

A Tanizaki Feast: The International Symposium in Venice. Edited by ADRIANA BOSCARO and ANTHONY HOOD CHAMBERS. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1998. xi, 191 pp. \$42.95 (cloth).

Because collections such as this provide multiple perspectives, they resist the singular view of critical assessment. *A Tanizaki Feast* compounds the difficulty by celebrating an author whose literary playfulness also resists narrow classification. The challenge is like the one Bashō faced when he composed a haiku on the Eight Views of Ōmi. His response was to drape a veil of mist over the scene: a whiteness of words that reduced everything to the poet's gaze. No similar solution is possible for a review, and the only recourse is to describe a few of the eighteen views of Tanizaki in this book—with apologies for those left in my obscuring fog.

The essays presented by a diverse group of scholars span an enormous range of methods and topics. One virtue of this volume is that the juxtaposition of approaches in itself creates unexpected connections that deepen the appreciation of Tanizaki's achievement. For example, it is instructive to read the essays by Ken Ito and Kōno Taeko side by side. Ito draws on a narratological framework provided by Genette to examine how the Preface to "Sorrows of a Heretic" shapes our reception of this ostensibly autobiographical work, and to demonstrate that the manipulation of the differing levels of discourse established by the paratextual relationship of preface to story results in a "doubled, self-conscious rhetoric" (p. 32) that transcends the act of confession.

The narratological rigor of Ito's work contrasts with the intensely personal view of Tanizaki's career presented by Kōno, who claims it was a "desire to affirm" that drove Tanizaki to write (p. 117) and shaped the essential features of his literature: the promise of love, masochism, and presentiments. Kōno finds that many of the presentiments expressed in his works were later fulfilled in his life, suggesting that the rage for order so characteristic of him is an extension and a fulfillment of his desire to affirm (p. 123). Yet, as much as her approach differs from Ito's, the essays seem to echo off one another, providing a deeper insight into the links between Tanizaki's obsessions with creative control and narrative manipulation. And this kind of resonance arises from the very structure of the volume.

A related virtue of the collection is that it touches on some topics that have not been treated elsewhere. For example, Donald Keene and Jean-Jacques Tschudin provide an introduction to Tanizaki as a dramatist and to his connections with the *Shinkabuki*. Joanne Bernardi, in one of the more interesting contributions, explores Tanizaki's connection with the Pure Film movement, while Donald Richie elaborates on the adaptations of Tanizaki's fiction to the screen. Yet another topic broached here is Tanizaki's use of illness and metaphors of disease, which William Johnston traces out for us. I mention these essays in passing to indicate how the volume explores issues outside the mainstream of Tanizaki criticism.

The volume is not without flaws. Some of the contributions seem overly reverential, even for a celebratory collection, and many essays are too short to provide the detailed analysis needed to convincingly support their conclusions. Moreover, some important issues, especially Tanizaki's politics, are not adequately engaged. Apart from Suzuki Sadami, who notes in a fine essay that Tanizaki "is, as a cultural critic, among the most politically minded writers of modern Japan" (p. 50), only Anthony Chambers presents an explicitly political reading in his analysis of *The Makioka Sisters*.

Instead, there is a broad tendency to view Tanizaki on aesthetic grounds, valorizing him as a figure of resistance while overlooking the less savory aspects of his conservatism.

These criticisms are minor, arising mainly from a wish to see the contributors develop their ideas at greater length. Given the aims of the symposium, even the occasional lapses into uncritical appreciation are understandable, for critical distance is hard to establish with a writer like Tanizaki. As Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit aptly notes, “the pleasure of reading Tanizaki’s works, then, lies to a great extent in a complicity between narrator and reader, effectively established by the author’s well-honed narratorial devices” (p. 104). Thus, an act of critical imagination is needed to get beyond the allure of Tanizaki’s prose, and the volume on the whole succeeds in engaging his work on equal terms. Indeed, the book provides several models of critical appreciation, notably Howard Hibbett’s elegant essay. Hibbett historicizes Tanizaki’s oeuvre in terms of his personal life and the literary tradition he drew upon, and reveals to us the intricate and precarious equilibrium Tanizaki achieves between the control provided by his mastery of narrative and the anarchy of his comic impulses.

The volume is superbly edited and handsomely produced. The title, however, can only be read ironically for the book is more a sampler than a feast, whetting rather than sating the appetite for Tanizaki’s work. In my view this is what it should do.

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Japan Today. Third edition. By ROGER BUCKLEY. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. xiv, 218 pp. \$49.95.

All too often, a new edition of a book seems like your nerdy cousin Ralph who arrives every summer with a carload of bratty kids to “spend a few days” with your long-suffering family. Fortunately, Roger Buckley’s *Japan Today* more resembles an old college chum who shows up laden with gifts for your kids, a few old stories to reembellish, and a bottle of single malt scotch to share.

His first edition published in 1985 became something of a classic, reprinted three times. An up-dated second edition (1990) was itself somewhat shopworn and long in the tooth (reprinted six times) when he undertook to substantially revise the manuscript, resulting in this latest incarnation.

He has added some fifty pages of insightful and sometimes acerbic analysis of the last two decades of Japanese history to the perspicacious, wide-sweeping analysis of the Allied Occupation and the period up to around 1983. The result is an excellent addition to the scholarship of postwar Japan.

Not surprisingly, the emphasis of Buckley’s analysis has evolved along with Japan’s fortunes. For instance, the title of the fourth chapter has changed from the innocuous “Japan’s external relations” to “Minimalism: hesitancy abroad.” His sixth chapter, “Malaise: contemporary Japan,” leaves little doubt as to what Buckley believes to be Japan’s major challenge in the future. The second edition ended with something of a paean for Japan’s triumph over adversity in the previous four decades: “Pain and national pride have been the real spur. Contemporary Japan has won its way back and more” (second edition, p. 147). In the third edition, the coda is much more ominous: “Yet both the Japanese state and its people must avoid the great illusion of imagining that the past achievements and present benign international