Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan.
By Laura Nenzi. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008. Pp. 260.
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Laura Nenzi's *Excursions in Identity* is a well researched and extremely insightful book that vividly illustrates the ways in which travel afforded individuals in Edo period Japan the opportunity to transcend the everyday, engage idiosyncratically with landscape, and refashion their very identities. This book is a significant contribution to a growing body of English language scholarship on travel in early modern Japan, one that is especially welcome because her focus on the experience of the individual traveler makes it complementary with prior studies. Nenzi offers a "bottom-up" view that adds a new perspective to Constantine Vaporis's study of the sociopolitical infrastructure regulating travel in his *Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan* (Harvard University Press, 1994). Like Jilly Traganou's *The Tōkaidō Road: Traveling and Representation in Edo and Meiji Japan* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), Nenzi is concerned with the range of ways in which journeys and the sites encountered en route may be given meaning, but she does not approach these representations at the level of the "social subjectivities" that frame Traganou's analysis. Insofar as she examines the individual's travel experience, Nenzi's approach is similar to Herbert Plutschow's *A Reader in Edo Period Travel* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2006), which offers a series of detailed portraits of male travelers and their journeys along with a provocative argument about the development of "Tokugawa enlightenment." Yet Nenzi's approach is more synthetic and thematic than Plutschow's; also setting her work apart is an attention to the gender of the travelers and consideration of many travelogues by women.

Nenzi begins her study by introducing the idea of "malleable space," a key concept for her analysis of travel in Edo period Japan. She argues that a multiplicity of discourses (chiefly political, religious, and lyrical) encoded space in early modern Japan, making it amenable to selective construction by individual travelers. Whereas official maps produced by the Tokugawa shogunate privileged major highways, post stations, and barriers, other cartographic representations emphasized distinct elements and suggested alternative itineraries. Poetic associations in the form of *utamakura*, for example, might be the basis for a literary ordering of space, while mandala maps served a different range of purposes, offering other trajectories of movement and perhaps even engendering other temporalities. Even within each of the three major domains of discourse Nenzi delineates, she sees a world that was itself far from uniform. She uses the example of verbs of motion (*kudaru* and *noboru*) appearing in contemporary travel regulations, memoirs, and essays to show that notions of center and periphery were relative and in flux. Throughout the book, Nenzi makes the case for a great deal of individual agency in selecting one's particular mode of engagement with space, seeing even such word choices as a "conscious assertion of a personal spatial hierarchy" (p. 26), and arguing that literarily minded travelers had the freedom to choose which of several potential poetic or cultural references to foreground. This emphasis on the creative and associative autonomy of the individual traveler marks a significant departure from the presentation of *utamakura*-based literary travel that we see, for example, in Plutschow's *A Reader in Edo Period Travel*, where prescribed modes of appreciation are held to leave little room for autonomous engagement with the landscape.[1] While some may wonder just how much conscious "challenging" of "the monopoly that the Tokugawa strove to

1 Plutschow made similar arguments in a Japanese book published the year before; see *Edo no tabi nikki* 江戸の旅日記. Tokyo: Shūeisha 集英社, 2005.

enforce upon the landscape" (p. 43) occupied the minds of the travelers Nenzi introduces, the range of responses she presents is compelling, and readers cannot but be convinced that the competing discourses she so vividly outlines constituted a defining feature of travel for individuals in the Edo period.

The disconnect between the official idealization of a population tied to the land and the reality of widespread travel is a feature of Edo life that Constantine Vaporis discusses at length in *Breaking Barriers*. Nenzi likewise details the porousness of travel restrictions in the Tokugawa period, but examines the topic from the vantage point of institutions and individuals who asserted their own variant regulations and interpretations. Focusing on religious travel, Nenzi describes the intermittent efforts shrines and temples made to claim their independence as spaces beyond shogunal jurisdiction, seeing these as evidence of a countervailing framework she terms "the logic of compassion" (p. 46). She shows how religious institutions, motivated in part by potential monetary gains, catered to female pilgrims in targeted ways: erecting special halls for them, establishing specific times of year when women's pilgrimage was permitted, or advertising their efficacy for bestowing children. In Nenzi's view, this conflicting set of rules meant "travelers, including women, saw an opportunity to select the interpretation that fit them best" (p. 66). The ease and autonomy with which travelers were able to do so remains open to question, but Nenzi's elucidation of the competing logics that alternatively permitted or forbade the travel of women is cogent, and she convincingly shows how religious institutions were selective and creative in their response to official prohibitions.

