that Meiji Japan produced more *kanshi* than any of the previous historical periods, to judge by what is left. Anyone who wishes to learn more about how much we have missed in textbook histories of modern literature because of the privileging of "national literature" in Japanese that, ironically, first took shape in exactly that same last decade of the nineteenth century, will do well to read Tuck's book. His felicitous translations of poems in all three genres make reading not only educational but a joy as well.

Idly Scribbling Rhymers is a rich book, and it is to Tuck's credit that the different strands of his argumentation do not get tangled nor suffocate the reader. This is as much a study of politics and ideology as expressed in poetry debates as it is a thoughtful contemplation of Masaoka Shiki and his strategies to push his ideas about "Literature." For many, I imagine, Tuck's book will above all be a plea against all-too-neat narratives of modernization processes and ideologies of nation-state building. Tuck's book is yet another healthy corrective to ideas we may harbor about the young Meiji state that may dangerously suggest a programmatic application of a Japanese meta-analysis of nineteenth century European ideas. Modernizing Japanese spoke and wrote in many voices, in many communities, many of which were not happy with state institutions. Anderson was right in singling out print media as a prime vehicle for nation building, but Tuck helps to remind us that the building site for the nation was a cacophony. This is a masterful book; anyone with an interested in poetry or politics should read it.

The Japanese Discovery of Chinese Fiction: "The Water Margin" and the Making of a National Canon

By **William C. Hedberg**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. xii, 250 pp. $65.50.

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The Japanese Discovery of Chinese Fiction: "The Water Margin" and the Making of a National Canon by William C. Hedberg is a study in the reception and canonization of Chinese vernacular fiction in early modern and Meiji-period (1868–1912) Japan. The monograph turns to *Shuihu*

zhuan 水滸伝 (The Water Margin), one of the four classic Chinese novels, as a "focal point" and a segue into the "larger issues of language, canonization, and literary historiography" (178). In his work, Hedberg eschews the narrow, language-centric approach to literature once proffered by the Japanese discipline of *kokubungaku* (国文学, national literature) and attempts to reconceptualize *Shuihu zhuan* as part of the Japanese literary canon.

In the introduction, Hedberg questions the established paradigm of *kokubungaku* and proposes reading *Shuihu zhuan* as Japanese literature. He suggests that previous treatments of Sinitic literature in Japan superimposed modern geographic, linguistic, and national boundaries on the study of premodern texts. Following a number of pioneering works that have broken with this trend, Hedberg sets out to address the seminal questions of translation (both linguistic and cultural) and literary canonization by turning to the Japanese discovery of *Shuihu zhuan*. Given the mercurial nature of the novel with its numerous editions, both abridged and expanded, he contends that studying the canonization of *Shuihu zhuan* could be much more productive than dwelling on questions of its immediate reception.

Chapter 1 "Sinophilia, Sinophobia, and Vernacular Philology in Early Modern Japan" traces the emergence of *tōwagaku* 唐話学 in the Edo period (1603–1868), a new branch of Sinology concerned with interpreting, explicating, and translating vernacular Chinese texts. Hedberg begins by explaining that traditional *kangaku* 漢学 scholarship in Tokugawa Japan accepted the universality of the Chinese classics (e.g., Neo-Confucian scholarship under the auspices of the *bakufu*). However, this classical universalism was eventually disrupted by an "epistemic shift" (28) to a more practical, encyclopedic way of approaching China engendered by the study of Chinese vernacular fiction (Jp. *hakuwa shōsetsu*, Ch. *baihua xiaoshuo* 白話小説). Hedberg contends that the Edo period, with its large-scale importation of Chinese texts and burgeoning Nagasaki trade, ushered in a new realization: an understanding of temporal linguistic change exemplified by the emergence of *tōwagaku*. At first, many of its practitioners (i.e., Okajima Kanzan 岡島冠山, 1674–1728) presented *tōwa* as an indispensable part of a broader Sinological curriculum without positing an insurmountable divide between the elevated (Jp. *ga*, Ch. *ya* 雅) classics and the vulgar (Jp. *zoku*, Ch. *su* 俗) vernacular fiction. However, this attitude did not last long. Hedberg brings up the example of Suyama Nantō 陶山南濤 (1700–1766), one of the earliest Japanese explicators of

Shuihu zhuan, who studied the novel as a hobby divorced from classical scholarship. *Shuihu zhuan* attracted Nantō not as a repository of moral insights transcending time and space, but as a collection of encyclopedic facts about contemporary China, a China irreversibly detached from the classical age. According to Hedberg, the scholarship of Kanzan and Nantō illustrates a larger attempt by early modern Japanese Sinologists to "decenter" (49) China as a source of universal knowledge.

