

Eduard Klopfenstein, ed. Sprachlich-
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Japanischen: Europäische Japan-Diskurse 1998-
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BOOK REVIEW BY MARIA CĂRBUNE

THIS book, the title of which may be loosely translated as “Aggregate States of Linguistic and Literary Matters in Japanese: European Discourses on Japan, 1998–2018,”¹ is the result of a research project and several conferences organized by a small group of researchers between 2015 and 2018. Early conferences, starting with one in 1998, have since had their proceedings published elsewhere.² The project’s core group of researchers was formed by Roland Schneider (Hamburg University), Masako Sato (Nihon Daigaku), Sepp Linhart (Vienna University), Hartmut O. Rotermund (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Collège de France), Eduard Klopfenstein (Zürich University), and Susanne Formanek (Vienna University). As demonstrated by the essays in this volume, the conferences, organized by Schneider, covered a wide array of topics. This anthology contains studies of poetry-prose, orality, language/poetry, and other media categories, reflecting the themes of conferences held from 2015 to 2018, respec-

tively. The chapters are written in English, German, and French, an unusual choice that may pose challenges, yet at the same time they offer readers an opportunity to contrast and compare works and approaches of contributors in different academic languages.

The volume opens with a section titled “Poetry-Prose” and a chapter by Masako Sato, “The Transmission and Use of Old Patterns and Motifs in an Early Edo Period Narrative and in 1980s Mass Media Culture.” Sato refers to two works: a story by Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693) from the late seventeenth-century volume *Nippon Eitakura* 日本永代蔵 (Japan’s Eternal Storehouse) and the 1980s TV series *Oshin* おしん. She analyzes the pieces in terms of their content, structure, and sociocultural context. For Ihara Saikaku’s story, Sato highlights its similarity to the so-called *shusse monogatari* 出世物語 (lit. “success stories”) of the Muromachi 室町 period (1336–1573) *otogizōshi* お伽草子 (medieval short stories) genre and demonstrates how it espouses the values of the ascending merchant class (e.g., economy, diligence, and cleverness) through the stereotypical trials of a character who first loses his wealth and later gains it back. As Sato points out, being wealthy served as a means by which to gain social prestige and was praised by the merchant class, whose participation in literature, politics, and culture was restricted by the four-class system (*shi nō kō shō* 士農

1 Ger. “Aggregatzustände”: The title is a pun on the term “state of aggregation” or “state of matter” in physics. The German phrasing can allude to both the “state of a discussion” but also a similar idea or process that is expressed or transmitted through various media.

2 Klopfenstein and Müller, *Meer und Berge*; Klopfenstein and Müller, *Utopien und Dystopien*; Siebold-Wissenschaftsstiftung, *Geschichte*.

工商) of the Edo 江戸 period (1603–1868). Through an examination of several myths, such as that of the Shinto *kami* Ōkuninushi 大国主 (identified in the story in *Nippon Eitaikura* as an associated deity, Dai-kokuten), Sato develops a fundamental structure (Ger. *Grundstruktur*) of the plot of both works according to different stages: conflict; leaving the original territory; a transit or temporary sojourn into a foreign world; a confrontation with danger or a test; external help (human or divine) and mobilization of one's own abilities and strengths; establishing one's position and making a positive impact on the world; and external and internal change. The last two steps may repeat themselves in several episodes of a single work.

Sato analyzes the second work, the *Oshin* television series, based on the program's script, which comprises a narrative of an eighty-three-year-old businesswoman's account of her life. Sato undertakes a structural analysis based upon the same pattern juxtaposed with the study of the Amewakahiko 天若日子 myth.³ She formulates a truly interesting perspective on mass media stories by incorporating Umberto Eco's categories of mythical and romantic (here understood as novel-like) types of storytelling, in his chapter, "The Myth of Superman."⁴ She shows how *Oshin* similarly combines mythical storytelling, in that the outcome is foreseeable through the frame narrative as a success story, but with shocking changes in circumstances in the romantic narrative; this approach is intended to keep the audience interested for longer periods of time, as was the case for characters and plots of genres like comic books and TV series in general. The conflict points in the plot of *Oshin*, however, deviate from the twists and turns of novel-like narratives and become something more akin to clichés (Ger. *Versatzstücke*), which are so deeply ingrained in the collective memory that they acquire a mythical character. This chapter of the book elucidates parallels between Shinto myths and "success stories," as well as comparisons between the story *Nippon Eitaikura* and the TV series *Oshin*. However, the reader cannot help but note a certain similarity between the plot structure developed by Sato and that laid out by Vladimir Propp of the Russian formalist school in his groundbreaking morphological study of fairy tales.⁵ The author's usage

of the term "mythical" (structures or styles; b p. 23) remains somewhat unspecific and could benefit from further grounding in research and explication.

