“Visions, Re-Visions, and Revisions in Our Japanese Literary Studies”

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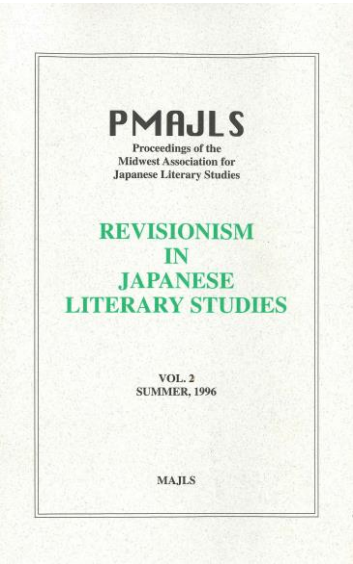

PMAJLS 2:
Revisionism in Japanese Literary Studies.
Ed. Eiji Sekine.

VISIONS, RE-VISIONS, AND REVISIONS IN OUR JAPANESE LITERARY STUDIES

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Revisionism, shūseishugi, is a Marxist term that either designates the advocacy of world dominance by change without actual revolution, or stigmatizes those who do not hold to orthodox Communist doctrine. Then there is T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, who finds himself more or less perplexed by "visions and revisions" of what seems insubstantial to begin with. The contrast between Lenin and Prufrock suggests that revisionism affords us a great latitude of possible action. How then, as Prufrock asked, "How should I begin? And how should I presume?"[1]

For us as well as Marx or Eliot, issues of revisionism may be viewed as no more than those of change deliberately sought. Change is a very popular subject among students of literature generally, and of Japanese literature in particular. We students of that literature never boarded the carousel of modernization that tooted historians and social scientists in merry circles. We were so terribly busy helping the Japanese discover they had no selves, poor dears. Then that loud parade of words on stilts called theory came in one end of town and went out the other. We were not sure what a post-feminism was and dropped the topic. Postmodernism was a disappointment. By the time it no longer scared deans, Fred Jameson and Stanley Fish had announced a post-contemporary series from the press of their

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[1] On being invited to speak on revisionism at the Madison conference, these (and the following) thoughts came to mind; I am grateful to James O'Brien, Eiji Sekine, and the other participants for a very responsive and lively forum.

duchy. That saved lots of katakana.

Japanese were bored with kindaika, anyway. They turned to kokusaika, the full senses of which have not been vouchsafed to me. In some matters, possession of a name is more important than having a meaning. Imitating the Japanese as we always do, we dread being thought wrong less than being thought furumekashii. At a conference on Japanese literature of any time from Ame no Uzume no Kami to Heisei, more of us would show up for sessions on Change In than Enduring Features Of.

Yet the philosophers are clearly right in holding that the crucial issue is not one of alteration but of identity. The many changes that have taken place in kabuki can be rattled off with some ease. But what is it that changes? The answer can only be that which continues, that which paradoxically remains the same, as with the identity of each of us. Philosophers love Standard Examples, and that for continuing identity involves a little monogatari about Jason's ship, the Argo, which set out on that long voyage to gain the golden fleece. As the journey wore on, sails were changed, a new rudder found, and boards were continuously replaced. At some point not an atom was left of the original vessel, and yet it was still the Argo. Like Jason, we have responded to many a signal of alert to well publicized novelties only to find ourselves in the same old boat. A little older and no doubt very much wiser.

What, then are the nature and identity of this unchanging thing that changes, Japanese literary studies? Many of us think of it as an ancient, much repaired building. Yet for a design approaching the present product, we can go no farther back than 1945 or 1950. (New College, Oxford, was founded in the fourteenth

century).[2] Before the generation that learned Japanese during a war, there were indeed predecessors--people like Aston and Chamberlain, Hearn and Fenollosa. The odds against which they struggled were most resembled our own in that their greatest problems were with themselves.

A bit later there were Sansom and Waley, and it is there that my personal observation begins. We knew the Sansoms well if not intimately.[3] And while working on English literature in the British Museum in 1963-63 I twice met Waley, discovering as my friends in the School of Oriental and African Studies had told me, that his was not a back you slapped. He lacked no courtesy, but he did lower the room temperature. Also in 1962, Nelson's Dictionary made its first appearance, and I remember thinking how convenient it would have been to have had it when Bob Brower and I were working on Japanese Court Poetry. Waley and those before him of course worked with even fewer reference books. It is hard not to think of those as uncluttered times. There is always some appeal in olden days. Even Japanese feel it. Konishi Jin'ichi told me he was charmed by George Sansom's Meiji Japanese, reminding him of the way older people spoke in his youth.

In short, by 1945 or 1950 some of the ground had been walked over and a few small plots cultivated. In so few decades since, the plots have increased in number and size; some have been over-cultivated and under-nourished. Like it or not, from

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2 Similar professional study of English literature goes back only about a century and a half. Like graduate students, we are given to presuming that the way things have been the past few years has held aboriginally.

3 "We" here means my wife and I: she is one of the few aoime no sansei, since her mother was born in Kyoto and she in Sapporo.

that start a half century ago to the present there grew the identity or identities that we must recognize if we are to be revisionists. Revising what does not exist is possible only for Buddhists and grant proposers.

