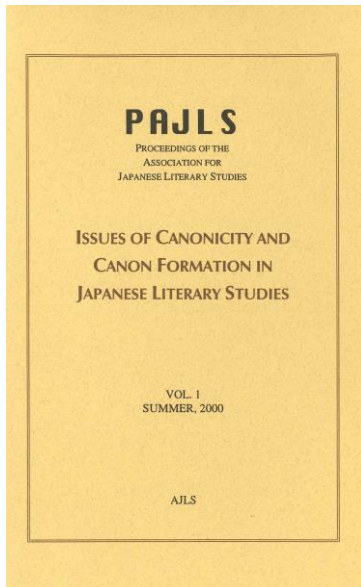


“From Canon Formation to Evaluational
Reformation: *Man'yō*, Genji, Bashō”

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*Proceedings of the Association for Japanese
Literary Studies* 1 (2000): 25–44.



PAJLS 1:
*Issues of Canonicity and Canon Formation in Japanese
Literary Studies.*
Ed. Stephen D. Miller.

FROM CANON FORMATION TO EVALUATIONAL REFORMULATION:
MAN'YŌ, GENJI, BASHŌ

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Introduction

There is no canon without human will behind it. And canons have not been canons from the start. Generally, a canon reigns over a system of values, and it has to be supported by a system of values formed by human will. That is why any approach to canon formation has to clarify a system of values or the human will that supports the canon.

In this paper, I will discuss three canonized works in Japanese literature: the *Man'yō-shū*, the *Genji Monogatari* and Bashō's *haikai*. These canons are based on a system of values, so-called "Japanese literature." "Japanese literature" is not a collection of literary works in Japanese or produced in Japan.¹ Rather it is a large-scale evaluational system that ranks many works in order of value, even though the sense of value and taste vary from person to person, status to status, or situation to situation. This system of value ranks works or authors and is maintained through education. Only a major change in values can reformulate the system of "Japanese literature."²

While the *Man'yō*, *Genji*, and Bashō are unmistakable canons in "Japanese literature," they are clearly different from the great canons which reign over the major religious systems. It goes without saying that the word "canon" is used in the study of literature as a metaphor for these "*seiten*."

¹ If we define "Japanese literature" as literary works in Japanese, we err in our judgment to ignore oral traditions of Ainu, many works written in Chinese and Japanized Chinese by dominant peoples in the Japanese archipelago, and so on. And if we define it as literary works written in the Japanese archipelago, we make the mistake of excluding many literary works written in Japanese but not in the Japanese archipelago.

² I will ignore some cases in which a special group respected the *Man'yō* or the *Genji* or Bashō's *haikai* as a code of expression, before the formation of the concepts of "Japanese literature."

The *Man'yō*, the *Genji*, and the *haikai* of Bashō were not part of the canon when each was written. Each was set up in the canon according to a set of values created after the birth of “Japanese literature.” A canon does not exist in a vacuum.

Hence, we must discuss what system of values “Japanese literature” had at first and then examine the *Man'yō*, the *Genji*, and Bashō as they were canonized in “Japanese literature.” If each of the three was canonized based on a different system of values, we may find three systems of values at work in “Japanese literature.” In other words, we would see alternative versions of “Japanese literature” as systems of values. Moreover, these canons may not change in position even as the system of values changes. In many cases they would reign over a new system of values by way of compensating for the exchanged values in order to comply with the new system. And so any approach to these three canons brings us to an analysis of the reformulation of the evaluational system supporting them as canon. That is why my paper is entitled “From Canon Formation to Evaluational Reformulation.”

Formation of the Concept of “Japanese Literature”

As stated above, we must first examine the formation of the evaluational system called “Japanese literature.” This concept did not exist in Japan until the end of the Tokugawa period. This is because the category of “literature” itself as we use it today was established in nineteenth-century Europe. Japan accepted the modern Western notion of “national literatures” in the late nineteenth century. The notion of “national literature” is said to have been conceived in the 1770s in Germany; by the nineteenth century it had spread throughout the world. Although there are many genres in Japan—poetry in the Chinese style (*shi*), poetry in the Japanese style (*waka*), stories or tales (*monogatari*, *sōshi*, *yomihon*, *gesaku*, etc.), drama (*inpon* or *maruhon* in *jōruri*), essays (*zuihitsu*), and so on—tying them together into one category as linguistic works was not attempted until the Tokugawa period. They merely floated alongside calligraphy, painting, the tea ceremony, *shamisen*, etc. in an enormous category of artistic accomplishments or “*yūgei*,” in contrast to the martial accomplishments or “*bugei*.”