Many scholars who have written on early modern travel, from Hino Tatsuo to Itasaka Yōko, have observed that quite apart from the charms of their intended destinations, journeys held a particular attraction for Edo individuals because they allowed a temporary transcendence of the strictures that shaped everyday home life. In the second section of her study, Nenzi frames this liberating potential of travel in terms of the redefinition of identities. Recreational travel, she argues, became the occasion for nothing less than personal re-creation, an outcome that had especial importance for women: "By exploiting the possibilities embedded in bodies, movements, and narratives, women became able to compensate some of the limitations to which they were subject at home" (p. 72). Her focus is on travel during the early modern period, but in analyzing the adaptive ways in which women made use of various gaps in legislative regulations, physical gaps in barriers, or marginal social positions to attain freedom of movement, she sees a connection with such medieval figures as the *asobime*. Alongside the possibilities afforded by the status of itinerant entertainer, taking the tonsure was another corporeally-mediated option that increased the mobility of medieval and early modern women alike, and strategic subterfuge – whether adopting the guise of a man or masquerading as a nun – provided another means to evade mobility restrictions. Echoing her discussion of the individual traveler's ability to select from various systems that imposed meaning upon a given landscape, Nenzi argues that female travelers were able to empower themselves because they were acutely aware "of the multiplicity of discourses and spatial hierarchies intersecting over the landscape and consciously selected which to respect and which to defy" (p. 91).

In her discussion of the journeys undertaken and inscribed by early modern individuals, Nenzi argues that authorship of travelogues further expanded these possibilities of personal re-creation; that "educated engagements with the landscape" not only permitted those of high status the chance to affirm their position, but also gave wealthy peasants and townspeople the opportunity to overcome their lower status, especially in the latter half of the Edo period. Nenzi is particularly attentive to gender and class-based differences between the individual authors, emphasizing the importance of such factors in shaping the contours of each traveler's encounter with the landscape. Her examination of a wide range of women's travel narratives leads her to conclude that they often "chose to conceal their opinions behind the veils of literary tradition" (p. 94), a tendency she explains in terms of their preference for the Heian age and its putative "tradition of relative feminine authority"

(p. 97). Whereas a female traveler might frame Utsunoyama in terms of its fame as a classical literary topos, for example, a male traveler might focus on famous battles that had been fought on the site. Yet Nenzi also introduces travelers who transgressed the gendered associations she identifies, which leads her to conclude that "the open road and the blank page were flexible areas where travelers could either polish their gendered differences or overcome them altogether by finding common ground in the embrace of literary heritage" (p. 101). Readers may wonder about the extent to which certain features that Nenzi claims as gendered were specifically encoded as such or if "female agency" (p. 99) was indeed the ultimate referent of the travelers' recollections of celebrated Heian poetic sites.[2] On occasion, this assumed equation of Heian with femininity appears to color Nenzi's interpretation of her sources. She quotes the author of a preface to Kikuchi Tamiko's record of her trip to Enoshima as affirming the naturalness of contemporary women's use of the archaic literary idiom: "Women so far have followed this path" (p. 117). In fact, however, here the preface's author is marveling that the nineteenth-century text's female author was able to write so successfully using elegant archaic diction: "One wonders how a (mere) woman could attain this level" (*ikade onna no mi nite kaku made wa tadorareken*). Nenzi's attention to a truly wide range of female authors of travelogues is welcome, for by referencing figures such as Arakida Reijo and Hara Saihin, who wrote in the mode of literati, and by seeking out the accounts that a host of more obscure female travelers produced, she has shown the complexity and diversity of women's travel writing in the Edo period. Still, whether painted in terms of acceptance or transgression, the underlying schema of Heian = feminine is one that deserves further complication, and here work such as Tomiko Yoda's *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Construction of Japanese Modernity* (Duke University Press, 2004) would be worthwhile to engage.

