

through his masquerade. Devastated by her rejection, he sets out to assault her; at this precise juncture, the narrator's tense shifts from past to present to imply that the story continues past the end of the novel. From a metafictional perspective, Key insists that the novel presents a violation of boundaries; at the end of the novel, the reader is caught between narrative levels in a fictional world that offers no closure (p. 150).

In sum, Key offers a critical reading of Abe's writings with references to the literary agenda of the time, but she also intermixes a wide range of critical literary theories to construct a cross-cultural framework. These include Kiyoteru Hanada's concepts of *sur-documentarism* based on the "sublation" of fiction and documentary (p. 26), Russian formalist writer Tzvetan Todorov's concept of "double structure" in the detective novel (p. 22), Gérard Genette's theory of focalization (p. 47), and Nichols's concept of "reflexive documentary" (p. 90). To this reviewer, Key's close readings focused on documentary and realism are enriching, but confining at the same time. How her readings intersect with critical avenues offered by other scholars needs elaboration. One is left wondering how the Marxist and feminist critical angles introduced by Nina Cornyetz on *Suna no onna* (Woman in the dunes) in *The Ethics of Aesthetics in Japanese Cinema and Literature* relate to Key's methodology. What about Christopher Bolton, who adopts Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of novelistic heteroglossia in reading Abe's work through the combined languages of science, psychology, and I-novel in *Sublime Voices: The Fictional Science and Scientific Fiction of Abe*? Moreover, how Abe continues to develop his metafictional approach in his later works, e.g., *Hako Otoko* (Boxed man, 1973), *Kangaroo Note* (1991), and *Tobu Otoko* (Flying man, 1994), could be broached.

Withstanding such concerns, this is an illuminating book that complements existing English-based scholarship on Abe. While a basic knowledge of critical literary theories is needed for full comprehension of Key's approach, it could easily be adopted for use in seminars on East Asian or comparative literature at the upper-level undergraduate or graduate level.

YAYOI UNO EVERETT
Emory University
yeveret@emory.edu

The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony. By MICHAEL S. LAVER. Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2011. xiv, 217 pp. \$104.99 (cloth).
doi:10.1017/S0021911812001520

Particularly since the 1960s, historians of Japan have studied in depth foreign relations in the first half of the seventeenth century, a period when the Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu*) instituted measures that significantly altered Japan's interactions with the outside world, creating what is often dubbed a "closed

country” (*sakoku*) policy. Michael S. Laver seeks to shed new light on this seminal period through a detailed examination of the “*sakoku* edicts,” seventeen directives concerning intercourse with the outside world issued by the *bakufu* in 1635. Laver methodically analyzes each edict, organizing his discussion into chapters on the edicts that restricted travel outside the country, those that prohibited Christianity, and those directed at foreign trade. His other chapters examine related events of the period: the expulsion of the Portuguese following the Shimabara Rebellion, the transfer of Dutch traders to the island of Dejima in Nagasaki, and the expulsion of Japanese women who had children with European men, as well as the children themselves. Concerning foreign relations early in the seventeenth century, Laver aims to show first that “the policy that came to be known as *sakoku* was an evolving process that began with specific reactions to particular historical stimuli,” and second that *bakufu* leaders acted largely to shore up their still tenuous political position in the decades after the establishment of Tokugawa hegemony following the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) (p. x).

Laver asserts that “even though the *sakoku* edicts appear to be concerned primarily with foreign policy, in reality they were efforts to bolster *bakufu* strength and prestige at home” (p. xi). He stresses that *bakufu* leaders were especially concerned with enhancing their regime’s politico-economic position vis-à-vis powerful lords in Kyushu. Largely in pursuit of that agenda, they prohibited Japanese from traveling abroad, forbade Japanese ships from sailing to foreign ports, and banned the construction of large oceangoing vessels. Laver concludes that Tokugawa leaders issued anti-Christian edicts in order keep out a dangerous ideological contagion but contends that their “biggest concern” was “that most of the Christian converts were located on the island of Kyushu, among the very daimyo that had fought against the Tokugawa at Sekigahara” (p. 79). He notes that over half of the 1635 edicts involved foreign trade (with four related to silk imports), stressing that these indicate a Tokugawa regime seeking not to eliminate foreign trade but rather to control all aspects of it. In their directives about foreign trade, the Tokugawa again were “primarily concerned with consolidating their own power and prestige at the expense of the regional daimyo” (p. 115). In his closing chapters, Laver offers some intriguing conclusions, for example a novel comparison of the seventeenth-century Tokugawa stance to that of the Hōjō in the late thirteenth century. He notes that both consolidated their position vis-à-vis lords in western Japan thanks in part to the specter of foreign invasion: the Hōjō played upon fears of another Mongol force appearing on the Kyushu coast while the Tokugawa gained power by stressing the threat of a Portuguese or larger Christian incursion.

Unfortunately, this is one of the few fresh insights in a study that largely synthesizes earlier research. Much of the book affirms Ronald Toby’s seminal interpretation of Tokugawa dominance in foreign relations, developed through a careful study of Japanese diplomacy in the seventeenth century.² For one, Laver stresses a point that Toby made apparent decades ago: that the Tokugawa

²Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

regime sought not to eliminate foreign trade but merely to control it to its advantage. To better understand Laver's interpretation, this reader would have valued more critical engagement with Toby and the work of other important scholars on seventeenth-century foreign relations cited in the monograph, for example, Arano Yasunori, Iwao Seiichi, and Robert Innes.³

In addition, Laver's main thesis—that the Tokugawa goal in foreign relations centered on counteracting the power of daimyo in the Kyushu region—deals with a fascinating aspect of foreign relations early in the Edo period that has not been comprehensively explored in English. Nonetheless Laver tells us little about how Kyushu domains themselves actually viewed and executed the 1635 edicts to help us determine how, as he asserts, Tokugawa leaders gained the upper hand in supervising foreign relations for the Japanese state. He instead provides discussions of events in and around Nagasaki, such the Dutch move from Hirado and the Shimabara Rebellion. We therefore learn much about these important events and relations with outside parties more generally, but do not gain a firm understanding of the interplay between the *bakufu* and Kyushu domains.

Overall this book offers an accessible overview of foreign relations in the first half of the seventeenth century and therefore would be useful in an undergraduate survey if a more reasonably priced paperback edition becomes available. But unfortunately it falls short in shedding new light on the course of foreign relations in the early Edo period.

ROBERT HELLYER

Wake Forest University
hellyer@wfu.edu

Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist Movement. By MARA PATESSIO. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2011. viii, 232 pp. \$65.00 (cloth); \$25.00 (paper).

doi:10.1017/S0021911812001532

According to Mara Patessio, historians have focused inadequately on the thoughts and actions of late-nineteenth-century Japanese women. Thus she sets out to study “what women themselves thought” about their own social roles and conditions during the early Meiji period (p. 2). In so doing, she engages a number of compelling questions: How can we account for women's

³Robert Innes, “The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century,” unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980; Iwao Seiichi, *Shuinsen bōekishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1958); Arano Yasunori, *Kinsei Nihon to Higashi Ajia* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1988).