

Fujiwara Teika's Supreme Poems of Our Times. A Thirteenth-Century Poetic Treatise and Sequence.



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Pacific Affairs, Vol. 41, No. 4. (Winter, 1968-1969), pp. 607-608.

Stable URL:

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on the message he has to convey" (p. xiii). To arrive at this necessary stage, the item to be mastered is carefully and progressively drilled, over and over again, to the point where the student can reproduce the item while his a language means "overlearning" it; therefore the major part of the time is attention is drawn to something apart from the item under study. Mastering given to practice.

The goals of this well-planned method are very high. It is not designed for the student who needs to know only a little Japanese, or has little time available for studying it, but for the serious student who needs Japanese for professional purposes, has a college background, and can work full-time on Japanese for a two-year course, with an average of twenty classroom-hours per week in the first year, and half that number in the second year.

In the Introduction, the author announces the proposed publication of another work, *The Japanese Writing System*. This could be the answer to the only serious deficiency of *Japanese Language Patterns*. It presents to the students a series of fundamental and well selected Japanese patterns, but outside their natural context—a dialogue, a conversation, or a short narrative. Besides the "monotony" factor involved in the learning of patterns outside a context (and the tremendous load on memory), there is the basic necessity for the student to see as often as possible these patterns in the natural setting of the language in use. One way of doing this is by reading. The author is conscious of this necessity; it supposes a knowledge of the writing system or the teaching of it almost simultaneously with the spoken language. *The Japanese Writing System* should therefore be a most welcome complement to *Japanese Language Patterns*.

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BERNARD SAINT-JACQUES

FUJIWARA TEIKA'S SUPREME POEMS OF OUR TIMES. A Thirteenth-Century Poetic Treatise and Sequence. By Robert H. Brower and Earl Miner. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1967. 148 pp. \$5.00.

THIS WORK by the poet and scholar Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) belongs to the literary genre *karon* (poetic treatise) which flourished during the Heian and Kamakura periods in Japan, and contributed much to the formation of what is known in the West as "Japanese court poetry." Although the interest in Japanese poetry has greatly increased recently, the *karon* has received little attention until now, and it is thus a great pleasure to see the first translation of a major work of this genre, complete with notes, introduction and portraits of Teika and his most eminent contemporaries.

The *Superior Poems of Our Time* has traditionally been regarded as a masterpiece of its kind. During the time of change and turmoil, with the decline of the old aristocratic culture, the demand for definite rules and

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objective standards of appreciation in matters of poetry grew strong, especially among the newly rising classes who wished to participate in cultural activities but had not yet a literature and art of their own. The *Superior Poems of Our Time*, like so many *karon* of the early 13th century, catered to such demands. A bastion of conservatism, it introduced would-be poets to traditional aesthetic concepts, at the same time providing a theoretical framework for already emerging different forms of literature, like the *renga* (chain poem) and later the Nō theatre.

Originally intended for the instruction of one of Teika's illustrious disciples, *Superior Poems of Our Time* consists of a short essay, explaining the essence and historical development of Japanese poetry, and a set of model poems, selected by Teika from the works of distinguished poets of different periods, including his own. The poems, eighty-three in the case of the text on which this translation is based, are arranged under traditional topics and grouped in order to achieve the integration of each single poem into a well-balanced unified whole. The technique of this kind of arrangement was developed during the Heian period in connection with numerous small and large, private and official anthologies; it was perfected by poets like Teika who was a kind of spokesman for tradition but had enough practical sense to experiment with new modes of composition; it finally found its best medium of application in the *renga*.

In this book the poems are presented in Japanese and English and are well explained in the notes attached to them. A separate running commentary attempts an interpretation of the sequence in terms of what the authors call "association and progression." In this way the depth, subtlety and beauty not only of each poem, but also of the sequence as a whole can be appreciated intellectually by the general readers in spite of the barriers of language and culture.

Vancouver, B.C.

HILDA KATO

THE KOREAN DECISION. By Glenn D. Paige. New York: The Free Press. 1968. 394 pp. \$6.95.

AS A POLITICAL SCIENTIST Glenn D. Paige has attempted to modernize the historians' use of verisimilitude to explain the process of decision-making in international relations in the past, and possibly in the future. His book is a provocative study and the author should be congratulated for his trail-blazing effort; but like many positivists of the past he has failed to produce a convincing model. Using the American decision to intervene in the Korean crisis of June 1950 as a test-case, Professor Paige has concluded that if one has access to the relevant facts of the past, "propositions" can be formulated to aid historians and decision-makers in similar situations. Even