Hartmut O. Rotermond dedicates the second chapter, "Chasing Buddhahood: An Example of Japanese Syncretism," to a discussion on Japanese religious syncretism. He primarily considers a sermon from the thirteenth-century *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (*Sand and Pebbles*) by the monk Mujū 無住 (1226–1312). The chapter examines the text's various versions, particularly the *kōhon* 廣本 (extended version) and *ryakuhon* 略本 (abridged version), and subsequent adaptations, such as the *Konsenshū* 金撰集 (Collection of Golden Extracts).⁶ *Shasekishū* is a collection of Buddhist parables (*setsuwa* 説話). In the Edo period, it was perceived as a doctrinal text (*hōgo* 法語), and it greatly influenced other sermon texts and literary genres. Rotermond analyzes how the phenomenon of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹, a hybrid theory holding that Shinto gods are local manifestations of buddhas, is portrayed in the first chapters of the *Shasekishū*. He refers to the historical process through which Shinto *kami* began to be granted a more independent position by the insistence that Japan is the "land of the *kami*" (p. 45), and as such their veneration and worship should take precedence. In this context, the *Shasekishū* portrays *kami* as *wakō* 和光 (deities of "soft light") and more effective than the (distant) buddhas because of the benefits they grant (also explained through the Buddhist notion of *hōben* 方便, "skillful means," in the quest for enlightenment, in which the *kami* rejoice. This is illustrated through accounts such as the burning of the Miidera 三井寺 Monastery by the monks of Mount Hiei 比叡山, whereby the deity Shinra Myōjin 新羅明神, more than being saddened by the monastery's destruction, celebrated a monk's attaining of enlightenment. Rotermond proceeds to analyze several poems in connection to the idea of killing as compassion (*jihi no sesshō* 慈悲の殺生) in the *Konsenshū* and the *Suwa engi* 諏訪縁起 (The Origins of Suwa) in the *Shintōshū* 神道集 (Anthology of the Way of the Kami). Additionally, he selects an eclectic group of works to reference for his analysis of the poems related to the *honji suijaku* paradigm, Shugendō 修験道 (mountain asceticism), and from syncretic Shinto traditions such as Goryū Shintō 御流神道 and

3 Sato, "Die Entstehung der Bildrolle."

4 Eco, *Apokalyptiker und Integrierte*, pp. 187–222.

5 Propp, *Morphology of the Folktales*.

6 See Nishio and Minobe, *Konsenshū*.

Miwa Shintō 三輪神道, as well as documents from popular traditions. From this abundance of textual material, Rotermond demonstrates how the prohibition to consume meat or offer living beings as sacrifice, so problematic in medieval Shinto and Buddhism, was circumvented. One case he investigates in particular is that of the deity Suwa Myōjin 諏訪明神, in which esoteric concepts such as the doctrine of *nyūga ga'nyū* 入我我入 are employed. This reflects the three mysteries (*sanmitsu* 三密) in which the Buddha enters the body of the practitioner and the practitioner enters the body of the Buddha, which allows the human being to attain buddhahood. Thus, the consumption of sentient beings is depicted as creating a causal link (*kechien* 結縁) to buddhahood, by their ingestion into the body of a Buddhist devotee. In this context, a quoted *waka* 和歌 poem⁷ provides a skillful means for understanding the circumventing of the *sesshō* prohibition against the background of Japanese religious syncretism.

In the third chapter, Eduard Klopfenstein gives a short overview of the origin and differences between two literary genres of Japanese poetry, *haiku* 俳句⁸ and *senryū* 川柳.⁹ The predominant first part constitutes a meditation on *haiku*'s original comic intent, accompanied by an analysis of *haiku* poems by Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) and Kobayashi Issa 小林一茶 (1763–1828). Originally derived from the first verses of a *renga* 連歌 (chained link poetry), *haiku*'s humorous character has passed into oblivion in the modern, international reception of this very popular genre; it is now best known for unexpected, witty contrasts and usage of words symbolic of particular seasons. This contrast is also discussed by Klopfenstein in quoting Masaoka Shiki's 正岡子規 concept of *kokkei* 滑稽 (humorous) (p. 64), in which humor goes beyond laughter to evoke the contrast and alternation between the long-standing

aesthetic categories of the elegant (*ga* 雅) and the vulgar (*zoku* 俗). The second part revolves around the history and qualities of *senryū* and includes an interesting discussion—both the author's and also among a group of *haiku* and *senryū* poets—on the differences between the two poetic genres. The indication of *senryū*'s humor as being more direct, blunt up to the point of vulgarity, and tied to a particular social milieu of the middle class, is noteworthy. As lighthearted as the poems Klopfenstein quotes are, his writing style, close to the orality of a presentation, occasionally includes such oddities as translations quoted directly “from the internet” (p. 63), with no author or source given for the translations. In addition, Klopfenstein seeks to identify a connection between the indirect, distant humor of *haiku* as a literary genre and a general characteristic of the humor of Japanese people as a whole as being restrained. This directly contrasts with his subsequent description of the ever-expanding Japanese humorous *senryū* of the twentieth century, which, as mentioned previously in the chapter, rely on more direct humor. Why should one genre, like *haiku* or *senryū*, represent the whole of Japanese humor, and the other not?

Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt's essay focuses on kimchi, gender, and ethnicity in Japanese-Korean contemporary lyric poetry. The author's enriching and playful literary style of analysis is exemplified by the wordplay in the piece's original German title, “Erlesenes Essen – Kimchi, Gender und Ethnizität;” the first word, “erlesen,” can mean either exquisite or well-read (i.e., cultivated), while the second word refers to food. Iwata-Weickgenannt introduces the role food plays in language and literature as a delineator of both inclusion and exclusion of social groups and an indicator of self-understanding and the understanding of social class, ethnicity, and gender. The examined literary works, novels, and poems stem from *zainichi bungaku* 在日文学 (Korean minority literature) in Japan. The discussion concerns works like *Chi to hone* 血と骨 (Blood and Bones) by Yang Sök-il 양석일, *Kazukime* かずきめ (The Pearl Diver) by Yi Yang-ji 李良枝, Yū Miri's 柳美里 autobiographical *Mizube no yurikago* 水辺のゆりかご (The Cradle of the Shore), and, most of all, *Mesoddo* メソッド (Method) by Kim Masumi 金真須美. Depictions of food in the quoted novels serve to identify the trauma of rejected Korean identity expressed in eating disorders, to designate a social class, or again to show the rejection of a Korean ethnic identity perceived as biologically ingrained. An

7 One of the central poems discussed in connection to Suwa Myōjin has no title and is quoted in the *Konsenshū*, pp. 329–30: うつひとも うたるるひと もろとも いずれもおなじ ゆめのたわむれ. *Utsu hito mo / utaruru hito mo / morotomo ni / izure mo onaji / yume no tawamure* (“For one who kills [shoots] as for one who is killed [hit], for both it is only the vain pastime of the same dream”—the translation of *tawamure* as “vain pastime” mirrors Rotermond's choice of “vain passe-temps”).

8 *Haiku* is a seventeen-syllable poem, usually in lines of five, seven, and five morae, usually containing a juxtaposition of ideas and a seasonal reference.

9 Of a structure similar to the *haiku*, *senryū* do not contain a seasonal reference and are often cynical or humorous.

analysis of two juxtaposed poems, *Kimchi* キムチ by Sō Shūgetsu 宗秋月 (1984) and *Konbini no kimchi* コンビニのキムチ by Chōng Chang 丁章 (2005), takes up most of the chapter. In her analysis of Sō's *Kimchi*, Iwata-Weickgenannt traces a network of meanings in the portrayal of a mother's reverie while preparing kimchi for her two children. Through metaphors, wordplay, and alliterations that evoke visual, tactile, and auditory sensations, the poem touches on themes of a mythological Korean homeland (e.g., the word *kawara* references both roof tile and a riverbed, thus evoking the red tile-roofs of a typical Korean village situated on a riverbed), and (Korean) motherhood and femininity propagating a biologically ingrained Korean culture since time immemorial. The rejection or the grudging acceptance of a Korean ethnic identity is discussed here, as elsewhere in the works quoted in the chapter, through the children's reluctant enjoyment of kimchi.

Overall, Iwata-Weickgenannt seems to purposely conflate the author and the work and rely heavily on biographical and historical criticism in her interpretation. In the case of the poem's analysis, this occasionally leads to over-interpretation. For example, there are no textual clues that the mother raising her children away from the motherland of Korea or that the father's absence is significant in a broader, cultural way, which Iwata-Weickgenannt interprets as possibly reinforcing the idea of the matrilineal transmission of culture. Similarly, Iwata-Weickgenannt also deconstructs Sō Shūgetsu's claim elsewhere in her essay that the perpetuity of (Japanese-)Korean culture is due foremost to the mothers of the Korean minority in Japan, which itself amounts to a subversive stance against the domestic oppression of Korean women. It is unclear if the reference to Sō's essays is meant to shed light on the poem as well. The ending sentence of the analysis, posturing that "there can be no resistance against domestic violence of husbands and sons" out of the position of "maternal nurturing" (p. 80), seems misplaced and projecting generalized qualities of Korean minority literature onto the poem. Simultaneously, it seems to fall into the trap it tries to avoid, i.e., the trap of characterizing a normative womanhood, by repeating the post-structuralist dichotomy between the feminist, self-liberated woman on the one hand, and the captive, suffering woman of motherhood on the other hand, with no possibility of reconciliation. The analysis of Chōng Chang's poem, *Konbini no kimchi*, relies heavily on historical criticism as well, to great benefit. It follows

an informative summary of the economic development and evolution of social perceptions of kimchi in Japan. Iwata-Weickgenannt points out that here kimchi is firmly anchored in the present, as opposed to a mythological time of a lost Korean homeland (in *Kimchi*). In the author's interpretation, the lyrical voice's shock at the seeming naturalness of this incorporation of kimchi into Japanese cuisine is furthermore a sign that the trauma of colonization and discrimination by the Japanese has not been addressed and that the Korean minority population has merely mutely transitioned from being a victim of arbitrary discrimination to a witness of an equally coincidental culinary boom. While short, this chapter represents a *tour de force* in the analysis of interconnectedness of kimchi, gender, and ethnicity in selected works of Japanese-Korean minority literature.

In the fifth chapter, "Reflections on Poetry Composition in the Poetry of Tawada Yōko," Jasmin Böhm analyzes the poems of Tawada Yōko 多和田葉子 with reference to three subject areas: body of language and language of body (*sprachkörper* and *körper-sprache*); the correlation between literature and translation; and the in-between space of language(s) as the birthplace of literary creation. The majority of the article is dedicated to the second topic, the correlation between literature and translation. These topics also serve to answer Böhm's central research question: whether the poems of Tawada Yōko can be defined as metapoetics due to their reflecting and problematization, explicitly or implicitly, of the lyrical creation process. It is clear that this article was partly born as a result of lengthy, high-quality research for Böhm's dissertation project on Tawada's poetry; she eruditely presents us with several concepts of literary theory (e.g., metafiction, metapoetics, and literary translation), classifications of meta-poems in additional sub-types (Verspoetik, Künstlergedicht, autoreferenzielle Werke, and Böhm's own categories, prozedurale Metapoesie and intertextuelle Metapoesie), in addition to extensive literary scholarship on and by Tawada. Due to limited space, I will only address Böhm's analysis of her primary topic, the correlation of translation and literature. Leaning on Walter Benjamin's theory of translation, according to which a successful literary translation is closer to a type of meta-language ("pure language") than to the original language, she describes how Tawada claims that literary translations should "obsessively follow the literalness [of the original text] until its language breaks

