Preface

The cover of this book, Takahashi Hiroaki’s *Twilight*, “highlights the ideological emphasis on the virtues of the traditional countryside in opposition to the urban, industrial society” (Dartnall 1996, 80). Yet, this depiction represents only half of the story I will tell here. In this woodblock print, a rural woman is shown as part of a natural and a national landscape (note the Shinto shrine, a symbol of Japanese nationalism in the 1930s, in the background). In my story, she is an exhausted woman trying to survive her days.

Since the time of my first stint of fieldwork in 1984, more than ten years have passed. I have incurred so many debts during these years that I may miss the names of some of those who contributed to the completion of this book in one way or another. I extend my thanks and apologies to them first. While working on this book, I have had fruitful engagements with intellectual communities in Tokyo, Chicago, Iowa City, and Los Angeles. In Tokyo, my former teachers were always there whenever I needed their help and support. In Chicago, Norma Field always listened to me despite her busy schedule, and later she read the entire manuscript for this book. In Iowa City, Margery Wolf was a mentor in the area of women’s studies, and Stephen Vlastos gave me precious comments on my research and writing. In Los Angeles, Francesca Bray read the first version of my manuscript and offered many valuable comments. Leslie Pincus, Miriam Silverberg, and Karen Brodkin were my best intellectual companions. The members of the Center for Japanese Studies and the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, gave me their utmost support. I am also grateful to Robert J. Smith, and Patricia Tsurumi, who kindly shared her unpublished paper with me, and Kendall Brown, who found the woodblock print *Twilight* for the cover of this book. My graduate research assistants, Brenda Jenike Robb, Haeng-ja Chung, Jennifer Reynolds, Mayumi Yamamoto, William Horton, and James Jo helped me at various stages in preparing this manuscript.
Patricia Crosby at the University of Hawai‘i Press has earned my unending gratitude for her help and courtesy from the beginning to the completion of the publication of this book. My thanks also go to Susan Stone, who painstakingly edited my manuscript and remarkably improved the quality of my writing. I am also grateful for the help of anonymous reviewers, who shared their insights with me, and of Cheri Dunn and Masako Ikeda, who oversaw the production of this book.


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My Ph.D. dissertation, which I completed in 1982, was about Catalan nationalism in Spain and France. Since then I have traveled a great distance, both geographically, from Europe to Asia, and intellectually. I believe, however, that what I learned in Europe is present in this book, that people everywhere live both for and against the
state. The late George Dalton prepared me well for this journey. My parents, Asano Kazuo and Asano Chizuko, have always sustained me, from long before I began my career as an anthropologist. I am grateful that they never molded me to fit the category of Japanese women. The late Tamanoi Yoshirō and Tamanoi Kimiko have also extended their help to me and my family. My most heartfelt thanks go to my daughter, Yōko, who always accompanied me to Nagano, and my husband, Fuyu. Despite his occasional complaint "anthropologists often disappear," he has given me his firm and most affectionate support throughout these years. Lastly, I thank all the women in Nagano who shared their memories with me (I wish I could thank them individually). Although not all of them appear in this book, I hope that the narratives I have translated here represent the complexity of their lives in a way they would find satisfactory. Without their voices, I could not have written this book.

Following Japanese custom, I have cited Japanese names surname first throughout this text.