



**Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time.**

Review Author[s]:  
P. G. O'Neill

*The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3. (May, 1968), pp. 638-639.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-9118%28196805%2927%3A3%3C638%3AFTSPOO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>

*The Journal of Asian Studies* is currently published by Association for Asian Studies.

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/afas.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

when they created their first state inside China. It played a role in the T'u-chüeh-Chinese relations in T'ang and again became an actuality in the treaties between Kitan and Chinese during the Sung. In all these cases, China felt militarily too weak to destroy her opponents and gave in, accepting a treaty of equal status. Whenever China hoped to be able to "assimilate" a neighbor, i.e. to destroy its social structure and economy, she used the tributary treaties. Again, depending solely on China's military power, the frontier was set so that the "tributary nation" remained either outside or inside China; the last stage meant the end of the nation as a nation. Yü put most weight on the last two stages, while, for an understanding of international relations, the first stage seems to be of highest importance.

Yü has used some of the archeological reports, but mainly to show that Chinese cultural goods were found outside China. But Chinese weapons in a non-Chinese tomb must not be "contraband trade" (p. 130); they could very well be captured. The Yünnan implements have not necessarily been made in China (p. 130); they could equally well have been made by enslaved Chinese craftsmen or men who worked for the tribes. The Artaštra is a doubtful source for a proof of early Chinese silk exports (p. 152) but silk from Chou time was found in Central Europe, long before official trade and imperial power existed. Chinese silk was indeed found in Noin Ula (p. 104), but the interesting feature is that the motifs of decoration are more Iranian than Chinese. Thus, again the facts are studied from the Chinese viewpoint alone and not from both sides.

Perhaps I am expecting too much from this book. I admit that few people can be equally well informed about Chinese and Western sources, archeological, old and new, but certainly I cannot agree with J. K. Fairbank, who called the book a "masterly survey of the full record thus far available." It is rather a preliminary analysis of Chinese data which will have to be complemented by a similar study based upon the sources which we have for the Central Asian and Southeast Asian societies.

WOLFRAM EBERHARD

University of California, Berkeley

**Fujiwara Teika's Superior Poems of Our Time.** BY ROBERT H. BROWER AND EARL MINER. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1967. ix, 148 pp. Index of Poets, Index of First Lines, Bibliography, Glossary of Literary Terms, Appendix, Illustration. \$5.00.

This book is an interesting and enlightening sequel to the authors' *Japanese Court Poetry*, which has become a standard work in its field. Whereas the earlier book broke new ground by bringing Western criticism to bear on the whole range of early Japanese poetry, in this present one the authors allow one of the greatest figures in the history of Japanese poetry to speak for himself on the aims and standards of his time.

This they do by translating the *Kindai Shūka* of Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241). This work consists of a critical essay and a sequence of eighty-three poems chosen and arranged by Teika from the works of other poets, and to this the authors have added an introduction of some thirty-five pages which is a masterly example of how to put a writer and his work into historical and literary settings. We are introduced into the poetry circle at the center of Court life in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and shown how, while the great clans struggled outside for political power, Teika could suffer the same disbarment from Court functions for giving offense to the emperor with a poem as he did for striking a high official with a candlestick. We see that poetry was such a serious matter that we readily accept Teika's sincerity when, faced with his sons' lack of application to writing and poetics, he says "I see the extinction of our house already before my eyes."

The most interesting aspect of the translation of the poems is that it makes abundantly clear the principles on which they were arranged. The concept of a poetic sequence ordered by association and progression was first set out in English in 1958 by Konishi Jin'ichi in conjunction with Brower and Miner ("Association and Progression: Principles of Integration in Anthologies and Sequences of Japanese Court Poetry, A.D. 900-1350," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XXI, 67-127), and was taken up by the latter in their *Japanese Court Poetry*. In this new book they help the reader to see

clearly how the system works by separating the poems only by brief notes on their motifs and on their time and space content. Taken individually, the translations themselves will not be to everyone's taste, for they tend to be rather florid. Over the sequence as a whole, however, this serves a purpose by underlining the validity of the concept of integration. The book's success in demonstrating this concept gives it its main importance.

P. G. O'NEILL

*School of Oriental and African Studies  
University of London*

**The Five Sacred Festivals of Ancient Japan: Their Symbolism and Historical Development.** BY U. A. CASAL. Tokyo: Sophia University in cooperation with Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1967. viii, 114 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Index. \$6.00.

The Five Festivals, or *Gosekkū*, come at measured, magical times of the year. There is the New Year festival, centering on the first day of the first month; the *hina* or doll festival, on the third day of the third month; the boys' festival, on the fifth day of the fifth month; *Tanabata*, when the heavenly star-lovers meet, on the seventh day of the seventh month; and the chrysanthemum festival on the ninth day of the ninth month. This calendar of major Japanese festivals has a Chinese orderliness about it, as you can see.

Casal concludes, at the end of his study, that all five observances are fertility celebrations. He does well in examining the agricultural aspects of the *Gosekkū*. He is, I think, less perceptive when it comes to the human, sexual dimension. He seems to have missed completely, for example, the significance of Daikoku's mallet (p. 30), the symbolism of the lion dance (p. 32), the significance of the peach in connection with the girls' festival (p. 57), the folkloric connection between woman and water (p. 86), and so on.

Casal, in his scholarly work, leaned heavily on the comparative method. He did well with it, and using it gave him a special zest for collecting and classifying, and for making over and over that always miraculous discovery that, when all is said and done, life is one. But, as a method, it does have serious limitations, especially when it comes time to offer inter-

pretations. At one point (p. 84), he arrives at Granet's theory of the origin of *Tanabata*, without reference, apparently, to Granet. A *tour de force*, granted, but superfluous.

As we progress from the first to the fifth festival of the *Gosekkū*, Casal notes, the celebrations are of diminishing importance. Casal in fact introduces a sort of entropy theory of festivals, where *oshōgatsu* (the New Year) is the most "effusive," the 3-3 festival is less so, the 5-5 less still, and so on. The 9-9 chrysanthemum festival is really terribly minor ("nothing but polite and obligatory visits, and a meditative contemplation of flowers"), and (to Casal's fascination) there is no 11-11 festival at all. The implication is that the vital cosmic forces have somehow fizzled before you reach November. There are a number of difficulties here; mainly, the problem is that this orderly calendar is neither wholly scholastic nor wholly popular. From the scholastic point of view (the *Gosekkū* cycle is after all partly a contrivance), a sixth festival would disturb the orderly asymmetry of the whole, which is based on a play with odd numbers. From the popular point of view, there is already a notion of the unwinding of cosmic energies, but in two semi-annual cycles, not one annual cycle. In the Japanese folk calendar, the rainy season, which comes in late June and early July, brings with it the danger of epidemic and sickness, and, as a critical time, is marked by rites of purification and exchange of gifts that parallel the observances of late December and early January. Furthermore, when autumn comes, and the *Gosekkū* cycle draws little attention, many towns and villages hold the major observance of the year, the festival of the *ujigami*. Is it then possible to consider the Five in isolation, as it were, from other annual celebrations which reflect little of the influence of Chinese-Japanese scholasticism?

This book is surely not the most interesting product of U. A. Casal's pen. His first chapter, on the New Year observances, is expansive and imaginative, but after that, it is the author himself (if not the festivals) who becomes less and less effusive. Casal was at his best in his essays on such folk creatures as the Kappa, the Badger, and the Fox. Why? Because he was a gifted collector of tid-bits and oddities, of the incidental, rather than a master of the comprehensive and theoretical. He was a talented