time for his journal on local folk culture than his fictionalized narratives. Even the contrived dialogue among the characters is a valuable source of linguistic information, as much of it is rendered quite authentically in the local dialect (Hishimura 1994, 98–99).

As for the historical details, there simply is no more comprehensive analysis of the events that precipitated the Umemura Rebellion than Ema's novel, and historians themselves acknowledge its accuracy (Ōoka 1990; Hishimura 1994,

94–104; Ōno Masao, personal communication, 27 May 1997 and 29 May 1998). In fact, in their brief account of the Umemura incident, the editors of a well-regarded history of social movements in Gifu prefecture borrowed extensive passages verbatim from Ema's narrative without bothering to cite the original.[36] The irony here is that a social scientist might well regard the history text as a reliable authority, while dismissing the original as "only a novel."

One worrisome aspect of "The Mountain Folk" as a potential source of data is the political orientation of its author. Ema sometimes appears to be rather dogmatic in praising the integrity of the peasants' lifestyle or bemoaning their oppression under the new regime. These passages should be weighed with caution. Even so, Ema's sympathy for the people of Hida may reflect his own humanist inclinations rather than some obligatory tribute to leftist political ideology. Furthermore, his portrayal of the peasants is not always flattering, as can be seen in their rather naïve impression that Mito Rekkō is a Christian deity, their obvious delight in rumor-mongering, and their alleged predilection for the *renshi*'s bath water. Nor is Umemura cast as an unequivocal villain; rather, Ema describes the young governor as being highly idealistic but overly ambitious in implementing his reforms (Ema 1997a, 391–92).

The result is a complex narrative that presents many different perspectives, none of them explicitly privileged over the others. In fact a senior editor at Shunjūsha, the current publisher of *Yama no tami*, once confided to me that the problem with this novel as a marketable commodity is the absence of a sympathetic central character—a recognizable "hero." This can perhaps be seen as a reflection of Ema's ethnographic training in the style of Yanagita Kunio. In order to deal with the problem of varied opinion and conflicting accounts, Yanagita advocated gaining a broad perspective by talking to as many different people as possible, then drawing conclusions based upon the assembled evidence (Kawada 1985, 291–300.)

Perhaps Ema's novel should be treated in the manner of any so-called "key informant"—a source of ideas and hypotheses that must nevertheless be tested against alternative sources. On the other hand, if true objectivity derives only from considering different points of view, then "The Mountain Folk" provides an important counterbalance to "official" accounts of the Meiji Restoration, or of any attempt to extend bureaucratic, centralized authority into outlying and seemingly backward regions.

NOTES

* I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Amako Naomi for providing me with important information and advice. This research was largely funded by a Fulbright Research Fellowship (2003–2004).

1. In this article I use the traditional order for Japanese names, in which the family name precedes the given name. Ema's given name was "Nakashi" (though the standard reading of the character 修 is *nagashi*), but he used "Shū," the Chinese-derived reading of the same character, as a pen name when writing fiction.

2. Yoshimeki Haruhiko, winner of the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for Literature in 1993, cites Ema's *Yama no tami* as the single most important influence on his own literary career (Schnell and Yoshimeki 1997). See also Ōoka Shōhei's (1990, 55–73) very positive appraisal of *Yama no tami*. Ōoka was the author of the well-known anti-war novel *Nobi* [Fire on the plain]. Other notable admirerers include Kikuchi and Ozaki (1978), Honda (1980), Haga (1991), and Nagahira (2000).

3. All translations appearing in this article are my own.

4. There are actually three ranges, the Hida Sanmyaku, the Kiso Sanmyaku, and the Akaishi Sanmyaku, more popularly known as the Northern Alps, Central Alps, and Southern Alps, respectively.

5. Similar offers were made in other parts of Japan at that time.

6. From 1910 to the end of the Second World War, Korea was under the colonial domination of the imperial Japanese government. During this time, Koreans were taken by the thousands from their native land to work in Japanese mines and factories. In the larger cities like Tokyo they constituted a significant minority population, and were often falsely accused of seditious activities.

7. Granted, by the time Ema began doing his fieldwork in the early 1930s, most of those who had directly experienced the rebellion had passed away. Much of his data came from what people had heard from their parents, relatives, or older acquaintances. There were a few notable exceptions. For example, Ema seems to have relied quite heavily on the recollections of Kotaka Nui, who had been born in 1843 and was twenty-five years old at the time of the rebellion. Ema was able to interview her extensively prior to her death in 1933 (Kotaka 1971, 13–14). Despite her advanced age, her memories were reportedly very vivid (Amako Naomi, personal communication, 2 June 1999).

8. Yanagita Kunio is widely recognized as the "father" of Japanese folklore. Japanese anthropologists also consider him one of the early pioneers of their discipline (Kawada 1993). For background on Ema Mieko's career as a folklorist, see Nakagome 2006.

