

In This Issue

Literary criticism and Japan are the threads that link three of the articles in this issue. THOMAS BLENMAN HARE uses poststructuralist criticism to explore the literary and religious genius of the great patriarch of Japanese Shingon, Kūkai (744–835). Kūkai, also known as Kōbō Daishi, heavily influenced the Heian court and, ever since, has been regarded as a profound religious teacher. Hare discusses two of Kūkai's shorter writings to show that not only did Kūkai brilliantly deal with the problems of translation from Sanskrit and Chinese, but also managed to encapsulate his esoteric Mahāyānaist religious doctrines into his texts. Hare shows how Kūkai created texts that acknowledge the separation between sign and signifier, but also can bridge the very separation they create and thus provide access to the reality of Buddhist religious truth.

From poststructuralism this issue moves to the concept of antistructure, which DAVID BARNHILL takes as the central point in his analysis of the Japanese poet, Bashō. From the famous seventeenth-century poet's travel diaries, Barnhill shows that Bashō depicted himself as passing as a wayfarer through a world containing structures for secular and sacred life. Barnhill argues that Bashō selected the voice of a pilgrim in order to emphasize a state of being "in between"—like a bat that is somehow both a mouse and a bird—as a metaphor for the life journey of the human soul among the fixed verities in the Buddhist universe.

In a third piece of literary criticism, MARK MORRIS looks at recent English-language scholarship on the *Genji monogatari*. He recalls the difficulty Western interpreters found in placing Lady Murasaki's work within the literary canon when Arthur Waley's translation appeared in 1925. Morris shows that recent Western critics and scholars have employed psychoanalytic theory to cast the *Genji monogatari* as an account of Prince Genji's pursuit of self, although in the narrative it is women who are the objects of his desire. Morris endorses this psychoanalytic perspective and concludes that the book's attraction derives from the mirror-like surface of Prince Genji's character, which is free from any hint of self-awareness. Yet, the women Genji pursued and readers of the *Genji monogatari* are drawn by a common quest to understand the Shining Prince's motives and desire.

NEIL L. WATERS leaves literary criticism for administrative history, but still discusses Japan. He looks into local government during the years 1888 to 1890, roughly midway through Emperor Meiji's reign (1868–1912). He describes the efforts of central government authorities to regularize local self-government in these years and argues that the Meiji central government's policies had the effect of undercutting the growth of local democratic institutions. He concludes these changes formed part of a second transition in Meiji history, which, while not as significant as the restoration itself, still shifted the balance of power to the central government. After 1890, the central authorities, no longer bound by the constraints of real local

self-rule, launched a sustained program, with profound long-term effects for Japan, to subordinate the interests of citizens to those of the nation-state.

This issue's fifth and final article, also on questions of modern state-building in Asia, shifts attention to China. JOHN FITZGERALD reviews the approaches used by the Nationalist Party in the 1920s with those favored by the Chinese Communist Party. He points out that while most interpreters have stressed the ideological differences between the two, another perspective reveals that both shared a commitment to nationalism and a faith in the power of political revolution as the means to achieve their goals. He suggests that the failure to achieve a true revolution in state power during the mid-1920s came not, as most historians would have us believe, as a consequence of the ideological clash between the Nationalists and Communists, but rather because both parties were acting on misconceptions about the Chinese people's notions concerning nationalism and the role of the state.