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Autor:	Gálik, Marián
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ROC BIRD'S WINGS OR WELL FROG'S WALLS ON THE FAR EASTERN INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Marián Gálik, Bratislava¹

Two of my studies to date begin with a well frog and a mythical Chinese bird. When pondering over the specificity of melancholy in China and in Europe,² I quoted the words of the philosopher Zhuangzi 莊子 (3rd cent. B.C.) or his school. There a certain Ruo 若 of the North Sea met the Lord of the (Yellow) River and said: "You can't discuss the ocean with a well frog — he's limited by the space he lives in. You cannot discuss ice with a summer insect — he's bound to a single season. You can't discuss the Way (i.e., Dao 道, M.G.) with a cramped scholar (*qu shi* 曲士) — he is shackled by his doctrines. Now you have come out beyond your banks and borders and have seen the great sea — so you realize your own pettiness. From now it will be possible to talk the Great Principle (*da li* 大理)." ³ Nobody knows what this Great Principle really meant for Zhuangzi, but it probably involved a systemo-structural framework of entities and the relations between them in the contexts and their environments under analysis. In the first chapter of Zhuangzi's book we read a few sentences about a huge bird "named P'eng 鵬 with a back like Mount T'ai and wings like clouds filling the sky. He beats the whirlwind, leaps into the air, and rises up ninety thousand li, cutting through the clouds and mist, shouldering the blue sky, and then he turns his eyes south and prepares to journey to the

- 1 Paper read at the international conference: Identity and Canon - Japanese Modernization Reconsidered: Transcultural Perspectives, organized by Professor Irmela Hijiya-Kirschner, Japanese-German Center, Berlin, October 11-13, 1995.
- 2 "Melancholy in Europe and in China: Some Observations of a Student of Interliterary Process", paper read at the international conference: Melancholy and Society in China, organized by Professor Wolfgang Kubin, Bonn University, July 1-6, 1995, and published in *Asian and African Studies* (Bratislava), 4, 1995, 2.
- 3 *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. Transl. by Burton Watson. New York and London, Columbia University Press 1968, pp. 175-176. Original text see in *Zhuangzi yinde* [莊子引得] *A Concordance to Chuang Tzu*. Peking, Yenching University 1947, p. 42.

southern darkness (*nan ming* 南冥)."⁴ One may only guess what this "southern darkness" meant to Zhuangzi's ancestors and contemporaries, but it was probably something unknown, to be researched, not fully explored.

When writing this paper I came across the "frog from the bottom of its well" in the very thoughtful and provocative book by David Pollack: *The Fracture of Meaning. Japan's Synthesis of China from the Eighth through the Eighteenth Century*.⁵ Here the frog is defined in a different way than in the parable of Zhuangzi. In Zhuangzi "froggishness" is criticized, just like the narrow experience of a summer insect or the restraining views of a cramped scholar. According to Pollack, in the Japanese tradition "China was Japan's walls"⁶ for the whole millenium and even much longer. Its well is, of course, not a normal well in the original Zhuangzian meaning, and broadly transcends it. China could not be Japan's walls. She was her extended world of culture, her paradigm, an object of intercultural confrontation.

I personally admire Professor Pollack's achievements, but the methodological instructions I follow in my studies are different. To search for the Great Principle in Southern Darkness was an ingenious idea of Zhuangzi: for me now the most important thing is to define both of them and to make them the object of the present research.

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That not quite clearly defined object of study (at least from a comparative point of view) in relation to China and Japan in Pollack's book was the interliterary (or even intercultural, or if you prefer cross-cultural) community (commonwealth) of the Far East (East Asia). The interliterary (intercultural) community is an historical systemo-structural entity of several literatures (cultures) of this part of the world, eventually of the adjacent countries. It more or less corresponds to the geographical territory, although it incorporates, at least in certain periods, also Vietnamese literature, Manchu literature as a whole, and a part of Mongolian literature.

4 Ibid., p. 31 and 1.

5 Princeton, Princeton University Press 1986.

6 Ibid., p. 4.

This community developed over the centuries, from the first Chinese writings in the second half of the second millennium B.C. until the end of the 19th cent. A.D., and partly until the second decade of the 20th cent.

If we cast a critical glance at the contemporary theories of comparative literature, we cannot be fully satisfied: We see namely that certain problems or regularities of the interliterary process, transcending the genetic-contact or typological framework (the so-called influence and parallel researches in the West), have not yet been satisfactorily studied.⁷ This holds even more for the interliterary community of the Far East than for many others.⁸ This interliterary community was in its time, and certainly before the end of the 19th century, at least to some extent specific within the complex of a quite impressive number of variously rising, developing and decaying interliterary communities of the world, which were in harmony with the concept of China as *Zhongguo* (*chugoku*, *chicho*) (The Middle Kingdom), or *Zhonghua* (*chuka*) (The Middle Civilization) and its relation to the so-called peripheral territories. The concept of Sinocentric order developed in time and underwent changes either from the viewpoint of the Chinese themselves, or from that of the other countries of the Far Eastern region.

