numerous place names are mentioned in the text. The introduction ought to have offered information about the culture of the early Manchus. Such information would surely have been more valuable than the recounting of theories about shamanism found in the present introduction.

The text itself yields enlightening vignettes on the practice of shamanism among the Manchus. That a woman served as a shaman may surprise some readers, but it is clear from other sources that women played an important role in the shamanism of the North Asian peoples. The descriptions of the shamaness' attire, attitudes, and adventures are vivid and often amusing. They offer a glimpse of the values of the early Manchus. Such descriptions of the punishments in "Hell" are particularly valuable: "Doctors who had wrongly administered drugs and who had caused death were being punished by being disemboweled... Those two had stealthily eavesdropped were being punished by having their ears nailed to window frames." (p. 80). These accounts are gruesome but graphic.

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The present work is a collection of eighteen essays and an introduction on various aspects of history and culture of the Muromachi period (1334-1573). It is not, however, a random collection, as such works often turn out to be. On the contrary, it is the end product of a carefully planned and executed project which began at a conference in Kyoto in the summer of 1973. At that meeting the papers which eventually came to comprise the chapters of the present volume were read and thoroughly analyzed by thirty-five participating specialists, of whom twenty were from Japan and fifteen from the United States. In the four-year period between the end of the conference and the publication of the book, there was further interaction and discussion via correspondence between pairs of Japanese and American scholars whose collaborative efforts have resulted in ten of the eighteen chapters of the book. No work, it seems, has received as much preparatory analysis and collaborative input by as many scholars from both sides of the Pacific as has this book. The addition of a glossary, a list of contributors, an index and a well selected set of illustrations consisting of maps, figures and tables comprise the contents of the work.

To students of Japanese history in general and of Muromachi history in particular, this work is invaluable, especially when it is remembered that the Muromachi period, except for its art, aesthetics, architecture and drama, has been, until recently, the most neglected in all of Japanese history. For centuries Japanese scholars had avoided the study of the Muromachi period, partly on the assumption that there can be nothing redeeming in the study of such an unstable and chaotic age, with its almost incessant warfare and its numerous riots and public disturbances by widely divergent groups, such as the peasants, townspeople and religious bodies. Conventional histories tended to treat the age merely as a transition from the more stable warrior society of the Kamakura period which preceded it to the even more stable, peaceful and prosperous Tokugawa period which followed it. Such an approach to the study of the

period had failed to note that what appeared to be evidences of chaos and decay were, in fact, signs of fundamental institutional change. The Muromachi age turns out to be, as the present study clearly shows, a "seminal period of institutional and cultural change," in which the foundation for many of the dominant traditions of political organization and religious and artistic expression which were to persist until modern times was laid.

Also contributing to the neglect of the period was a second assumption—perhaps stemming from the first—that primary materials permitting an adequate reconstruction of its history and institutions were lacking and had not survived the violence and destructiveness of the age. If anything has the power to turn students away, it is the prospect of lack of materials, but this assumption too has been shown to be without a basis in fact by the discovery in the postwar era of sufficient materials to make possible the full investigation of most aspects of the period.

There has been in the past yet another deterrent to the study of the Muromachi period. This has been the existence in Japanese historiography of an obvious bias toward the imperial house and a corresponding prejudice against the Ashikaga shoguns who, by the abuse of their power when they were strong, or the neglect of their duties and responsibilities when they were weak, have been blamed for the plight of the imperial house whose fortunes fell to its lowest in history during this period. So pronounced has been this tendency at times in the past that honest scholars, despairing of conducting a fair and impartial study, have avoided the age completely. Fortunately for Japanese historiography, and as the publication of this book attests, these conditions no longer exist.

The book's organization, although conventional in many respects, is excellent. Divided into six parts, it begins with a description of Kyoto in the Muromachi age (Time and Place) and proceeds to a consideration of the political organization, first of the bakufu at the center and of its agents in the provinces (Political Organization), then of the village at the local level (Lordship and Village). It continues with a look at the socio-economic aspects of the age (Commercial Economy and Social Change), and concludes with essays on the culture (Cultural Life) and religion (Religious Life) of the period. These chapters are preceded by an excellent introductory essay on the place of the Muromachi period in Japanese history by Professor Hall, a co-editor of the work.

As to whether or not the book achieves balance, the answer would depend largely upon the reader's own special interests. The social-sciences oriented scholar will, in all probability, approve the heavier emphasis given in the book to the political, social and economic aspects of the age which are allotted—if we include the opening two chapters of Part One in this category—eleven out of the total of eighteen chapters, or, approximately, 61 percent. By the same token, the culturally oriented scholar would probably be dissatisfied with the mere seven chapters, or only 39 percent, of the book being allocated to his interests. In this connection, it can be pointed out in defense of the social scientist that it was precisely his area of interests, and not that of the student of culture, which was grossly neglected in the past, and that, therefore, the political, social and economic aspects of the period should rightfully receive the greater emphasis.

However, as between the political and the socio-economic, there is a decided imbalance in favor of the former which has been allotted six chapters to only three for the latter. When it is recalled that the Muromachi period was a period of great social flux, one feels that at least a chapter on the subject would have been appropriate. On the other hand, it must be admitted that notwithstanding the organization of the book,