Naturally enough, most people are more interested in intellectual than in institutional issues, more in theory than in FTEs. But we may recall Lenin and consider our infrastructure before our superstructure. One of the earliest features to emerge, a prime feature of our Japanese literary study, is translation. A number of people, but Donald Keene in particular, astutely realized that for a profession to be built the public must be convinced that there was something to profess. There was no point in trying to arouse excitement in Kokindenju. A small number of people translated a large number of modern Japanese novels, and we owe a lot to Knopf for undertaking to publish them. Donald also took a crucial further step by enlisting a number of people to translate for the two Grove Press anthologies that became the primers of study. They are now mossy milestones, but without them their critics would not have jobs, because there would be no program in which to complain about.

There has been a continuous debate within our guild and with many a dean whether translation is a true scholarly, professional achievement justifying promotion. Sooner or later every aim and method, every genre of study, will be questioned. It is difficult to say whether the deans or we ourselves are harder to convince that we need all the kinds of study we can get, and that judgment about any instance should not be about the kind but the quality of the work. Obviously there is no dearth of literature to translate or even to retranslate, as Helen McCullough and Edward G. Seidentsticker have shown. Besides that, as Edwin

McClellan's translations beautifully reveal, the quality of a translation lies not simply in the Japanese of the original but even more so in the quality of the English. If we had got going sooner, Sōseki's Kokoro in Ed's version would have brought that great writer the Nobel prize.

Debates over rendering waka have caused many a heart to burn and fist to shake. A decisive moment in my travel in those realms of gold came some years ago when Miriam Brokaw--who deserves honor as one of the university press editors who has done most for Japanese studies--asked me to be reader of Laurel Rodd's translation of the Kokinshū.

I did not like the way Laurel ended lines with an unimportant "of" or a word like "when" that seemed to me proper at the beginning of the next line. For that matter I did not like such procedure in a great deal of contemporary poetry. So the poets were doing that! That illuminated a dark mind. One of the few smart things to my credit was a self-denying ordinance on translation method. If the interpretation involved was reasonably accurate and full, my taste did not matter. That does not mean that one should turn namby-pamby or choke in silence. When people one really admires, people like Hiro Sato or Mark Morris, turn waka into one liners (of course studiously avoiding chōka), then one can speak up. It is worth quarreling over Medoc vs. St. Emillion but not over Dunkin Donuts.

Even then the management of disagreements is a fine art, something easily got wrong. Although an inveterate scold like Roy A. Miller eventually turns into a joke, we all need to watch ourselves.[4] Our guild is a small one, highly vulnerable

[4] At the conference in Madison where an earlier version of this paper was presented, Phyllis Lyons said that Roy Miller had advised her to follow another path.

because of lack of scale. And as boys beaten by their fathers beat their sons, so does reviewing nastiness spread. Whether revisionism, change, or civilizing, the institution of good manners cannot come too soon. If we wound each other, we commit something close to familicide and even suicide. The properties of these matters became clear to me in the spring of 1967, at the close of a Fulbright at Oxford. Christopher Ricks asked for a review of Rachel Trickett's book on late seventeenth-century English poetry for Essays in Criticism. It seemed pretty awful. But it would have been churlish to ignore the bounteous treatment received during that year at Oxford, leaving behind an explosion over a book by a colleague there. The lesson was: never review a book one could not admire. Friends have quarreled with that decision, arguing that the notion is pusillanimous, that the bad must be stigmatized, and that we have solemn duties to warn our graduate students. Nonsense. Do our graduate students have no minds? If a book is bad, it is most effectively ignored. And if (as is all too likely) I have made a mistake in judgment, a negative review is unjust to the author and shows me to be a fool.

It would be nice to report living happily ever after. But even honoring the principle, we may unintentionally, carelessly cause pain as we take pleasure in a momentary infallibility of about 2,000 words, as they say. We are in this together, and mending our ways, revising our reviewing, seems to me to be one of the most important professional changes we can make. This is especially true of senior people, whose positions should lead them to generosity and encouragement. Graduate students and assistant professors may be given some allowance. Until they have written their books, they live in a Peach Blossom Spring from which they will wake soon enough.

All our goals in literary study--including revisionism--depend on language training. My Army Specialized Training Program teaching was far superior to high-school languages taught in Marshfield, Wisconsin (though having Latin, French, and German available is more than can be widely expected today.) At the end of our first ten weeks we had final oral exams in Japanese. After only twenty more weeks of training, the U.S. Army sent some of us off to Japan, assigning me as an interpreter in a battalion headquarters company based first in Kōchi and then near Beppu. We roamed over the beautiful mountains and valleys of Shikoku in springtime and through the extraordinary heat of Miyazaki in the summer. It was pleasant work: every Shikoku village seemed to be named Kawaguchi, and in each we asked about medical personnel, food and fuel, drinking water and electricity.