[the limits of] the conventional aesthetics.”¹⁰ The poet also sees the in-between space between languages as the birthplace of literature and considers every act of creation as a translation from this pure meta-language existing *a priori* in each poet. Böhm aims to employ this paradigm of translation versus literature in analyzing several well-chosen poems. Yet Böhm is less successful in pointing out aspects of the “body of language” (the materiality of the language contributing to the poem’s meaning in a visual or phonetic way) and in demonstrating how Tawada’s poems can be read as “translations” of the “pure language.” The understanding is perhaps hindered by the lack of the complete inclusion of any poem, relying heavily on the narration of the content, and on quoting single lines or words out of the many works referenced. Generally speaking, her contribution constitutes a thoroughly researched, complex, and interesting discussion of the intermingling of literary theory and poetical works in the case of Tawada, although the discussion of literary theory occasionally overwhelms the poems’ analysis to the detriment of in-depth literary criticism.

In his second essay in the volume, “Beginnings and Connecting Strategies in Modern Linked Poetry,” which concludes the “Poetry-Prose” section, the editor Eduard Klopfenstein provides a short introduction to the history of the *renga* poetry genre. He examines a series of modern-day *renga* gatherings and compositions in light of their types of connections between stanzas, allusions, and references to the main poem topic in the subsequent stanzas. The author delves into the circumstances of several *renga* poetry gatherings, as well as their impact and reception. Broadly speaking, Klopfenstein restricts his focus to the beginning of the linked poems (called *hokku* 発句 in premodern times), but this does not hinder him from accomplishing a more thorough analysis of each part of the five quoted modern-day *renga* poems (*renshi* 連詩). He investigates whether similar patterns of connections in the first and second parts of *renga* can be found in modern *renshi* poetry as well. However, his method of examination relies exclusively on quoting and analyzing *renshi* in which the *hokku* were written by the same poet, Tanikawa Shuntarō 谷川俊太郎. The author acknowledges this limitation in his closing remarks. Klopfenstein’s analysis of the quoted poems accounts

for how they adhere or depart from traditional *renga* rules,¹¹ as well as the talent or experience of individual poets. Thus, he renders understandable for the reader the “symphony of images” that the poems offer in the fashion of their *renga* predecessors.¹² Overall, this chapter is rich with information and insight on both *renga* and *renshi* and on their similarities and disparities. It introduces a hitherto understudied genre of modern Japanese linked poetry, together with the unique and personal perspective of Klopfenstein as an initiator, promoter, and translator of *renshi* poetry gatherings. In a future analysis of modern *renga*, it would be interesting to compare such German/European-Japanese hybrid poems with experiments with *renga* in Western modern poetry, such as the project of Octavio Paz in 1969,¹³ which Klopfenstein mentions only briefly.

In the short article “Japanese Folktales and the Storytelling Tradition – Spatiotemporal Framework, Performance and Experience” that opens the section titled “Orality,” Gergana Petkova traces the general qualities of Japanese folktales and Japanese storytelling by a typology of performers and performance along spatial and temporal axes, and in a modern-day interactive context employing diverse media formats. While referring to several researchers of folktales, both Western and Japanese, Petkova does not aim to exemplify a particular definition through case studies of one or more folktales nor to problematize the modern adaptations or methods of storytelling of long-standing fairy tales. Rather, she illustrates in broad strokes the image of traditional storytelling as being done at night (ideally, but not only, at New Year’s) and around the home hearth, while invoking Japanese beliefs in the special quality of both these specifications (e.g., *yomi no kuni* 黄泉の国, the new bride’s role in tending the fire in the hearth). The present tense of the verbs in the author’s characterization gives this reader the feeling that the article, too, refers to a mythical time still existing in unspecified locations in Japan, while one might ask oneself if storytelling does indeed occur around the hearth anymore. The most interesting aspect of the article is its elucidating modern-day phenomena such as the Momotarō 桃太郎 Festival established in 2001, the autumn Uraja

10 Tawada, *Verwandlungen*, p. 30.

11 These rules include avoidance of thematic consistency (*muga* 無我), or erasure of poetic individuality, the specific restrictions depending on the stanza’s place in the poem, from first to fourth.

12 Konishi, “The Art of Renga,” p. 45.

13 Starrs, “Renga,” p. 276.

うらじゃ Festival, and the local restructuring of the town of Tōno 遠野 in Iwate 岩手 Prefecture. Known throughout Japan thanks to Yanagita Kunio's 柳田國男 (1875–1962) *Tōno monogatari* 遠野物語 (*The Legends of Tono*), the town has created a whole infrastructure to better value its folklorist legacy, including a library, folklore village, open-air museum of traditional houses and crafts, autumn festival, the “1000 Storytellers Project” launched in 2009, and so on.

