

the outside world? And finally, to what extent is the novel an autobiographic account of Su Xuelin's fascinating life? Ultimately we do not know the answer. But the readers of Barbara Hoster's book will know one thing with certainty, namely that the author has accomplished an impressive feat in the analysis of this interesting novel, its perplexing author and of the contradictory and truly revolutionary times in which it was created.

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TERRY KAWASHIMA:

*Itineraries of Power: Texts and Traversals in Heian and Medieval Japan.* (Harvard East Asian Monographs.) xiii, 240 pp. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. £31.95. ISBN 978 0 674 97052 6. doi:10.1017/S0041977X1800040X

For some time now, premodern Japanese literary studies in English has been characterized by a certain expansiveness, with works ranging from transhistorical examinations of shifting themes and tropes to critical-theoretical interpretations that draw primary texts into broader discussions. Exceptions notwithstanding, the days of exhaustive studies of single authors or texts have all but ended. But in the move from philology to sociology there is always a risk that literariness itself goes unheeded. Enter Terry Kawashima's study of tropes of movement in classical and medieval Japan. Spanning a multiplicity of temporalities, literary genres, and geographical locations, *Itineraries of Power* produces a compelling argument about the nature of power, one that emerges from sustained engagement with the details of diverse texts.

As she explains in her introduction, Kawashima is not interested in a "blanket theory of movement" but rather in the ability of "movement-as-trope" to signify "a range of conditions and relations of power" (p. 7). Movement in a text can be physical (the story of an exiled courtier) or metaphoric (the shifting registers in which this story of exile is narrated), and Kawashima attends especially to those moments when both types are present. Positioned in this way at the crossroads of "literal and literary movements" (p. 2), Kawashima's approach unites textual analysis with extratextual critique.

The four succeeding chapters proceed in rough chronological order, each devoted to the intersection of a particular text or figure with a critical idea. Chapter 1 explores what *Yamato monogatari* (c. mid-tenth century) reveals about the relationship between movement and gender. Pushing back against conventional wisdom that the social, political, and even sartorial immobility of Heian court women signifies their subordination, Kawashima instead construes this "static female positionality" as a critique of male court society (p. 18). For example, *Yamato's* multiple stories about the post-abdication wanderings of Emperor Uda (r. 887–897) portray him as unmoored, in contrast to his female poetic interlocutors who maintain their positions as the political world lurches around them. In the context of an early-tenth-century court that sought political, territorial, and cultural consolidation, *Yamato* can be read as a "textual space from which to challenge dominant discourses" (p. 57).

Chapter 2 carries the discussion of the subversion of court authority into the realm of poetics and exile. Here Kawashima focuses on the courtier and poet Fujiwara no Sanekata (c. 958–998), who late in life served as provincial governor of Mutsu, a frontier area in the northeast where the interests of native peoples,

military deputies, and court authorities clashed. Kawashima explores how Sanekata uses *utamakura* (“poem pillows”, place names that attained charged symbolic value through citation and semantic play) not only to cast the Mutsu landscape in the image of the court imaginary, but also to smooth over the frontier tensions amidst which he lived. Through this “soft conquest” (p. 81), Sanekata models an aesthetic strategy that would help ensure the continued political relevance of court culture well into the warrior-dominated medieval period.

Chapter 3 wades deeper into the issue of courtier–warrior relations through a discussion of the Genpei wars (1180–85) and their narration in *Heike monogatari*, especially the Kakuichibon variant (1371). Kawashima focuses specifically on Taira no Shigehira (1157–1185), who was captured by the Minamoto and marched to his execution in the east. Participating in a time-honoured literary tradition, he composes *waka* (vernacular poetry) and *kanshi* (classical Chinese poetry) to record the travails of his captive journey. But by unravelling familiar tropes and deliberately misinterpreting well-known citations along the way, he ends up advocating for the inevitability of his own death. Shigehira hence becomes a cautionary tale about the effective use of texts in the age of warrior dominance.

Lastly, chapter 4 discusses a series of origin narratives about Suwa Shrine found in *Shintōshū* (c. 1350s), arguing provocatively for a uniquely medieval notion of power that emphasizes multiplicity and omnipresence. Particular attention is given to “Suwa engi”, a lengthy narrative that tells and retells the story of Kōga no Saburō as he travels throughout the realm and the underworld in search of his beloved Kasuga. The repetition of Saburō’s wanderings informs Kawashima’s notion of “ubiquitous presence”, a “textual effect [that] resists and rejects the possibility of one-timeness” (p. 182). This takes on additional meaning when it is revealed that Saburō is actually the Great Suwa Deity and that his associates constitute a vast network of affiliated deities. The “elsewhereness” embodied by Saburō – his endless traversals of different territories – and the way this figures prominently in shrine-origin narratives indicates a model of power quite different from the centre-periphery paradigm. Suwa, Kawashima argues, “sought to exhibit power not through a beckoning, but through attempts at ambient omnipresence” (p. 196).

In her careful readings of primary sources, Kawashima succeeds in building a compelling argument about power and movement. Yet after finishing the book, I found myself wishing for a more robust synthesis of these moving pieces. Instead of a conclusion, Kawashima opts for an epilogue in which she revisits her arguments through a brief semantic analysis of the terms *chinza*, *chinju*, and *chinkon* (all are acts of fixing, taming, and allaying that which is itinerant). This riff nicely reinforces the modulation and “doubling back” at work throughout the monograph, but it also leaves several points underdeveloped or unaddressed. These include the seeming centrality of “softness” in formations of courtier authority (Sanekata’s “soft conquest”), the specific meaning of ambience (as opposed to ubiquity or omnipresence) in the diagnosis of the structure of power in “Suwa engi”, the recurrent yet ambiguous designation “Heian and medieval Japan” (are these continuous, contiguous, or simultaneous?), and the appeal to “premodern or modern, Japanese or otherwise” (p. 15). Further exploration of these points would have been welcome.

That said, Kawashima has produced a study of unconventional breadth and uncommon insight. I have no doubt that her thoughtful and creative traversals across the territories of premodern literary studies will provide her readers with a new understanding of how text can be used to structure and restructure the world.

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