In her third and final section, Nenzi discusses how a combination of factors in the second half of the Edo period brought travel within the reach of a wider range of the population and further expanded the set of discourses that gave meaning to the landscape. She offers particularly insightful readings of travel guides (some of which have not yet been set in movable type), pointing out, for example, the way that the palindromic presentation of the early forerunner *Shokoku yasumi kaibun no ezu* set the stage for a new democratized approach to travel that displaced a single master narrative in favor of the individual traveler's independently charted journey. With the eighteenth century came wider dissemination of textual sources such as guides and primers as well as visual materials such as *ukiyoe* prints and *sugoroku* games: sources Nenzi helpfully situates in their role as "inventories" or agents of "cultural imprinting" (p. 128). These imparted not only the practical information needed to undertake a journey but also instilled the literary and cultural knowledge that enabled a new group of travelers to participate in a mode of travel that had thus far been foreclosed to them.

Moreover, Nenzi shows how this process made space even more malleable by promoting new commercial modes of engagement with the landscape. A journey could be redefined in terms of the pursuit of a series of local products, and sites along the way could be evaluated in terms of their accommodation of consumer desires. Nenzi illustrates the incursion of commerce with a fascinating look at the elaborate variety of services provided to pilgrims at sacred sites by both religious organizations and local entrepreneurs, and the occasional disputes that arose between these forces. She situates the increasingly widespread production of amulets, local products, and other commodities that could be purchased by travelers as an expansion of established historical and lyrical modes of engagement. Commercialism, in other words, offered new possibilities at familiar locations, and

2 The specific literary references invoked by the travelers are also open to question; the poem Arakida Reijo composes (p. 105) surely refers primarily to Fujiwara no Shunzei's poem (Suzukagawa kiri no furuki no marukibashi kore mo ya koto no ne ni kayou ran); the poem an anonymous female traveler wrote in 1767 plays on the additional meaning of *chitose* as "crane," and in its final words probably recalls Fujiwara no Kintō's poem in the *Hyakunin isshu* more than Ariwara no Narihira's at Yatsuhashi (pp. 112–13).

travelers were increasingly able to appropriate a site through consumption: "Tangible objects and local specialties had become the material equivalents of a quotation, the commodified counterparts of an intellectual, intertextual engagement" (p. 156). Nenzi includes in her analysis the related phenomenon of simulacra, smaller-scale copies of sacred and other sites that were constructed in Edo, such as the Meguro Mt. Fuji (written with the wryly chosen orthography 不二, meaning "peerless" or "the one and only"). These allowed those women, children, and others who could not make the journey the chance to visit.

Alongside the acquisition of physical icons of the site or the consumption of local gastronomic specialties, the new commercialized recreation of the late Edo period permitted the proliferation of some further forms of corporeal engagement with the landscape: erotic and therapeutic travel. Analogous to the way in which the literary traveler appropriated the landscape through the recollection of *utamakura*, or the tourist acquired *meibutsu*, "interaction (and intercourse) with local prostitutes served [as] a way of evaluating the worth, sampling the flavor, and appropriating the essence of an unfamiliar space" (p. 167). Nenzi concludes the main body of her work with a discussion of journeys undertaken to Ikaho and other hot springs resorts, showing how bathing, like sexual intercourse or consumption of local products, was another means of physically engaging with a site – one that had special potency given the particular features of the bath's role as a source of rejuvenation, its status as a space apart from the everyday, and its equalizing effect on fellow bathers. Drawing upon a variety of little-known records of such travels, she shows how a traveler might undertake a trip to bathe at a hot springs resort to fulfill commercial, therapeutic, recreational, or historical aims, and perhaps more importantly that these were not mutually exclusive. By thus bringing together at one site the various modes of encoding and engagement with landscape that she has illuminated in the course of the book, Nenzi's discussion of bathing trips serves as a fitting conclusion to her study.