In chapter 2 "Histories of Reading and Nonreading," Hedberg examines the reception and domestication of *Shuihu zhuan* in Edo-period Japan. At the outset he suggests that the Japanese discovery of the novel proceeded not only through reading it from beginning to end, but also through "replacement" (58) with derivative literary and material works. Hedberg goes on to describe the paratext of *Shuihu zhuan* represented by copious commentaries, the most well-known of which was authored by Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆 (1608–1661). Premodern Japanese readers engaged with the novel together with this paratext without trying to isolate the original narrative from the commentarial tradition. For instance, Seita Tansō's 清田儋叟 (1719–1785) reading of *Shuihu zhuan* was an attempt to appropriate Jin's exegetical methodology; conversely, Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848) went against Jin in his engagement with the text. Hedberg also draws the reader's attention to Santō Kyōden's 山東京伝 (1761–1816) *Chūshin suikoden* 忠臣水滸伝 as an effort to "tame" (89) the Chinese novel by transplanting its structure and tropes onto Japanese literary soil. He wraps up the chapter by introducing a series of *Shuihu zhuan*-based prints by Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川国芳 (1798–1861) as yet another artistic way of interacting with the novel. Hedberg maintains that, given the profusion and variety of *Shuihu zhuan* lore in premodern Japan, the researcher would do well to eschew the "impact and response" mode of analysis in favor of what David Damrosch termed "a phenomenology of a work of art" (93–94).

Chapter 3 "Justifying the Margins" is dedicated to the emergence of Chinese-literature historiography (*Shina bungakushi* 支那文学史) in Meiji-period Japan. According to Hedberg, at that time the study of literature was predicated on a new understanding of history centered on the nation, an entity that was thought to possess certain immutable, essential characteristics. This understanding undergirded the nascent field of national-literature historiography (*kokubungakushi* 国文学史) and was adopted by the scholars of *Shina bungakushi* as well. Hedberg demonstrates that these scholars' approach to literary historiography owed

much to European models with their emphasis on social and cultural progress. Beholden to the Western characterization of the novel as the pinnacle of literary achievement, Japanese literary historians proceeded to produce their own accounts of *Shina bungaku* seeking to discover the authentic voice of the national people (Jp. *kokumin*, Ch. *guomin* 国民) divorced from the rigors of Confucian orthodoxy. In the perennial contention between simplicity (Jp. *shitsu*, Ch. *zhi* 質) and adornment (Jp. *bun*, Ch. *wen* 文), these scholars contended, the latter emerged victorious under the Mongols resulting in the appearance of drama and the vernacular novel epitomized by *Shuihu zhuan*, the two greatest achievements of Chinese *belles-lettres*.

In chapter 4 "Civilization and its Discontents," Hedberg turns to the significance of *Shuihu zhuan* in Meiji-period literary circles. To some, the novel signified a long-awaited departure from Confucian didacticism and appeared to possess many quasi-modern qualities absent from other works of Chinese vernacular fiction. The vivid depiction of its characters was thought of as deserving particular praise. Others (e.g., Mori Ōgai 森鴎外, 1862–1922) perceived *Shuihu zhuan* as a key to understanding contemporary China with its persistent socioeconomic problems and even attempted to arrive at a semblance of a "Grand Unified Theory of contemporary Chinese social instability" (162). While a host of armchair ethnographers used the novel as an aid to discovering contemporary China, many Japanese had a chance to compare the vision proffered in the novel with the real thing by travelling to the Qing Empire and, later, republican China. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 (1892–1927) was one of such travelers and went so far as to detect Nietzschean undertones in *Shuihu zhuan* while on his journey. At the end of the chapter, Hedberg sums up these disparate accounts by describing the role the novel played in Meiji professional and amateur literary circles as a putative "privileged point of entry into a unique national psyche" (176). In the epilogue, he revisits the central contention of the monograph—that "Japanese engagement with Chinese fiction provides a new avenue by which to interrogate the binaries that have traditionally served as ideological anchors for Japanese and East Asian literary historiography" (180)—and concludes by rephrasing Tansō's assertion, "... it is only by standing in the peripheries that we are better able to interrogate and reconsider the center" (181).

