“*Kambun*, Histories of Japanese Literature, and Japanologists”

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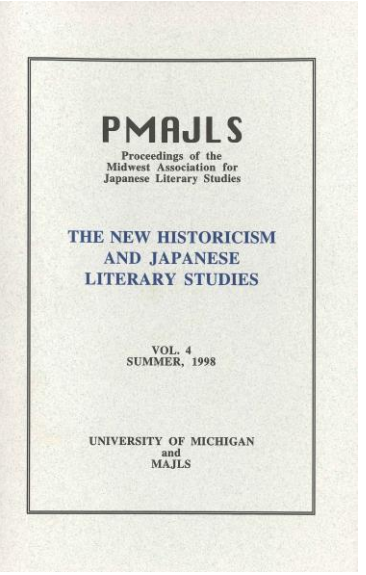

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Kambun, Histories of Japanese Literature, and Japanologists

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In terms of its size, often its quality, and certainly its importance both at the time it was written and cumulatively in the cultural tradition, kambun is arguably the biggest and most important area of Japanese literary study that has been ignored in recent times, and the one least properly represented as part of the canon.

I would like to see a distinction maintained in English when referring to kambun. When speaking of kambun works by Japanese, I suggest that the language they use, one based on the classical language of China, be called "Sino-Japanese." And only when referring to Chinese traditional texts written by Chinese would we say that they are written in "Chinese." I repeat: the term "Sino-Japanese" for kambun written by Japanese, the term "Chinese" for kambun texts written by Chinese. It is misleading to conflate the two. There are exceptions to this, but we will not deal with them here.

It is about texts written in Sino-Japanese by Japanese that I will focus my initial remarks. Of course, the Sino-Japanese written by Japanese, like the Latin written by late-medieval, Renaissance, and even later practitioners, often shows the influence of the writer's vernacular: hence, the insistence on its being called Sino-Japanese. As a corollary to this, it seems wrong-headed that some would judge Sino-Japanese kambun compositions on the basis of whether or not they meet the same criteria as those composed by Chinese. That is precisely what

Konishi Jin'ichi rather frequently does;[1] and Donald Keene also occasionally cites such estimations.[2]

By the same token, it is misleading at best for anyone to call kambun a foreign language in premodern Japan. Again, let us look at the tradition of classical studies in the West. In James Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson, it is nothing short of staggering to see not only how much Latin and Greek Johnson and his classmates had crammed into their heads by the age of ten, but also how much composition work they did in those languages. Johnson and his schoolmates were probably more at home in Latin composition than most young Americans are today writing English--or for that matter, than most young Japanese are writing in their language. And let us keep one fact in mind: if classical Chinese was a foreign language for Japanese, it was also a foreign one for Chinese (albeit not to the same degree), certainly from the Sung dynasty on, and arguably as early as the Six Dynasties or earlier.

The fact that Japanese were able to write diaries, treatises, prefaces, etc., *at all* in Sino-Japanese reflects considerable familiarity with the idiom. Of course, there are better and worse examples of kambun composition by Japanese. But there are better and worse examples of kambun composition by Chinese, some semi-literate, others far from polished. Certainly, one should not look to the earlier-mentioned criterion, that of whether or not a kambun composition by a Japanese would pass muster as a composition by a Chinese, as an index of its merit. Rather,

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[1]Konishi Jin'ichi, A History of Japanese Literature (see n 6 below): Vol. 2, pp. 8, 51-52, 54, 166, 186; Vol. 3, pp. 5-6, 12, 13, 14, 17, 23, 181; see also one of the references in n 2 below.

[2]Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart (see n 7 below), pp. 215 n 98, 1065 (citing a Konishi Jin'ichi article), 1069 (cf. 1085 n 24), 1077-78.

Sino-Japanese compositions must be judged by a different set of standards. Devising such criteria is one of the tasks before us.[3]

Skill in reading and writing Sino-Japanese became an integral part of the training and education of most educated Japanese. The other idiom that Japanese wrote in, kana, will here be called "Japanese" (in quotation marks), because *both* it and Sino-Japanese make up Japanese (*without* quotation marks) literature.