9. Ema preferred to keep his various professional identities separate through the use of pseudonyms: fictional narratives like "The Mountain Folk" were written under his regular name; archaeological studies were written under the name Akagi Kiyoshi; ethnological accounts were written under the names Dashi Yaichi and Satō Yoshio. In fact, Ema occasionally cites himself under a different name (see, for example, Dashi 1937).

10. See, for example, Ema's description in the novel of *hōkaburi goya* (1997a, 170–83), a type of hut used in Hida villages as a gathering place for young men. This passage is based on a series of articles entitled *Hōkamuri goya no kenkyū* ("Research into the Hōkamuri Huts"—*hōkaburi* and *hōkamuri* being alternative pronunciations of the same characters), which were written by Yamada Hakuba and appeared in the journal *Hidabito* during the period 1935–1936.

11. Ema completed the last major revision of *Yama no tami* in 1958, and it was published as a new four-part edition by Rironsha. At this point the novel had grown to two-and-a-half times its original length and included a considerable amount of detailed ethnographic information. When the editors at Shunjūsha obtained rights to reissue the novel, they decided that much of this information was superfluous and interfered with the flow of the narrative; they subsequently opted to return to the 1949 version. Thus the penultimate edition is the only one currently in print, though the later, four-part edition can still be

found in some libraries and the occasional used bookstore. Many readers prefer this later edition.

12 The term allegedly derives from the verb *yobu* 呼ぶ—"to visit"—but came to be written with the characters 夜這い meaning "night-crawling."

13. The term used here is *sōtome*, a local variant of *saotome* 早乙女, referring to the young women employed to do the actual transplanting of seedlings in the flooded paddies. It is written with *sa* 早, the character for "quick" or "early"—but in this case meaning "young"—and *otome* 乙女, meaning "virgin" or "maid."

14. The term used here is *kuwagashira*, which means literally "principal hoe."

15. The term used for "leap year" in the actual text is *urūdoshi*, which is more accurately rendered as "intercalary year." According to the old lunar-solar calendar in use at that time, months were literally defined by the cycle of the moon. In order to bring these lunar months in line with the solar year, a short "intercalary" month was inserted at approximately three-year intervals. The years during which this occurred were known as *urūdoshi*, or "intercalary years."

The last two sentences in this paragraph contain a clever play on words. The *urū* in *urūdoshi* sounds like the verb *uru*, meaning "to ripen" or "bear fruit." Thus Old Heisaku is implying a year during which many children will be born.

16. *Onna no yobai*—that is, women initiating the *yobai* encounters—has been reported in other sources. See, for example, Akamatsu 1986, 182–98; Yagi 1998, 296–97; Ikeda 2003, 111–17. Chiba (1983, 14–15) reminds us that, while such references appear in folk songs all over Japan, this does not necessarily prove that the custom was actually so prevalent.

17. In this instance Ema uses his real name rather than Dashi Yaichi, his customary ethnologist pseudonym.

18. Buddhist priests of the True Pure Land variety were in great demand at that time of year because of the need to have a special memorial service, called *shōki hōonkō*, performed at various temples and households.

19. Young men often guarded access to the young women of their villages, barring outsiders under threat of violence (see Akamatsu 1991, 147–51). Ema also discusses this control issue in the novel (1997a: 171, 195).

20. Jizō is a bodhisattva, considered to be the protector of children and wayward travelers. Statues of Jizō are ubiquitous in Japan, and are sometimes found along roads and highways. As the excerpt suggests, the statues are often adorned with red bibs.

21. The *sakaki* tree is considered sacred, and its branches are often used in purification rituals.

22. Here I borrow a term coined by Geertz (1973).

23. A neighboring province to the east, now part of Nagano prefecture.

24. A district in former Mino province, in what is now the southwestern part of Gifu prefecture.

25. Mito Rekkō is an alternative way of referring to Tokugawa Nariaki (1800–1860), former lord of the Mito domain and founder of the Mito school of Shinto and Confucian-based nationalism.

26. "-sama" is attached to names as an expression of respect.

27. *Doma* refers to the entryway typically found in old farmhouses. It was located just inside the front door. It consisted of a floor made of bare earth—hence the term *doma* 土間, which is written with two characters meaning "earth" and "area" (as in floor space). People entering the house would ordinarily pause in the *doma* to remove their footwear before stepping up into the main living area.

28. A lengthy description of this dance also appeared in a special issue of *Hidabito*. See Ema Shū, Segawa Ryōzō, Murata Sukesaku, and Ema Mieko 1939.

29. The term used to describe this form of punishment is *sarashi*, meaning to expose to public view.

30. *Namu amida butsu*, an expression of faith in Amida Buddha, used by adherents of Pure Land (Jōdo-shū) and True Pure Land (Jōdo-shinshū) Buddhism.