An essential difference between the Chinese and the "barbarians" resided in the idea and the notion of *wen* 文, which is a concept of multiple meanings, but may be roughly translated as spiritual culture. The concept of *wen* (Japanese *bun*, Korean *mun*, and Vietnamese *van*) constitutes one of the basic principles of the systemo-structural complex in the political and cultural history, and in art and literature. It stands for a civilizing principle and process manifesting itself in various strata of life, mainly in the ideological action primarily of Confucian philosophy and in the axiological aspects of cultural consciousness. From China *wen* radiates like the rays of the sun into the surrounding world: Korea, Japan, Vietnam and a great part of South-East Asia, and also to Tibet, Mongolia and Manchuria. It is very difficult to find an adequate term for this tendency or intercultural process.

7 Durišin, D.: *Theory of Interliterary Process*. Bratislava, Veda 1989, pp. 148-151.

8 Gálik, M.: "Die theoretischen Aspekte der interliterarischen Gemeinschaft des Fernen Ostens". In: Diem, W. und Falaturo, A. (eds.): *XXIV. Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 26. bis 30. September 1988 in Köln. Ausgewählte Vorträge*. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag 1990, pp. 491-496.

I call it “culturalism” after Professor Wolfgang Franke, according to whom: “The Chinese saw their cultural superiority to the barbarians. The Chinese script and the literature, the Chinese customs and the Chinese way of life, were such unique achievements that all the barbarians who came into contact with them were utterly impressed and sought to acquire something of them.”⁹ Even as late as in 1672, Kumazawa Banzan 熊澤蕃山 (1619-1691), according to Professor Harry D. Harootunian “argued that in the four seas [of which China is the center, M.G.] the countries that made up the eastern barbarians (i.e. Japan, Korea, etc.) were the most superior; in fact, outside of chuka, Japan ranked highest.”¹⁰

If we take into account the Japanese feeling of their own ethnocentrism, and the Japanese are to be ranked among the most proud nations of the world, we may imagine their psychological reactions. Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1726-1779), who lived one century later, considered the thing differently: he condemned, and rightly, the sinophiles in Japan, who regarded themselves as being the sons of the Eastern barbarian country.¹¹

Chinese “culturalism” acted centrifugally, never centripetally. It was only during the last stage of its existence, as well as of the existence of the Eastern interliterary (or intercultural) community, that a few Japanese works (12 to be exact) were translated into Chinese, 9 of them by the Japanese themselves. Such was the state of Sino-Japanese literary relations between 1660 and 1895.¹² The Japanese were very much ashamed of their own “barbarianism” and tried to do everything to prove that their country was more entitled to be *chuka* than great China. Among the 129 works translated from Chinese into Japanese during this period, Wei Yuan's 魏源 (1794-1856) *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖誌 (Illustrated Gazetteer of Maritime Countries; 1844) elicited a far greater response in Japan than it had in

9 Franke, W.: *China and the West*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1967, p. 23.

10 Harootunian, H.D.: "The Function of China in Tokugawa Thought". In: Iriye Akira: *The Chinese and the Japanese. Essays in Political and Cultural Interactions*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 1980, p. 12.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

12 Tam Yue-him, Saneto Keishu, Ogawa Hiroshi (eds.): *Riben yi Zhongguo shu zonghe mulu* (A Comprehensive Bibliography of Japanese Translations of Chinese Books). Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press 1981, p. 60. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

China proper.¹³ The Japanese, for obvious reasons, took to heart far more than the Chinese, one of Wei Yuan's maxims: "how to use barbarians to fight barbarians, how to make barbarians pacify one another (to our advantage), and how to employ the techniques of the barbarians in order to bring barbarians under control."¹⁴

In *The Fracture of Meaning* we observe the splendor and misery of "culturalism" within the framework of *wakan* 和漢 Japanese/Chinese. Professor Pollack tries to point out the views of Japanese themselves on this problem: "I am concerned," he asserts, "with the Japanese interpretations of what they saw as essentially 'Chinese', rather than our own interpretations or those of the Chinese themselves. The difference is considerable, for the Japanese invariably seemed to find the most profound significance of Chinese culture far from where the Chinese would ever have thought to seek it."¹⁵ For example, "the Chinese would have been appalled at the Heian Japanese deification of a single T'ang poet, Po Chü-i (772-846), to the almost complete exclusion of poets the Chinese have always regarded as superior."¹⁶

This or similar attitudes are nothing extraordinary in the interliterary or intercultural process in general. To some extent it is connected with that "foggishness" spoken of at the beginning of this paper but also with the overall attitude of the receiving and giving structures of literature or culture. Already the Russian Formalists, mainly Yu. Tynyanov (1894-1943) in 1929, posited the thesis about the selectiveness of the receiving phenomenon and milieu within the national literature.¹⁷

13 Ibid., p. 13.

14 Quoted according De Bary, Wm.Th., Wing-tsit Chan and Watson, B.: *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York, Columbia University Press 1960, p. 675. Cf. also Franke, W.: op. cit., pp. 95-99.