Imagine a Japanese literature without Sino-Japanese--a Japanese literature--

without the Kojiki, the Nihon shoki, and the Kaifūsō;

without the prose of Kūkai or the Honchō monzui;

without the tales of the Nihon ryōiki, the Gōdanshō, and the Shintōshū;

without the Shōmonki;

without the diaries of Ennin, Fujiwara no Michinaga, Fujiwara Teika, or Mori Ōgai;

without important prefaces to the Kokinshū, the Shin kokinshū, and the Kanginshū;

without Buddhist writing like the Ōjō yōshū;

without Tokugawa comic writings such as Neboke sensei bunshū;without much of the poetry of Sugawara no Michizane, Rai San'yō, and Natsume Sōseki--not to mention the Gozan poets!

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[3]In this regard, see Judith N. Rabinovitch, "An Introduction to Hentai Kambun (Variant Chinese), A Hybrid Sino-Japanese Used by the Male Elite in Premodern Japan," Journal of Chinese Linguistics 24:1 (Jan. 1996), pp. 98-127. Note also the following entries in the Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983; 10 vols.): "Chinese Literature and Japanese Literature" (by Imamura Yoshio), vol. 1, pp. 292-96; "Poetry and Prose in Chinese" (by Satō Tamotsu), vol. 6, pp. 193-97; "Kambun" (by Robert L. Backus), vol. 4, pp. 123-24; and "Hentai Kambun" (by Judith N. Rabinovitch), vol. 3, pp. 126-27.

What, too, of writings in the Japanese cultural tradition that are sometimes taken to be quintessentially Japanese, which are in fact either translated from, or likely largely based on, Sino-Japanese kambun, starting with the "Seventeen-Article Constitution" attributed to Shōtoku Taishi? In this category one finds the Taketori monogatari, the Hōjōki, and the Soga monogatari. This is to say nothing of works based on Chinese kambun texts, such as sizable portions of the Konjaku monogatari.[1]

How can one understand anything of the development of prose style in Japan without a close familiarity with classical Chinese, and with earlier "Japanese" and Sino-Japanese prose? For instance, how can one describe the admixture of Chinese compounds in the great medieval tale literature, if one does not know both earlier Heian tales in "Japanese" and earlier kambun, of the Chinese as well as Sino-Japanese varieties? What of the influence of Sino-Japanese kambun diaries and records on the Jikkinshō? And regarding Chinese kambun, what of the influence of Chinese poetic themes on Fujiwara Teika, of Sung poetry on the Kyōgoku poets, of Ming and Ch'ing fiction on Ueda Akinari, and of Po Chü-i on everyone? Do people just repeat other scholars' opinions about this, or do they develop an intimate familiarity of their own with these presumed models/sources/influences?

In this regard, I would warn people not to uncritically accept other scholars' estimations. Konishi Jin'ichi, for example,

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[1]Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart (see n 7 below): pp. 435 and 467 n 9 (re the Taketori monogatari), citing Kanō Morohira (1806-1857) and Takeda Yūkichi; pp. 347-48 and 762-63 (re the Hōjōki), citing the Chitei no ki (Record of the Pond Pavilion) by Yoshishige no Yasutane; pp. 888 and 912 n 70 (re the Soga monogatari), citing Takahashi Nobuyuki (for fuller reference, see p. 911 n 66); and pp. 573-74 and 596 n 29 (re the Konjaku monogatari), citing Ōsone Shōsuke et al.

although certainly far better acquainted with both Chinese literature and Sino-Japanese kambun than most, can be frustrating--creatively suggestive in many of his generalizations, but very much in need of qualification (or better specificity) in others. In my copies of the three volumes of his literary history, there are dozens of penciled in question marks about points he makes either about aspects of Chinese literature, comparisons he makes between it and Japanese literature, or about his reasoning in reference to both.[5]

Yet, the standard histories of Japanese literature in English--the volumes by Konishi Jin'ichi,[6] Donald Keene,[7] and Katō Shūichi[8]--are truly admirable in that they treat kambun as being an

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[5]Similarly, his comments on Six Dynasties poetry should not be accepted uncritically: Konishi Jin'ichi, "The Genesis of the Kokinshū Style," Helen C. McCullough, trans., Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 38.1 (June 1978), pp. 61-170.

