To take this a step further, her book could have benefited from some appeal to poststructural approaches to literary analysis which are usually more interested in destabilizing the readings of texts rather than presenting them as unproblematic wholes. The freedom that this more theoretical level of analysis would have afforded Wang would in turn have enabled her to question the connection between the regional and the national that she argues seems to be at the heart of Jia Pingwa's whole literary project, not to mention his life. Is it really possible for the author to at once be so localized and idiosyncratic in his depictions and still be "narrating China"? This question begs to be asked and addressed, in my opinion. An attendant concern which I hope will expose how ideologically constructed these notions of locality and nationhood are is Wang's treatment of the concept of "native place" or "nativism" 鄉土. Wang's anatomy of this important concept virtually stops at the (mainland) Chinese border, while the term itself in Chinese language discourse most assuredly does not. What of "nativism" in Taiwan? The historical link between the usage of the term in China and that in Taiwan is fairly clear (as is the link from China back into Japan and even back as far as Germany with the terms *heimatkunst* and *heimatroman*). Are we simply to accept that the nativism of Taiwan (either pre- or post-war) is simply different from the far-flung examples that have occurred in mainland China through the decades or are we in fact limiting our scholarly imaginations by allowing them to be inscribed and proscribed by the political boundaries of contemporary China?

Finally, the use by Jia Pingwa of what Wang describes as an "ethnographic" style of narrative writing is an interesting and fruitful one. However, I found Wang's own employment of it also by and large unselfconscious. What would have been an interesting addition would have been a thematization of the ways in which Jia's own depiction, and his utilization of the ethnographic lens, raise problems of authenticity and representation. It is curious to me, for example, why it is that ethnographers themselves, when engaged in their best-effort inscriptions of actual experiences they observe and participate in during their fieldwork, are often at pains to foreground the logocentric biases of their own work. How much more so the literary work which, while interested in social reality, is itself a fictitious concoction of characters, places and events and therefore an additional step removed from whatever this "reality" may be? One absolute last nitpicking detail: this is a lengthy study and could have been economized in certain key places. To name two: I felt the interview could have been edited to be more succinct and better highlight Jia Pingwa's most relevant insights; I also felt the bibliography, which contained many extraneous reference items: Watson's translation of the *Shiji*; Wu Jingzi's *Rulin Waishi*; Philip Kuhn's *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*; Christine Gilmartin's *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*; Mark Currie's *Postmodern Narrative Theory*; Mary Ann Doane's work on 1940s women's film, to list only a few, nowhere surface, either explicitly or implicitly, in Wang's study. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that these concerns of mine, especially the more salient ones outlined above, are more the product of having done my best to carefully read a thought-provoking and challenging, and of course path-breaking, study of one of China's most important living authors. This is an outstanding work and should serve as a model, with some caveats, for further studies to come.

Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age.
By William Wayne Farris. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. Pp. 372. ISBN 10: 0824829735; 13: 978-0824829735. $48.00.

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The population history of Japan is an especially rich area for study, but it is also both a challenging and a frustrating one. The Tokugawa period is well represented by village records, which allow

detailed family reconstitution studies equivalent to those undertaken with European parish registers. The population censuses and vital statistics of the twentieth century are some of the best in the world. The population of Japan may have been about 12.25 millions in 1600; it was 31.25 millions in 1721, 29.87 millions in 1792, and 36.53 millions in 1875. There was a phase of growth in the seventeenth century followed by stagnation in the eighteenth century, it would appear. The task of outlining the causes of this demographic cycle has attracted the attention of many distinguished scholars in both Japan and the United States. One of the questions they ask focuses on the beneficial consequences of slow population growth for subsequent industrialization and economic transformation. It is clear that Japan is an especially fertile ground for these debates, especially as they relate to long-term changes in economic, demographic and social structures.

This study takes us to the period before Tokugawa, to 1150–1600, and the course of population change in medieval Japan. The sources for this exercise are, to say the least, fragmentary and local. This is an area for the bold; assumptions must be made and justified; speculations are everywhere. On the whole, William Wayne Farris copes very well. He is experienced (the author of *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*, Cambridge, MA, 1985), careful, and yet decisive in his efforts to establish some order out of the chaos. I read this book as an historical demographer with a passing interest in the Japanese case, not as a specialist historian. I found it both impressive and convincing, yet at times strangely irritating. Why had certain opportunities for demographic generalization and illustration not been taken?