The second chapter in this section is by Susanne Formanek and is titled “Orality in Writing: On the Prominence of Characters’ Speech in Major Works of Edo-period Popular Prose.” The article constitutes an overview of several works of genres of “playful literature” (*gesaku* 戯作), such as *dangibon* 談義本 (mock-sermon books), *sharebon* 洒落本 (fashion books), *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 (so-called yellow-cover booklets), and *shōhon jitatemono* 正本仕立て物 (stories in promptbook form). The analysis of the works highlights an aspect less researched in Japanese literature: the reproduction of spoken language before the emergence of the *genbun itchi* 言文一致¹⁴ movement. Formanek draws parallels between the various genres: for example, similarities between *kibyōshi* and *dangibon* in the form of social criticism and humor, and between *kibyōshi* and *sharebon* as seen in the choice of stereotyped characters. The emergence of *kibyōshi* as political satire in the eighteenth century with the appearance of Koikawa Harumachi's 恋川春町 (1744–1789) *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* 金々先生栄花夢 (Master Flashgold's Dream of Prosperity) in 1775 also gave way to a wide repertoire of literary tropes: from argot and contemporary slang expressions, to the witty use of allegory, allusions, asides, and *reductio ad absurdum*. On the other hand, Formanek also remarks on the innovation in phonetic notation of dialectal speech in *Ukiyoburo* 浮世風呂 (At the Public Bath) by Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 (1776–1822). One constant observation pervades the characterization of quoted works: their quality of unveiling the hypocritical nature of the characters, in the contrast between what they say and do, what they think and what they say, and critiquing of other characters followed by performance of the same action under critique. This emphasis on hypocrisy of the stereotyped roles signifies for Formanek an awareness of the fact

that the specific society the “kinds of people” lived in forced them into the “roles” they performed, in both their actions and their utterances. For the author, this suggests a type of humor that unmasks itself as social criticism, a nuanced observation which might be hard to trace in the contemporary reception and enjoyment of the works described. Formanek's commentary on the depiction of hypocrisy through humor echoes the notion of *ugachi* 穿ち (“hole digging”), or of “satirically viewing and commenting on the ‘holes’ or flaws in contemporary manners and mores, which was central to the new popular literature and to the *gesaku* genres that came to the fore in the latter half of the eighteenth century.”¹⁵ Haruo Shirane traces the roots of *ugachi* in the censorship of the day, which caused ideas to be expressed by roundabout means such as satire. According to Shirane, however, “the person who practiced *ugachi* was not a social critic or reformer; instead, he pretended to be a casual bystander. It was often sufficient merely to expose ‘the hole.’”¹⁶ The article is a welcome and comprehensive addition to the study of Edo-period popular literature.

In a short and concise contribution to the second section, Eduard Klopfenstein tackles the intricacies of *bunraku* 文楽, or *ningyō-jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃, traditional Japanese puppet theater. His essay, “Between Talking and Singing: Narration, Dialogue, and Singing in *Jōruri* Recitation,” predominantly focuses on the dynamics of the sole reciter's (*tayū* 太夫) voice fluctuations accompanied by the instrumental interpretation of the shamisen. Klopfenstein stresses how the genre developed autochthonously (i.e., not influenced by Chinese culture) and that there is no equivalent to be found for its intermediary tones between recitation and singing in Western culture. A schema of a *jōruri* recitation quoted from an unnamed TV program from the late 1990s gives valuable insight into the different states of interpretation, particularly voice modulation. The photos of facsimiles of an original script for *bunraku* (*maruhon* 丸本) and its arranged script for particular productions (*yukahon* 床本) are visually enticing, and Klopfenstein's transcription and explanations on notation techniques specific for the needs of *bunraku* theater are particularly engrossing. All the reader might miss when perusing this interesting piece is a bibliogra-

14 This was a movement for the unification of spoken and written languages.

15 Shirane, “Introduction,” p. 380.

16 Ibid.

phy which might enable further research into the topic or facilitate better absorption of the given information.

Concluding the section “Orality,” Klopfenstein conducts a comprehensive survey of the history of recitation and performance of modern poetry after 1945. Titled “Modern Poetry after 1945: Between Silent and Loud Reading, Recitation, and Performance,” the chapter comprises an introduction to a supposed general disinclination of Japanese people toward poetry performance and recitation, followed by a presentation of some theories on what the causes for this might be. Klopfenstein delves into the history of poetry recitation from the interwar period, crossing into wartime poetry with the help of Tsuboi Hideto’s monumental 2013 study.¹⁷ Thus, the author highlights how poetry recitals or performances in prewar times were more widely accepted and broadcast on radio and how vinyl records of the poetry recitations have been preserved from the time before and after the Second World War. With a novel but entirely plausible theory, Klopfenstein attempts to explain the resurgence of poetry recitation and performance in the 1960s through the fact that the younger generations participating in it had not lived through the propagandistic, nationalistic recitation of war poems, or the *rōei* 朗詠 traditional ceremonial recitation of poems at the imperial court, and therefore they had not formed a negative association with the idea of poetry performance. Klopfenstein touches upon the *gengo shijō shugi* 言語至上主義 movement of poetry and gives several examples of prominent modern poets engaging in recitation and performance activities in recent years (Tanikawa Shuntarō, Shiraishi Kazuko 白石かずこ, and Yoshimasu Gōzō 吉増剛造). A brief mention of how Japanese poets adapted the phenomenon of poetry boxing from the United States, via the Indian city of Taos, serves as the closing for an enlightening introduction to a rather understudied topic in modern poetry recitation in Japan.