[6]Konishi Jin'ichi, A History of Japanese Literature: Volume One, The Archaic and Ancient Ages, Aileen Gatten and Nicholas Teele, trans., Earl Miner, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Volume Two, The Early Middle Ages, Aileen Gatten, trans., Earl Miner, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Volume Three, The High Middle Ages, Aileen Gatten and Mark Harbison, trans., Earl Miner, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[7]Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart: Japanese Literature from Earliest Times to the Late Sixteenth Century (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993); World within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600-1867 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976); and Dawn to the West: Japanese Fiction in the Modern Era (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), 2 Vols.: [Vol. 1] Fiction and [Vol. 2] Poetry, Drama, Criticism.

[8]Katō Shūichi, A History of Japanese Literature: Volume One, The First Thousand Years, David Chibbett, trans. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979; rpt. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1981); Volume Two, The Years of Isolation, Don Sanderson, trans. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983; rpt. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., n.d.); Volume Three, The Modern Years, Don Sanderson, trans. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983; rpt. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., n.d.).

integral part of the literary tradition of Japan. There are areas where one might disagree with their treatment--certainly, with the way each describes Sino-Japanese as being a foreign language[9]--but their scope is appropriately broad.

Apart from such literary histories, what translations or studies of Sino-Japanese works do we have in Western languages? There is Francine Hérail's translation of the Midō kampaku ki,[10] Helen McCullough's of the Mutsu waki,[11] and Judith Rabinovitch's of

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[9]Konishi Jin'ichi, A History of Japanese Literature, Volume 1, p. 4; vol. 3, p. 23. Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart, pp. 189, 581, 1083 (cited below in this note). Katō Shūichi, A History of Japanese Literature, Vol. 1, pp. 4, 17, and 32. Burton Watson also slips into this locution; Japanese Literature in Chinese (see n 18 below), Vol. 1, p. 6.
Note the circularity in reasoning in the following citations from Donald Keene, Seeds in the Heart. Concerning the diary of Ennin: "Unfortunately, Ennin's ability, especially his skill at writing difficult classical Chinese, has kept most Japanese from reading the diary in which he narrated his travels." (p. 361) About Sugwawara no Michizane: "Michizane ranks as a major Japanese poet, though his preference for Chinese as a medium of expression had the unforeseeable consequence of estranging him from future generations of readers whose education did not extend to the subtleties of Chinese prosody." (pp. 205-6) About Fujiwara Teika's Meigetsuki (Chronicle of the Bright Moon), a diary covering the years 1180 to 1235: "[T]his adverse combination of language [kambun] and content [politics] no doubt explains why such an important work has been so little studied." (p. 828-29) About Gozan authors: "Their poetry, because written in a foreign language, has become in the last century increasingly difficult for Japanese to understand, and has accordingly remained on the periphery of studies of Japanese literature." (p. 1083)
Given so many treasures, perhaps Japanese and others should learn kambun--certainly those who claim expertise in Japanese literature.

[10]Notes journalières de Fujiwara no Michinaga, ministre à la cour de Heian (995-1018) (Geneva & Paris: Librairie Droz, 1987).

[11]Helen Craig McCullough, "A Tale of Mutsu," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 25 (1964-65), pp. 178-211.

the Shōmonki.[12] We have both the Chamberlain and Philippi versions of the Kojiki,[13] Aston's of the Nihon shoki,[14] renderings of Ennin's diary and the Ōjō yōshū by two of the Reischauers,[15] the Michiko Y. Aoki and Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura renditions (respectively) of the Fudoki and the Nihon ryōiki,[16] as well as a translation of the Wa-Kan rōei shū by J. Thomas Rimer and Jonathan Chaves.[17] Burton Watson, of course, has not only

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[12]Judith Rabinovitch, Shōmonki: The Story of Masakado's Rebellion (Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, Sophia University, 1986). Note also her "Wasp Waists and Monkey Tails: A Study and Translation of Hamanari's Uta no Shiki (The Code of Poetry, 772), Also Known as Kakyō Hyōshiki (A Formulary for Verse Based on the Canons of Poetry)," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 51.2 (Dec. 1991), pp. 471-560.

