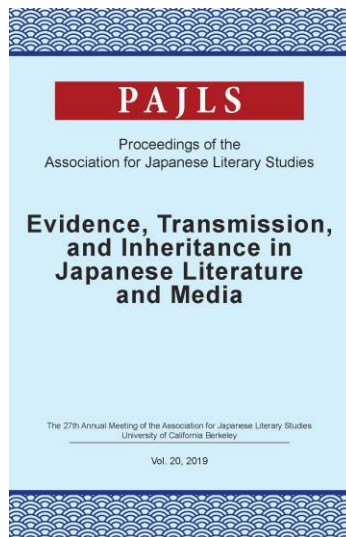


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MATTHEW FRALEIGH, MANAGING EDITOR

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The twenty-seventh annual meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies was held at the University of California, Berkeley, on September 6–8, 2018. The conference was held in conjunction with the Kotenseki Seminar, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the C.V. Starr Library and Chang-Lin Tien Center for East Asian Studies. The seminar was sponsored by the Library, UC Berkeley's Center for Japanese studies, and the National Institute of Japanese Literature. The conference and seminar were organized by Toshie Marra, Dan O'Neill, and Jonathan Zwicker.

The conference comprised forty-odd presentations, all of which spoke to the theme "Evidence, Transmission, and Inheritance in Japanese Literature and Media." These presentations sought to address the history and theory of Japanese literature and media with special attention given to the ways in which writers have grappled with the problems of evidence, transmission, and inheritance and how these problems continue to renew and complicate the relation between the past, present, and future.

From questions surrounding lines of hermeneutic authority in secret transmission and early textual scholarship, to the emergence of new modes of inquiry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on models from late imperial China and early modern Europe, to the anxieties surrounding fears over the loss of cultural authority at various moments of rupture (both political and seismic) across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Japanese literature has been centrally preoccupied with the past and the future—how it can be known and transmitted—as well as with anxieties over forgery, inauthenticity, and cultural loss.

Two years after the conference meeting in 2018, fifteen scholars offered to revise their papers to appear in written form in the present volume. As many of the authors suggest, the written form can also become a site of loss, as language invariably points to its own imperfection, if not failure, to serve as a medium of representation. This proceedings, in a similar way, points to the very contingencies of transmission, revealing the evidentiary to be a process of knowledge production entangled with the aporias of loss, erasure as well as the possibilities of reinvention.

At the same time the papers serve as evidence of what can be gained by examining Japanese literature's investigations into the past and what possibilities it may hold for the future. As such the proceedings, and the conference itself, speak to the idea of a "palimpsest," which raises the unanswerable yet endlessly seductive question as to where the meaning of a text begins and where it ends. A palimpsest refers to "a parchment or

other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). While the thirteen papers and two keynote speeches collected here present traces of the conference that convened in 2018, they also aim to present new thoughts and questions on the theme of evidence, transmission, mediation, and inheritance. Each paper attempts this by experimenting with border-crossings of many kinds and in many forms, redefining or refiguring the meaning of a “text” through its “textuality,” evoking the plurality and de-centering of meaning described by Roland Barthes in *S/Z*:

. . . the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable . . . the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language.¹

The papers collected here make visible the “galaxy of signifiers” in examinations of various aspects of textuality, including allusion, citation, adaptation, genre, narration, intertexts, paratexts, performance, networks, and material culture. We hope that such an approach will invite readers of Japanese literature and beyond to join and continue the conversation and imagine new nodes of connection through the process of reading and transmission.

The 2018 conference was made possible by the UC Berkeley C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Center for Japanese Studies, Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, and the National Institute of Japanese Literature.

I would also like to thank these scholars for their conference presentations and encourage readers to seek their work elsewhere: Jonathan Abel, Ikuho Amano, Tomoyo Arisawa, Pedro Bassoe, Frederick Bowman, Marjorie Burge, Lewis Cook, Molly Des Jardin, Raechel Dumas, Mamoru Fujita, Camila Gutiérrez-Fuentes, Gergana Ivanova,

¹ Roland Barthes, trans. Richard Miller, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 5–6.

Motoi Katsumata, Victoria Oana Lupascu, Hoyt Long, Kendra McDuffie, Jamie Newhard, Azusa Ōmura, Charles Quinn, Atsuko Sakaki, Katherine Saltzman-Li, Raj Lakhi Sen, Rumiko Shinzato, Kendra Strand, and Michael Toole.

The Kotenseki Seminar on Thursday, September 6, 2018 welcomed scholars from the National Institute of Japanese Literature to UC Berkeley. I would like to thank Iriguchi Atsushi, Kansaku Ken'ichi, Kobayashi Kenji, Koida Tomoko, Ochiai Hiroshi, Sasaki Takahiro, and Unno Keisuke for their presentations on Buddhist texts, manuscripts and printed books. Their research continues to uncover the many gems in the Mitsui Collection (Mitsui Bunko) at UC Berkeley. Mark Blum's essay at the end of this volume serves as the single surviving record of this exciting event. I would also like to thank NIJL Director Robert Campbell for his keynote address and his leadership at NIJL, which has made Japanese literary studies more accessible to an international audience. I hope that NIJL will continue to collaborate with AJLS in the future, as the ongoing work today on print and material culture and the Digital Humanities in Japanese literary studies continues to raise new and compelling questions about the evidence, transmission, and inheritance of knowledge across time and place.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Matthew Fraleigh for his invaluable assistance as Managing Editor of *PAJLS*, and to Dan O'Neill for his generous invitation to serve as editor of this volume.

Matthew Mewhinney
January, 2021