

AJLS Newsletter

Association for Japanese Literary Studies

No. 23 (Spring, 2006)

Edited by Eiji Sekine

AJLS • Purdue University • 640 Oval Drive • W. Lafayette, IN 47907-2039 • USA
765.496.2258 (Tel) • 765.496.1700 (Fax) • esekine@purdue.edu (Email)
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Travel in Japanese Representation Culture: Its Past, Present and Future

July 1-2, 2006

Josai International University, Tokyo, JAPAN

Call for Papers

The 2006 AJLS annual meeting will be held, for the first time, in the summer (July 1-2, 2006) in Japan (at the new Tokyo campus of Josai International University). The conference will be chaired by Professor Mizuta Noriko and organized by Professor Miki Sumito and will feature the theme of travel in Japanese literature and in Japan's representation culture as a whole. From religiously charged pilgrimages to leisure-oriented tourism, traveling has impacted people's lives on various levels from ancient days to the present. With drastic technological changes, the notion of travel today expands itself both in terms of space and time: We can travel to the universe, travel to the micro-cosmos of our own body, and even take a trip to the future. What can and should we discuss about the current expansion of the notion of travel in relationship with its representational tradition?

The mythological image of traveling gods, expressed through the folkloric term of "kishu ryûri 貴種流離," is recurrently recaptured in classical stories focusing on socio-politically motivated transfer of important characters. Tradi-

tional visits to temples and shrines were visitors' expressions of religious faith; literary pilgrimages, visiting well-known places rich in poetic associations, were great literary inspirations for travelers. At the same time, these experiences allowed travelers to discover the joy of traveling itself. From Meiji period on, people took a trip to individually explore new "scenery" so as to appreciate its previously unnoticed beauty. Modern literature was an inspiration for the development of tourism culture.

Today, literature has become an integral part of media culture (together with painting, photography, TV shows, and cinema), which by mass-producing images of fashionable scenes, serves to further enhance the institution of modern tourism. When the government claims that tourism is one of the key areas of Japan's national promotion, and when travel agencies and the media industry work together so as to sell literature as a part of the travel experience, concepts of both travel and literature demand redefinitions as necessary players of today's late consumerist economy.

From this broad interest in the concepts and representations of traveling in Japanese literature, the conference organizers

solicit paper/panel proposals, which can shed new light on this theme. Please consider, in particular, exploring concepts listed in the following as key components constituting this theme:

- Traveler's Expressive Selfhood: i) narrator's points of view and awareness of readers' eyes; ii) gender and travel; iii) oral narrative and strolling minstrels; iv) representations of michiyuki 道行; v) travel and poetic expressions (waka 和歌, renga 連歌, and haikai 俳諧)
- Traveler's Search for Inner Self: i) religious journeys (monomôde 物語, junrei 巡礼, shugyô 修行, kanjin 勧進); ii) travel in coming-of-age novels with the pursuit of a true self; iii) travel literature as a genre of fiction; iv) travel in the genres of utopian literature, fantastic literature, and children's literature
- Traveler's Experiences of Otherness (transfer and border transgression; contact and communication with foreign cultures): i) travel by gods in the Origuchi concepts of "kishu ryûri" and "marebito," as well as political exiles (rural position appointment by the government, demotion, refugee, etc.); ii) expression of borders between past and present, between city and country, between home and abroad, and between dailiness and fantasy; iii) approaches to foreign cultures (acceptance, appropriation, and denial); iv) superior/inferior observer's standpoint (tour of a colonial inspection, accounts by seasonal workers and immigrants); v) discovery of a traveler's own cultural identity through trips to foreign lands; vi) culture shock through school trips, study abroad, international internship, etc.
- Travel in Contemporary Culture: i) media and travel literature; ii) current trend of tourism and literature (sightseeing, search for healing, and eco-tourism); iii) an aging society, traveling, and literature