Farris sets out the wider problem and existing approaches in his introduction. Three possibilities are suggested: (1) the hypothesis of continuous and sizable growth; (2) the theory of practically no growth; and (3) the assumption of growth starting in the middle. Under (1), the Japanese population was thought to have increased from 4.4 millions in 1100 to 18.5 millions in 1600. But under (2) the 1600 population was reduced to 10–12 millions and that of 750 to only 6 millions consistent with an annual growth rate of 0.08–0.10 percent. The name of Hayami Akira is associated with this "no growth" theory. Farris favours (3), Kito Hiroshi's "assumption of growth starting in the middle". Specifically, he argues that population grew from 5.5–6.3 millions in 1150 to 15–17 millions in 1600, with almost all of the growth coming after 1280. His figure for 1280 is 5.5–6.0 millions in rural Japan with a further 200,000 in urban areas, mainly Kyoto, making 5.7–6.2 millions in total. The causes of the static population between 1150 and 1280 are the apocalyptic trio of disease, famine and war: "endemic and epidemic diseases, death-dealing famines, and hungry and abusive samurai raised mortality and lowered fertility for a population just barely surviving" (p. 66). But a new era of growth began to dawn in the thirteenth century so that by 1450 the population had reached 9.6–10.5 millions giving a 4–5 millions increase from 1280. The causes of this growth were clear: fewer famines and epidemics (especially smallpox, measles and influenza), and some commercial and agricultural expansion. Farris turns next to the vexed question of the 1600 population. He believes that the true population was closer to 15–17 millions than to 12.3 millions (the revised estimate made by Hayami in 1975), a range that has as its maximum Saito Osamu's new estimate of 17 millions. Thus the Japanese population continued to grow at a substantial rate during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although that rate may have varied among the regions and islands. He is aware of the implications of raising the estimate for 1600. The demographic and economic growth of the early Tokugawa period will appear more muted, while that of late medieval Japan will be cast in a rather more positive light. Again, Farris focuses on mortality due to diseases, war losses and food shortages, but he also reviews supporting background evidence on agricultural and commercial activity (including urbanization), and family life.

Farris's "Epilogue" draws together and summarizes his various conclusions. There are three important tables showing his preferred estimates for population size and total arable land (both 1150–1721), and rice yields (730–1720). These are accompanied by some well-made observations. First, Farris reminds us that although his calculations will be the subject of discussion and revision,

it is remarkable that such data exist for medieval Japan and that some informed judgements can be made concerning economic and demographic change. This was not a "Dark Age" in all senses. Second, 1150 did represent a turning point with signs of population expansion thereafter, and although this was not comparable with the "epoch of strong demographic, agricultural, and economic growth" between 1600 and 1721, it was not negligible. Third, there may be some similarities with aspects of the European medieval experience, at least as far as the agricultural and population expansion between 1000 and 1250 is concerned, but that there was no single, uniform pathway to "modernity". Japan went its own way.

Japan's Medieval Population is certainly an important and thought-provoking study, especially for an English-speaking audience. It is self-critical yet also prepared to develop arguments, to make its opinions felt. Whilst accepting the level of care and attention taken in discussing the available evidence a case might be made for greater demographic and comparative awareness. Farris repeatedly discusses the roles of disease, famine and war. These are Malthus's "positive" checks, his "misery and vice". They tend to act in the form of demographic crises; that is relatively short periods during which deaths far exceed births. Farris provides lists of the years in which famines were reported, when there were damaging military campaigns with extensive "collateral" damage, and when epidemics struck (smallpox, influenza, and measles in particular, but no bubonic plague). European historical demographers have begun to question the longer-term significance of demographic crises. Certainly, if such crises are large and very frequent the consequences will be limiting for economic and demographic growth, but knowing only their dates does not help us assess their impact. We also need to look at the other side of the coin; Malthus's "preventive" checks which relate to fertility, especially the influence of marriage patterns (age and extent), as well as fertility within marriage and net reproduction. If the impact of demographic crises was so important in medieval Japan it suggests that fertility was probably rather high, otherwise the population would have passed into terminal decline. Early and universal marriage would certainly have helped. But as Farris regularly points out, we have no direct evidence on Japanese fertility in the medieval period. Even the evidence on mortality needs close critical scrutiny. What exactly do those temple death registers tell us? Irregular incidence, seasonality, gender bias: these are some of the issues, and there is no "at risk of dying population" which would allow mortality rates to be estimated. Even nineteenth-century death registers, which have been analysed with the utmost demographic sophistication, tend to give improbably low survival chances.

