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This is an exhaustive survey of Japanese Court poetry in its nature, development and contrast with Western poetry. The greater part of the book is devoted to a description of the development of Court poetry in chronological order, but this is primarily a critical study rather than a literary history. The authors' aim in this volume is "to present Court poetry by using a critical method adapted from modern Western literary studies" (p. vii). This is promising enough; the method the authors advocate here naturally claims our special interest, and, fortunately, we find that our expectations are fully answered, and sometimes surpassed, by the authors' admirable efforts in bringing forth the hidden beauty of our familiar poems taken up and discussed under a new light.

"Analytical" may be the best term for the authors' method which is at once efficient and fruitful. They declare that "modern Western methods of critical analysis are as applicable to all periods of Japanese Court poetry as to our own" and that "Japanese poetry possesses artistic riches comparable to our own" (p. 121). Their analytical technique is not simple but manifold. First there are analyses of images and other formal elements of the poems. For example, on the poem by Fujiwara Yoshitsune:
The Bay of Naniwa:
The water reeds touched with the sunset
Are withered in the frost,
And the choking ice has blocked The passageway of boats to open sea.

the authors comment:

In structural terms the rhetorical technique of Yoshitsune's poem involves, as it were, beginning with the pictorial frame in the first line. Then two sets of two lines follow, the first giving a close-up view, the second implying greater distance. Within each of these parallel pairs of lines there is a line (2, 5) with two nouns joined by the possessive particle and a line (3, 4) with verbs suggesting what happens to the nouns of the other lines. The effect of the lines with verbs is quite similar, since "withered by frost" and "blocked by ice" are parallel in sense as well as form, and frost and ice are closely related natural phenomena. By means of such rhetorical techniques, what is so disjunct in grammar and syntax is given unity by means of parallelism and development in the near-distant relationship of the imagery. (p. 281)

And, in the case of ex-Empress Eifuku's poem on cherry blossoms in the evening:

The evening sun Flickers upon the cherry blossoms With a moment's light,
And though it does not seem to set, Its glowing softly melts away.

we find another aspect of the analytical work. The uniqueness of the poem consists, according to the authors, in its employing a "dialectic." We are meant to understand first 'the brevity of the scene ("a moment's light"), then its timelessness ("does not seem to set"), and once again its change ("melts away").
"The poem argues, although in an altogether pleasant fashion, in order to convince us that this one moment, so brief in time and yet so slowed in the consciousness of the speaker, is very special" (p. 378).

This analytical attitude is carried beyond the formal stage further into the domain of inner meaning and cultural background. Ki no Tomonori's poem:

| Hisakata no | On this day in spring |
| Hikari no dokeki | When the lambent air suffuses |
| Haru no hi ni | Soft tranquility, |
| Shizugokoro naku | Why should the cherry petals flutter |
| Hana no chiru ran | With unsettled heart to earth? |

is quoted as a typical example of Japanese seasonal poetry. In this poem "there is the consciousness of the lover of nature, of the person who regrets its change, and of the person or state of mind that encompasses both. For both are true: it is sad that the flowers should fall, and it is true that man should know they must" (p. 473). We have here two contradictory concepts brought under our consideration, namely, first, the Japanese view of nature more or less characterized by some Buddhist concepts such as the unity of all natural life and the subjection of man to laws true of all nature; and, second, the inevitably human sense of man's separate identity resulting from the idea that man is the only self-conscious being. Such discrepancies between the monism of theory and the dualism of experience are "too fine to be called conflicts and perhaps best termed ironies" (p. 472). This ironic concept of nature and man's place in it, or more exactly, the attitude of "affirmation and acceptance tinged with ironic awareness, which do not exclude the possibility of wit" (pp. 473-74) marks the basic tones of Japanese poetry.

At the basis of the authors' analytical attitude there lies a
critical criterion. Their catholic taste is admirable. We may note, however, a clear preference for complexity to simplicity in the evaluation, which works as a principle in their historical view of Court poetry. As a natural consequence of it, they seem to consider the age of the Shinkokinshu the peak of the development.