The proposal deadline is **March 1, 2006**. A 250-letter proposal, together with the

proposal form, should be mailed to: AJLS 2006, Josai International University (Tokyo Kioi-cho Campus), 3-26 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN 102-0094. For inquiries, contact conference administrators (Professors Kawano Yuka, Okada Miyako, or David Luan) by e-mailing at: ajls2006@jiu.ac.jp or by faxing to: 03-6238-1299. **All annual meeting participants must become members in order to present.**

2005 Meeting Report

The fourteenth annual meeting of the Association of Japanese Literary Studies was held at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, on 7, 8, and 9 October 2005. Though the conference took place during what *should* have been the peak of the leaf season in New Hampshire, all three days were, unfortunately, gray and rainy. Nevertheless, the view of Occum Pond from the Dartmouth Outing Club, site of the conference banquet on Saturday night, did have a certain "yuugen" sort of beauty all its own. The banquet was followed by a fascinating keynote lecture by Jordan Sands, titled "From Everyday Life to Print: The Production of Texts in Two Modern Japanese Genres."

The theme of this year's conference was "Reading Material: The Production of Narratives, Genres and Literary Identities"; participants were encouraged to "read" the materiality of their texts as well as the contents. The twenty-five presenters explored the topic by considering a wide range of modern and pre-modern Japanese narratives through their relationships with emerging media (television, film, newspapers, word processors, photography, woodblock printing) as well as evolving cultural conventions and regulations (censorship, business imperatives, "automatic writing"). The presentations spoke to each other in a myriad of interesting ways, and the editors of the conference proceedings antici-

pate a very interesting volume. Contributors will also be contacted directly, but should be reminded that their final essays are due 1 March 2006.

AJLS Membership

The annual fee is \$25.00 for regular, student, and institution members (\$35.00 for overseas members outside North America). Membership provides you with:

- Panel participation for our annual meeting (if your proposal is selected).
- Two newsletters
- One copy of our latest proceedings.
- One free copy of a back or additional current issue of the proceedings if you are a student member.

Inquiries and orders (with checks payable to AJLS) should be sent to the AJLS office. Further information on our activities is available on our website: www.sla.purdue.edu/fil/AJLS.

Princeton will host the 2007 AJLS

Princeton University will host our next year's conference in the Fall of 2007. We are under final negotiation with host candidates for the 2008 conference. If you are interested in hosting an AJLS meeting for 2009 or later, please contact Professor Ann Sherif at: ann.sherif@oberlin.edu or 440.775.8827.

New Proceedings and Back Issues

The new issue of our proceedings, *Landscapes Imagined and Remembered*, has been published. This volume and the following back issues are available. Each copy is \$10.00 for AJLS members and \$15.00 for non-members. Orders should be sent to the AJLS office. (Add \$10 for mailing if you order from outside the North American area.)

Poetics of Japanese Literature: vi, 207pp, 1993.

Revisionism in Japanese Literary Studies, PMAJLS, vol. 2: vi, 336pp., 1996.

Issues of Canonicity and Canon Formation in Japanese Literary Studies, PAJLS, vol. 1: vi, 532 pp., 2000.

Acts of Writing, PAJLS, vol. 2: ix, 428 pp., 2001.

Japan from Somewhere Else, PAJLS, vol. 3: vi, 158 pp., 2002.

Japanese Poeticity and Narrativity Revisited, PAJLS, vol. 4: vi, 344 pp., 2003.

Hermeneutical Strategies: Methods of Interpretation in the Study of Japanese Literature, PAJLS, vol. 4: xiii, 517 pp., 2004

Landscapes Imagined and Remembered, PMAJLS, vol. 6 : vii, 215 pp., 2005

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PAPER/PANEL PROPOSAL FORM

Travel in Japanese Representation Culture

DEADLINE: March 1, 2006

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Institution:

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Please attach your 250-letter proposal to this form and send to: AJLS 2006, Josai International University, 3-26 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan 102-0094.

AJLS
Purdue University
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