
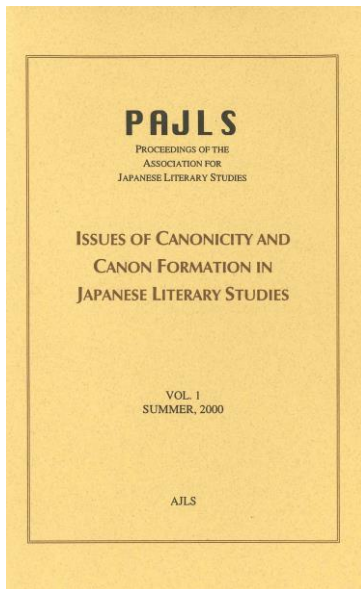


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ISSUES OF CANONICITY AND CANON FORMATION IN JAPANESE LITERARY STUDIES

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FOREWORD

The papers in this volume were presented at the eighth annual conference of the Association of Japanese Literary Studies held in Boulder, Colorado, November 12-14, 1999. The title of the conference, "Issues of Canonicity and Canon Formation in Japanese Literary Studies," elicited a hearty response from scholars around the world. These papers were chosen from among almost a hundred superb submissions and represent some of the most recent and thoughtful scholarship on the subject of canonicity. The topics of these papers cut across historical and literary periodizations, genres, and theoretical and methodological strategies, as well as social and institutional influences. There does not seem to be another issue as encompassing, compelling, or crucial to our field as that which describes and explains the forces that led to how "literature" was and is created within the national consciousness of Japan. As teachers and scholars of Japanese literature, these are issues we cannot afford to ignore.

We were extremely fortunate to have three keynote speakers at the conference, each of whom represents a different part of the Japanese literary world and evokes different responses to the issue of canonicity. Professor Kubota Jun is an Emeritus Professor of Japanese Literature from Tokyo University. He is one of the foremost experts on medieval Japanese *waka* and one of the most prolific academic commentators on subjects related to Japanese literature. His paper, "Izumi Kyōka no Sakuhin no Nihonteki Tokusei ni tsuite," examines, as its title implies, the "Japaneseness" of Izumi Kyōka's literary works. Professor Suzuki Sadami is a Professor of Japanese Literature at Nichibun in Kyoto. His most recent book, *Nihon no 'Bungaku' Gainen* (Sakuhinsha, 1998), dissects the conceptual framework of the word *bungaku* in Japanese. His paper, "From Canon Formation to Evaluational Reformulation: Man'yō, Genji, Bashō," discusses the "evaluational system" that ranks literary works in Japan. Finally, Takahashi Mutsuo, an author of *tanka*, essays, and novels, recently published *Yomi-naoshi Nihon Bungaku-shi* (Iwanami Shinsho, 1998). His paper is entitled "Uta no Unmei," and in it he discusses the historical role of the *waka* from the point of view of, as he puts it, a "practitioner of literature." Each of these papers was warmly received and prompted vigorous discussion from the conference participants.

Support for the eighth annual AJLS conference came from several sources. We are grateful to the Japan Foundation, which provided a generous institutional grant. Other outside funds came from the Northeast Area Council of the AAS. Internal financial support from the University of Colorado was provided by the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Center for Asian Studies, the Graduate Council of the Arts and Humanities, the Council on Research and Creative Work, and the Center for the Humanities. In addition to this monetary support, we received invaluable assistance from Professors Laurel Rodd and Stephen Snyder.

Finally, it is incumbent upon us to thank David Boyd of the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at CU, without whom this conference would never have run as smoothly as it did, and Sandy Adler, Foreign Language Communications Support Specialist at CU, who dedicated many hours to preparing both the program and the manuscript for publication.

Stephen D. Miller
Conference Chair, 1999
University of Colorado at Boulder