At the same time a traditional concept brought from China and regarded highly—namely “*bungaku*”—embraced intellectual works and poetry in

Chinese or Japanized Chinese.³ Using this concept as a receptor, in the early Meiji Japanese scholars accepted the Western concept of "polite literature." While the modern English word "literature" had remained ambiguous, the notion of a national literature established the category of "polite literature," which included intellectual works and linguistic arts of high quality worthy of a proud nation. This was one meaning of "literature" formed during the nineteenth century.⁴

In China, the notion of "polite literature" was not as easily accepted as in Meiji Japan because the concept of "linguistic arts," that is the basis of "polite literature," was staunchly resisted by a system of values which looked upon fiction as inferior. Based on this principle, Chinese poetry had been ranked highly and was seldom included in the same category as fiction. This is why the establishment of the modern concept of "literature" and the notion of "literary history" was delayed in China.⁵ Interestingly, the first Chinese literary history was written by a Japanese person in the 1890s.⁶

Compared with China, Tokugawa Japan accepted the Western concept of "literature" more readily because of the following elements. First, since ancient times poetry in the Chinese and Japanese styles had been classified in the same category, as "*shiika*," while poetry in the Japanese style was never classified as "*bungaku*." Second, in the Tokugawa period the feeling for poetry, drama, and the novel formed as in the West and was not tied to a category such as linguistic art. Third, "Pax Tokugawana" often resulted in a distortion of the system of values in many domains through the neo-Confucian study established by the shogunate. Take the most important example: artistic accomplishments came to be looked upon with the same respect ac-

³ A history of Japanese literature was written by Emura Hakkai in the late eighteenth century entitled *The History of Poetry in Japan* (5 vols., Nihon Shishi, 1777). It chronicled the history of poetry in the Chinese style in terms of Confucian studies in Japan, since both domains formed the category traditionally called "*bungaku*" in Japan. See my book *Nihon no "Bungaku" Gainen* (The Concept of "Literature" in Japan) (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1998), 102-03. Hereafter cited as *CLJ*.

⁴ See *CLJ*, Chap. I, II-1.

⁵ "Literature" in English was translated into many Chinese and Japanese words, such as "letters" (文字), "books and writings" (書物, 著作), "grammar" (文法), etc., in the mid-nineteenth century. See *CLJ*, 125-28.

⁶ See *CLJ*, 79-80.

corded martial accomplishments, even among the ruling classes of the samurai, before the end of the Tokugawa period.⁷ That is why "literature" was accepted, translated, and established as "*bungaku*" in its new sense in Japan more easily than in China. Thus the notion of "Japanese literature" embracing intellectual works, poetry, and fiction was established in Meiji Japan, and several histories of Japanese literature were written in 1890, the year the Imperial Rescript on Education was issued following promulgation of the Constitution of Great Imperial Japan in 1889.

The notion of "Japanese literature," in the new conceptual sense of "*bungaku*," transformed the concept of national literature borrowed from the West. And the transformation has been going on ever since. As a matter of fact, all Japanese literary histories have started with the *Kojiki*, *Nihonshoki*, and *Fudoki*. The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* are histories, and *Fudoki* is a geographical document, although our narrow concept of "literature" as linguistic art does not consider them to be "literature." However, that does not explain why "Japanese literature" transformed the Western concept of national literature. Naturally, Japanese scholars of the West in the early Meiji made the concept of "Japanese literature" as broad as the humanities to include thought, history, geography, and linguistic arts. That is because "polite literature" in English ranked intellectual works highly. We see, then, that the early inclusion of historical and geographical works is not necessarily a concept particular to "Japanese literature." Not all national literary histories take linguistic art as their origin. However, none of the literary histories in the West was written in a non-Western language. Moreover, it is the definition of the national literature that it be written in the national language. Nevertheless, as we know, almost all of the *Kojiki* and *Fudoki* was written in Japanized Chinese, and the *Nihonshoki* was written in Chinese. Thus the concept of "Japanese literature" can be said to be an "invention of tradition" in two meanings: not only was it newly created in Japan, but it was also created out of a definition of national literature in modern Europe.

The acceptance of the concept of "national literature" in the West leaps forward to create "Japanese literature," even though there is a vital difference between the two. How great is this difference? Let us look at why the *Man'yō-shū* was canonized.

⁷ See *CLJ*, Chap. III-2.

Why the *Man'yō-shū*?

Unlike Europe, where national languages were established in modern times, thereby destroying the intellectual community of Latin of the Middle Ages, Japanese intellectuals wrote both Chinese (or Japanized Chinese) and Japanese until the last years of the Meiji era. Moreover, Japanese had been reading and writing in Japanese and enjoying popular culture involving Japanese literary works since the late Middle Ages. In other words, the revolution of national language did not occur in Japan as it did in Europe. And the writers of Japanese literary histories in the mid-Meiji era insisted that "Japanese literature" had a very long history, ignoring the European definition of national literature. They were proud of Japanese tradition and East Asian culture, in contrast to Western literary histories, which dated back to the Middle Ages at the latest. Thus Japanese state nationalism, learned from Europe, was unlike European civilization in having a long tradition of national literature. All histories of Japanese literature in mid-Meiji clearly show this.⁸

The study of the *Kojiki* and the *Man'yō-shū* had begun in the mid-Tokugawa period with the "*Kokugaku*" school, which asserted cultural nationalism in contrast to Neo-Confucianism, which was established by the Tokugawa shogunate. Learning cultural nationalism, that stood in contrast to the Chinese culture, from the "*Kokugaku*" school and state nationalism from the modern West, Meiji intellectuals formed a cultural nationalism of their own. Opposed to Western civilization, their cultural nationalism often leaned toward an "Asianism" that was different from the "*Kokugaku*" school of the Tokugawa period.

