

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the twentieth volume of the *Japan Studies Review* (JSR), an annual peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the Asian Studies Program at Florida International University Seminar. *JSR* remains an outlet for publications related to Southern Japan Seminar events that encourages submissions from a wide range of scholars in the field. The 2016 issue features six articles with varied interdisciplinary topics.

In "Performing Prayer, Saving *Genji*, and Idolizing Murasaki Shikibu: *Genji Kuyō* in Nō And Jōruri," Satoko Naito provides an analysis of the dramatizations of the often-overlooked text *Genji kuyō tan* and the different portrayals of Murasaki Shikibu. Next, in "Nihilism And Crisis: A Comparative Study of Yu Da-Fu's *Sinking* and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's *Rashōmon*," James Au Kin Pong provides a philosophical view of the pervasiveness of nihilism as an authentic literary response to crises in Southeast Asia, exemplified in twentieth-century Chinese and Japanese texts. Tony Tai-Ting Liu and Ren Mu's "Pivot Towards China: Japan's Renewed Security Strategy in Asia" studies the implications of foreign politics and security issues relating to Japan's new strategy to remain cautious over China's rise. Shige (CJ) Suzuki's "Reviving the Power of Storytelling: Post-3/11 Online 'Amateur' Manga" surveys the function of graphic storytelling in two examples of manga that originated after the March 11 disasters in Japan. In "Japan's New English Education Reform Plan: A Step Back to 1904," Yuki Takatori questions the teaching establishment and government initiatives of Japan's reform efforts that have neglected a vital aspect of the curriculum for decades involving the old-fashioned syntactic analysis known as the "Five Sentence Patterns" (*Gobunkei*). Finally, Masaki Mori in "The Creature Disappears for Our Convenience": An Analysis of Murakami Haruki's 'Elephant Vanishes'" offers a literary analysis of the different versions of this original Japanese text by Murakami Haruki and its English translation to deconstruct its divergent Kafkaesque attributes.

This issue also features two essays. Daniel A. Métraux's "George Kennan's Influential 1905 Depiction of Korea as a 'Degenerate State' and Japan as its Gracious Savior" focuses on the reports made by an American war correspondent who geared American foreign policy in favor of Japan's takeover of Korea during the Russo-Japanese War. The second essay by Zenel Garcia, "A 'Normal' Japan and the Externalization of China's Securitization," delves into Sino-Japanese politics and security relations as Japan's successful securitization of China has led to several important developments among Southeast Asian neighbors.

There are also three book reviews, with two by Métraux. The first, on Eri Hotta's *Japan 1941: Countdown To Infamy*, pertains to Japan's role during Pearl Harbor, and the other, on Richard J. Samuels's *3.11: Disaster and Change in Japan*, explains the political changes after the March 11 catastrophe in Japan. Lastly, Kazutaka Sugitamao reviews Miura Reiichi's *Haruki Murakami and Postmodern "Japan": The Culture of Globalization and Literature* about the cultural trend of globalization in Murakami's novels.

This year's *Japan Studies Review* is supported by the Japan Foundation Institutional Support Grant for a collaborative project called The South Florida Partnership in Japanese Studies (SFPJS) Housed at Florida International University.

FIU Asian Studies Program greatly appreciates their contribution.

Re: Submissions, Subscriptions, and Comments

Submissions for publication, whether articles, essays, translations or book reviews, should be made in electronic formats, preferably Word for Windows via email attachment (please inquire about other formats). The editor and members of the editorial board will referee all submissions.

Annual subscriptions are \$35.00 (US). Please send a check or money order payable to *Florida International University* to:

c/o Steven Heine, Professor of Religious Studies and History
Director of the Asian Studies Program
Florida International University
Modesto A. Maidique Campus, SIPA 505
Miami, FL 33199

Professor Heine's office number is 305-348-1914. Submissions for publication should be sent to asian@fiu.edu.

Visit our website at <http://asian.fiu.edu/jsr>. PDF versions of past volumes are available online.

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

ISSN: 1550-0713