

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the thirteenth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the joint efforts of the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University and the Southern Japan Seminar. 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 eight articles covering a variety of issues in Japanese studies.

The first article, titled "The Triviality of a Pop Song: How Murakami's Characters Overcome Detachedness," is by Christopher Mihalo. He follows the main character, Toru, and details the events that lead to his ultimate reentry into society.

The second article, "The Healing Processes in Two Religious Worlds," is written by Leila Marrach Basto de Albuquerque. She examines the use of hands for religious healing, as seen in the laying-on of hands (or *passé*), and with the *Johrei* Messianic technique.

Following this, the third article is "*Ganguro* in Japanese Youth Culture: Self-Identity in Cultural Conflict" by Xuexin Liu. She explains the results of a study about the *ganguro* phenomenon among Japanese youth. Liu explains the urban fashion trend's various roots in African-American hip-hop culture, as well as the concept of "black face" as a counterculture against Japanese notions of propriety, gender roles, and cultural identity.

On a different note, the fourth article is "The Soka Gakkai in Cambodia," written by Daniel A. Métraux. This article examines the modern trajectory of the Japanese New Religious movement Soka Gakkai in Cambodia after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. Métraux discusses the small but growing number of Cambodians that are turning to Soka Gakkai, an imported Buddhist sect, rather than native Khmer Buddhism.

The fifth article, "Why Did Japan Fail to Achieve Full-Fledged Democracy before World War II? – An Analysis of Class Relations and Forces Using Marxian Class Theories," is by Yukio Yotsumoto. She presents various theories of democratization against the backdrop of Japan's prewar labor conditions. Yotsumoto argues class relations and labor conditions did not allow democracy to fully develop until after World War II.

The sixth article, "New Trends in the Production of Japanese Ladies' Comics: Diversification and Catharsis" by Kinko Ito explores the

various types of ladies' comics in Japan and gives great insight into this fascinating world.

The seventh article, "Disaster-Relief Confucian-Style: Ninomiya Sontoku's Philosophical Approach to Late-Tokugawa Poverty" is written by John A. Tucker. This article mostly focuses on 19th century Japanese agricultural leader, philosopher, moralist and economist, Ninomiya Kinjirō, and his belief on how the *Daigaku*'s philosophy should be applied to better society.

The last article, "Sacred Pariahs: Hagiographies of Alterity, Sexuality, and Salvation in Atomic Bomb Literature" is by Yuki Miyamoto. She gives many compelling reasons and examples of how the Yumechiyo, an A-bomb survivor, is portrayed as a pariah the television drama *Yumechiyo Nikki*, or the Diary of Yumechiyo.

This year's issue also includes one essay, "Dōgen and Plato on Literature and Enlightenment" by Carol S. Gould, who argues that both Plato and Dōgen are iconoclasts in their respective philosophical realms who ask similar questions about self-reference and identity. By examining Dōgen's *Genjokōan* and Plato's *Theatetus* and *Symposium*, Gould concludes that the differences between Dōgen and Plato lie primarily in the cultural values of their times.

Lastly, this volume includes five book reviews. Takayuki Tatsumi's analysis of U.S.-Japanese relations through postmodern science fiction is reviewed by Natsuki Fukunaga of Marshall University. Ian Condry's exploration of hip-hop Japan is reviewed by Xuexin Liu of Spelman College. Hideaki Matsuoka's reflection about the growth of the Church of World Messianity in Brazil and other Japanese new religions is offered to us by Daniel A. Métraux of Mary Baldwin College. Jeffrey Lesser's collection of scholarly writings about ethnicity and identity issues of migrants with Japanese ancestry in Brazil and Japan is presented by Ronan A. Pereira of the Brazil-based *Universidade Estadual Paulista*. Lastly, Yuji Ichioka's overview of Japanese-American history in the 1920s and 1930s is also reviewed by Daniel A. Métraux of Mary Baldwin College.

Steven Heine

Re: Submissions, Subscriptions, and Comments

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

Annual subscriptions are \$25.00 (US). Please send a check or money order payable to *Florida International University* to:

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

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