As the new, narrow sense of "literature" (in the sense of a linguistic art) and the modern European concept of national literature gained power over the older, broader sense of "literature" and state nationalism rose in Japan, the *Man'yō-shū* became established as canon in "Japanese literature." The *Man'yō* is a huge anthology of ancient poetry that clearly belongs to the category of a linguistic art. Although the whole of the *Man'yō* is written in Chinese because no native letters existed in Japan at the time, as later volumes of the *Man'yō-shū* were compiled and edited, the use of "*man'yō*-

⁸ See *CLJ*, Chap. VIII-1-ii.

gana” increased. In “*man'yō-gana*” all Chinese meanings were eliminated and the characters were used only as phonograms to represent a “pure national language” or “*yamato-kotoba*.” In short, the poems of the late *Man'yō* represent an ancient linguistic art written in Japanese with Chinese letters. That is why the *Man'yō* came to be looked upon as one of the canons of Japanese literature.

We need to recognize another difference between the concept of “Japanese literature” and Western “national literature.” Japanese scholars of the West transformed the concept of polite literature brought from modern Europe to include the broader meaning of popular literature, such as the dramas of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), novels of Ihara Saikaku (1643-93), Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848), and Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822). This was due not only to their nationalism vis-à-vis the European genre of linguistic arts but also because of their liberalism toward the popular culture of the Tokugawa period.⁹ However, as in the notion of a national literature based on Western polite literature and the morality of the nation-state, there was a tendency to eliminate popular literature, especially in academic circles (with some exceptions). As a matter of fact, a collection of Saikaku's works edited by Ozaki Kōyō was banned in 1893.

How Was the *Man'yō-shū* Canonized?

I am speaking here, however, only of Japanese scholars of the West in early and mid-Meiji. In the Japanese poetic world, the style of the *Kokin-waka-shū* was regarded as the mainstream from the Tokugawa period to mid-Meiji. From the mid-Tokugawa period the *Man'yō* was respected only by the cultural nationalist or so-called *Kokugaku* schools, which considered the *Man'yō* to be revealing the frank feelings of the ancient Japanese, in contrast to the logical poetry of the Chinese style. I will return to this issue later. However, in the early nineteenth century, Kagawa Kageki (1768-1843) reformed Japanese poetry by breaking with tradition and using up-to-date terminology in the style of the *Kokin-waka shū*. He was influenced by the style of the spiritual school (*Seirei-ha*) in Sung China. Even in the Meiji period his style prevailed as the central mode in Japanese poetic circles formed around the Imperial family.

⁹ See *CLJ*, Chap. IV-2.

Respect for the *Man'yō* emerged in the 1880s. It went hand in hand with the reformation of Japanese poetry in the modern style, which was influenced by Western romantic poetry, with its emphasis on the expression of feeling. However, we must not overlook here an element which acted as a receptor in accepting the Western romantic spirit: the revival of poetry in the Chinese style, which valorized the representation of real fact. To master not only English but also prose and poetry in the Chinese style was necessary for the elite in the Meiji period. As a method of linguistic art which valorized a style representing real feelings, it was made a mixture of Western romanticism and Chinese realism. This method found many frank representations of real feelings in the *Man'yō*.

Take, for example, Ochiai Naobumi (1861-1903), who is known as a reformer of literature in the early Meiji and who was one of the editors of the first anthology of Japanese prose, *Nihon Bungaku Zensho* (23 vols., Hakubunkan, 1890-91). He highly regarded the spirit of poetry in the Chinese style which denied fiction as important in the modernization of Japanese poetry. One of his disciples, Kankeko Kun'en, proved it in his "Ochiai Naobumi no Kokubun Shiika ni okeru Shin'undō" (A New Movement by Ochiai Naobumi in Japanese Poetry) (1925). Ochiai organized an association of Japanese-style poetry called the Asakasha (1893), with Yosano Tekkan (1873-1935) as a member. Tekkan became well known as the leader of romantic and nationalistic poetry in the Japanese style published in a collection of poems, *Tōzainanboku* (North, South, East and West) in 1896.

Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) also stressed the importance of the frank expression of feelings in modern short poetry in the Japanese style in his "Utayomi ni Atauru Sho" (Article for Poets in the Japanese Traditional Style) (1898). He praised the method of Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219), the *Man'yō*, and the poetry of T'ang and Sung China. Shiki's position was not accepted in the circle of *tanka* at that time, but it produced an association called "Araragi" which had as members Saitō Mokichi (1882-1952) and Shimagi Akahiko (1876-1926). It took the lead in short poetry in the Japanese style from circa 1920.¹⁰

¹⁰ See my article "Kindai Hyakunen no 'Watashi'; Tanka wo Megutte" ("I" in Modern Hundred Years; A Study on Tanka), *Tanka to Watashi* (Tanka and "I"), "Tanka to Watashi" (Japanese and Tanka), 10 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1999), Vol. 5, 40-48.

Hence we can say conclusively that the *Man'yō-shū* was established as canon by taking over the anti-Chinese cultural nationalism of the school of ancient Japanese thought, by priding itself on the long tradition of "Japanese literature," and by creating an emergent modern state nationalism. This went hand in hand with the aesthetic formed from a mixture of romanticism brought from the modern West and Chinese realism revived in Meiji Japan.

Was the *Genji* Part of the Canon in the Meiji Period?

While the *Genji Monogatari*, a story of great scale written in the early eleventh century and consisting of many immoral love affairs, was loved by the aristocracy of the Heian period and the people in the Tokugawa period, it had never been looked up to as part of the canon except for some small groups who see the *Genji* as a code of literary expression. This is because Confucian studies, Buddhism, and Shintō reigned in Japan from ancient times, and they forbade immoral love affairs. Some thinkers tried to insist that the *Genji* was written to inculcate Buddhist doctrine or to teach Confucian morality. However, in the mid-seventeenth century these distortions were denied by Motoori Norinaga.