31. A *shishi* is an imaginary animal commonly depicted in folk dances through the use of a rather grotesque-looking wooden head or mask. The term is often rendered in English as "lion-dog."

32. The term the captain uses here is *anne*, a variation on the standard *ane*, meaning "elder sister." Later in the narrative other members of the household will use the same term.

33. The term used here is *kitsunebi* 狐火, meaning literally "foxfire." According to Japanese folk belief, foxes (*kitsune* 狐) were thought to possess supernatural powers, including the ability to change their physical appearance and to bewitch or bedevil human beings. Any mysterious or inexplicable phenomenon would likely be attributed to the work of foxes. This included strange lights seen at night. Such lights were referred to as *kitsunebi* (attaching the character *hi* 火, meaning "fire" or "light"). They were sometimes seen to form a procession, as in this example.

34. This device has a long history in the literary traditions of East Asia, most notably China, where it is referred to as "pointing at the mulberry and upbraiding the ash" (Kwok 1972, 7).

35. Dale was describing the assumptions that underlie a vast body of popular literature known collectively as *Nihonjinron*, or "discussions of [what constitutes being] Japanese."

36. Compare Gifu-ken Shakai Undōshi Hensan Iinkai 1971, 356-371 with Ema 1997b, 3–8, 35–40, 44). The "borrowing" could not have taken place in the opposite direction (from the history text to the novel), as the original publication date for this edition of Ema's novel is 1949.

REFERENCES CITED

Amako Naomi 天児直美

1985 *Honō no moetsukiru toki: Ema Shū no shōgai* [When a flame burns out: The life of Ema Shū]. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

1989 *Maō no yūwaku: Ema Shū to sono shūhen* [The devil's temptation: Ema Shū and his surroundings]. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

Akamatsu Keisuke 赤松啓介

1986 *Himin no minzoku bunka—seikatsu minzoku to sabetsu mukashibanashi* [Folk culture of the uncommon folk: Oral history of folklife and discrimination]. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

1991 *Hijōmin no sei minzoku* [Sexual folk customs of the unordinary folk]. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

Beckmann, George M., and Okubo Genji

1969 *The Japanese Communist Party 1922–1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Breen, John

2000 Ideologues, bureaucrats and priests: On 'Shinto' and 'Buddhism' in early Meiji

Japan. In *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds., 230–51. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

CAMPBELL, Joseph, and Bill D. MOYERS
1988 *The Power of Myth*. New York: Doubleday.

CHIBA Tokuji 千葉徳爾
1983 *Nyōbō to yama no kami* [Wife and mountain god]. Tokyo: Sakaiya Tosho.

DALE, Peter N.
1986 *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*. London: Croon Helm.

DASHI Yaichi 多志弥一 (Ema Nakashi)
1937 Shirakawa-mura no jinruigaku kenkyū [Anthropological research in Shirakawa Village]. *Hidabito* 5(6): 41–42.

ELIADE, Mircea
1958 *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. London: Sheed and Ward.
1978 *A History of Religious Ideas, vol. 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

EMA Mieko 江馬三枝子
1942 *Hida no onna-tachi* [The women of Hida]. Tokyo: Mikuni Shobō.

EMA Shū (Ema Nakashi) 江馬 修
1935 Saotome kō: Genshi nōgyō to josei [Thoughts on *saotome*: Primeval agriculture and women]. *Hidabito* 3(6): 1–6.
1943 [1939] *Sanmin no seikatsu* [Way of life of the mountain folk]. In *Kita arupusu* [The Northern Alps], Tanabe Jūji, Kumazawa Mataroku, eds., 341–46. Tokyo: Rikugeisha.
1989 [1957] *Issaka no ayumi* [One novelist's journey]. Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentaa.
1997a [1949] *Yama no tami* [The mountain folk], vol. I. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.
1997b [1949] *Yama no tami* [The mountain folk], vol. II. Tokyo: Shunjūsha.

EMA Shū 江馬 修, SEGAWA Ryōzō 瀬川良三, MURATA Sukesaku 村田祐作, EMA Mieko 江馬三枝子
1939 Hida Ichinomiya no sairei to saiji buyō [Festival and sacred dancing at Hida Ichinomiya]. *Hidabito* 7(11).

GEERTZ, Clifford
1973 Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 3–30. New York: Basic Books.

GIFU-KEN SHAKAI UNDŌSHI HENSAN IINKAI 岐阜県社会運動史編纂委員会
1971 *Gifu-ken shakai undōshi* [History of social movements in Gifu Prefecture]. Tokyo: Gifu-ken Shakai Undōshi Hensan Iinkai.

GOTŌ Shinzaburō 後藤新三郎
1983 *Edo jidai no Hida-shi* [History of Hida during the Edo Period]. Takayama, Gifu Prefecture: Takayama Insatsu.

