

Reviews

As noted above, a new journal was launched in 1989 at the Center for Japanese Studies, Beijing University. Its title Ribenxue 日本学, probably best translated as "Japanology" or "Japan studies" is an interesting term, inasmuch as "Zhongguoxue" 中国学 is at best a rare (but not unheard of) term for "Sinology" or "China studies." It strikes this reviewer as comparable to "Shinagaku" 支那学 as the (primarily) Kyoto University term for Sinology. Thus far two issues Ribenxue have appeared, roughly 50 articles totalling some 650 pages in all.

The first issue contains a wide variety of articles on themes, some familiar and some new(er). Song Chengyou 宋成有, for instance, has an essay on the excruciatingly tiresome theme of "Japan's Bourgeois Revolutionary Struggle: The National Character of the Boshin War" (Shilun Riben zibenzhuyi jieji geming zhanzheng: Wuchen zhangzheng de minzu tese 試論日本資本主義階級革命戰爭: 戊辰戰爭的民族特色). Two essays later, however, Yan Shaotang 嚴紹盪 has a piece on "The Destiny of Traditional Japanese Kangaku in the Meiji Period: Experiences and Lessons of the Modern Culture Movement in Japan" (Ribei chuantong Hanxue zai Mingzhi shidai de mingyun: Riben jindai wenhua yundong de jingyan yu jiaoxun 日本傳統漢學在明治時代的命運: 日本近代文化運動的經驗與教訓); he begins with an examination of the work of Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 and Hayashi Razan 林羅山 to set the deep background of Edo-period Kangaku and then leaps into the Meiji period to see the confrontation it elicited during the cultural reform efforts of that time. This material has been gone over in Japanese and English before, but rarely in Chinese.

Similarly, Wang Xiaoqiu's 王曉秋 essay, "How Japanese Viewed China at the End of the Tokugawa Period: A Study of the Trip to Shanghai of the Senzaimaru in 1862" (Mumo Ribenren zenyang kan Zhongguo: 1862 nian "Qiansuiwan" Shanghai zhi xing yanjiu 幕末日本人怎樣看中國: 1862年千歲丸上海之行研究), represents one of the first Chinese examinations of this first contact between Chinese and Japan in over two centuries on Chinese soil. Japanese have studied the travel accounts prepared by the Japanese travelers after this voyage, and it has been mentioned in one or two English sources, as it has in Chinese. Much of Wang's work of the last decade has focused on Chinese travel, shipwreck, and popular accounts of Japan in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. This essay marks the beginning of an important complement to his earlier work.

This new journal, though, is not just for historians. There are several essays concerned with literature, such as Chai Shen 柴森 on Natsume Sōseki and Zhou Li 周力 on Shimazaki Tōson; also, there is a partial translation of Tsubouchi Shōyō's 坪内逍遙 Shōsetsu shinzui 小説神髓 [Essence of the Novel] by Liu Zhenying 劉振瀛.

This same issue of Ribenxue also includes a number of the papers from an "international" (actually, it seems, only Sino-Japanese) symposium held in August 1988 at Beijing University on the subject of the Taika 大化 reforms of the seventh century. Nine essays, six by Japanese and three by Chinese, appear here, and the Chinese contributors--Shen Ren'an 沈仁安, Wang Jiahua 王家驊, and Song Jiayu 宋家鈺--are all highly reputable scholars of ancient Japan. They include questions of land allocation, textual criticism, the concept of the "sovereign's land" in ancient Japan, and the reliability of the Taika reform edict.

There are also three reviews (each five pages in length, and hence more like Japanese scholarly reviews than Western ones) of Chinese books.

Issue number two of Ribenxue (1990) is somewhat more international in character, but at a cost. The second essay is a twenty-page translation by Chen Wenshou 陳文壽 from Edwin O. Reischauer's highly popular work, The Japanese Today (1988). The section entitled "Separateness and Internationalism" by Reischauer and "Ribende dutexing yu guojihua" 日本的独特性与國際化 [Japan's distinctiveness and internationalization] by Chen is in no detail changed from the earlier edition of this book, The Japanese (1978). At a time when the Chinese are also trying to find a distinctive place in the world, it is no wonder that they look to such a distinctively non-Western culture (though one much closer to their own) that has "made" it in the world. Whether all this stuff belongs in scholarly journals is highly debatable. Reischauer's book was quoted widely by the Chinese participants to the conference described above (see "Sino-Japanese News"), and the entire book appears now to have been published in Chinese translation.

Along the same lines is an essay by a Soviet Japanologist by the name of Karnilov (translated by Song Chengyu) on the numerous theories about the Japanese and their culture in the 1960s and 1970s. While this piece purports to transcend the Nihonjinron debates critically, it is not terribly successful, falling into equally simplistic (if not as offensive) generalizations about Japanese culture as the Nihonjinron addicts.

The next essay in this volume of Ribenxue, "Shilun Woguo tongyi

de zhuti" 試論倭國統一之途 On the subject of the unification of the state of Wa] by Shen Ren'an, looks to be quite interesting. A subject little examined in English or other Western languages, though worked to death in Japanese, this is one area in which Chinese scholars have begun to make a considerable contribution through readings and rereadings of texts written in classical Chinese.

Zhang Xiang 張翔 has an essay entitled "Wenming kaihua de daolu" 文明開化的道路 [The road to civilization and enlightenment] which comparatively examines the work of Fukuzawa Yukichi and Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉; while there is nothing new here, it is interesting to see Chinese working on early and mid-Meiji intellectual history. It is followed, in the same vein, by Yan Shaotang's "Cong 'jingxue' xiang 'Zhongguo zhexue' de 'tuopi': Riben jindai Zhongguoxue de xingcheng zhi yi" 从經學向中國哲學的脫皮: 日本近代中國學的形成之一 [Shedding "classicism" in favor of "Chinese philosophy," one of the formations of modern Japanese Sinology] looks at the early-Meiji background to the emergence of the modern discipline of Sinology, as it overcame "traditional" Kangaku classicism. This is a highly selective study, but an equally sophisticated one, especially in his analyses of the work of Endō Takayoshi 遠藤隆志. Yan's is one of the very best minds in the Japan field in China today. Wang Xiaoqiu has an essay in this volume on Sino-Japanese cultural interactions in the May Fourth period. It looks primarily at the intellectual and academic relationship between Li Dazhao 李大釗 and Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造.

There are several essays in the literature field: Pan Jinsheng 潘金生 on the fourteenth-century literature classic Tsurezuregusa 徒然草 [Essays in Idleness] by Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好; and Yu Renyuan 俞任遠 on women's literature in the Heian period; and Liu Zhenying on Sōseki's I Am a Cat (in Chinese: Wo shi miao 我是貓). The last three essays concern contemporary (postwar) affairs, one (by Kang Shuhua 康樹華) on the present state of the field of criminology in Japan. One book review concludes this issue of Ribenxue.

Anyone interested in this journal should write to the Center for Japanese Studies (Ribei yanjiu zhongxin 日本研究中心) at Beijing University. They plan for it to come out annually. The front cover of the first issue is adorned with a color photograph of the torii at Miyajima near Hiroshima; the back cover is a photograph of a large Japanese crowd staring up at itself in an enormous (diamond vision?) scene. The covers of the second issue depict mirror images of Ōsaka Castle with the flowers in the foreground in bloom. The standard Fuji-san photo is, thankfully, absent. (JAF)