In the mid-seventeenth century or the Genroku era, human feelings, especially in love affairs expressed by the term "*mono no aware*," were made much of in popular culture. Some streams of thought attached greater importance to human feelings, as contrasted to the social code established by the Tokugawa shogunate, by quoting the *Analec*s of Confucius and opposing neo-Confucianism. Motoori Norinaga, in his articles on "Shibun Yōryō" (The Spirit of the *Genji Monogatari*) of 1763, insisted that it was the *Genji Monogatari* that depicted the most exciting moments in human feelings by its presentation of a picture of real life at the ancient court. Basing his opinion on a cultural nationalism that stood in opposition to thought brought from China, Norinaga insisted, in his "Isonokami no Sasamegato" (Whispering of Isonokami) (Chap. 1-2 written in 1763, 3 chapters published in 1816), that Japanese poetry and tales frankly represented real human feelings as the spirit of Chinese poetry had in ancient times but had been unable to express because of a strict code of morality. Norinaga's

position did not, however, become the mainstream of thought in the Tokugawa period.¹¹

Norinaga was cited in Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Shōsetsu Shinzui* (The Essence of the Novels) (1887) to support Tsubouchi's insistence upon the realist method in novels that reflected the trend toward realism in the linguistic arts and cultural evolutionism of late nineteenth-century Europe. However, contrary to what most people think, Tsubouchi's *Essence of the Novels* did not become a canon of literary theory at the time. It was not canonized until around the end of the century.¹²

The *Genji* was also canonized from the viewpoint of linguistic art in the Japanese style by the cultural nationalism of the Meiji period. However, praise for the *Genji* was generally accompanied by criticism of its immorality. This was natural enough, since the values at the time were based on Shintō and Confucian morals established by the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890.

Take, for example, the first Japanese literary history, entitled *Nihon Bungaku-shi* (A Literary History of Japan) (1890), written by Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō (published as a textbook in two volumes for junior high school students—the young elite at the time—by Kinkōdō, the most important publisher in mid-Meiji).¹³ It stated that the *Genji* was “the essential work of Heian literature” and “the ultimate in beauty in the courtly style of literature” (233). Murasaki Shikibu was also the best woman in Japanese history because of her excellent skill at literature and her good behavior (252-53). However, the editors criticized two faults in the *Genji*, one a defect in style: it was often monotonous, and it lacked will power. These faults could not be easily overcome, by women in particular, because they were general faults of the courtly style of literature (262-63). Second was the issue of “immorality.” The purpose of fine art was to show a harmony of truth, goodness, and beauty. Although Murasaki Shikibu possessed this

¹¹ See “‘Mono no Aware wo Shiru’ Setsu no Raireki” (Commentary: Origin of the Opinion ‘To Understand Human Feeling’), Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga shū* (A Collection of Motoori Norinaga) (Collection of Japanese Classics, Shinshō-sha, 1983), and *CLJ*, Chap. III, 3-ii.

¹² See *CLJ*, Chapter. VI, 2.

¹³ See *CLJ*, Chap. VII-1-ii on *Nihon Bungaku-shi* by Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō.

spirit, and women's writings tended to hide immorality, Murasaki Shikibu introduced too many adulterous relationships due to the immorality of the Heian period. Although the editors confirm Motoori Norinaga's opinion that the *Genji* stated the truth of society, they clearly reject Norinaga's logic that Murasaki Shikibu wrote about adultery to show the utmost in real feeling (267-71).

These comments go fundamentally unchanged in Haga Yaichi's *Kokubungakushi Jukkō, Fuzan-bō* (Ten Days of Lectures on Japanese Literary History) (1899).¹⁴ Haga defines "literature" as a linguistic art in the preface to this work. His opinion seems more modern in its valorization of linguistic art than Mikami's standard of the harmony of truth, goodness, and beauty. Taking the representation of human feeling as the first standard to evaluate literary works and introducing Norinaga's remarks (110-11), he declares the *Genji* to be the greatest example of linguistic arts in Japan (117-18). However, his standpoint was more complicated rather than that of Mikami and Takatsu and later studies. Compared with Mikami's comments, Haga's tone is less enthusiastic. He does not evaluate the creativity of Murasaki Shikibu as highly, citing an opinion that the *Genji* was born from the *Utsubo Monogatari* (106). Repeating Mikami's statement that the *Genji* represents the reality of corruption in high society in the Heian era, as Norinaga pointed out, Haga is more emphatic than Mikami, stating that it is a problem to cite the *Genji* in school textbooks (110).

Mikami Sanji and Haga Yaichi were both famous and influential scholars of Japanese literature in their day, but can we say that the *Genji* was completely canonized in the Meiji era? The answer depends upon the definition of "canon." It is better to spend our time examining an outline of evaluational reformation on the *Genji*, however, than to wonder whether or not canon formation was complete at this time.

By Whom Was the Canon Formation of *Genji* Completed?