In the chapter “The *Shichiken zushiki* (1779): A Funny *Ken*-Game Instruction Book by Yomo no Akara and His Drinking Companions,” Sepp Linhart examines a small book from the second half of the eighteenth century, the *Shichiken zushiki* 七拳図式 (Instructions on the *Ken*-Game). The work is attributed mainly to Ōta Nanpō 大田南畝 (1749–1823), also known as Yomo no Akara 四方赤, and to several other authors among

his contemporaries. Previously defined by scholars as a *kokkeibon* 滑稽本 (humorous novel intended for mass circulation), *Shichiken zushiki* is considered by Linhart to be more of a humorous essay on a variant of the *kazu-ken* 数拳 game (number’s *ken*) due to its lack of plot. In the introduction, the author familiarizes the reader with the personality of Ōta Nanpō, a famous *homme de lettres* and author of *kyōka* 狂歌 (satirical *tanka*), *kanshi* 漢詩 (Chinese poetry), and *sharebon*, as well as a list of Ōta’s humorous pseudonyms throughout his lifetime. He also informs the reader about the type of political, hedonistic, and *ken*-related humor prevalent in Ōta’s works and in the Edo period at large through a well-chosen selection of *waka* and *senryū*. Linhart then outlines the structure of the book. He explains the rules of the *shichiken* laid out in a section of the book by Akera Kankō 朱楽管江, as well as its connection to the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove,¹⁸ who are said to have lived in China at the end of the Wei dynasty and are frequently depicted in classical East Asian paintings. Additional examples of poems included in the work follow, and are analyzed from an intertextual perspective enriched by a wealth of information on the seven sages. The accompanying reproductions of images from the book, in which a poem and a drawing of a sage are juxtaposed, make for a dynamic reading. Linhart, who has extensively researched the *ken*-game in Japan,¹⁹ a predecessor of the game known around the world today as *janken* ジャン拳 (rock-paper-scissors), punctuates this excursus on *shichiken* with his knowledge of rules and versions of the game, all centered on the act of drinking by the loser. The author also briefly highlights such facts as that Ōta Nanpō worked as a *bakufu* official, and that the connection to the *shichiken*, seven sages, can be read as signifying an intrinsic critical attitude towards the politics of the day. Nevertheless, this piece might have benefitted from the inclusion of more information on its reception, both contemporary and posterior, as well as how it relates to other *ken*-game variations and to the political circumstances of its supposed

17 Tsuboi, *Koe no shukusai*.

18 This was a group of Chinese scholars and poets from the third century CE who are said to have retreated to a bamboo grove to escape the danger of the political world, which they criticized and satirized in their writings. The motif of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove was known in Japan as early as the ninth century and widely depicted in art from the sixteenth century to the Edo period.

19 Linhart and Frühstück, *The Culture of Japan*; Linhart, *Ken no bunkashi*.

author. Unfortunately, the reader is left with the impression that this fascinating contribution exists in a void, as the piece fails to reference previous scholarship, however much of it exists, on the *Shichiken zushiki*.

The second contribution by Linhart likewise concerns the *ken*-game, in a chapter titled “The Inscriptions in the Pictures [*gasan* 画讃] for the *Ken*-Game by Shōkōsai in 1809, Written by Tetsugōshi Namimaru, *Kyōka* Poet and Iron Merchant from Osaka.” The work described is a two-volume book called *Ken sarae sumai zue* 拳会角力図会 (Illustrated Competition of the *Ken* Groups), published in 1809 by Kawachiya Tasuke 河内屋太助 (fl. 1735–1868) from Osaka and Murataya Jirōbē 村田屋治郎兵衛 (fl. 1816–1824) from Kansai. Because Shōkōsai Hanbē 松好斎半兵衛 (fl. 1795–1807), a well-known *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵²⁰ master from Kansai, provided twenty-one illustrations for the two volumes, the book has captured the interest of later generations. As a result, the work has been well-preserved and reproduced in many libraries in Japan and Europe. *Kyōka* poems accompany the illustrations, written by a poet from the rival Kansai group of the *kyōka* faction of Ōta Nanpō and Akera Kankō. This poet was also an iron merchant, as his name suggests: Tetsugōshi Namimaru 鉄格子波丸 (?–1811) (alternative reading: Hamaru, Namimaro). Linhart expertly analyzes the twenty-one illustrations and the accompanying fourteen *kyōka*, and he makes the *ken*-related wordplay and humor accessible to the uninitiated reader. Though he surveys the different types of *ken*-games (e.g., *hon-ken* 本拳, *sansukumi-ken* 三すくみ拳) and provides background information on the two artists, Linhart does not go beyond to the contemporary context or into the portrayal of the *ken*-game within the content of the two volumes. In lieu of a conclusion, he offers an additional two examples: portrayals of *ken*-games in illustrations and poetry. While the piece is perhaps narrowly concerned with examples of *ken*-game depictions, this is another pleasant, well-crafted introduction to the world of *ken*-games as a leisure time or humoristic activity of the early nineteenth century.