[13]Basil Hall Chamberlain, The Kojiki: Records of Ancient Matters (2nd ed., Kobe, J.L. Thomson, 1932; rpt. Rutland, Vt. & Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1982); Donald L. Philippi, Kojiki (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1969).

[14]W.G. Aston, Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697 (London: Kegan Paul, 1896; rpt. Rutland, Vt. & Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1972).

[15]Edwin O. Reischauer, Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgimage to China in Search of the Law (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955); cf. idem, Ennin's Travels in T'ang China (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955). A.K. Reischauer, "Genshin's Ōjōyōshū: Collected Essays in Birth into Paradise," Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 2nd series, 7 (Dec. 1930), pp. 16-97 (partial translation); note also the partial translation by Allan A. Andrews, The Teachings Essential for Rebirth: A Study of Genshin's Ōjōyōshū (Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, Sophia University, 1973).

[16]Michiko Y. Aoki, Records of Wind and Earth: A Translation of *Fudoki*, with Introduction and Commentaries (Ann Arbor: The Association for Asian Studies, 1997); Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The *Nihon ryōiki* of the Monk Kyōkai (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[17]J. Thomas Rimer and Jonathan Chaves, Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing: The *Wakan rōei shū* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

published the two volumes of his Japanese Literature in Chinese,[18] but also the work entitled Kanshi: The Poetry of Ishikawa Jōzan and Other Edo-Period Poets.[19] Responsible for the kanshi translations in his jointly-authored anthology, From the Country of Eight Islands,[20] Watson has also published translations of the Sino-Japanese verse of Gensei, Ryōkan, and Natsume Sōseki.[21] Robert Borgen treated several kanshi by Sugawara no Michizane in his study of that figure.[22] There are book-length translations of Gozan poetry by Marian Ury,[23] David Pollack,[24] Sonja Arntzen,[25]

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[18]Burton Watson, Japanese Literature in Chinese: Volume 1, Poetry and Prose in Chinese by Japanese Writers of the Early Period (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Volume 2, Poetry and Prose in Chinese by Japanese Writers of the Later Period (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

[19]San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990.

[20]Hiroaki Sato and Burton Watson, From the Country of Eight Islands: An Anthology of Japanese Poetry (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).

[21]Burton Watson, Grass Hill: Poems and Prose by the Japanese Monk Gensei (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Ryōkan: Zen Monk-Poet of Japan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); and "Sixteen Poems by Natsume Sōseki," in Essays on Natsume Sōseki's Works, Japanese National Commission for Unesco, comp. (Tokyo: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 1972), pp. 119-24.
For additional studies of Ryōkan, see John Stevens, One Bowl, One Robe: The Zen Poetry of Ryōkan (New York & Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1977); Nobuyuki Yuasa, The Zen Poems of Ryōkan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and John Stevens, Three Zen Masters, n 26 below.

[22]Robert Borgen, Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1986).

[23]Marian Ury, Poems of the Five Mountains: An Introduction to the Literature of the Zen Monasteries (Tokyo: Mushinsha, 1977; 2nd, rev. ed., Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1992).

and others.[25] Recently appearing are the volume by Timothy H. Bradstock and Judith N. Rabinovitz, An Anthology of Kanshi (Chinese Verse) by Japanese Poets of the Edo Period (1603-1868),[27] and Hiroaki Sato's treatment of the kanshi of the late-Tokugawa woman poet, Ema Saikō.[28] Finally, there are the studies of Japanese interaction with and transformation of Chinese models by David Pollack,[29] Ward Geddes,[30] and myself.[31]

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[24]David Pollack, Zen Poems of the Five Mountains (New York: The Crossland Publishing Co.; Decatur, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1985).

[25]Sonja Arntzen: Ikkyū and the Crazy Cloud Anthology: A Zen Poet of Medieval Japan (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1986).

[26]John Stevens, Three Zen Masters: Ikkyū, Hakuin, Ryōkan (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1993); for additional studies on these three figures, see the bibliography, pp. 159-61. W.S. Merwin and Sōiku Shigematsu, Sun at Midnight: Poems and Sermons by Musō Soseki (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1989).