Just as Haga Yaichi's *Ten Days of Lectures on Japanese Literary History* was published, the first book on the history of Japanese literature written in English was published in London. W.G. Aston, the author of *A His-*

¹⁴ On Haga Yaichi's *Ten Days of Lectures on Japanese Literary History*, see *CLJ*, VIII-3.

tory of Japanese Literature,¹⁵ adopted a clear method of evaluating literary works by selecting artistic elements, even in the case of Shinto ritual prayers (*norito*, 9-13). In fact, he treated the *Man'yō* as part of the canon of Japanese literature from the viewpoint of linguistic art. "It is delicate sentiment and refined in language, and displays exquisite skill of phrase with a careful adherence to certain canons of composition of its own" (34). In particular, he was very positive in his evaluation of the *Genji*, insisting that "a very large and important part of the best literature which Japan has produced was written by a woman." He found this to be "a remarkable" and "unexampled fact" (55). His attitude was far different from Mikami, who pointed out that the *Genji* lacked willpower because its author was a woman.

Careful to avoid the discourses on morality written by Japanese thinkers, Aston wrote that "like Fielding in England," Murasaki Shikibu "was the creator in Japan of this kind of fiction."

In the quality of her genius, however, she more resembled Fielding's great contemporary Richardson. Before her times we have nothing but stories of no great length, and of a romantic character far removed from the realities of daily life. The *Genji Monogatari* is realistic in the best sense of the word.

Moreover, Aston continues, "the language is almost invariably decent, and even refined, and we hardly ever meet with a phrase calculated to bring a blush to the cheek of a young person."

Following standards for modern European novels and paying little attention to cultural differences between modern Europe and ancient Japan, Aston canonized the *Genji*, although he mentions the great change in the use and meaning of the Japanese language in a reference to Motoori Norinaga's *Tama no Ogushi* (A Little Treasure Comb) (96). Furthermore, he tried his best to contemporize the *Genji*. "There are few dramatic situations in the *Genji*, and what little of miraculous and supernatural it contains is of a kind

¹⁵ London: Heinemann, 1898. *A History of Japanese Literature* by W.G. Aston was published in 1899, although there was a "first edition 1898" published by William Heinen in London. *CLJ*, Note, 397. On *A History of Japanese Literature*, see *CLJ*, VIII-3.

which might well be believed by a contemporary reader" (94). According to Aston, can't we say that the *Genji* is the origin of modern novels?

At any rate, W.G. Aston brought to fruition a modern evaluation of the *Genji* as the first romantic and realistic novel in Japan that had great length and excellent language. His *History of Japanese Literature* was highly readable, and it was partially translated into Japanese at the time. Thus, it contributed greatly to making the *Genji* the biggest canonical work in literature not only in the English-speaking world but in Japan as well.

The romantic spirit has long tended to idealize the ancient world. Romantic criticism also yearns for and idealizes ancient works. In addition, both the *Man'yō-shū* and the *Genji* could respond to another sense of value in the modern age, namely realism. Finally, state nationalism in Japan may have abetted the process of the canonization of the *Man'yō* and the *Genji*.

Were I interested only in canon formation, I would close my study of the evaluation of the *Genji* here, adding only that some movements arose in the Taishō period which accelerated the canonization of *Genji*. One was women's liberation. The second was estheticism or decadence in aesthetic and moral values. Third was a change in the sense of values among male intellectuals involving the will to "drop out" of society in their enthusiasm for love affairs in particular or to engage in self-parody.¹⁶ However, values changed again after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, and as a result evaluations of the *Man'yō* and the *Genji* took another turn.

Evaluational Reformation of the *Man'yō* and the *Genji*

A Lecture on Literary History of Japan (Kokobungakushi Kōwa, Iwanami-shoten, 1908, 1946) by Fujioka Sakutarō remained a famous book among the short histories of Japanese literature even after the Second World War. Asō Isoji writes in his afterward to the version published in 1946 that Fujioka's literary history has the peculiar tendency to evaluate works and authors based upon a total view of a cultural system made up of nature, life, society, thought, politics, morality, and religion (366-68). This method was based on his own ideas of a national culture that constituted a holistic and organic system. Fujioka's ideas were clearly formed under the influence of the concept of the state-organism that flourished among Japanese academics

¹⁶ See *CLJ*, Chap. XI, 3, etc.

in the humanities after the Russo-Japanese war as a current of German idealism. The Japanese state organism had formed a theory of the family-state having the Emperor as head or spirit.¹⁷ Fujioka's general remarks in his book show that it had been the special character of the Japanese nation to unify like a family under the Imperial family (4-6).

Moreover, Fujioka's general remarks featured an attitude of the Japanese respect for nature, as Aso Isoji also pointed out. Fujioka said that a positive respect for nature was different from the attitude of respect toward humans in the West or passive obedience to nature among other Oriental peoples (25). And we should examine how thought arose after the Russo-Japanese war in these words, too. In spite of the slight win to the big power, Japan gained confidence in its own ability to be on a par with the Great Powers. On the other hand, the serious damage done by the imperialist war produced a deep doubt in modern civilization brought to intellectuals from Europe. And so the assertion that the positive attitude of respect for nature is original to Japanese culture became more influential in this time.

