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FURUSATO

‘Home’ at the Nexus of History, Art,
Society, and Self

Edited by
Christopher Craig, Enrico Fongaro, Aldo Tollini



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORS' PREFACE	7
FURUSATO IN JAPANESE BUDDHISM AS A SPIRITUAL PLACE <i>Aldo Tollini</i>	11

PART I FURUSATO IN IMAGE AND IMAGINATION

DUTCH ART THEORY AT HOME IN JAPAN: AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF GERARD DE LAIRESSE'S <i>GROOT SCHILDERBOEK</i> 'S PRESENCE IN JAPAN AND ITS INFLUENCE ON JAPANESE ART <i>Tijana Žakula</i>	27
THE GREAT EAST JAPAN EARTHQUAKE AND FURUSATO/HOME. TOWARDS FURUSATO AS A SACRED SPACE <i>Ozaki Akihiro</i>	45
THE REDISCOVERY OF FURUSATO AND THE INHERITANCE OF FOLKLORE: A CASE STUDY OF YAMASHIRO, TOKUSHIMA PREFECTURE <i>Myōki Shinobu</i>	59

PART II BEING AT HOME

THE PLACE AND THE WAY: HEIDEGGER, MATSUO BASHŌ, AND ART AS BEING-AT-HOME <i>Marcello Ghilardi</i>	75
BUILDING A HOME IN THE WORLD: BELONGING IN THE WILDERNESS <i>Gerard van der Ree</i>	89

TRANSIENCE AND THE PROMISE OF HOME: RECONCEPTUALISING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH HEIDEGGER AND NIETZSCHE <i>Lukas Daniel Peter</i>	115
--	-----

PART III
FURUSATO ACROSS SPACE

<i>QIAOXIANG</i> AND <i>FURUSATO</i> : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOMES OF OVERSEAS CHINESE AND JAPANESE EMIGRANTS <i>Kawaguchi Yukihiro</i>	139
--	-----

ESCAPING HOME, FINDING HOME: THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN RECREATIONAL TRAVEL IN THE LATE EDO PERIOD <i>Sonia Favi</i>	153
--	-----

FROM IBARAKI TO EDO/TOKYO: HOW THE EARTHQUAKE CATFISH FOUND A NEW HOME IN THE CAPITAL <i>Davide Bitti</i>	169
---	-----

PART IV
FURUSATO IN LITERATURE

<i>FURUSATO</i> IN THE FIRST JAPANESE TRANSLATION OF THE <i>SONG OF ROLAND</i> BY BAN TAKEO <i>Kuroiwa Taku</i>	183
--	-----

“HOMELAND” IN THE DISCOURSES OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY OF THE EARLY 19 TH CENTURY IN JAPAN AND CENTRAL EUROPE <i>Mária Ildikó Farkas</i>	195
--	-----

REASONING ABOUT <i>FURUSATO</i> AS THE ORIGIN OF LIFE (生命) AND SPIRIT (心) <i>Zakota Yutaka</i>	215
---	-----

MODERN YUCATEC MAYAN LITERATURE AND THE CONCEPT OF HOME, <i>MAYAB</i> <i>Yoshida Shigeto</i>	227
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EDITORS' PREFACE

This volume is a collection of essays based on papers presented at the Hasekura League International Symposium held on 15-16 November 2018 at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The title of the conference was “Furusato: ‘Home’ at the Nexus of Politics, History, Art, Society, and Self”, and a group of European, Japanese, and North American scholars assembled to consider the theme from a diverse array of academic approaches. Setting out from the multifaceted Japanese concept of ‘*furusato*’ (written variously as 故郷, ふるさと, or 古里 and translatable as home, hometown, or place of origin), participants identified and ruminated upon both its forms in Japan and related ideas in the outside world.

The papers included in the current book are divided into 4 major sections. After an introductory essay by Aldo Tollini that explores the place of *furusato* in Buddhism and Buddhist enlightenment, the first section is concerned with *Furusato* in Image and Imagination. Tijana Žakula presents an account of the transportation of Dutch art theory from Europe to Asia and the processes by which it found a home in Japan (Chapter 1), Ozaki Akihiro’s essay focuses on the imagination and understanding of *furusato* as an essential element of disaster recovery (Chapter 2), and Myōki Shinobu offers a look at one community’s mobilization of its unique folklore to promote local revitalization (Chapter 3). Section 2 is entitled Being at Home and includes an essay examining poetry and philosophy in the search for a more inclusive form of *furusato* by Marcello Ghilardi (Chapter 4), another considering vastly different genres of writing to find a

philosophical basis to escape feelings of alienation by Gerard van der Ree (Chapter 5), and a third exploring ideas of homelessness in the works of Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche by Lukas Daniel Peter (Chapter 6). The third section, devoted to ideas of *Furusato* across Space, includes an anthropological study by Kawaguchi Yukihiro of collective identity among populations of Chinese and Japanese emigrants resident overseas (Chapter 7), an analysis by Sonia Favi of efforts to escape *furusato* among domestic travelers in early modern Japan (Chapter 8), and a discussion by Davide Bitti of the migration of the mythical earthquake catfish from its original hometown to the city of Edo after the 1855 Ansei Earthquake (Chapter 9). The four chapters of the final section are comprised of Kuroiwa Taku's investigation into the revealing nature of the use of the term "*furusato*" in the first Japanese translation of the Song of Roland (Chapter 10), Mária Ildikó Farkas' survey of the romanticization of home in the development of national consciousness in Japan and Central Europe (Chapter 11), Zakota Yutaka's exploration of *furusato* as a means of connecting past and present in literature from Europe and Japan (Chapter 12), and Yoshida Shigeru's examination of the character and importance of homeland in indigenous Mayan literature (Chapter 13).

What emerges in this diverse array of studies is a questing for and testing of ideas of home whose aggregate supplements the insights offered by the works it contains. Several subthemes weave through and between the individual chapters and across the four sections, giving a shape to the concept of *furusato* and highlighting both expected and surprising aspects of the concept. The original call for papers issued in connection with the Venice symposium identified the subthemes of collective pasts, identity, nationalism, and nostalgia, and the chapters in the present volume take these up and develop them. The shared past as a form of *furusato* is discussed in connection with local folklore in contemporary Japan (Chapter 3), among populations of Chinese and Japanese ex-pats (Chapter 7), and in the preservation of indigenous identity in Mexico (Chapter 13).

The derivation of personal and collective identity from *furusato* links considerations of post-disaster recovery (Chapter 2) with satiric imagery in early mass media (Chapter 9). Nationalism and national membership connect early modern Japanese travel (Chapter 8) with poetic expressions of patriotism (Chapter 11). And nostalgia represents a thread running through the whole of the book.

Less anticipated were themes that often seem at first sight contrary to the idea of *furusato*. Examinations of homelessness and alienation expose the reverse side of *furusato* and raise questions about the limitations of standard ideas of home (Introduction and Chapters 5 and 6), the impermanence and mobility of *furusato* challenge key assumptions connected to it (Chapters 1, 8, and 9), and considerations about the essentializing, ahistorical, and contingent nature of home (Chapters 7, 10, and 12) reveal some of its negative aspects.

Taken as a whole, the works collected in this volume present an ambitious and enlightening first foray into an interdisciplinary and multi-regional exploration of the concept of *furusato*. Readers are encouraged to take the chapters on their own terms and to read across them in pursuit of shared concerns and themes. It is the hope of the editors that the book will inspire further research into and treatment of *furusato* as a means of exploring ideas of home, origin, and belonging.