Excursions in Identity is a model of logical thinking, elegant structure, and lucid writing. Nenzi's prose is engaging and has a real stylistic flare. There are but one or two misplaced or missing macrons, a few errors in romanization (*Menqiu* for *Mengqiu*, p. 124), and a handful of misspelled proper names (Asahi Monzaemon instead of Bunzaemon, p. 150; Oguri Hankan instead of Hangan, p. 174; Sen no Rikkyū instead of Rikyū, p. 178), etc. Infelicities are minor and generally do not compromise Nenzi's insightful analyses; those scholars who are interested in reading the Japanese glosses she provides will likely be able to surmise that "kakikuratsu" should be "kakikurasu" (p. 78), "hisasaka" should be "isasaka" (p. 85), and "derarуru" should be "iderarуru" (p. 126). On very few occasions, Nenzi gives terms that seem to be used in their classical senses a more modern gloss; the exclamatory particle *kana*, for example, is translated as a speculative question (pp. 151, 176), the adjective *okashi* (usually meaning "charming" or "affecting") is translated as "strange" (p. 118), and the readings of *waka* poetry are occasionally flawed by improper parsing of lexical items (*katanari no waka nado kikedo koto no ha no hana wa nioi no mijikeru mono o* should be *katanari no wakana to kikedo koto no ha no hana wa nioi no michikeru mono o*; p. 118). Yet on balance, Nenzi's translations are careful, accurate, and highly readable.

Nenzi's work is an important contribution to our understanding of travel in Edo Japan that will be essential reading for anyone interested in the popular culture, literature, and daily life of the period. One of the great strengths of *Excursions in Identity* is how Nenzi carefully selects a richly complementary set of primary materials, offering close readings of them that resonate within and across chapters. In order to showcase various modes of engagement with landscape, for example, she discusses how the political, religious, and lyrical representations conceived of a single site, Mt. Fuji, which she argues "could simultaneously embody a political statement, a cosmic diagram, and a cultural paradigm" (p. 45). Over the remainder of the book, Nenzi continues to build on these observations, adding further portraits to her gallery of Mt. Fuji's various guises that show it reconfigured by turns as a site

of commercialized recreation or erotic dalliance. The result is a nuanced and rewardingly detailed picture of the multiplicity of possibilities that could be discovered or created on the open road.

A New East Asia: Toward a Regional Community.
By Kazuko Mori and Kenichiro Hirano, eds. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008. Pp. 238. ISBN 10: 9971693887; 13: 978-9971693886.
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Professors Kazuko Mori and Kenichiro Hirano have compiled a thought-provoking volume on recent developments and debates about "East Asia." The volume is the product of an ongoing project of Waseda University's Center of Excellence for the Creation of Contemporary Asian Studies (COE-CAS) led by Professor Mori, with funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education and Science. Both the larger project and this volume's nine chapters add to an ongoing and increasingly complex debate about East Asian community and regionalism, as well as the study of East Asia. As their opening preface explains, the Waseda project has been motivated not just by a desire to make sense of the driving forces and tensions of the "New East Asia," but also by more than a little dissatisfaction with the ways that the subject has been thus far approached and studied.

The strength of this volume lies especially in an approach that may be best characterized as outside-in – that is, it is an approach that (mostly) speaks from the periphery. For example, the authors highlight actors, perspectives, and issues that are often marginalized by politics, power, and scholarship. In this sense, the volume is not just about East Asia's internal tensions and dynamics but also its relationship with a larger world structure and system. In particular, this reader is reminded of a point also made in Peter Katzenstein's *A World of Regions* (2005). While themes and emphases notably diverge from some of Katzenstein's, the authors in varied ways make clear the point that the "New East Asia" has very much been shaped and constrained by the material and knowledge structures that have characterized the "American Imperium."[1]

Indeed, this theme is repeated across otherwise diverse topics. Whether the topic is Asian scholarship, Asian nationalisms, Japan's role in the regional order, Korea's predicament as a middle power (in more ways than one), China's public diplomacy, capitalism, globalization, "non-traditional" security, or Asian values – most chapters highlight efforts to define and construct both East Asia and the roles and identities of individual states and actors in relation to those established structures. With one or two notable exceptions, chapters also tend to contain an implicit, if not explicit, critique of the incentive structures, value systems, and "institutionalized academic knowledge"[2] that have been especially shaped by American power and scholarship.

Appropriately, the volume begins with Kazuko Mori's chapter on "Asian Studies" as it sets up key ideas and points of debate that become centralizing points for the rest of the volume. In tracing the history and significance of both "Asia" and "Asian Studies," his chapter highlights two points that are repeated in other chapters. The first is the challenge of understanding "Asia" given the diverse and often competing national perspectives within it. Mori, like most of the volume's contributors, sees unity and value in "Asia" as both topic and approach, but it is a unity that must also reconcile and accommodate the many different perspectives and experiences within it. As Rozman's

1 Peter Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

2 Naoshi Yamawaki cited in Mori Kazuko's chapter, p. 6.