On the other hand, an interesting problem arises from this preference in the case of Minamoto Sanetomo's poems. As might be expected, the authors are doubtful whether the poet really deserves the praises some Japanese critics including Saito Mokichi and Masaoka Shiki have lavishly bestowed upon him. They say that "many modern Japanese place such a high value on 'sincerity' that they confuse it with poetic integrity; they confuse biography with art, the man with the speaker of the poem" (p. 333). No mention is made, however, of Kobayashi Hideo whose essay on Sanetomo has fascinated so many readers among us. The reviewer is sure that he is not alone in wishing to have the authors' comment on that clever writing. On the other hand we must pay respectful attention to their opinion that the romantic revival of interest in the Man'yoshu in Edo and Meiji times is, in a sense, "a revival that still blinds many Japanese scholars and readers to the merits of much of their own best poetry" (p. 329).

The comparison drawn by the authors between Japanese and Western poetry in this volume is of much importance, too. Comparison is one of the best means when one has to describe products of one culture for those brought up in another. For example, here is a poem by Ki no Tsurayuki:

Kasugano no
Wakana tsumi ni ya
Shirotae no
Sode furihaete

Do those girls set out
On some excursion for young
shoots,
That they so gaily beckon,
which is, according to the authors, "a pastoral poem that creates an idyllic past" (p. 209), because in the poem the poet presents himself as an observer of the old capital at Nara in its former days and uses the images conveying the feeling of the past. This explanation will suggest a way to a better understanding of the poem to those who are already familiar with Western pastoralism.

Further, the comparative method can be greatly effective in showing the delicate yet radical difference between some apparently similar experiences. Concerning the absence of tragic or epic qualities in Japanese poetry the authors make a typical comparison of this kind. The climax in the Heike Monogatari occurs when, defeated at the battle of Dannoura, the Taira heroes rush to their death in the sea. The metaphor of the maple leaves for the torn red banners in this scene has a corresponding example in western literature, in Book I of Paradise Lost, where Milton employs the image of fallen leaves for the fallen angels lying upon the infernal waves. But there is a difference. In the Heike Monogatari it is the beauty of the red leaves that dominates: it overrides pathos, suffering and the carnage of battle. "Moreover, it is just this beauty which seems to us to soften the shock of conflict and, at least to the Western eye, diminish the grandeur of a story of epic proportions by employing something less than what we expect as epic treatment," while there is very little colour in Milton's lines. Milton's leaves are "autumnal," but not bright. Moreover Milton's point is more intellectual than that of the Japanese poet. His leaves have fallen, just as Satan's legions have fallen, and both left their source of life, God and the living tree.
"Both passages have qualities of the epic and of beauty, but where Milton's is the beauty of the epic, we may turn the words about for the *Heike* : it is an epic of the beautiful" (p. 443).

Yet after all, it must be admitted, any great work of art has something in it that transcends cultural boundaries. The two co-authors have proved themselves to have a thorough knowledge of the two traditions, and therefore, we may safely say that they are well-qualified to suggest a way of uniting the two currents into one, that is, one culture of a higher order common to all human beings, East and West. Offering Fujiwara Teika's magnificent poem:

Haru no yo no
Yume no ukihashi
Todae shite
Mine ni wakaruru
Yokogumo no sora.

The bridge of dreams
Floating on the brief spring night
Soon breaks off:
Now from the mountaintop a cloud
Takes leave into the open sky.

as a typical example embodying the ideal of beauty in the period, the authors say 'such beauty was elusive, ephemeral, the stuff that dreams are made on' (p. 262). This comes to us as a kind of revelation, and we feel that we are led up to an eminence which commands a higher view of literature. And we will remain thankful forever to the two American scholars for having enriched our poetic experience through the analyses and comparisons they have so successfully worked out in this high monument of scholarship.

(Haruhiko Fujii)

N. B. The translations of the poems quoted are those by the authors.