# BOOK REVIEWS

*The Tale of Matsura: Fujiwara Teika's Experiment in Fiction.* Translated by Wayne P. Lammers. Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1992. xii + 208 pages. $35.00.

FUJIWARA TEIKA, 1162–1241: prestige and legitimacy of the poetic tradition are inherent in the name; any work, therefore, that proclaims 'his' name garners a wealth of untold benefits. Thus Wayne Lammers's translation of *Matsura no Miya Monogatari*, ca 1190, as *The Tale of Matsura* sparks our curiosity and compels us to pore over its pages lest we be caught unawares of a literary endeavor from the hands of Teika.

Not all reference works credit Teika with the authorship of *Matsura no Miya Monogatari*. *Kōjien*, *Nihon Koten Bungaku Daijiten*, *Daijinmei Jiten*, *Nihon Rekishi Daijiten*, and *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (Robert H. Brower's entry) do not cite Teika as the author of the work. *Shinchō Nihon Koten Bungaku Shōjiten*, however, concedes Teika's authorship on the basis of the citation in *Mumyō Zōshi*, ca 1200, and Donald Keene refers to Teika as the author in his 'A Neglected Chapter: Courtly Fiction of the Kamakura Period', in MN 44:1 (Spring 1989), in which a detailed plot summary and analysis of *Matsura no Miya Monogatari* occupy a substantial part of the discussion. Likewise, Konishi Jin'ichi in his *A History of Japanese Literature*, 3, *The High Middle Ages*, presents the *Mumyō Zōshi* quote as evidence for assigning authorship to Teika, although in a footnote he expresses some caution about the reliability of the quote.

A large part of Lammers's study involves the presentation of evidence arguing for an unqualified acceptance of Teika as the author. The present volume was derived from Lammers's 1987 dissertation, to which he makes frequent reference in the appendices regarding dates and authorship. (One wishes that more information from this part of the dissertation were included in the main argument rather than made as references passim.) *The Tale of Matsura* is divided into three parts: a critical introduction in three chapters, followed by the translation in three 'books', and concluded by appendices arguing dates and authorship, and indices of both general and poetic nature.

Lammers splits the case for establishing authorship into two separate chapters: 'Fujiwara Teika and *Matsura no Miya Monogatari*' discusses Teika as *the* accepted author before supporting arguments are presented in detail in Appendix B, 'The Authorship of *Matsura no Miya Monogatari*', which makes a clearer case for Teika's authorship based on internal and external evidence. The disturbing element here is the reversed order of presentation, the conclusion preceding sections of the supporting arguments. Although in Appendix B Lammers offers Teika's father, Fujiwara Shunzei (1114–1204), the priest Saigyō (1118–1190), Fujiwara Yoshitsune (1169–1206), the abbot Jien

(1155–1225), and Fujiwara Ietaka (1158–1237) as contemporaries of Teika to form the control group to gauge authorship, he does not propose any other likely candidate.

The first part of Chapter 1 provides plot summaries in five parts (unrelated to the structure in which the original and the translation are divided into three 'books'), discusses the significance of the title and the three colophons at the end of the work, and suggests a date prior to 1200. This proposed date is based on the earliest written citation of the title in *Mumyō Zōshi*, in which Teika is described as a Lesser Captain, a post he held from 1189 to 1202.

Lammers places much weight on the reference in *Mumyō Zōshi* and promotes a three-point case for a fuller reading of Teika's poetics: first, to fathom the relationship between *yōen* in Teika's poetry and fiction; second, to grasp his views on the *honkadori* technique; and third, to investigate the tale-like (*monogatari-teki*) quality found in Teika's poetry and his experiment in fiction. As further evidence for Teika's authorship, Lammers presents special features of the tale, such as a superior level of erudition in the Chinese classics, access to other *monogatari* manuscripts, and, most importantly, the *yōen* aesthetic (poetic) principle in prose form. He also discusses atypical features of this tale when compared to typical monogatari convention: the pre-Nara period in which the story is set; most of the action taking place in China; the inclusion of a military episode in the middle of the tale; and the reliance on supernatural occurrences to propel the plot, resulting in a lack of verisimilitude in the story line.