Fujioka evaluated the *Man'yō*, the *Genji*, and Bashō's *haikai* positively. In the case of the *Man'yō*, he featured the style of the long poems of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro as great and deep in their expression of feeling (52-55), the style of long poetry by Yamabe no Akahito as elegant and pretty in tone in its expression of unifying the subject with nature (56-57), and the style of Ōtomo no Yakamochi as an expression of national feeling for the Imperial family (63). Fujioka's words on Akahito's poetry were clearly influenced by the thought of his day, as were his words on the style of Yakamochi. Fujioka theorized Akahito's description of scenery without expression of subjective feeling on the surface as the unity of subject and nature. This theorization synchronized with the thought of unity of subject and object or nature in "new naturalism" or "pure naturalism" proposed by Shimamura Hōgetsu and Iwano Hōmei, or in the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō, one of Fujioka's fellow students in junior high school, who wrote the preface for his *Lecture on the Literary History of Japan*. I will return to this

¹⁷ Japanese theory of the family-state started with Katō Hiroyuki under the influence of Spencer's evolutionism and German state-organism in mid-Meiji and arose among Japanese academics in the humanities after the Russo-Japanese war. See Ishida Takeshi, *Meiji Shisōshi-kenkyū* (A Study on History of Political Thought in Meiji) (Miraisha, 1954, 1992).

theory later. However, Fujioka analyzed the originality of poets better than earlier studies. That is why his book led the field in his time and why it has remained a famous book over time.

Fujioka evaluated the *Genji* as having both idealism and realism (114-15). Like Aston, he saw it as an example of women's literary ability in the Heian period (104). He featured the *Genji* as having a sense of evanescence and the idea of retribution in Buddhism, analyzing especially the "ten Uji chapters" (111-14). Moreover, as an unavoidable defect of women's literature in the Heian period, he pointed out their blind side to life at Court (118-19) and to love affairs lacking moral sanction (120-23). His attitude reads like the that of the critics in the mid-Meiji era, but his approach was quite different. He criticized the limitations of the vision presented by women's literature in the Heian period from his position of cultural holism. He insisted on writing about the lives of the lower classes as well as family loves. Moreover, if moral sanctions were to be invoked, it was the men who lived in the Court who should be punished. He sympathized with women's life in the Court. They had no freedom, and their lives were ruled by men's caprice. In short, Fujioka recognized the *Genji* as one of the great works in the Japanese literary canon. In addition, he pointed out defects in women's literature of the Heian period as a social problem of the era.

Bashō's *haikai* as canon

Even if Fujioka reflects the idea of the state-organism popular in his day, he was liberal in his positive evaluation of women's literature in the Heian period. His liberalism was even more evident in his appraisal of the popular writings of the rising merchant class of the Tokugawa period as works of literature. In this he opposed most literary historians of the Meiji era who, with the exception of the early Japanese scholars of the West who praised *gesaku* fiction, despised popular literature as amusement or play.

In the case of Mikami Sanji, only two authors, Chikamatsu Monzaemon and Takizawa Bakin, were canonized. Mikami wrote that Chikamatsu's dramas were often compared to Shakespeare at the time. Many works of Takizawa Bakin, which are shot through with Confucianism, were published in the new style of letterpress printing in the mid-Meiji period. Haga Yaichi also took over Mikami's scheme, as did W.G. Aston. Incidentally, Aston damned the "pornographic school in popular fiction which disgraced Japan

in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (*A History of Japanese Literature*, 56).

Among the words of popular literature from the Tokugawa period, *haikai* in particular, because it was popular among the lower classes in the cities, was looked upon as vulgar and an insignificant genre by almost all intellectuals in the Tokugawa, but also by literary historians in the Meiji. In this genre there were two exceptions, Bashō and Buson, because both were well-informed about poetry in China and the Chinese style. Bashō especially was well known as a reformer of Japanese poetry, which had become a trivial genre. Here I will limit my discussion to an evaluation of Bashō.

In the Meiji, *haikai* continued to be treated as vulgar play until the movement to reform modern literary art by Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) began to gain power ca. 1900. The reformation ceased to limit the object to the first phrase of *renga* play, or "*hokku*," but it also changed the name of the genre to "*haiku*." In addition, Shiki did not treat Bashō as being as important as Buson; instead, he laid stress on the importance of "clear impressions."¹⁸ Bashō was recognized by only some critics, especially those who emphasized his Zen thought. Most writers of Japanese literary history in the Meiji followed Mikami, Haga and Aston. Only Aston had a high opinion of Bashō's symbolism as "a perfection of apt phrase, which often enshrines minute but genuine pearls of true sentiment or pretty fancy" (294). Fujioka's *A Lecture on Japanese Literary History* follows the same scheme, although his analysis of the world of Bashō, his ad-lib styles full of variety, his Zen approach to principles of the universe, his doctrine of both "unchanging and vague" beauty, mysterious profundity, subdued refinement and transcendence in his old age is much clearer than Aston's (259-65). In short, Bashō's *haikai* was canonized in the Meiji period, but only in the context of literary history. In other words, it was a relic that belonged to the past that lacked contemporary meaning.

¹⁸ Although the term "*haiku*" was often used by Masaoka Shiki in place of the traditional term "*haikai*," it was now said that the modern usage was established by the general magazine *Taiyo* ca. 1899. *CLJ*, Note, 387. On the style and thought of Masaoka Shiki, see *CLJ*, Chap. X, 2-i.