Four images remain. One is sheer incredulity and terror as our troop train passed through Hiroshima. Another is the nice Japanese man in Kawaguchi who heard out my questions and, as we were getting back into our jeeps, said to me in flawless English, "I should like to give you a present." It was a pocket Eiwa-Waei dictionary. Another was an emergency up in Niihama that took us as fast as those narrow roads allowed. Some Koreans had commandeered a rusty boat, filled it with machinery they had lifted from a Sumitomo mine, and were about to put to sea when they were arrested by Japanese police. It took a long time at the dock and in the dark of night to work this out. Fortunately, our captain was patient with his PFC interpreter and impatient with the fool of a second lieutenant who started shooting in the air. It clearly emerged, however, that the Koreans were no doubt guilty as caught, but that they had been practically enslaved by Sumitomo. The captain's calm good sense and my thirty weeks of Japanese

enabled us to divide the Koreans from the boat and get the charges reduced to a misdemeanor. Finally, there was the Japanese caught in broad daylight, mind you, stealing U. S. Army food--from garbage cans. This time the colonel heading the regiment told the aforesaid PFC (now exalted to corporalship) to interpret at a court martial of that starving Japanese. How was it possible, knowing nothing about English law terms, much less Japanese? Then the serious mistake. The plea and the result were unforgettable. "Sir, I have had only thirty weeks of training in this difficult language and a man's future depends on my ability to get things right. I just can't do it unless you give me a strict order." Of course he gave it, of course the man had taken garbage, of course he was convicted, and of course the guilt remains my own. It did not help any that it was possible to return to Minnesota, graduate in Japanese studies with a noted anthropologist, and still be weak in Japanese.[5] My successors have been far better taught.

A few years ago an advisee in comparative literature, now finishing her Ph. D. in anthropology at Chicago, came to me and said, "Mr. Miner, I spent six months in a German high school and am fluent in the language. Now I am in third-year Japanese at Princeton, and I can't even read the newspaper." "That's right, Kathy." She had the unfeigned sympathy of one who has looked up the same gomben kanji forty times. Appropriately enough, it was in Japan that William Empson wrote the poem with the line, "The language problem, but you have to try."

Japanese is a difficult language for reasons that need not

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5 The anthropologist is the Cornell Bob Smith, who was in that group of seventeen-year-olds gathered at Minnesota in 1944.

be enumerated. But one of the happiest changes during my years in the profession has been the great improvement in language teaching. Middlebury and the Inter-University Center work their wonders summer after summer and year after year. But the real improvement has occurred throughout the land. Today teachers better trained than in my generation train their students far better. Among those better trained people are now a number of Nihon umare, Nihon sodachi who have raised the ante. If that is revisionism, let's order more helpings.

Two further revisions, or changes, are much to be wished. One is to remove a scandal. Our language teachers are made to feel that they are second-class citizens. Since as "native informants" they have grown up in Japan and are usually Japanese by birth, they are acutely and surely painfully aware of status barriers to them in a society relatively free of them. Moreover, they are almost invariably women, except that the head of a large program is likely to be a man who probably holds a professorial title. It must be its own kind of torture to be in a department of one or two and have to teach everything, from a-i-u-e-o to courses in any non-European literature. But the problem of social injustice does not arise. How can we shake our massive bureaucratic structures, how redefine academic appointments and ranks? It is not enough to treat our language teachers as full and genuine human beings, although that should be assumed as a minimum.

Surely if that problem could be solved another one would be solved with it. That is the subtle and sometimes less than subtle way our language classes instill as axiomatic that, no matter how hard they try, our students will never really get Japanese. What is the purpose of doing what one implies cannot be done? Rates of pay are also involved. None of us is paid enough, but the salaries of our librarians are even more appalling than those

of language teachers. How can we look these colleagues straight in the eye? They share our love of books and our ambitions for our students. Must they wait for their reward in heaven?

Having moved this far into the scoldiology of our guild, we ought to move further still to consider that of the professorate. The founders of our enterprise had mostly learned or polished their Japanese at the Navy Language School at Boulder or in the Army intelligence program in Ann Arbor. Bob Smith at Cornell and I belong to that slightly later generation, seventeen and just graduated from high school in 1944. There were other military programs training people in Japanese, not all fortunate to be posted to duty in Japan.

The point is that the founding generation was all men. Some women were recruited to teach: e.g., Betty McKinnon, who was born and grew up in Otaru--and was my wife's kokugo no sensei in jogakkō. The nature of those days is suggested by Columbia's approaching my wife for teaching Japanese while she was yet in high school.[6] We men came back with the G I Bill to help us to Ph.D.s and so to college and university positions. Nobody said you had to be a man to learn and teach Japanese. It was just assumed that men were the natural professors. Women were allowed only slowly into positions for which they were amply qualified. The prejudice extended to nisei (male as well as female) and, as in Japan, to those of double ancestry. Not so long ago, such people were apt to be found in Hawaii and the west coast, dwindling markedly as one moved east. They were all but

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[6] In 1942, members of military intelligence sought her out in Bethel, Vt. and kneeled on the floor with her as she read off the various military installations from a secret map that had been somehow acquired. The offer to teach was at $200 per week, a salary her later acquired husband did not reach until ca. 1957. She was then sixteen years old.

entirely absent from private universities until recently. Overcoming those two prejudices has been one of the best feats of revisionism or justice in one person's lifetime.

The profession would not have advanced in more intellectual respects in the absence of special aid. Within universities language departments come out of the hides of English and history departments. Outside are the foundations and government. In the 1950's Donald Shively organized a series of conferences that met in posh places in the Caribbean and elsewhere. I was too young to feed at that trough. But many of us benefitted from a marvelous series of East-West conferences organized by Horst Frenz at Indiana University. One of the extraordinarily lucky things that has happened to me was to be invited with Peter H. Lee, James J-Y Liu, and R. K. Ramanujan. Peter was long a one-man band in Korean literature, but his Japanese is letter perfect, he reads Chinese, and handles three European languages. James was rather prickly in those days but was also our leading authority on Chinese poetics. Raman was our most gifted translator of poetry from an Indian language, Tamil. Peter later organized east Asian comparative literature program conferences by the AAS. It had the special feature of including such distinguished persons from non-Asian literatures as the classicist Michael Putnam, the Miltonist Barbara Lewalski, and the modernist A. Walton Litz.

