

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the eighth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the joint efforts of the Southern Japan Seminar and the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University, with partial funding from the Japan Foundation. JSR continues to be both an outlet for publications related to Southern Japan Seminar events and a journal that encourages submissions from a wide range of scholars in the field.

Appearing in this issue are four articles on a variety of topics related to Japanese society, including centralized as well as local educational systems, party faction and coalition dynamics in politics, the mirror poetics of Kawabata's "Snow Country," and the symbolism of blind characters in Zato plays.

The first article, "Importance of 'Local' in a Centralized Educational System: A Blumerian Study of School Uniform Changes in Japan" by Yuichi Tamura, examines whether the Ministry of Education's guidelines set on global and national levels are incorporated by "local" educational systems. Analyzing the changes of school uniforms through records, surveys, and interviews in Joyo and Nara City junior high schools, it is observed that local variations in school regulations are determined by educators' interpretations of students' rule violations, community culture, and other factors.

Following this, "Party Faction and Coalition Dynamics in Japan" by Monir Hossain Moni analyzes the loss of Japan's political stability in 1993 causing disorder in existing political structures. The rapid shuffling of power due to conflicts between organizations, loss of credibility, and corruption, has made it difficult to devise basic policies on certain key issues, thereby leading to people's mistrust. At the time of the election of Koizumi in 2001, the question was asked whether he would make for a truly different approach.

The third article, "Kawabata's Mirrored Poetics" by Masaki Mori, describes how Kawabata Yasunari's fiction-making techniques in "Snow Country" combine ideas and techniques of Western literature with classical Japanese poetics, such as *tanka* and *haiku* poems. The lengthy passage of Kawabata's mirror scene reveals his appreciation for Japanese literary ambiguity, which includes multiple levels of meaning and symbolism.

The final article, “Zatō Plays in Kyōgen: Satire and Symbolism” by Junko Baba, deals with the physical blindness of its characters as a metaphor for mental blindness and also as a devastating criticism of the higher social ranks.

Also featured in this issue are two essays. One is “Japanese Business Schools as *Senmon Gakkō*, with Special Reference to the U.S. CPA Examination” by Kiyoshi Kawahito, who points out the difficulties of being an accounting student in Japan and the problems being faced by those interested in making the CPA examinations. Second, James W. Heisig’s essay, “The Place of Japanese Philosophy,” focuses on the universality of philosophy and the contributions of Japanese thought to the philosophical traditions of East and West.

Additionally, the volume contains four book reviews of recent publications on Japanese studies. Christopher Benfey’s study of how the encounter between Japanese and American scholars during the Meiji period influenced each others’ lives and works is reviewed by Daniel A. Metraux of Mary Baldwin College; Gail Dubrow and Donna Graves’s work concerning the rapidly disappearing landmarks of Japanese American migrants and their efforts to preserve these, which reveals hardships faced in America by Nisei, is reviewed by Masaki Mori of the University of Georgia; Anne Walthall’s edited volume introducing the lives of modern Japanese men and women which are not often described in historical studies is reviewed by Tinaz Pavri of Spelman College; and James Arraj’s book focusing on the question of whether Buddhist enlightenment can be compared to the Christian spiritual experience is reviewed by James W. Heisig of Nanzan University.

Please note: Japanese names are cited with surname first except for citations of works published in English.

Steven Heine, Editor

## **Re: Submissions, Subscriptions and Comments**

Submissions for publication, either articles or book reviews, should be made in both hard copy and electronic formats, preferably Word for Windows on a disk (please inquire about other formats). The editor and members of the editorial board will referee all submissions.

Annual Subscriptions are \$10.00 (US). Please send a check or money order payable to *Florida International University*.

C/o Steven Heine, Professor of Religious Studies and History  
Director of the Institute for Asian Studies  
Florida International University  
University Park Campus, DM 300  
Miami, FL 33199

Professor Heine's office number is 305-348-1914. Faxes should be sent to 305-348-6586 and emails to [asian@fiu.edu](mailto:asian@fiu.edu).

All comments and feedback on the publications appearing in *Japan Studies Review* are welcome.