

are irrelevant to the whole picture, even though the analysis based on such a translation does not quite hold. The above example is therefore only a reminder to myself, that from the point of view of the creator of the original texts, the value of a translator lies primarily in faithfulness and not in beauty adorned by the creative ability of the translator. But a faithful translation, like a faithful woman in the prefeminist era, is often ugly. Therefore, since it brings forward an aspect of medieval Japan beautifully, I consider this book a service to the English reader.

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KONISHI JIN'ICHI. *A History of Japanese Literature. Volume Three: The High Middle Ages*. Translated by Aileen Gatten and Mark Harbison. Edited by Earl Miner. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. xix+654 pages. Appendices, chronological table, bibliography, index, illustrations, maps. Paperback US\$24.95; ISBN 0-691-10248-1. Cloth US\$74.50.

This is the third of the five volumes of Konishi's *History*, and the latest to be translated into English. The use of the term "High Middle Ages" will strike many readers as puzzling; it is but one of many instances when Konishi deliberately strives to jolt one out of one's complacency. As he explains in the general introduction to the *History* (KONISHI 1984, 52-68), he rejects the commonly accepted periodization based on political events (and reflected in the names of changing seats of government) in favor of an approach that seeks to distinguish the qualities of Japanese culture by considering its relation to foreign cultures, or "by placing Japanese literature within the spatial coordinates of the world" (KONISHI 1984, 55). Thus, volume 1 covers the Archaic Age, when only indigenous Japanese culture exists, and the Ancient Age, when changes start to occur with the introduction of Chinese culture. The Middle Ages are set off as a period when literary awareness undergoes change as the foreign culture is accepted. Konishi subdivides the period by certain key concepts: the Early Middle Ages (KONISHI 1986) hinges on the concept of *fūryū* 風流 (aristocratic beauty), the

High Middle Ages on *michi* 道 (artistic vocation), and the Late Middle Ages on *jōri* 情理 (reason and feeling). Konishi selects 1205, the year of the compilation of the *Shinkokinshū*, as the symbolic starting point for the High Middle Ages, and 1597, when the Keichō Royal Printer was established, as the start of the Late Middle Ages (139).

Konishi's principal indices of periodization are the terms *ga* 雅 (the refined, the high) and *zoku* 俗 (the popular, the low). Readers familiar with the work of the folklorist Yanagita Kunio will feel at home with these terms, as with the concept that *zoku* elements will permeate the *ga* sphere—though the reverse, highborn-downward-moving model that Konishi also identifies may not be so familiar (KONISHI 1984, 420). Konishi sees the standards of *ga* applying not only to the creator of a work but also to the audience, which must have a wide, deep knowledge of the precedents on which the work is based, and which could, in fact, participate also in the creation of such literature (KONISHI 1984, 59). He recognizes that the two realms are not distinct, and uses the metaphor of the water plant to illustrate how a style may be rooted in *ga* while floating in the *zoku* world—a circumstance for which he coins the term *ga-zoku*, in order to avoid the use of the term *haikai* 俳諧, which was originally applied to such works but later came to be applied to a particular form of poetry.

For the general reader, the most rewarding part of the volume may well be part 1, "Between the Early and High Middle Ages," which focuses on the twelfth century. It was a period characterized by an increasing readiness to tolerate, and then to appreciate, individuality in the expression of opinions or feelings. A good example of the trend is provided by the following poem by Saigyō on the theme of the Genpei War (1180–1185), which Konishi evaluates as being "probably the first instance of irony in traditional waka and . . . undoubtedly perceived as appallingly *zoku* by the inhabitants of the *ga* sphere, accustomed as they were to an aesthetic based on shared, traditional concepts and responses": *How can there be|Pauses in the traffic crossing|On the Hill of Death?|Those whose lives have been taken|Keep going there in multitudes* (76–77).

The twelfth century is notable as the time when the new literary aesthetic of *ga-zoku* emerged. In the realm of waka, this was manifested in the inclusion of renga 連歌 (linked verse) in the royal waka anthology *Kin'yōshū* (comp. 1125). Renga incorporated colloquialisms and Sinicized words, whereas the earlier *Kokinshū* style had dictated that only Yamato language be used in waka (89–94). The new aesthetic appeared also in the factual *monogatari* 物語 and *nikki* 日記 of the time, while the separation of *ga* and *zoku* is reflected in the casual attitude towards the transmission of fictional *monogatari*, with only the *Genji monogatari* sharing with royal waka anthologies the *ga* that ensured conscientious transcription (100–102).

One of the unexpected jewels of this volume is the quite detailed information on the form of public Buddhist services, about which little is known prior to the twelfth century. This information is introduced as necessary background material for *setsuwa* 説話, which had their origins in the preachers' explanation of a scriptural text by means of practical applications, such as allusions to history, legend, and anecdote. Konishi goes so far as to suggest that "Buddhist temples, open to the public for such services, became rather like city colleges where people learned new Chinese loanwords and characters in the course of being entertained," and posits that this led to the creation of a class with a homogeneous response to words, in effect "an untraditional *ga* circle" (126).