GRAPARD, Allan G.
1984 Japan's ignored cultural revolution: The separation of Shinto and Buddhist divinities in Meiji (shimbutsu bunri) and a case study: Tōnamine. *History of Religions* 23: 240–65.

HAGA Noboru 芳賀 登
1991 *Yama no tami no minzoku to bunka: Hida o chūshin ni mita yamaguni no henbō* [Mountain folk folklore and culture: Transformation of mountain lands with focus on Hida]. Tokyo: Yūzankan Shuppan.

Hishimura Fumio 菱村文夫

1994 *Umemura sōdō no kenkyū* [Research on the Umemura Disturbance]. Takayama, Gifu Prefecture: Takayama Insatsu.

Honda Shūgo 本多秋五

1980 Rekishi shōsetsu-ron no ikku [Theory of the historical novel, Act I]. *Subaru* June, 198–221.

Ikeda Yasaburō 池田弥三郎

2003 [1958] *Sei no minzokushi* [The ethnography of sex]. Tokyo: Kōdansha.

Kawada Minoru 川田稔

1985 *Yanagita Kunio no shisōshi-teki kenkyū* [Yanagita Kunio's research into intellectual history]. Tokyo: Miraisha.

1993 *The Origin of Ethnography in Japan: Yanagita Kunio and his Times*. New York: Kegan Paul.

Ketelaar, James Edward

1990 *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kikuchi Masanori 菊池昌典, Ozaki Hotsuki 尾崎秀樹

1978 Rekishi bungaku o kiru: Ema Shū "Yama no tami" to puroretaria sakka-tachi [Critiquing historical literature: Ema Shū's "The Mountain Folk" and the proletarian writers]. *Rekishi to bungaku*. Summer/June, 249–70.

Koschmann, J. Victor

1987 *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790–1864*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kotaka Fusa 小鷹ふさ

1971 *Nuijo monogatari* [Story of the woman Nui]. Kyoto: Rakuju.

Kwok, D. W. Y.

1972 Wu Han: The Case of the Mulberry and the Ash. In Wu Han, 1–27.

Nagahira Kazuo 永平和雄

2000 *Ema Shū ron* [Theory of Ema Shū]. Tokyo: Ōfūsha.

Nakagome Mutsuko 中込睦子

2006 *Sōsōki minzokugaku ni okeru josei minzoku kenkyūshi-teki ichizuke* [Historical position of women's folklore research during the incipient period of folklore studies]. Tsukuba, Japan: Tsukuba Daigaku Jinbun Shakaigaku Kenkyūka.

Ōmachi Tokuzō 大間知篤三

1960 *Yobai* [Night crawling]. In *Nihon shakai minzoku jiten* [Dictionary of folklore in Japanese society], vol. 4, Ogawa Seiichirō, ed., 1545–46. Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha.

Ōno Masao 大野政雄

1971a Furukawa shidan: Umemura sōdō [Speaking of Furukawa history: The Umemura Rebellion], part 6. *Kōhō Furukawa* 146: 4.

1971b Furukawa shidan: Umemura sōdō [Speaking of Furukawa history: The Umemura Rebellion], part 7. *Kōhō Furukawa* 147: 4.

Ōoka Shōhei 大岡昇平

1990 [1974] *Rekishi shōsetsu no mondai* [Considering the historical novel]. Tokyo: Bungei Shunjūsha.

SCHNELL, Scott
1999 *The Rousing Drum: Ritual Practice in a Japanese Community*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

SCHNELL, Scott, YOSHIMEKI Haruhiko 吉目木晴彦
1997 Ema Shū to "Yama no tami" [Regarding Ema Shū and "The Mountain Folk"]. *Shunjū* 391: 1–10.

SCOTT, James C.
1990 *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

SMITH, Robert J., and Ella Lury WISWELL
1982 *The Women of Suye Mura*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

STONE, Lawrence
1987 *The Past and Present Revisited*. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

TSUJI Zennosuke 辻善之助, MURAKAMI Zenjō 村上専精, WASHIO Junkei 鷲尾順敬, eds.
1983 *Shinhen Meiji ishin shinbutsu bunri shiryō* [Historical materials on the separation of Shinto and Buddhism during the Meiji Restoration, new edition]. Tokyo: Meichō Shuppan.

WOOD, Raymond W.
1990 Ethnohistory and historical method. In *Archaeological Method and Theory*, vol. 2, Michael B. Schiffer, ed., 81–110. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

WU Han
1972 *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

YAGI Tōru 八木 透
1998 *Yobai*. In *Nihon minzokugaku jiten* [Dictionary of Japanese folklore]. Nakayama Tarō, ed., 296–97. Tokyo: Parutosusha.