Bashō's *Haikai* as Canon in Contemporary Japan

In fact, the movement to valorize Bashō's *haikai* arose in mid-Taishō. Ōta Mizuho, a *tanka* poet who belongs to the so-called "naturalism" school, was greatly interested in traditional *haikai*. Ca. 1920, inviting Kōda Rohan, the famous novelist and critic, who was well informed about classical thought, he organized a group of young thinkers, Watsuji Tetsurō, Abe Jirō, Abe Yoshishige and Komiya Toyotaka, who were active in the movement of so-called "Taishō culturalism," to study Bashō's *kasen* composed of thirty-six phrases in *renga*, which Bashō preferred, and edited the famous seven series. Ōta Mizuho and his group published their approach in three volumes, *Bashō Haiku Kenkyū* (Studies on Bashō's *Haiku*) (Iwanami-shoten, 1922, 24, 26), done in a seminar style. In addition, Ōta Mizuho published *Bashō Haikai no Konpon Mondai* (The Essential Issue in Bashō's *Haikai*) (Iwanami-shoten, 1926). In this book, which was a well thought out analysis of Bashō's life and times, Ōta closed in on the notion of "life" as the essence of Bashō's thought in his later years. In short, Bashō's thought, as read by Ōta, posits an essential "life" as the center of the universe. It is the truth of the universe, and from it streams everything in this world. By it all matter and things are unified. Basing his idea on the theory in Tendai Buddhism which unifies essence and phenomena, Ōta presented this "life-centerism" as a sort of pantheism in the Western mode. He distinguished it from monotheism or polytheism (211-36).

However, this "life-centerism" clearly belongs to the time of Ōta and not that of Bashō. Before the Meiji Restoration, the word *seimi* 生命 ("life") had no special use or significance in China and Japan. *Seimi* or *shōmyō* 性命 traditionally meant lives gifted by *ten* 天 ("heaven") or the essence of all things in Chinese and Japanese. And the power of activity was created by a sort of spirit, *ki* 氣 which runs through all things from the source of the universe. In short, the notion of "life" in the Tokugawa may not have been the conceptual system that Ōta described. Through the Meiji the notion of "life" was transformed by influences from the West: "human life" as the foundation of human right, "eternal life" in Christianity, the "spirit of life" in Romantic poetry, the "evolution of life" in the thought of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, the "linkage of life" in genetics, "universal organism" in German idealism, the thought of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1885) regarded as an instinctism in the same way as Nietzsche's philosophy, and

the thought of Tolstoy, who said "God is life" in his *My Confessions* (1879-81).

The "life-centerism" in Taishō Japan was probably formed by a process of reviving the Oriental notion of universal spirit or "ki" under the influence of Romanticism and German organic theory. It was translated into the modern notion of "life" under the influence of the various human crises at the time: the Russo-Japanese war, the rapid development of heavy industry, and urbanization. In the Japanese vision of "life-centerism," "life" is the source of the universe and the first principle of a world view. It is like God or "Ten" 天 as the source of the universe in Oriental philosophy, or the one and only subject in neo-Platonism, not as the Creator of the world standing out of the world in Christianity or Islam. This thought was first given systematic shape by Nishida Kitarō in his book *A Study of Good* (1911).¹⁹ Then, by embracing various European vitalisms, for example the notion of "élan vital" in Bergson or "Lebensphilosophie" from Germany, a great current of "life-centerism" or "vitalism" arose in the Taishō period.²⁰

Take, for example, Ōta Mizuho who, after writing *The Essential Issue in Bashō's Haikai*, said his motto for writing *tanka* in his essay "Tanka Ritsugen" (A Proposal on Japanese Traditional Poetry) (1918) was to sing "of true feelings captured by intuition" and standing on a concept of the "life and love of things." In fact, the realization of universal "life" is the fundamental concept of "neo-naturalism" or "pure naturalism" advocated by Shimamura Hōgetsu and Iwano Hōmei ca. 1910. Bashō's life-centerism which explained by Ōta is clearly an interpretation from a view of "Taishō vitalism," or Ōta's thought itself developed in his age.

"Taishō vitalism" reflects another current of thought related to the issue of "overcoming" modernity (*kindai no chōkoku*) or to overcoming the alienation in human life produced by modern social systems, the disproportionate development of intellect, sentiment, and will, the separation of subject and object, and the injuries to humanity produced by civilization and man himself. That is because the concept of "life" should have the funda-

¹⁹ On Nishida's *A Study of Good*, see my article "Reading Nishida Kitarō's *A Study of Good*: Formation of Vitalist Philosophy" (Nihon Kenkyū, Bulletin in Japanese of *Nichibunken* 17 [1998]).

²⁰ On "Taishō vitalism," see my book *Reading Modern Japan via the Concept of "Life": The Birth and Development of Taishō Vitalism* (NHK Books, 1996).

mental ability to unify all things and leap to the restoration of every alienation. In addition, "Taishō vitalism" involved a revival of Oriental esthetics, especially the mysterious profundity theorized as newly born from the unity of subject to object or to nature. Take, for example, the most famous motto in the *tanka* world: "jissō ni kannyū shite shizen jiko ichigen no sei wo utsusu, kore ga tanka-jō no shasei de aru" (to look into the real dimension and to describe a life self unified with nature, that is the sketch in *tanka*). It was made by Saitō Mokichi in *Tanka ni Okeru Shasei no Setsu* (A Theory on the Sketch in Tanka) (1920).

