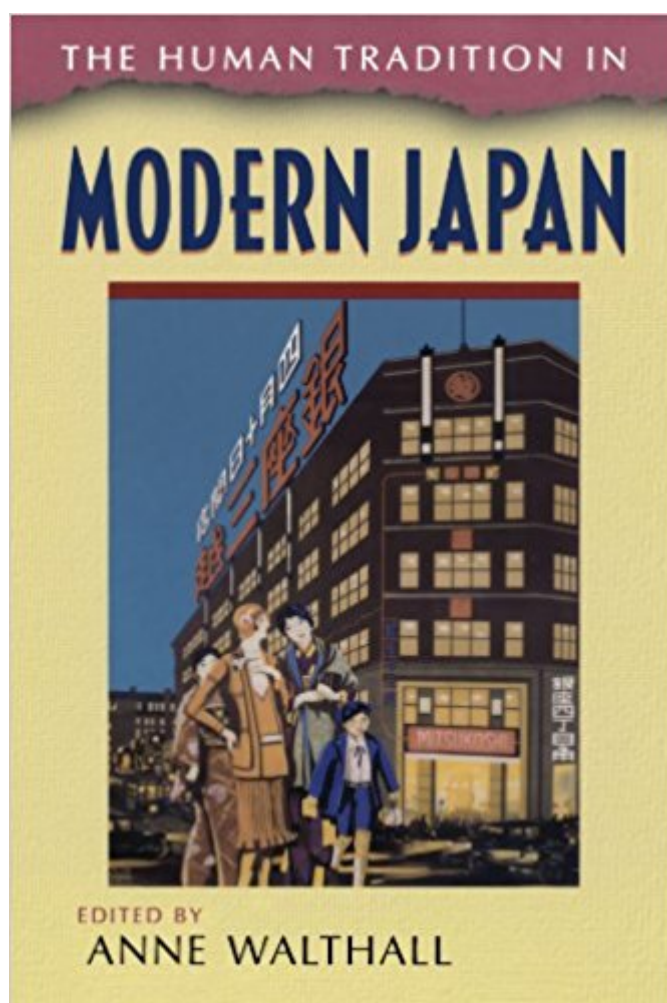


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# The Human Tradition In Modern Japan (The Human Tradition Around The World Series)



## Synopsis

The Human Tradition in Modern Japan is a collection of short biographies of ordinary Japanese men and women, most of them unknown outside their family and locality, whose lives collectively span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their stories present a counterweight to the prevailing stereotypes, providing students with depictions of real people through the records they have left-records that detail experiences and aspirations. The Human Tradition in Modern Japan offers a human-scale perspective that focuses on individuals, reconstitutes the meaning of people's experiences as they lived through them, and puts a human face on history. It skillfully bridges the divides between the sexes, between the local and the national, and between rural and urban, as well as spanning crucial moments in the history of modern Japan. The Human Tradition in Modern Japan is an excellent resource for courses on Japanese history, East Asian history, and peoples and cultures of Japan.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Human Tradition in Modern Japan illustrates the themes of 'big history' through the flesh-and-blood experiences of real people: a pop star, a feudal administrator, an Okinawan peasant-turned-official, a lesbian novelist, a princess, an economist, the mother of a prime minister. It beautifully enriches our understanding of Japan's last 350 years by humanizing, and thus complicating, it. The writing is lively and accessible. (James L. Huffman, Wittenberg University) This book will be a valuable supplementary text for introductory courses on modern Japan. (The

Historian) This book demonstrates that by exploring the experiences of everyday Japanese we can often learn more about the history and people of Japan than by concentrating on the powerful, wealthy, and influential. It is often in the lives of the ordinary that we glimpse the extraordinary. It is also here that we sense most clearly the ties that unite us all as human beings. (F. G. Notehelfer, University of California, Los Angeles) A fascinating work that unearths the lives of twelve diverse men and women who lived in Japan between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. . . . Walthall has done an excellent job in unifying the twelve authorial voices into one, as each chapter flows effortlessly into the next. . . . One of the many strengths of this work is that most of the essays elucidate larger social, cultural, and political issues that transcend Japan. . . . By focusing on the rich texture of the collective human experience, *The Human Tradition in Modern Japan* becomes a book valuable not just to students of Japanese history but to all students of history. (Journal of World History) *The Human Tradition in Modern Japan* is a splendid antidote to those tedious tomes that perpetuate the myth of 'the Japanese' as a peculiarly homogenous, harmonious, and culture-bound people. These essays sparkle with individuality and personality, dreams and disappointments, the varied and unpredictable dramas of 'ordinary' lives and experiences. (John W. Dower, MIT, author of *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*)

Anne Walthall teaches Japanese history at the University of California, Irvine.

Able edited by Anne Walthall (Professor of Japanese history at the University of California, Irvine), *The Human Tradition In Modern Japan* is an assemblage of short biographies of ordinary Japanese men and women, most of whom were not well-known outside their home area, spanning the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Highly recommended for readers with an interest in Japanese history and culture, *The Human Tradition In Modern Japan* approaches Japanese history and society in a different light, as it debunks commonly myths in the United States about Japan being an entirely "homogenous" society, and successfully presents life in Japan as people really lived it from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

I read this book for a Japanese History class. The book covers from 1600 to about 1990 the lives of famous and ordinary Japanese men and women. It was refreshing to read about how the political side of history has impacted people and society. Highly recommended!

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