


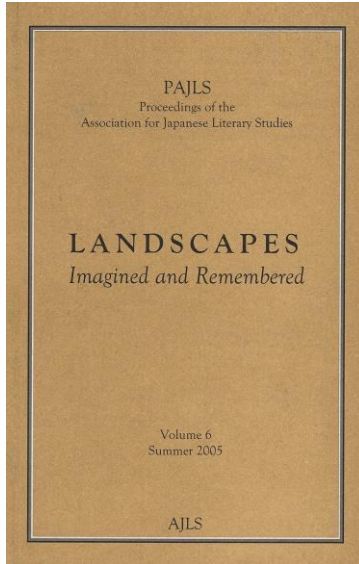


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Davinder L. Bhowmik , and Edward Mack 



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Ed. Paul S. Atkins, Davinder L. Bhowmik, and Edward
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Landscapes Imagined and Remembered

Edited by
Paul S. Atkins
Davinder L. Bhowmik
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Editors' Foreword

"Landscapes Imagined and Remembered," the thirteenth annual meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies, was held 22-24 October 2004 in the Walker-Ames Room of Kane Hall at the University of Washington, Seattle. The conference explored the role of landscape – which is to say, manifestations of our perceptual relationship with the environment – in Japanese texts from earliest times to the present. This volume presents revised versions of most of the papers given at the conference.

Twenty-four scholars from five countries – the United States, Japan, Canada, Germany, and New Zealand – presented papers, and three distinguished keynote speakers gave stimulating addresses from a variety of perspectives. The keynote speakers were Professors Matsuoka Shinpei of the University of Tokyo, Nakahodo Masanori of the University of the Ryukyus, and John W. Treat of Yale University.

Major funding for the conference was provided by the Toshiba International Foundation. The remaining funds needed to support the conference and the publication of this volume were provided by the University of Washington, specifically, the following units: Department of Asian Languages & Literature, Japan Studies Program, Simpson Center for the Humanities, Office of Research, School of Arts & Sciences, and the Graduate School. Technical support for our website (<http://depts.washington.edu/ajls04>) was provided by the East Asia Center at the University of Washington. The Association for Japanese Literary Studies (AJLS) also subsidized publication of this volume.

Norigiku Horikawa and Takako Shiozaki of Ikebana International, Seattle chapter, designed and installed traditional Japanese floral arrangements for the conference site. Logistical support was provided by UW graduate students Sarah Clayton, Fusae Ekida, Matthew Hardin, Jon Holt, Yukiko Shigeto, and Milan Vidakovic, and by Kyle Ikeda of the University of Hawai'i. Alexis Franks assisted in editing this volume. Youngie Yoon handled our finances. Masahiko "Sam" Sakamura designed our website. Martha Walsh carefully copy-edited the manuscript. Keiko Yokota-Carter installed a display in honor of the conference and our keynote speakers at the University of Washington's East Asia Library. Professors Eiji Sekine and Michael F. Marra gave us valuable advice. We are grateful to all who lent a hand in making the conference a success.

We chose the conference theme for a number of reasons. First, there was the practical concern, historically observed by organizers of AJLS meetings, of selecting a theme that was broad enough to invite participation by a wide variety of scholars from both the premodern and modern "wings" of our field. Second, we felt that this topic was long overdue for discussion. While environmental historians of Japan have been actively publishing in English for

some time, there has been little research done recently on landscape in Japanese literature – not as an inspiration for scattered musings on the splendors of nature, but as an object of critical inquiry that maps this crucial intersection of perceiving subjects and the world that they behold. Third, our geographical location – situated between the Cascade Mountains and Puget Sound, within walking distance of Union Bay and with Mount Rainier visible (on clear days) from just outside the conference site—made landscape an appropriate choice for an academic gathering held in Seattle.

From the beginning, our emphasis was on landscape as a perceptual relationship. The term “landscape,” with its painterly connotations, already foregrounds perception – forestalling any concept of an essential nature before being constructed by the viewing subject – but we sought to make this choice explicit. In our call for papers, we expressed the hope that the conference would explore the ways in which landscape is an “annexation of nature by culture,” as Simon Schama has written, focusing on the perceptual relationship between human beings and their environments, both natural and artificial, in texts from earliest times to the present.¹ Whether rich landscapes or barren anti-landscapes, in our view, such literary depictions are never free from the imprint of culture and cognition.

Schama’s *Landscape and Memory* provided a ready handle for organizers and presenters alike to grasp the unavoidable construction of nature by culture, but it was not the immediate inspiration for the title of the conference. We simply took our opening premise to its logical conclusion, implicitly claiming, with the phrase “imagined and remembered,” that direct apprehension of landscape is an illusion – even when we are perceiving the natural world before our eyes, it is overlaid with other landscapes previously seen, with others that we have only heard or read about, with the landscapes that ribbon our dreams, fantasies, and nightmares.

Happily, such a view found ready counterparts in Japanese critical texts. Most prominently, Karatani Kōjin’s essay “The Discovery of Landscape,” in his book *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, regards the concept of landscape as a modern invention, imported into Japan like so many other ideas during the Meiji era, and intimately linked with the opening of Hokkaido to mainland settlers.² However problematic Karatani’s claims regarding the supposed ignorance of premodern Japan to the notion of landscape, his essay drew necessary attention to the cultural construction of landscape and the “extreme interiorization” that enables it. But as early as the twelfth century, the poet, courtier, and critic Fujiwara no Shunzei remarked in his treatise *Korai fūteishō* 古来風躰抄 (Selected Poetic Styles of the Past and Present, 1197-1201) that, “without poetry, one would not know the color or scent” of

¹ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 12.

² Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 11-44.

blossoms.³ It is culture that opens our eyes to see landscapes as we see them, not as they are. Such a view runs counter to the movement launched by Masaoka Shiki to reform traditional poetry: the *shasei* (drawing from life) method advocated by Shiki and his followers may have reinvigorated the art of Japanese verse but, in our view, it was merely substituting a new conception of nature for one that had grown old.

The response to the call for papers was impressive and humbling. It attracted eighty-seven proposals, of which we were hard-pressed to choose only twenty-four for presentation at the conference. Our only regret of the entire enterprise is that more of these fine submissions could not be included. We considered running simultaneous sessions, or packing more papers into the schedule, but abandoned both ideas as incongruous with our understanding of the intent of the conference, which is to increase the intellectual coherence of the field by gathering specialists on premodern, early modern, and modern literature for in-depth discussions and critiques of the papers given.

Our informal survey of reactions to the conference indicates that it was successful. One senior scholar present called it the best-organized conference he had attended; another said it was perhaps the best ever, and that there was not a bad paper in the entire crop. On this last point we agree completely. Moreover, we were gratified by the breadth of papers presented, which focused on literature from the earliest times to the present. In our view, such chronological range strengthens the Association for Japanese Literary Studies as a scholarly organization.

It is our hope that the explorations of landscape as a vital component of the “system” of Japanese literature that were begun at the conference and continued in this volume will stimulate further research into the complicated negotiations between self and other that take place within the perception of the natural world through the means of landscape. Literature is more than character and plot, or language and trope; it is also about settings, scenes, atmosphere, and place. The papers that follow illustrate this principle in more ways than we could have imagined.

Paul S. Atkins
 Davinder L. Bhowmik
 Edward Mack
 Seattle, 16 September 2005

³ Hayashiya Tatsusaburō 林屋辰三郎, ed., *Kodai chūsei geijutsuron* 古代中世芸術論, *Nihon shisō taikei*, vol. 23 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 262.