Japan has been very generous with the Shiryōkan, Nichibunken, and various international meetings. At the UNESCO kaigi, those at the literature table were ordered alphabetically by surname: Itō Sei, Miner, Mishima Yukio, Nakamura Mitsuo, Mdme. Podpalova from Moscow, and Fr. Roggendorf from Jōchi. William Malm in music and Tange Kenzō in architecture were memorably there. Other conferences followed, and there has been

a long process of extremely profitable exchange between Japanese and Americans as also between Japanese specialists and people in other literatures. Organizations such as the American and International Comparative Literature Associations have further promoted exchange and stimulation of ideas. This all transcends revisionism.

Our superstructure has many weaknesses. It is not difficult to illustrate the ease of going wrong.[7] In one sense, Japanese Court Poetry originated on the third floor of Folwell Hall at the University of Minnesota, where Robert H. Brower had arrived A. B. D. from Michigan, and where I was nearing the end of graduate study, in which I had switched to the then splendid English Department after disappointment in Japanese. When we first met, I had done no Japanese for four years, and Bob was completing his Michigan dissertation on the Konjaku Monogatari. He suggested that we read the Kokinshū, which we did--more or less--in Kaneko's old edition. It produced a powerful reaction. This was not like the so-called haiku I had read and in fact like nothing I had ever read. It was different, difficult, and wonderful.

Bob was extraordinarily fluent in Japanese, having a kind of perfect pitch in it, French, Chinese, and Italian. But poetry was new to him, and he found his different hurdles as high as mine. Aniki that he was, he had me draft translations before we met. Any resemblance between a poem by Narihira and my version bordered on the miraculous. Bob made a big thing of verbs, for which we did not use the usual Japanese grammatical scheme but the system of Masako Yokoyama: he was high on linguistics

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7 The examples will be from books whose faults and limits rest in major part with me. Others should certainly feel free to substitute their own offspring for mine.

then.[8] Finally, by his prodding, I would put things together in a revised translation that he corrected further. This recollection will emphasize our starting from degree zero. There in Minneapolis we had a north star but no compass. It was we two, tormenting the god of Sumiyoshi.

We leading authorities on the Kokinshū in Folwell Hall parted in 1953 but reconnected in California two years later. At this point Mark Morris's interest in Foucauldian power structures might be switched on. I grandiosely conceived that several of us could work on different genres or stretches of Japanese literature, so producing a kind of separately written history of Japanese literature. Burton Fahs of the Rockefeller Foundation visited UCLA, and was persuaded in his Wilshire Blvd. hotel room to give Bob and me two years of financial support: 1957-58, 1958-59. If Foundation money taints, we were tainted. And tainted again when Arthur Wright agreed to use his Ford Foundation largesse to bring to Stanford a Japanese scholar for us to work with. That was of course Konishi Jin'ichi, who permanently altered my intellectual map and my life.

Getting him required fighting "the power structure," or at least the Tōdai gakubatsu.[9] Bob asked Donald, who was then in Japan, whom we should seek to get. Donald had just read Jin'ichi's brief Atene Shobō Nihon Bungakushi and wrote Bob in

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[8] Yokoyama, "The Inflections of 8th Century Japanese," Language, 24 (1950), Supplement. As with Hitomaro and Akahito in the kanajo to the Kokinshū, her study and the usual Japanese account both have things to recommend them. Not having heard hers mentioned in many years, I recommend it for its truly different perspective on the language.

[9] Perhaps our enemy was the Mombushō, but it amounts to the same thing. As I tell my Komaba and Hong friends, my favorite Japanese proverb is "Tōdai moto kurashi."

language unquotable that only Jin'ichi would do. We held off Tōdai and the Mombushō. Jin'ichi, Akiko, and Kōchan duly arrived in Stanford. And so began a most extraordinary two-year's education and a lifelong friendship. As I began to learn from waka linguistic scratch and Bob from literary, a very different set of motives and problems displaced previous ones.

People very clearly thought us strange. For one thing, we were collaborating, something humanists almost never did or do. For another--and this is the heart of the matter--we were devotedly at work on Japanese poetry, something sensible people knew did not exist, at least as a serious object for adult study. Ivor Winters--the poet. critic, and Stanford icon of those days--was particularly fierce on the topic, although he would not allow criticism from anybody but himself.[10] When Ed Seidensticker stopped by in 1958, he shouted, "Collaborate! I want to see you collaborate." And he was not wholly feigning contempt when he snorted, "'Narinu nari'--you call that poetry?"

We had our solaces. One of the best was the Sansoms. We often called on them for tea. George would ask us with genuine interest what was on our minds just then and comment with kind wit. After we eager young men had been serious long enough, Katharine would intervene with tea, a glass of Wente's Grey Riesling, and civilized general talk. The day's problems melted away. Another solace was booze: martinis before dinner, wine with it, and scotch after it. The sheer quantity is alarming in this re-vision. The combination of great excitement with our work

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[10] Few people know that he and his wife, the novelist Janet Lewis, took over the deeds of property held by issei and nisei--and quite exceptionally gave the property back when the owners returned. She was also particularly kind during Bob's lowest point, when in fact I thought he would die.

and of the estrangement by others clarified some things and made problems of others, as that boozing may suggest.