Two years before, when Ōta Mizuho published his book on Bashō's *haikai*, Satō Haruo published his famous essay "Fūryū'ron" (A Theory on Elegance) (1923) in *Chūōkōron*. In this essay, he praised the instantaneous sentiment to unify with nature as the elegant profundity that is the essence of Bashō's world. The "elegant profundity" to be written in contemporary literature was the effort to overcome the modern stage of writing in which human egos struggled with each other and opposed nature. Although Ōta's description in his book was limited on the surface to a study of Bashō's world, his subtext might well be read as a version of Saitō's "Theory on Elegance." Ōta's book established Bashō's *haikai* as a canon by prescribing a new direction for contemporary poetry, if not the whole of literature, under the influence of "Taishō vitalism." Thereafter elegant or mysterious profundity, "*wabi*," "*sabi*," and "*yūgen*," were determined to be the essence of Japanese or Oriental ethics that stand in opposition to Western material civilization. We can even read a political agenda in these ethics.²¹

Moreover, the Bashō fever of late Taishō was a lively issue in contemporary literature. Take one example. Devoting himself to Bashō's *haikai* in the last year of Taishō, a young short story writer explored a modernist style or, in his own words, "realistic symbolism." His short stories had a great

²¹ This sort of thought may be found in its first stages in "Gendai Shisōkai no Shūsei" (Trend of Thought World in Contemporary), *Chūōkōron* (April 1909), by Kaneko Chikusui (1870-1937), a critic who was active in journalism in the 1910s. See *CLJ*, Chap. XI, 2-ii. And on a future of "overcoming modernity thought," see my article "Nishida Kitatō as Vitalist, Part 1: The Ideology of the Imperial Way in Nishida's *The Problem of Japanese Culture* and the Symposia and 'The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan,'" *Japan Review*, Bulletin in European language of *Nichibunken* 9 (1997).

impact on many novelists after his premature death from tuberculosis, especially after the Second World War. In "Kakei no hanashi" (A Tale of a Trough) (1928), Kajii Motojirō (1902-32) criticized his regaining a feeling for life from the ennui of existence as an illusion to be absorbed in the mysterious and elegant sound heard from an old bamboo trough in the mountains. This influential style speaks to the contemporary stage of existence and had a close relationship to the evaluation of Bashō at the time.²²

Conclusion

The *Man'yō-shū*, the *Genji Monogatari*, and Bashō's *haikai* are unmistakable work in the canon of Japanese literature for general audiences and for specialists in Japanese literature. This study on evaluational reformulation has used representative Japanese literary histories as its tool, examining powerful trends in the literary world of each time. Of course, we will need to research in further detail each period before and after the Second World War. Studies on evaluational reformulation have been done for the other works in the classical canon—the *Kokin-waka-shū*, *Makura no Sōshi*, *Tsurezure-gusa*, *Heike Monogatari*, Zeami, Chikamatsu Monzemon, Ihara Saikaku—and in the canon of "modern Japanese literature" from Tsubouchi Syōyō and Futabatei Shimei to Ōe Kenzaburō.

However, in this study, a more effective method might have been to present the canon-forming process rather than to expose it. Studies on the canon in Japanese literature generally have been based on the concept of modern "literature" or linguistic art and "Japanese literature" as established in the early twentieth century. That is why it is difficult to be clear about why and how the canon was treated as a canon in linguistic works from each period—ethically or aesthetically, established or dis-established, in academe or in journalism, in literary history or the contemporary and practical literary world, etc. In the Tokugawa period, there is no concept of literature in its modern sense; in addition, shogunate-sponsored neo-Confucianism was even chary about poetry. The study of the *Manyō-shū* and the *Genji* was done privately, while Bashō's *haikai* belonged completely to popular audiences. In the Meiji, the new government's position on state nationalism adopted Con-

²² On Kajii Motojirō, see my dissertation "Kajii Motojirō Kenkyū" (A Study on Kajii Motojirō), Graduate School for Advanced Studies, Hayama, 1997.

fucian thought alongside admiration for the imperial family, and it created “Japanese literature” in a new, broader sense. That is why the *Man'yō-shū* was praised as the origin of works in pure Yamato Japanese, why the ethical side of the *Genji* was condemned, and why the thought behind Bashō's *haikai* was highly esteemed. Although Aston's *A History of Japanese Literature* advocated the concept of linguistic art and evaluated highly literature by women of the Heian period, a mere ten years later, Fujioka's cultural holism, or a new method of evaluating linguistic arts in terms of a total cultural system, pointed out their limitations due to cultural problems. Both cases tell us how the value of linguistic work changed dynamically as evaluative values and methods changed. The cases of the *Man'yō* and Bashō's *haikai* also illustrate the change from canonization in literary history to a practical and applied contemporary canon.

In conclusion, I am calling upon us to change our viewpoint away from canon formation to one of “evaluational reformulation.” The history of evaluational reformulation constitutes one side of literary history. A study on evaluational reformulation will enable us to revisit and rewrite ready-made literary history and to open up studies on literature and literary history to interdisciplinary fields in culture. By self-relativizing the concept of “literature” and our own sense of values in cultural history, new histories of literature and new evaluations of individual literary works await us.

Further Reading

See the expanded version of this paper in Suzuki Sadami, “‘Bungaku’ gainen oyobi koten hihyō o hensen: Man'yō, Genji, Bashō,” *Bungaku no kindai*, Inami Ritsuko and Inoue Shōichi, eds. (Kyoto: Nichibunken Sōsho, 2001).

I am grateful to Dr. William J. Tyler of O.S.U for editing this article in English. Of course, any mistakes are my own.