[27]Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

[28]Hiroaki Sato, Breeze Through Bamboo: Selected Kanshi of Ema Saikō (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[29]David Pollack, The Fracture of Meaning: Japan's Synthesis of China from the Eighth through the Eighteenth Centuries (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[30]Ward Geddes, *Kara monogatari*: Tales of China (Tempe: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1984).

[31]John Timothy Wixted, "The Kokinshū Prefaces: Another Perspective" Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 43.1 (June 1983), pp. 215-238. Abridged version: "Chinese Influences on the Kokinshū Prefaces," in Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern, Laurel Rasplica Rodd, with the collaboration of Mary Catherine Henkenius, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; rpt. Boston: Cheng and Tsui Company, 1996), pp. 387-400. The same abridged version: "Influencias Chinas en los Prefacios de Kokinshū," Amalia Sato, trans., Tokonoma: Traducción y Literatura (Buenos Aires) 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 23-35.

Notwithstanding such contributions, most students of Japanese, whether Japanese or non-Japanese, do not begin to have the grounding in classical Chinese that would enable them to understand kambun texts well. In the U.S., the required training in Chinese of graduate students in Japanese is, at most, two years of the modern language and one year of the classical--which, of course, is scarcely a start. What is the upshot of this? A vicious circle: people shy away from what they do not know, stay permanently ignorant of it, and its non-importance of course is often thereby confirmed, especially because of natural reluctance to draw attention to one's weaknesses.

When citing Chinese sources, Japanologists generally rely on the Japanese editions of the works they are studying, which vary considerably as to quality. It is like looking through a glass darkly--and a secondhand glass, at that--one sometimes made further opaque by inadequate familiarity with Chinese cultural history. Without a strong grounding in classical Chinese, one is forever hobbled in being able to study Japanese literature. That is true for virtually anything up to the twentieth century, and arguably for much that is more recent.

Of course, what everyone in Japanese literary studies needs is several years' study of Chinese, including at least two years of classical Chinese, and then special readings in Sino-Japanese, as well as real training in Chinese literary and cultural history. Instead, most Westerners get a fraction of that and most native-speaker Japanese are exposed to a smattering of kambun, both of the Chinese and Sino-Japanese varieties, in the standard secondary-school curriculum. Not much attention is given kambun in the Japanese literature curriculum in Japanese universities.

Research institutions in Japanese studies, wherever they may be, should consider having a position in kambun studies: to help

reflect the real breadth of Japanese literature, to insure that graduate students get proper training, and to serve as a resource for others at the institution.[32]

The slighting of kambun goes hand in glove with two phenomena. The one has already been alluded to, the general need of most Japanologists to be able to read classical Chinese and Sino-Japanese better. The other has to do with what might be called a "narrowing" in the definition of what is considered Japanese literature or culture. Certainly, the scope of Japanese literature, as regards kambun, is far narrower than it was in Mori Ōgai's day.

In the wake of World War II, with the promotion of Japanese cultural studies outside of Japan, there seems to have been an emphasis on topics that are unquestionably "Japanese." That this coincides in Japan both with a turning away from China and continental Asia and with a reduction in the learning of Chinese-based kanji, makes nineteenth-century literature in "Japanese" difficult of access, to say nothing of the way it makes things written in kambun seem a foreign language. The net effect is a kind of "Japanism" that, along with Nihonjin-ron discussions and the like, is really heir to the worst Japanese racism of the pre-war.[33] To put it bluntly, we have a kind of ethnically pure "Japanism" in Japanese studies.

This is manifested in different ways. The Japan Foundation in the U.S., for example (unlike its European counterpart), for decades seldom funded anything that smacked much of China.

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[32]In this respect, it is encouraging to see the inauguration of an annual summer workshop in kambun at Cornell University.

[33]Cf. John Timothy Wixted, "Reverse Orientalism," Sino-Japanese Studies 2.1 (Dec. 1989), pp. 17-27; reprinted in Hiroshima Signpost, Jan. 1992, pp. 30-35.

And my own experience with two books having considerable bearing on Japan (but with Sinology-related titles) also illustrates the narrowness of Japanese studies.