The first of the following three chapters written by Masako Sato is titled “Motif Interaction in Japanese

Culture: Lyric Poetry Behind Paintings—How Poetical Motifs Transform in Other Media.” The study commences with an exploration of the scholarship, poems, and reception of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka 三条西実隆 (1455–1537), a well-respected poet and *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*The Ten Thousand Leaves*) scholar of the Muromachi period. Sato traces the development of *Man'yōshū* studies in parallel with the development of a *waka* poetic motif of “the bridge in the rain” in several works leading up to the Edo period. Her examination features rich details on historical circumstances and adjacent poetical works. Sato lends important insight into the legacy of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka and the evolution of *waka* principles over time, outlining the transition from a metaphorical, emotion-based usage of the “bridge in the rain” motif in the *Man'yōshū* to a more realistic, empirical portrayal in subsequent *waka*. This trend continued as seen in the poetic principles of the simple, honest expression of sentiments espoused by Ozawa Roan 小沢蘆庵 (1723–1801) and that of authenticity (*shirabe* 調) promoted by Kagawa Kageki 香川景樹 (1768–1843). Sato also credits Sanetaka with the impact of theme index-based *waka* poetry anthologies which led to more people, especially from the lower classes, learning how to compose *waka*. Particularly striking is the depiction of Sanetaka as a model of poetry studies for the two cultural poles of the seventeenth century, the shogunate and the aristocratic court, through the Sanjōnishi family's association with the Tokugawa government and the emperor's preoccupation with *Man'yōshū* studies. Sato goes on to relate the transformation of the “bridge in the rain” motif to its depiction in the eighteenth-century prints by Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige 歌川 (安藤) 広重 and Keisai Eisen 溪斎英泉. The author's attempt to draw direct correlations between the quoted poems and the presented paintings, based on superficial arguments, requires deeper reflection. However, this chapter stands as a strong contribution to the volume through its masterful historical and poetical analysis of its chosen literary motif.

In the following chapter, “The Myth of ‘The Cave of the Sun Goddess’: Images and Interpretations in Tokugawa-period Japan,” Masako Sato surveys portrayals of this most famous narrative regarding Amaterasu Ōmikami in Japanese mythology. She examines works by authors from the early seventeenth to the nineteenth century, such as those by Ihara Saikaku and Saitō Tokugen 斎藤徳元 (1559–1647), in several *kanazōshi*

20 Literally “pictures of the floating world,” *ukiyo-e* is a genre of Japanese woodblock prints and paintings produced between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries, featuring motifs of landscapes, tales from history, theater, and pleasure quarters. It is the main artistic genre of woodblock printing in Japan.

仮名草子 (*kana* booklets),²¹ such as one by Miura Tameharu 三浦為春 (1573–1652), in a novel by Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 (1761–1816), painters such as Katsukawa Shuntei 勝川春亭 (1770–1820?) (as illustrator of Santō Kyōden's *gōkan* works), and Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849). In his novel, *Seken Munesan'yō* 世間胸算用 (This Scheming World), Ihara Saikaku references the myth at the start of twenty short stories that follow a variety of people of different statuses by beginning with the phrase, “[in] the remote ages of the Sun Goddess in the Cave.” According to Sato, the intrinsic associations to the mythical motif in Santō Kyōden's novel stem solely from the title, *Iwato-kagura tsurugi no itoku* 岩戸神楽剣威徳 (Ritual Dance Music from the Door of the Cave of the Sun Goddess), and the fact that its climactic sequence takes place in a cave. Thus, the connection to the mythic narrative is tenuous at best, but Sato goes to great lengths to demonstrate the provenance of the symbols in the stories by tracing the inspiration for it back to the *kokugaku* 国学 (nativist studies) movement. For example, the author notes evidence that Santō Kyōden had certainly read Motoori Norinaga's 本居宣長 (1730–1801) *Kojikiden* 古事記伝.²² Noteworthy are Sato's observations on the practice of rearranging mythic elements, which provided a “collage of imaginative tools” (p. 258) for authors of several works from the Edo period. For example, the woodblock prints of Katsushika Hokusai offer an interesting juxtaposition of the portrayal of the mythical motif and the goddess Ame-no-Uzume, said to have been the one to lure Amaterasu out of her cave through lewd dancing, thus bringing light back to the world. However, the most interesting examples are mentioned in the conclusion, in the staging of a play called *Iwato no Kagekiyo* 岩戸景清 (Kagekiyo in the Cave) by the Edo-based Kabuki theater Kawarezaki-za 河原崎座. Sato relates the staging of the play to the return of an actor banned for political reasons from Edo, whose comeback was superimposed upon the motif of the sun goddess returning from the cave. The *yakusha-e* 役者絵 (i.e., pictures of Kabuki actors onstage) portraying the performance also bore the *shita-uri* シタ売り seal,²³ indicating it was best sold covertly rather than publicly (p. 270). Sato includes three

additional woodblock prints by Utagawa Toyokuni III 三代歌川豊国 (1786–1865) and Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 (1798–1861), believed to have been meant to satirize real events, political matters, or critiques of the government itself. As Sato states, this phenomenon can also be traced to the development of a kind of critical civil society, whose political thought similarly derived from the *kokugaku* school of thought. Sato's treatment concludes with the transformation of the motif into a symbol of the newborn nation-state during the Meiji Restoration. In sum, this chapter represents another well-documented, rich analysis of the evolution of portrayals of the myth of the Heavenly Rock Cave²⁴ under the influence of the *kokugaku* school.

