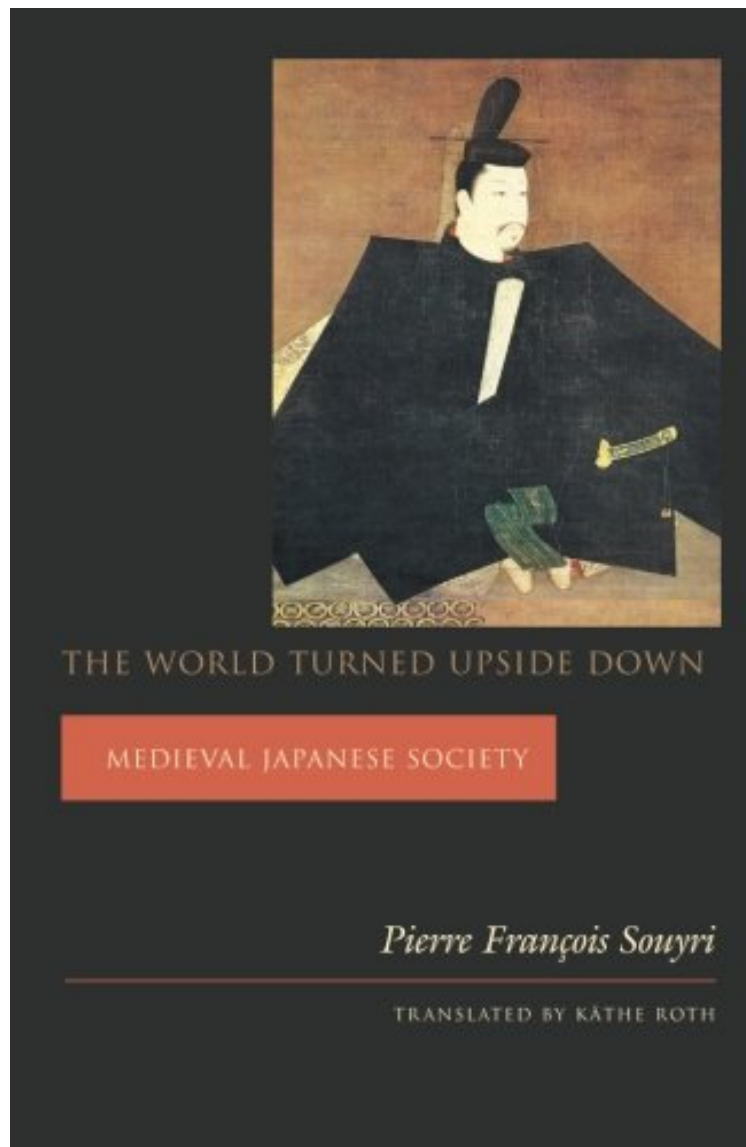


(Mobile pdf) The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society (Asia Perspectives: History, Society, and Culture)

The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society (Asia Perspectives: History, Society, and Culture)

Pierre François Souyri
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In the late twelfth century, Japanese people called the transitional period in which they were living the "age of warriors." Feudal clans fought civil wars, and warriors from the Kanto Plain rose up to restore the military regime of their shogun, Yoritomo. The whole of this intermediary period came to represent a gap between two stable societies: the ancient period, dominated by the imperial court in Heian (today's Kyoto), and the modern period, dominated by the Tokugawa bakufu based in Edo (today's Tokyo). In this remarkable portrait of a complex period in the evolution of Japan, Pierre F. Souyri uses a wide variety of sources ranging from legal and historical texts to artistic and literary examples to form a magisterial overview of medieval Japanese society. As much at home discussing the implications of the morality and mentality of *The Tale of the Heike* as he is describing local disputes among minor vassals or the economic implications of the pirate trade, Souyri brilliantly illustrates the interconnected nature of medieval Japanese culture. The Middle Ages was a decisive time in Japan's history because it confirmed the country's national identity. New forms of cultural expression, such as poetry, theater, garden design, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, and illustrated scrolls, conveyed a unique sensibility sometimes in opposition to the earlier Chinese models followed by the old nobility. *The World Turned Upside Down* provides an animated account of the religious, intellectual, and literary practices of medieval Japan in order to reveal the era's own notable cultural creativity and enormous economic potential.

A masterful synthesis of current scholarship... brilliant... excellent. (Herman Ooms *Journal of Asian Studies*) Souyri dexterously handles historiographical controversies with a light and kindly touch. (Choice) Thought provoking.... Whoever wants to get a broad picture of the current state of the art in the field of Japanese medieval history should read this book. (Reinhard Zillner (of the French edition) *Monumenta Nipponica*) *The World Turned Upside Down* is an indispensable addition to the growing corpus examining this vital era when the Japanese world truly did seem to be in total upheaval. (History) A solid social history filling a void in the present English literature on social history in the Japanese Middle Ages. (James Guthrie *Sixteenth Century Journal*) Pierre Souyri does not burden the reader with detail that a new student will simply be unable to absorb, but tells interesting stories that will linger in the memory... I am pleased that Professor Souyri has produced this book and I believe it will be a useful aid to undergraduate teaching... (Tom Nelson *School of Oriental African Studies*) A lively account of medieval Japan which builds on recent Japanese historiography, and which offers a wealth of new information on social organization. It is certain to challenge some of the received wisdom about medieval Japan and to stimulate discussion. (Thomas LaMarre, McGill University) About the Author Pierre F. Souyri is Directeur des études at the cole Française d'Extrême-Orient. Kthe Roth is coeditor of *Judaism: Myth, Legend, History, and Custom, from the Religious to the Secular*.