For no doubt related reasons involving Bob's increasingly serious manic-depression, I think his chief motive was to succeed in completing a book without mistakes, beyond cavil. My motive became clearer and clearer. It was simply to dedicate all I had to rescue waka from unjust contempt and condescension, to establish it as one of the great poetries of the world.[11]

Another thing that made us curious to others was that we were sitting at the feet of a Japanese professor. Those who had some knowledge of Japan found the strangeness in our working with a jokyōju from the then Tokyo Kyōikudai. Those few who saw us close up marveled at the smoothness and good humor that prevailed among us. The brightest Japanese knew that Jin'ichi had won his Japan Academy Prize at the age of only thirty-six for his work on Kūkai's Bunkyō Hifuron and assumed, I think, that we were sensei and two deshi. Which was true enough. But that did not account for the increasing closeness of our friendship.

Some years ago Richard Bowring asked in the course of a review if it were not time to replace certain familiar studies, and he named Japanese Court Poetry. That may give others a handle on revisionism, in turning now to issues posed by that book and one or two other things with my name on them. Words criticizing my own work should break nobody else's bones. The issues include some Richard must have had in mind. Hadn't the profession--not to mention Japanese scholarship and criticism--advanced beyond 1957-58? Hadn't new literary theories emerged? Wasn't it high time for a new Japanese Court Poetry? Not all

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[11] Donald Keene understood; so did Howard Hibbett, who joined us at Stanford to work with Jin'ichi on haikai. Howard and I were then teaching at UCLA.

those questions are useful. Many things in that book should be different, but there is no point to a New Japanese Court Poetry. Revision is not vision; it can improve but it cannot create.

How could others wish to work as we did? Bob and I agreed that he would work out the historical information and Japanese arcanum with Jin'ichi's help. We asked Jin'ichi to go through the unannotated Kokka Taikei and other sources marking poems that we should focus on, one mark for the typical (of the Shinkokinshū for example), and another for outstanding poems. Those we studied and, in our many sessions with Jin'ichi would raise the questions and issues that we found. Then we went back to work. When we thought we had understood poems, we selected those for each of us to translate and then vetted each other's work till we agreed on a translation. Only when we had a sufficient body of poems did we start writing a chapter. Bob concentrated on the opening historical sections and I on the rest. Then we vetted each other's work. It was very time- consuming, but we found no shortcuts. We could not have done it differently. And we could not have done it at all without Jin'ichi, who was a kind of shaman for the enterprise.

In those days there was no hermeneutics, no kaishakugaku. One read and translated poetry. When published, our translations were criticized not for inaccuracy but for excess. To take a simple example, James T. Araki protested that when Saigyō mentioned withered reed leaves, we had no authorization to say "frost-withered." In general, we added a lot. We did so for two related reasons. One is that things were often implied or tacit; and another is that in this first general study of waka in English we wished readers, especially those 99% without Japanese, to understand the fullness of the poems. I know in my bones that we did what

we had to, but that Jim was essentially right. When Teika writes "Haru no yo no /yume no ukihashi," it seems just to me to say "brief spring night," something obvious in the tradition but not to someone who needed a translation.

The frost that Jim objected to is a borderline case. Nothing excited us more than Jin'ichi's acquainting us with the integration by progression and association of the royal collections and other sequences. Two poems before that one by Saigyō, there is the image of frost. And we had acquired a fund of waka language, including shimogare. Moreover, like the association of wind with mountains, Japanese associate change in leaves with atmospheric elements. For example, "shigure ni aezu / momijitarikeri." Our reasons were sound, but Jim was right about results, quite another matter. Self-deceit comes so readily: Bob and I told each other that a reader cannot supply what is not there but can subtract from excess. Bob and I were haunted by differing versions of the fear that we might miss something. If the understanding of waka differed before and after Japanese Court Poetry, it remains true that both of us independently came to trimmer styles of translation, proving Jim Araki right.[12]

We both stuck to one decision, but I have changed on another. We stuck with our alteration of shorter and longer lines. There are no minutes of our sessions and I remember no more how we reached that decision, than how we decided--though both of us did strongly decide--that we would not go as it were the whole way to English fives and sevens, as Helen McCullough

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[12] Jim and Kenneth Yasuda also illustrate something more important than revisionism. Each had ideas for which the rest of us were not prepared: Jim on Kōwakamai and more importantly on Edo prose narrative, Ken on nō and more importantly on renga. Neither has been adequately appreciated.

and some others have chosen to do. Only think of the heat these little issues raise--and how trivial they are compared to actual results!

None of us is altogether immune to change, however. Translating renga and haikai for Japanese Linked Poetry involved confronting a different medium: broken syntax, frequently non-finite verbs and adjectives, and very often a verb or adjective at the end of a line governing both an earlier and later noun. With the verse medium differing so, I heard (or thought I heard) a call from Tsukuba to drop punctuation. People seem to have kept any doubts on that to themselves.