In a volume by Yoshikawa Kōjirō that I translated, Five Hundred Years of Chinese Poetry, 1150-1650: The Chin, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties,[34] the author draws comparisons between late-Edo waka and developments in post-Sung Chinese poetry, fills in the background to the use of Ming models by Ogyū Sorai and his followers, and writes as a superb prose stylist of Japanese. Yet, the book was never reviewed by a Japanese-studies journal such as Monumenta Nipponica, The Journal of Japanese Studies, or the Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese.[35]

In a volume that I compiled, Japanese Scholars of China: A Bibliographical Handbook,[36] there are entries for more than 1,500 twentieth-century Japanese scholars of China, many of whom deal primarily or secondarily with Japan.[37] Yet this handbook, one to arguably the greatest academic tradition in Japan, was not reviewed by any of the above-mentioned Japanese-studies journals.

The experience I had when submitting the Yoshikawa Kōjirō volume for the "Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the

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[34]Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

[35]In fact, the book-review editor of the Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese, Marian Ury, told me personally: "No one is interested in that sort of thing."

[36]Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

[37]The work includes bibliographical information, for example, about Yonezawa Yoshiho in art history, Mori Katsumi in history, Hanayama Shinshō in Buddhism, and various scholars in literature--all made accessible under a main subject-heading for "Japan" in the subject index, with various sub-headings for "Japanese Literature," "Japanese History," etc.

Translation of Japanese Literature" provides a further example of the narrowness of what is considered Japanese literature. The submission was returned, with a letter saying that the volume "is an interesting work and an important contribution to Chinese literary studies," but that it did not qualify as a work "of literature in translation."[38] Never mind that the book's finest feature--more than its scholarship--is its prose;[39] there may be no better expository Japanese writing this century. The intent--as made clear with the submission--was for the translation to be judged in terms of how well it created an analogue in English to the outstanding prose of the original.

By the Commission's standards, a classic of English writing like Thomas Macaulay's History of England would not qualify as English literature. And Edward Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire would be simply a contribution to Roman history.[40] Compare this attitude with that of the editors of the wonderful "Library of America" series. Classic works in it

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[38]Letter to "John Wixted," November 30, 1990, from "Victoria Lyon-Bester, Program Director, Prize Administrator, Donald Keene Center of Japanese Studies, Columbia University."

[39]It is to their credit that Howard Hibbett and Gen Itasaka included an essay by Yoshikawa Kōjirō in their textbook to illustrate Japanese prose style: Modern Japanese: A Basic Reader (2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 2 vols., Lesson 50.

[40]The same kind of contradiction is explicit in the following statement by Donald Keene regarding Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki: "His composition 'Iken Hōji Jūnikyō (Opinions in a Sealed Document in Twelve Articles) has been praised [by Kawaguchi Hisao] as the finest example of Heian kambun. The Twelve Articles are recommendations to the government concerning prayers to aid agriculture, the dangers of extravagance, the necessity of increasing the food allowance to students at the university, and so on. Not all the articles are important, and the work as a whole lacks literary significance [underlining added], but the document is admired [by Kawaguchi] for its mastery of balanced prose, its clarity of expression, and its objective manner of presenting historical facts [underlining added]." Seeds in the Heart, p. 206.

include not only what one would expect--Hawthorne, Melville, Wharton, Whitman, and the like--but also others of both cultural and literary importance: Francis Parkman's eight-volume history, England and France in North America; and the Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, whose prose Edmund Wilson so highly praised in his study of Civil War writing, Patriotic Gore.[41] The chapter by John M. Ellis, "The Definition of Literature" (in The Theory of Literary Criticism: A Logical Analysis),[42] is apropos in this regard, for its cogent discussion of what constitutes literature.

It is unfortunate that many Japanese today are so narrow in the way they think of Japanese culture, Japanese literature, etc.--far narrower than Mori Ōgai and his generation were. It is even more disappointing to see many Westerners adopting the same stance. What needs to be changed is the attitude, the mind-set, that lies behind it.

The scope of Japanese studies needs to be widened. The narrow, parochial view of Japan must be countered. As part of the task, kambun should be given greater attention. As long as the kambun traditions of Sino-Japanese and Chinese are ignored, understanding of Japanese literature--and Japanese culture--will remain both distorted and impoverished.

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[41]Edmund Wilson, Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 131-73, esp. p. 143.

[42]Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, pp. 24-53.