Chapter 2, 'The Aesthetic of *Yōen* in a Narrative Context', tackles the application of the poetic *yōen* aesthetic in a prose context, centering on episodes related to the love affair between the male protagonist, Ujitada, and the Chinese empress dowager. Lammers describes *yōen* as 'ethereal charm', 'ethereal beauty', 'characterized by complexity of technique', 'express[ing] subtle shades of pathos', and combining 'elements of more somber styles with "beautiful" imagery and an ethereal atmosphere', following Brower and Miner's definition in *Japanese Court Poetry*, 1961. The author contrasts the Japanese definition of *yōen* to *yao yen*, its Chinese predecessor, and states that the Chinese tradition places more emphasis on the sinister supernatural quality exemplified by the bewitching female spirit of Mt Wu than on the romantic element featured in *yōen*. He links departures from conventional monogatari themes and requisite verisimilitude of post-*Genji* tales to Teika's desire to evoke in prose form, even at the expense of realism and plot, the same type of dream-like atmosphere and effect found in *yōen* poetry.

Chapter 3, 'The Manuscripts and the Texts', consisting of only two pages, describes the 'uncomplicated' textual history of *Matsura no Miya Monogatari*. (The brevity of this final chapter suggests that it might have been better situated in the appendices.)

The three books of the translation are adroitly handled, piquing the interest of readers to follow events in the tale with anticipation. Lammers expounds the obvious shortcomings of the work in his Introduction, but somehow the story manages to hold our interest despite, or perhaps because of, the informative notes he provides to bolster the translation. Hagitani Boku's opinions are clearly discernible in most of the creative interpretations of obscure passages, although occasionally Lammers departs from the commentator's speculative scheme to offer theories of his own. Nowhere is Hagitani's presence more noticeable than in the images of Teika poring over manu-

scripts of *Hamamatsu Chūnagon Monogatari* (ca 960s), and *Utsuhō Monogatari* (ca 983) to glean notions for handling similar situations in his own literary creation.

Lammers attributes the reasons for departures from the monogatari convention to the application of the *yōen* aesthetic in a prose context that apparently required a divergent set of criteria from traditional monogatari. He also suggests that Teika may have been writing fiction as a diversion during a lull in his career, and if he was not seriously attempting to create literature per se, perhaps he had the latitude to play with certain elements such as the depiction of genteel sensuality in the love affair highlighting the *yōen* aesthetic. He proposes that what may have begun with serious intentions toward the literary may slowly have given way toward experimentation as the author became anxious to conclude a time-consuming project.

Lammers achieves the goals he sets out to accomplish: he presents a convincing case for establishing Teika as author of the tale, extols the virtues of his attempt to create the effect of *yōen* in fictional form, and makes yet another work from the classical canon available to specialists and students alike—certainly a contribution worthy of serious consideration.

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*Murasaki's Genji and Prouste's Recherche: A Comparative Study*. By Shirley M. Loui. Studies in Comparative Culture, 10. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, N.Y., 1991. viii + 246 pages. $69.95.

MUCH of what Shirley M. Loui says about the two major works of literature that form the subject of her monograph has to do, as it properly should, with emotion—its representation, its associations, and what might be called the metaphysics of emotion—and so I will ask the reader to excuse me for mentioning some of my own emotions upon beginning to read her book. The first might be a measure of appreciation for her courage in choosing so large a subject and for the good sense she has shown in structuring her thinking by concentrating on a few major themes. A second might be envy of the many delights that comparison of two works so individually rich might offer to the reader-scholar once embarked on the task. For my part I am one of the many who, as Loui says, 'have responded over the years to the similarities . . . of the two authors [but whose] responses have trailed notes of uneasiness, a hesitancy to pursue the comparison while remaining fascinated by it' (p. vi).

The third, however, is incredulity. The book, which originated in Loui's 1987 doctoral dissertation in comparative literature at Washington University, treats both *Genji Monogatari* and *A la recherche du temps perdu* entirely as works in translation. Loui seems to be largely innocent of French, although French is not, so far as I know, numbered among the exotic languages. Only two titles in French—one of them an encyclopedia article, the other the source of an epigraph—appear in the six pages of her bibliography. Loui is entirely innocent not only of Japanese but of any notion of what is involved in translating from Japanese into a Western language. She jumps back and forth between the Waley and Seidensticker translations to serve her interpretive pur-