Hedberg's monograph is a valuable and timely contribution to the field of Sino-Japanese literary studies. His selection of primary sources in both Chinese and Japanese is wide while his translations are well-crafted and

idiomatic. It is also noteworthy that in this volume Hedberg introduces the English-speaking reader to many specimens of groundbreaking Japanese scholarship (here it will suffice to point out Saitō Mareshi's *Kanbunmyaku to kindai: Shin matsu, Meiji no bungakuken* 漢文脈と近代：清末・明治の文学圏, 2005), not to mention the English-language works of Wiebke Denecke, Matthew Fraleigh, and David Lurie to name just a few. Next to the formidable accessibility of Saitō's style and the sheer grandeur of Denecke's scholarly designs, *The Japanese Discovery of Chinese Fiction* strikes its reader as a compact and well-argued summation of the current state of Sino-Japanese literary studies as well as a work that, to borrow Charles Joyner's turn of phrase, asks large questions in small places. To the delight of scholars working in adjacent fields, Hedberg's monograph does not shy away from historical and biographical insights, but remains informed by literary considerations. While demonstrating an exemplary command of contemporary literary theory, Hedberg does not let it subsume his subject, producing research that is, by and large, primary-source driven. *The Japanese Discovery of Chinese Fiction* will be of interest not only to scholars of Japanese literature and history (both modern and premodern), but also to Sinologists looking to expand the scope of their research beyond China proper.

At the same time, Hedberg's penchant for "destabilizing the very idea of an original text" (93) may result in obscuring a number of important issues. The reception of the numerous editions of *Shuihu zhuan* in Japan is complicated by their linguistic intricacies, prolixity, and the existence of *kanbun kundoku* that bridged the gap between the classical languages of China and Japan to a considerable extent. Driven by larger questions, Hedberg chooses to forgo a more technical examination of the translation/adaptation of these original texts, but it is this very process that can shed even more light on the issues that concern him the most. For instance, the language and orthography of Kyōden's *Chūshin suikoden* alone are indicative of the challenges Japanese readers of Chinese fiction faced as well as the hermeneutic strategies they employed. If Hedberg proceeds to elucidate such "technicalities" in his future work, his contribution to English-language scholarship will be even more solid. Incidentally, it seems that recourse to Denecke's discussion of "reference cultures" and the "tragedy of translation" could do the subject no less justice than the somewhat nebulous "phenomenology of the work of art."

On a more general note, the attempts to "decenter" China and topple it from the pedestal of universal moral values described by Hedberg appear

to lend additional support to scholarly theories seeking the roots of Japanese modernity in the Edo period. The larger question remains, however, how central this new, presumably "modern" mode of thinking was to Edo society at large. Did it overshadow and displace Zhu Xi-style Neo-Confucianism and its many derivatives eventually setting off the Meiji restoration? Or was it anachronistically brought to the fore from the "margins" in another process of canonization—the process of writing "Japanese-thought historiography" (*Nihon shisōshi* 日本思想史) by such scholars as Maruyama Masao? While successfully questioning and challenging the *kokubungakushi* paradigm, Hedberg's monograph stops short of interrogating its cousin, *Nihon shisōshi*, with its all but teleological search for trappings of modernity in Tokugawa Japan. Many prominent Sinologists of the day (now largely relegated to footnotes due to the perceived "unmodern" bent of their thought) remained adamant in their adherence to classical universalism even after encountering vernacular Chinese. A more detailed discussion of their "discovery of Chinese fiction" would be a welcome future addition to Hedberg's monograph and an opportune segue into reassessing the validity of some claims of *Nihon shisōshi*.