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Article Contributors and Summaries

Akahashi Nariko (1306–1365): A Force to Be Reckoned With

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Akahashi Nariko (1306–1365) was the primary wife of the first Ashikaga shogun Takauji (1305–1358) and the mother of his heir and six other children. Her natal family, the Akahashi Hōjō, were descendants of the Taira clan who had served for over a century as regents of the military government in Kamakura and later as its de facto rulers. But even with this notable pedigree, Nariko has garnered little scholarly attention: she seldom rates more than a footnote in studies about her famous husband, no monograph or article about her has been written in English, and there exists only one publication about her life in Japanese. While scholars have written much about the military and political machinations involving the Ashikaga shoguns in the fourteenth century, few have written about their wives and mothers. Seeking to develop a fuller understanding of Akahashi Nariko, this essay offers a picture of

a strong-willed woman who had a close relationship with and powerful influence over her husband, and was a fierce protector of her children and their political and social interests.

Poets on the Periphery: Kūkai's Vision of Frontier Governance

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In the early ninth century, Japan's northeastern frontier remained contested territory. Although the region was nominally incorporated into the Japanese state as Mutsu Province, the indigenous Emishi repeatedly frustrated Japanese attempts to dominate the region. The numerous military campaigns undertaken during the late eighth century yielded dubious results. Furthermore, a failed coup d'état in 810, otherwise known as the Kusuko Incident, compounded the imperial court's difficulties. In response to these challenges to court authority, the thoroughly sinophilic Emperor

Saga reinforced the *ritsuryō* system of governance, including a renewed emphasis on *monjō keikoku* (statecraft through writing) as a political technology and justification for literary production. This article presents and analyzes two epistle-poems written by Kūkai to Ono no Minemori and Ōtomo no Kunimichi on the eve of their respective postings to governorships in the northeastern borderlands. These texts demonstrate how Kūkai creatively appropriated continental literary and historical source materials to situate Minemori and Kunimichi's assignment to the frontier within the framework of *monjō keikoku* thought.

Artist as Disciple: Miyajima Tatsuo and Sōka Gakkai

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Miyajima Tatsuo is a globally recognized artist known for his immersive installations of LED counters. His work emphasizes the cyclical nature of time and is often described as “Buddhist,” but without reference to the specific type of Buddhism that informs Miyajima's production. This article looks closely at Miyajima's profound affiliation with the Buddhist religious organization Sōka Gakkai and references the artist Joseph Kosuth's understanding of conceptual art to analyze Miyajima's work. It argues that Miyajima's production represents a form of religious practice rooted in Nichiren Buddhism and the cultivation of an “inseparable bond” (*shiteifuni*) with Sōka Gakkai's third president, now honorary president, Ikeda Daisaku. The article aims to counter the dominance of secularization narratives in contemporary art that frame the use of religious themes and motifs as a matter of individual interest and expression, rather than organizational affiliation and collective practice.

REVIEW

The Currency of “Tradition” in Recent Exhibitions of Contemporary Japanese Art

EXHIBITION REVIEW BY CHELSEA FOXWELL

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Justin Jesty. *Art and Engagement in Early Postwar Japan*. Cornell University Press, 2018.

Namiko Kunimoto. *The Stakes of Exposure: Anxious Bodies in Postwar Japanese Art*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

BOOK REVIEW BY REBECCA JENNISON

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Hong-key Yoon, ed. *P'ungsu: A Study of Geomancy in Korea*. SUNY Press, 2018.

BOOK REVIEW BY OLE BRUUN

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Dorothy C. Wong. *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770*. National University of Singapore Press, 2018.

BOOK REVIEW BY ABIGAIL I. MACBAIN

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Bryan Lowe. *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan*. University of Hawai'i Press (Kuroda Institute), 2017.

BOOK REVIEW BY YOKO HSUEH SHIRAI

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RESEARCH NOTE

Research Note on Brahmanical Deities in Mikkyō Astrological Art

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KYUSHU AND ASIA

Demon Roof Tiles: A Study of the Dazaifu Type *Onigawara* Style I-A

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This article takes up a distinctive regional type of Japanese roof tile known as the *onigawara*, or “demon tile,” embellished with the face or form of an ogre. Featured is the first *onigawara* to represent only the face of a demon, a type made in Dazaifu, northwest Kyushu, where a regional government office was located from the end of the seventh century through the Nara (710–784) and Heian (794–1185) periods. The highly skilled modeling of the demon’s exaggerated features, gaping mouth, and bared teeth combine with a clever design of these elements on a distinctive tile contour that melds function with form. The design and modeling of these tiles differs both from continental examples and contemporaneous works made in the Nara capital. Prominently placed on the roofs of Dazaifu’s most important buildings, eighth-century Dazaifu *onigawara* embody the character of the place and their role warding off evil. The Dazaifu type is unique in the history of tiles, a point demonstrated through discussion of several sixth- through eighth-century intersecting streams of monster representations, tile shapes and designs, and their functions *in situ*—East Asian, regional, and capital-based.