There are those who object to other features of my reading-translation of linked poetry. One is reuse of the tsukeku by quoting it as the maeku for a new tsukeku. Another and very important matter would require too many words to explain, but it turns on my conceptions of tsukeai. A third involves considering there to be five topics or dai: the four seasons and, in the absence of one, miscellaneous, zō. That makes love, travel, etc. subtopics. Steve Carter follows Kaneko Kinjirō's differing practice. My apologia is simple enough. For one thing, my brief was linked poetry as practiced by Sōgi and successors. More particularly, I followed Jin'ichi's instruction and, for that matter, his example in his treatment of the Minase Sangin Hyakuin in his *Sōgi.* Jin'ichi followed Yamada Yoshio's instruction and his example in Renga Gaisetsu. Yamada followed the family practice in one of the Satomura lines of renga. One summer I visited Jin'ichi in Tokyo to hammer such things out. Not only had I learned to trust him, but he is after all the last living person to be taught renga composition, by Yamada. Those who have learned otherwise may proceed otherwise.

There is, however, a serious flaw in Japanese Linked Poetry, the worse for not having been commented on before. With renga, it is easy to gain access to rulebooks, shikimoku. In the absence of available haikai shikimoku, I applied renga rules and principles to my private sense of haikai. Being skeptical about human powers to get things right, even where there is evidence, I all too confidently assume that I erred. And yet I still do not know how. There is a field for something larger than revisionism.

It is not clear to me that our fashionable studies of Japanese literature have revived literary history as extensively as is the case in English literature. Of course, William La Fleur has posited a Foucauldian "Buddhist episteme," and Mark Morris has asked some interesting Marxist or marxisant questions. But how much has really changed? We must never underestimate our self-protective inertia, whether as Newtonian bodies smugly at rest or habitually in motion. Most study of Japanese, like most of western literature, has remained splendidly or stodgily historical. Living people resist being pronounced dead. New theories have accelerated our pulses decade by decade, making surprisingly little lasting change in blood pressure. Much is forgot and much turns out to have been long words for the familiar. We never seem to recognize the central needs that theory should fill: the need to define our terms and need to conceptualize freshly what it is we do. It is all too brillig and the slithey tove.

Here that book may provide some comic relief. The historical conceptions of Japanese Court Poetry are so traditional as hardly to seem worth bothering about. (Though we shall see.) And what is new is sometimes embarrassing. Take the title. What is the Japanese translation? Some Japanese have referred to the book as "Nihon Kyūteishi" in parentheses. "Japanese Court Poetry"

is a remarkably cumbersome translation of "waka." Since the point of waka is that anybody can compose it, even illiterates, "court poetry" is a serious distortion, except of course that the authors of Japanese Court Poetry were taking themselves as seriously as did the Heian nobility. My aim to make waka seem to matter--not to mention common sense--would have been better served by the title, "Japanese Poetry From Its Beginnings to 1350." Somehow common sense seems to arrive much delayed.

There is a more serious matter. Revisionism, or rather replacement, is needed for the chapter on "Primitive Song." Takagi Ichinosuke, a wonderful man, was simply wrong in Yoshino no Ayu, on which we relied along with Japanese scholars at that time. Downright error like this can be readily put right by revisionism as correction. But when fault and virtue, wrong and right, are mingled, matters become more complex. A virtue of *Japanese Court Poetry* is that it covers a continuous poetic practice from earliest times to the Fūgashū and even Sōgi. How many Japanese books can one think of that do just that? Yet thereby hangs a fault. It causes even a faded cheek to blush whenever somebody referring to, or influenced by, the book mentions an early, mid-, or late classical period. We were trying so hard not to say "Age of the Man'yōshū" or "Kokin Jidai." Or find a nice way of saying, in a way parallel with earlier chapters, "Nambokuchō."

Once burnt twice shy. Japanese Linked Poetry fudges periodization. But twice shy, thrice uncertain. What was to be done in The Princeton Companion? The desideratum was terms equivalent to kodai, chsei, and kindai. But distributing the middle is not really feasible in a book of that kind in the absence of agreement among Japanese as to where chsei begins or ends.

Japanese friends argued for periods using the site of government pattern, something intellectually suspect. Imagine periodizing almost all English literature as the London period. In the end, scruples yielded to the site of government principle, partly because of fatigue, partly because the scale chosen used as a model the Shinchō Nihon Bungaku Shōjiten, and partly because people are used to Kōjien. But, by some fudging, the dates of those sites could be forced to coincide with a version of the ko-chū-kin principle. Both the Companion and Japanese Court Poetry are unsatisfactory in this respect. It is not only the Mikado and Richard Bowring who have "a little list."

Periodizing relates to my next topic, Japanese scholarship and criticism, concerning which far more important issues are involved. We are considering nothing less than the very nature and assumptions about literature: what it is, what relation it has to the rest of life, how it originates and develops, and how one discriminates the important or the good from the rest. Surely there is no more crucial set of questions for our study of writers, whether the yomibito shirazu or the big names from Princess Uchiko and Hitomaro to Natsume Sōseki and our contemporaries.

There is a version of these matters far greater than Prufrock's "overwhelming question." Can we trust the Japanese with their own literature? Can we act as well as say that we do? Do we truly believe "Yamatouta wa, hito no kokoro o tane to shite" and the rest? Does it make real difference what fūryū or yūgen means, now here, now there?