Farris makes a good job of using what he can find, but he is most reluctant to "borrow" from other periods and places. Historical demographers regularly use analogies (they borrow from the usually well-documented Scandinavian experience, for instance), they build conceptual models, they compare across time and space, and they check for internal consistency and logical plausibility. This is not the road for Farris; he misses opportunities for insight and illumination thereby. Here are three examples. In *Modelling the Middle Ages: the History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford, 2001), John Hatcher and Mark Bailey consider economic and demographic change during the period 1100 to 1500. They discuss size and structure, performance, alternative "what if" scenarios, and competing theories (Marx and Malthus included). Japan's medieval economic-demographic relations might have benefited from a similar approach. On page 10 Farris has the following observation: "The only quantifiable figures for fertility originate from the early eighth century and are very high: 45–50 births per thousand population. Infant mortality to age five was 50 or even 60 percent, leading to a life expectancy at birth of twenty-five at most". Such high levels of infant and child mortality are all but impossible to sustain. They would lead to life expectancies at birth closer to 20 than 25 years and require remarkably high levels of fertility, which a crude birth rate of 45 to 50 per 1000 would entail. Since the Japanese population clearly did survive until 1150 and beyond, and without the aid of substantial mass in-migration, demographic logic suggests that early-age mortality is likely to have been lower, life expectancy at birth at 25 years or above, and that fertility

was somewhat less heroic. Rather, as it may have been during the Roman Empire. Surprisingly, Farris allows himself only one graph, which shows annual figures for cultivated land on one estate between 1179 and 1197 (p. 61). No effort is made to illustrate the various time-series of population estimates (Hayami, Kito, Saito, Farris) and their implications, taking comparators from the Tokugawa and China, for example. This would certainly have aided understanding, even for the non-specialist, as well as highlighting the implications of different interpretive arguments.

This said, Farris has given us an interesting, carefully argued account, one that will certainly stimulate further debate.

Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500–1300.
By Bruce L. Batten. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. Pp. 183. ISBN 10: 0824830; 13: 978-0824830298.

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This work, by a specialist in ancient Japanese history, takes a multifaceted view of the history of Hakata spanning a period from ancient to early medieval times (a span the author specifies as covering the years 500 to 1300). The author's original research topic was Dazaifu, which he studied in terms of a "gateway" in Japan's frontier. The present work uses "Hakata" rather than "Dazaifu" in its title, though the Hakata that is studied here is not confined to Hakata (Hakata-tsu 博多津) in the narrow sense, that was formed in the course of the transition between the ancient and medieval periods out of Hakata-hama (博多浜) and Oki no hama (息浜) but rather "Hakata" in the broader sense, which includes the so-called Tsukushi Lodge (Kōrokan 鴻臚館 or Tsukushi no murotsumi 筑紫館), where foreign envoys were accommodated, and Dazaifu, the regional administrative centre. In the review that follows, unless we indicate otherwise, we will use "Hakata" in this broader sense.

The author opens his discussion by posing a number of questions (Introduction):

(a) How and why did Hakata become Japan's gateway? What, in other words, determined the location of Japan's boundaries – geography, politics, or both?
(b) Was all contact with the outside world channeled through this single route, or were there other avenues of communication? If so, how important were they? How and why did communication routes change over time?
(c) What was the actual level of traffic through Hakata or other portals? More broadly, was Japan essentially a closed social system, or was it part of a larger, regional (or global) zone of interactions? How and why did the level of cross-border traffic change over time?
(d) What types of interaction predominated in different historical periods? Was all interaction peaceful, as Fukuoka's self-image implies, or were there periods of tension or war?
(e) Why did "foreigners" come to Japan, and how did the Japanese people deal with them?

In his previous research, the author has discussed the frontiers of Japan in terms of the Daizaifu-Hakata region[1] and the Japanese state, people and culture in terms of frontiers and boundaries.[2] The present publication focuses on interactions rather than boundaries per se, and

1 *Kokkyō no tanjō, Daizaifu kara mita Nihon no genkei* (The Making of Japan's Frontier: Japan's Original Form Seen from Dazaifu). Tokyo: NHK Books, 2001.

2 Batten, Bruce L. *Nihon no "kyōkai": Zenkindai no kokka, minzoku, bunka* (Japan's Boundaries: The Premodern State, People and Culture). Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2000; Batten. *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interaction.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.