The first half of the High Middle Ages, from the early thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century, is noted for masterworks in the traditional genres of waka, *monogatari*,

and *nikki*, while the latter half of the fourteenth century to the close of the fifteenth century saw major achievements in the new fields of linked poetry and Nō drama. Konishi sees the period as characterized primarily by a neoclassicism that “sought to achieve fresh effect through amplifying preexisting aesthetic images” (140). It is in this concern with retrospectivity that the *michi* ideal of artistic vocation had its roots, for “*michi* required that transmission from earlier ages communicate a conformist ethic to future generations, so that a transmission might be received exactly as it was handed down” (147). This ideal had interesting ramifications for the lower classes, who, unable to rise in rank like the nobility, could yet gain glory for themselves through specializing in a vocation.

Another consequence of the *michi* ideal was the disappearance of literary amateurs, and the appearance of literary audiences who lacked the necessary creative powers but still wished to read or listen to literature composed by others (166). This trend was accentuated by changes in the receptive process, including the reading of native Japanese prose in illustrated format, and the development of aural reception with musical accompaniment (for example, the *monogatari* dealing with war and peace—the phrase Konishi prefers to the more usual “war account” or “battle record”).

While much of the remainder of the volume is devoted to the aesthetics of *ga*, a sidelight focuses on the process of ascension from *zoku* to *ga*—the elevation of folk songs and provincial Shinto song ballads into *imayō* 今様 songs in the capital style and thence into banquet songs (350–60), and the development of *sarugaku* 猿楽, which included comic mime, singing, and dancing, into Nō (520–26); while the relationship between public Buddhist services and *setsuwa* is further explored (314–31). Equally interesting is the dilemma of Zen Buddhism, which created its own world of *ga*, but in so doing sowed the seeds of stagnation, for “the fundamental nature of Zen is uncongenial to the world of *ga*” (380). Konishi demonstrates how priest-poets such as Ikkyū (1394–1481) deliberately turned to unconventional subject matter, and concludes, “I view this introduction of *zoku* in a *ga* art as an indication that the movement toward the Late Middle Ages had already begun by this time” (384).

This is a book for specialists rather than the general reader. Its most unusual feature is that it is written by one of the handful of living people to have actually composed linked verse. The detailed discussion of *renga* contests, with the judges’ evaluations and critical comments, makes this a unique source—and explains the fact that this volume is substantially longer than the others. While there is much to interest the general reader, it is often a matter of *mining* the entire set of volumes, rather than expecting to find a neat encapsulation of a topic. In this respect, the cross-referenced index to each volume, provided by the translators, is invaluable.

The translation itself is a tour de force, providing not only a lucid presentation of Konishi’s often complex arguments, but also literary translations of a wide variety of genres, most of works not previously translated, and including Chinese and Korean *shih* 詩. In fact the temptation is to browse the poetic sections as one would an anthology—though this contravenes the author’s oft-repeated dictum that a work must be considered in the light of the aesthetics of its time.

One major disappointment is that, despite the author’s stated intention that his *History* will include Ainu and Ryukyuan literature (KONISHI 1984, 3–4), in the first three volumes these are not referred to, apart from the interesting section on “Yamato Literature and Non-Yamato Literature” in the general introduction (KONISHI 1984, 34–52).

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MORSE, RONALD A. *Yanagita Kunio and the Folklore Movement: The Search for Japan's National Character and Distinctiveness.* The Garland Folklore Library 2. Alan Dundes, series editor. New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1990. xviii+210 pages. Appendix, bibliography. Hardcover US\$29.00; ISBN 0-8240-7146-8.

The publication of this book kills, so to speak, two birds with one stone. Written in the form of an intellectual biography, it not only makes available an "eminently publishable" dissertation (vii), but also introduces the achievements of Yanagita Kunio—a "towering local folklorist" (ix) and the founder of Japanese folklore studies—in a language much more accessible than the original Japanese used by Yanagita himself.

Yanagita Kunio is unquestionably a person who needs and deserves to be discussed within the framework of Japanese intellectual history: the mere translation of his work does not suffice to show his true stature. Yanagita's life (1875–1962) coincided with the period of Japan's emergence (or reemergence) as a modern nation, and reflects, although somewhat obliquely, the pains and strains accompanying the conflict between tradition and progress. It is the special merit of Morse's effort that it situates Yanagita within both the intellectual and social milieu of his time and the circle of his family, friends, colleagues, and disciples. In order to understand, or at least to gain access to, the folklorist Yanagita, one needs to know of his early appreciation of poetry and essayistic writing as well as of his first activities as a high official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and other government agencies.

Yanagita is said to have always instructed his students to start by observing and questioning the obvious. To observe well, listen closely, and then think about what one has perceived enables one to develop a feeling for what one studies; only after gaining this kind of empathy with the subject can one begin to write (28). Such was Yanagita's philosophy. How fertile and also how important this idea was becomes clear towards the end of the book, where Morse explains how Yanagita categorized the field of folklore studies. According to Yanagita, folklore studies cover three major areas, the proper understanding of which demands on the part of the researcher increasing degrees of involvement. First is the area of material objects, which even a "casual traveler" (*tabibito* 旅人) can readily observe. Second comes the realm of oral transmission, which requires the attuned ear of a "longtime lodger" (*kigūsha* 寄寓者). However, it is only with the third area, that of mental and emotional phenomena ("social folk customs," to use Morse's term), that the real purpose of folklore studies is attained; this is accessible only to a "fellow villager" (*dōgōnin* 同郷人), since it demands an empathetic understanding of things that are beyond words (see KAWATA 1992, 26).