There seem to me to be only two possible answers, both necessary. The answer in principle can only be, Yes, or we are sunk in error and arrogance. The answer in practice is that Japanese scholarship and criticism is rich and multiple, so that one is obligated and, yes, privileged to search among alternatives. Bob

and I had fewer alternatives than there are today. The Iwanami Nihon Bungaku Taikei was incomplete, even for the Man'yōshū Quite seriously, I sometimes think we might never have finished (and it was a near thing in any case) if we had had access to today's resources. Ninomiya Kinjirō got by with one book, perhaps knowing one can be immobilized by assistance. No wonder that we are seeing specialties narrow to mid-Taishō shōhen shōsetsu in Osaka. It sometimes occurs to me that younger people might wish to visit those earlier years of pastoral bibliographical simplicity when almost all was being done for the first time and revision was impossible. But we must recognize the resources of our age if we are to fill its needs.

We did have various monumental Nihon Bungakushi, which mostly did not inflame our Katsuragawa. But we had in Jin'ichi our Japanese guide, our shirube. As Tomonori wrote, "Shiru hito zo shiru." Of course Jin'ichi is but human and a reputed maverick. And of course he has changed his mind over the years. But how much he knows by reason of a remarkable memory and an undying eagerness to learn![13] I am convinced in my soul that it is wiser--that it is even safer--to err with some critics than to go right with others. I also know that on those occasions on which I have thought otherwise, he usually proved right. And how easily he exercised two talents. One is to discuss complex issues in language just above one's current reach. The other is a seemingly effortless understanding of ygen in one usage rather than another, of understanding what is a natural image or a Buddhist figure, of applying Tang or Song models, of explaining the integration of waka to understand renga and haikai.

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13 Who else in his seventies would take to reading Heidegger in German to grasp certain issues in western theory?

This praise would embarrass him, but how else can I convey my conviction that in him there was somebody to enable me to articulate what I most sought, the importance of waka--and to continue to assist me, even my most recent work.[14]

My final topic involves western criticism. For this, the crucial issue is whether we should--or even whether we can--put aside the conceptions of literature that we as non-Japanese hold as convictions. Surely the major premise of that question is correct. Surely we all do have convictions about literature, or if "convictions" makes too great a claim, then ideas, or what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls prejudices (Truth and Method, New York: Crossroad, 1982). Gadamer bids us identify our prejudices (ideas, convictions). Doing so, he argues with his peculiar metaphor, we shall be able to fuse with the (Japanese) author's horizon our own (western) horizon. Clearly, some kind of dialectic, some kind of negotiation, some give and take is necessary.

Recognition of conventions is necessary, although not sufficient, for us to distinguish literary from other forms of expression (e.g., legal, historical), and within literature between lyric and narrative, and among literatures Japanese from English. The principle is obvious enough; it is the application that is hard. We often strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, fussing over the minutiae of linked poetry while accepting its radical principle

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[14] As this is written, the University of Michigan Press is copyediting my Naming Properties: Nominal Reference in Travel Writings by Bashō and Sora, Johnson and Boswell. Jin'ichi helped me through the very great difficulties of defining Bashō's special comedy. Another old friend, Jean H. Hagstrum, leant his assistance on Johnson by a vetting dated 26 March 1995, less than five months before his sudden death. It is not only "Asu shiranu / Wa ga mi to omoedo ..." but thought of how much I owe so many people that leads me to add reflection to an essay on revisionism.

that a given unit relates semantically solely to its predecessor and therefore its successor.

On the other hand, our "accepting" may well be merely pro forma. It may take a long time for an acceptor to understand, internalize, and act upon the assumption. A list might quickly be drawn up of the things that one of us accepted about renga and only slowly understood. Some of our disagreements with each other turn on assumptions hidden even from ourselves. Some are ostensibly about this and more profoundly about that. We are very apt to fail to notice when we really accept what before we had only said we did, or even when we have changed our mind about crucial tacit assumptions. The passage of time enables us to see more clearly what we once simply thought, which may mean no more than that we no longer think that way and are unaware of what we presently think.

The major issue of this kind involving Japanese Court Poetry is surely what people have regarded as its quaint, old-fashioned "formalism." It certainly is true that our study applied to waka the so-called analysis of the old New Critics. It is equally true that the responsibility is mine. One could hardly have studied English in ca. 1950 without being tinged by the New Criticism. It was impossible to be at Minnesota with Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, and others and not be affected. The datedness of the New Criticism is one thing. Its virtues and defects, what it can do and what it cannot--these are other matters. So also are its features that have continued to regulate our understanding. This is clear enough in the differences between the two outstanding Deconstructionist critics. Jacques Derrida brings with him a profound reaction against (not an indifference to) French Academy assumptions and a very continental philosophical inheritance. Paul

de Man's patient "reading" and concern with "rhetoric" show the extent to which he came of theoretical age in the atmosphere of New Critical "close reading."

That is to say, among other things, that a critical theory and a critical practice may be adapted to fit situations for which they were not devised. Our debt to the New Criticism in Japanese Court Poetry is evident. (Guilty as charged.) People have failed to see, however, how radically different from New Criticism our formalism became. The more we learned the clearer it became to me that to account for Japanese assumptions and practices in waka it was necessary to jettison central tenets of the New Criticism. These included some assumptions that still seem familiar. Two are involved in the New Critical insistence on the "literary object." One is the "autotelic" nature of the poem (cf. "the text"). The other is what J. C. Ransome wished to call the anonymity of a poem (cf. "the death of the author"). Another way of putting these matters is to say that to make the New Criticism applicable to waka it was necessary to accept as genuine what was held to be fallacious by New Critics. In particular, the proto-textuality of William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley had to be rejected. What they termed the genetic and affective fallacies were the very axioms of Ki no Tsurayuki (Kokinshū kanajo) and Murasaki Shikibu ("Hahakigi," "Eawase," and "Hotaru"). The Japanese assumed the centrality and agency of the poet and the reader. That assumption in turn requires, not mimesis, but the philosophical realism also required by mimesis.

