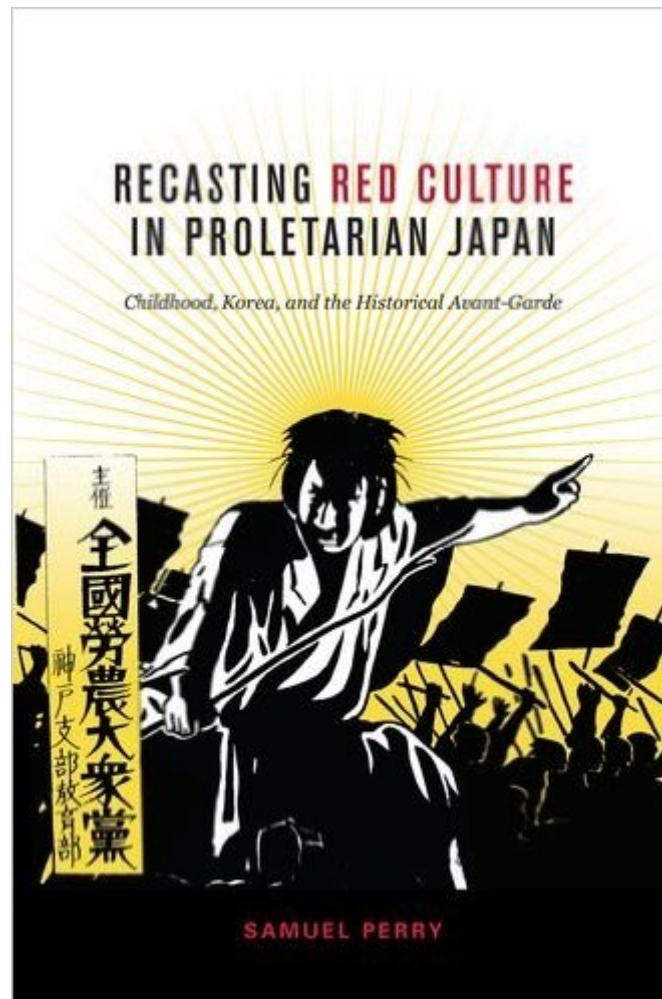


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Recasting Red Culture In Proletarian Japan: Childhood, Korea, And The Historical Avant-Garde



Synopsis

Recasting Red Culture turns a critical eye on the influential proletarian cultural movement that flourished in 1920s and 1930s Japan. This was a diverse, cosmopolitan, and highly contested moment in Japanese history when notions of political egalitarianism were being translated into cultural practices specific to the Japanese experience. Both a political and historiographical intervention, the book offers a fascinating account of the passions and antinomies that animated one of the most admirable intellectual and cultural movements of Japan's twentieth century, and argues that proletarian literature, cultural workers, and institutions fundamentally enrich our understanding of Japanese culture. What sustained the proletarian movement's faith in the idea that art and literature were indispensable to the task of revolution? How did the movement manage to enlist artists, teachers, and scientists into its ranks, and what sorts of contradictions arose in the merging of working-class and bourgeois cultures? Recasting Red Culture asks these and other questions as it historicizes proletarian Japan at the intersection of bourgeois aesthetics, radical politics, and a flourishing modern print culture. Drawing parallels with the experiences of European revolutionaries, the book vividly details how cultural activists recast forms of modern culture into practices commensurate with the goals of revolution. Weaving over a dozen translated fairytales, poems, and short stories into his narrative, Samuel Perry offers a fundamentally new approach to studying revolutionary culture. By examining the margins of the proletarian cultural movement, Perry effectively redefines its center as he closely reads and historicizes proletarian children's culture, avant-garde wall fiction, and a literature that bears witness to Japan's fraught relationship with its Korean colony. Along the way, he shows how proletarian culture opened up new critical spaces in the intersections of class, popular culture, childhood, gender, and ethnicity.

Book Information

Hardcover: 248 pages

Publisher: University of Hawaii Press (January 31, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0824838939

ISBN-13: 978-0824838935

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 0.9 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,116,238 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #110 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Horror & Supernatural #239 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > Asian > Japanese #974 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Children's Literature

Customer Reviews

Fascinating, and unflinching in its politics. Amazing view of the influence of Japanese communists in Asia before the war. Great discussion of children in the struggle and the red women who tried to represent them. Engrossing translations of proletarian fiction: the one about the starving daughter eating her dead mother's shrine food offerings made me cry.

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