In the next chapter, “Plum Blossoms in Japanese Culture,” Sato explores the significance of plum blossoms, first as a poetic motif adopted from Chinese poetry in the *Manyōshū* and *Kokinwakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Japanese Poems Old and New), and second in connection to the larger-than-life figure of the Heian scholar-official Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 (845–903) and his posthumous deification as the *kami* Tenman Tenjin 天満天神 from 987 onward. Sato gives valuable insights into the proliferation of what she calls “the imaginative chain of *tenjin*, Michizane, poetry, intellectual ideals, learning, and education,” which featured the plum blossom as a central symbol (p. 288). Thanks to the motif of plum blossoms appearing in a legendary poem of Michizane included in the *Kokinwakashū*, the flower's associations withstood the test of time and were reinforced by the incorporation of plum tree gardens into the landscape of Tenjin shrines, which rapidly spread across the country. Sato traces this association up to the present day, in shrines such as Yushima Tenmangū 湯島天満宮 in Tokyo, Kitano Tenmangū 北野天満宮 in Kyoto, and Dazaifu Tenmangū 太宰府天満宮 in Kyushu. The concluding section, which occupies a third of the chapter, examines the aforementioned poetic motifs and the concrete geographical and industrial influence of plum orchards in the vicinity of Kyoto and Tsukigase 月ヶ瀬 as sources of Ogata Kōrin's 尾形光琳 (1658–1716) inspiration for his famous painting, *Red and White Plum Blossoms* (*Kōhaku baizu* 紅白梅図). Sato effectively demonstrates Ogata's knowledge

21 This was an early Edo-period genre written entirely in *kana* or in a mixture of *kana* and *kanji*, primarily intended for women and children.

22 Commentary on the *Kojiki* written by Motoori Norinaga.

23 This seal marked items for sale “under the counter.”

24 Designates the Ama-no-Iwato cave in Japanese mythology in which Amaterasu, goddess of the sun, hid after being angered by her brother Susano'o, thus depriving the world of light.

of Japanese poetry, how he incorporated the motif of plum blossoms in his paintings, and the production of kimono designs for his family's business, whose dye was made from *ubai*, a catalyst sourced from the plum tree. Given the abundance of evidence for such sources of inspiration, however, one is left wondering why Sato traces the origins of the painting *Kōhaku baizu* to *Man'yōshū* poems featuring plum blossoms and to the Tsukigase valley specifically. Though the writing occasionally appeals to vague notions such as "sophisticated mentality" and "noble intellectual ideal," this chapter nonetheless paints a broad and rich picture of the significance of plum blossoms in Japanese culture from literary, cultural, economic, and historical perspectives.

In the volume's last chapter, "Poetry on Edo-Period Printed (Children's) Games," Susanne Formanek gives a broad overview of different popular games. Her survey sets out from early *utagaruta* 歌ガルト (poetry *karuta*), which built upon predecessors from the Heian period (*kai-awase* 貝合わせ and *kai-ōi* 貝覆 played with sea shells), to later *sugoroku* 双六 games. The games also served as media for the enjoyment and learning of *waka* poetry from the *Kokinwakashū*, *Ogura hyakunin isshu* 百人一首 (One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each), *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*), and by contemporary authors of the Edo period. The first part of the chapter delves into the similarities and discrepancies between Edo-period *karuta* cards and contemporary cards, examining the reasons for their evolution into the present form. The second part of the chapter surveys variations of *sugoroku*, a board game similar to the ancient *Game of the Goose*.²⁵ Formanek describes in detail the relationship between the represented poems, the scenes or context they address, and the illustrations on the cards or on the *sugoroku* game boards. The examples of the adaptation of the *Genji monogatari* and its pastiche, *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* 修紫田舎源氏 (A Fraudulent Murasaki's Bumpkin Genji) by Ryūtei Tanehiko 柳亭種彦 (1783–1842), as found in games and the examples of *sugoroku* games portraying tongue-in-cheek Confucian principles of piety and loyalty to one's parents, are particularly engrossing. Though Formanek's careful examination of an abundance of case studies is uniquely informative, one wishes that more

information on the historical usage of the games were provided. For example, in one place Formanek mentions the broad dissemination of the games in the context of Edo-period merchant and artisan families wishing to improve the education of their children and to draw closer to the cultural world of the aristocracy. The author exemplifies this situation with reference to the customs of private elementary schools, which served to educate girls who would work in noble families, thus increasing their chances for a good marriage. From this discourse, the only historical note on the Edo period in the article, one might imagine that these girls were the only ones playing *utagaruta* games as a means of learning poetry. However, Formanek briefly mentions elsewhere the decline of *utagaruta* as a family game played at New Year's. Perhaps the evolution of the playing of *utagaruta* and its context could constitute the object of further studies.

In sum, this volume brings together valuable academic studies of good to excellent quality and an extraordinary variety of topics and research methodology, while at the same time uniting them through common themes which run throughout the book: *kokkeibon*, *senryū* (Klopfenstein, Linhart, Formanek); Japanese humor; orality, fairy tales, and storytelling (Petkova) and poetry performance (Klopfenstein); reproduction of spoken language in *kibyōshi* and *sharebon* (Formanek); and continuity between religion/mythology and literature (Rotermund, Sato). The shortcomings of the work are limited to bibliographies being missing in some of its chapters and a somewhat outdated presentation of research materials, with some contributions lacking references more recent than the 1990s. However, this does not detract too much from the rich, informative, and nuanced content of the volume's contributions.

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²⁵ This is a board game where two or more players move pieces around a track by rolling a die or two dice. The aim is to reach square number thirty-six before the other players.

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