The profound adjustments necessary to fit New Criticism to waka testify to the conviction that Japanese assumptions carried. At those radical points where I was aware of conflict between Japanese and New Critical tenets, my choice (mutatis mutandis) was in favor of Japanese assumptions. They simply seemed to

accord better with what I knew and experienced. None of this seemed a sacrifice of truth. On the contrary, it was an enlargement and correction of New Critical doctrine (some of which had bothered me all along, anyway). Why, why, I wonder have those profound alterations gone unnoticed? How, how, I wonder do other people live with presumptions like those of the New Criticism and feel consistent in understanding waka?

My conversion occurred the more easily because of an ancillary circumstance. In an effort to repay Jin'ichi for the wealth he had given us, we had a series of meetings in which I preached New Critical sermons as we "analyzed" lyrics from Donne to Keats, with Bob there to learn as well. I was growing more confident of my ability to discuss critical matters in Japanese, and Jin'ichi's command of English grew by leaps and bounds. Years later, we continued those conversations on topics such as Russian Formalism and Structural theory. From Stanford to Tokyo to Princeton, it was possible to make sense only if some central Japanese tenets were accepted.

Many must share my skepticism as to certainty, if that rules out the fallibility and mess we all contribute to. But we can be more or less responsible. We can hazard ourselves rather than evade responsibility by avoiding the risks of defining our terms or mindlessly repeating what others say. My specific point is that it seemed possible to yield to, or learn from, Japanese assumptions while yet involving Jin'ichi in close reading. We can probably get a majority to sign the statement that we must honor both what we hold crucial to ourselves and what Japanese hold crucial to their literature. But to be meaningful the pledge requires first knowing those two crucial things and then acting to make them one. It is not clear to me how numerous people harmonize their

assumptions with Japanese assumptions.[15]

Although revisionism seems inadequate for what most matters to me, two concessions are necessary. One revision, or change, that would be welcome applies to the literary profession or the academic institution as a whole. This is our requirements for tenure. Even when they are not handled stupidly, the standards are often unrealistic, inhuman. Supposing for the moment that they are the right standards, let them be applied retroactively. There will be positions aplenty at every college and university. Hypocrisy is the word that comes to mind. Another revision badly needed involves Nihonjinron. Truly, many Japanese say very silly things about how special Japanese, Nihongo, and no doubt Yamatodamashii are. How very obliging it would be of those Japanese if they held a monopoly on the silly. But I have yet to hear a criticism of Nihonjinron that was not itself an example of Nihonjinron. One would think it lies in our power to put an end to such nonsense.

One would also think we could get over our vain belief that all we need is the right historical, critical, or theoretical practice. Concern with history, method, and theory is essential so that we know what has been tried, what we are doing, and so that we can know the issues in what we are doing. That is one thing, a very important thing. But the fashionable thing today will be out of fashion sooner rather than later. How many have heard of Carneades or remember the Geneva school that led J. Hillis Miller to Deconstruction? Revisionism is no favorite of mine if it means

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15 Focus on Buddhist rather than Shintō and the empirical seems to me one way of developing an alternative to the adaptation I have described, especially given the main emphases within Buddhism. But I know of no literary accommodation of western literary tenets to Buddhism. We pause before the Void, Nirvana, and ritsu.

one generation of graduate students repeating like a mantra Northrop Frye's "low mimetic," another Paul de Man's "rhetoric of temporality," and another one dismissing out of hand these people without having known what they knew.

As usual, there is also another hand to be on. We may hold on to what we will, change what we will, revise what we will. No matter which, everything depends on the intelligence brought to bear. We know much more than Tsurayuki or Coleridge, and they are the reasons why we do. We reread them or Murasaki Shikibu on monogatari because they are quite simply smarter than we are.

No amount of revision will take us to the heavenly city. As Stefan Collini has suggested, revision is not so much action as reaction. Or, in his words, "Revisionism is always in danger of reproducing the structure (while reversing the content of what it would replace." And again, "The danger attendant on the enthusiasm of revisionism is, of course, that of replacing the old intolerant orthodoxy with a new intolerant orthodoxy, that what was once prohibited becomes obligatory."[16] Yet there need not be in the humanities a counterpart version of Newton's law that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. On the other hand, the feats of revisionism do often seem to be the proverbial nine-days wonder or mare's nest.

Revision is a game any number can play. But it is another matter altogether to cease to re-do and instead to do. Tinkering and patching require no great talent, contribute very little to our intellectual life. We need revision far less than we need what is as new, just, and right as human minds can make it. It has been

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16 Collini, "Changing the Past," TLS, 29 September 1995, pp. 11 and 12.

said more cogently. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:11). Until the vision comes, there may be nothing else to do than repeat and revise. We are ourselves the place to begin revising, especially since the study of Japanese literature is now am established discipline. But it can take on meaning only to the extent that we possess the vision to make Japanese literature ours by remaking ourselves to accommodate it. I have found that very difficult indeed, the success only partial, limited. As the collective achievements of less than half a century of study have shown, however, the rewards are disproportionally great. They would not be so if Japanese literature were not one of the great literatures of the world.