15 Pollack, D.: op. cit., pp. 3-4.

16 Ibid., p. 4.

17 Cf. Tynyanov, Yu.: *Arkhäisty i novatory* (Archaists and Innovators). Leningrad 1929, p. 49 and Durišin, D.: *Sources and Systematics of Comparative Literature*. Bratislava, Comenius University 1974, pp. 63-65.

In 1970s and 1980s this thesis has been elaborated by Durišin and incorporated into his theory of comparative literature and later of interliterary process.¹⁸

The centrifugal action of Chinese “culturalism” did not imply that the Chinese impact spread with the same intensity and at the same time to other countries of the Far East. It was at first manifested on the territory of the present-day Korea, and particularly in the kingdom called Paekche (18 B.C.-660 A.D.) which served as a mediator of Chinese culture on its way to Japan. Chinese culture, hence also literature, reached Vietnam directly.

Linguistically, this interliterary community was heterogenous. The old Chinese literary language *wenyan*, adopted in the countries of the Far East in its local forms, served as the *lingua franca* (similarly to the Latin language in its medieval form in Europe) to the entire community up to the 19th century. In Japan it was called *kanbun*, in Korea *hanmun* and in Vietnam *hanvan*. All these countries for many centuries accepted as their own the Chinese script, although it was equally unsuitable to the agglutinative Korean or Japanese, and the isolating Vietnamese.

The impact here was also unidirectional: it always came from China until the last period, i.e. up to the 19th century. And it could be hardly otherwise. It was especially the Chinese script that elicited charm, and it slowly became a property of some non-Han nations, because it was the only one script accessible to them, and the allusive power of its characters, its calligraphic beauty, kept their attention and provoked their admiration through the ages, and in the case of Japan up to the present. At the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century the situation changed. As the Chinese began to accept new Japanese vocabulary (based on Chinese characters), vocabulary used by the Japanese especially in the domain of modern social and technical sciences.¹⁹

Initially and during many centuries, Chinese language was the only means of expression in all the literatures of the Far Eastern interliterary community. Chinese literature, very probably alongside folklore literature not recorded in writing, was the only literature. At the later stage of the ri-

18 Durišin, D.: *Theory of Literary Comparatistics*. Bratislava, Veda 1984, pp. 51 and 252-272.

19 Gao Mingkai 高名凱 and Liu Zhengtan 劉正琰 : *Xiandai Hanyu wailaici yanjiu* 現代漢語外來辭研究 (Foreign Terms in Contemporary Chinese). Peking 1958.

se and the development of non-Chinese literatures of this community, the Chinese literature still fulfilled a function of spreading "culture", it served as a substitute for the individual literatures of the area and created the models to be followed. Local aristocrats, scholars, public officials read this literature, memorized it and on its basis, utilizing its stimuli, and those coming from their own ethnic endeavours, myths, customs, life of the people or at the court, gradually began to create their own "individual" literatures. Contact was made, particularly during the first centuries of writing, by non-Chinese peoples of the Far Eastern interliterary community, with lyric poetry and historical prose or, if you like, fiction. The tone was set at least one thousand years before by the Chinese classics: *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Poetry*), and *Shujing* 書經 (*Book of Documents*). The first of these originated sometime in the 11th-6th century B.C. and is the most important literary monument of the Chinese antiquity. The 305 pieces of this anthology, although different in character, devote (at least the most significant and the most impressive ones) nearly the whole text to express emotions and thus constitute the basis of the lyrical character of the predominant part of the Chinese, and later to a great extent also of the traditional Far Eastern literature. Within the second, whose earliest parts were written sometime between the 14th and 11th cent. B.C., we find the foundations of the historical prose, with its characteristic traits of emotional, poetic and rhetoric nature. Its distinguishing mark is an attempt at fictionalizing mythological and historical facts which subsequently exercised a considerable impact on the development of the historical prose of the whole Far Eastern interliterary community.

The Japanese were well prepared for the reception of the Chinese literature in the 7th and in the 8th century A.D. According to the Taiho Codex from 701, when Li Bai was born, written under the impact of the Tang codices, Nine Classics (*jiu jing*), in reality Ten Classics, including, of course, *The Book of Documents* and *The Book of Poetry*, were prescribed reading for the intellectual strata of the society.²⁰ In the *Kojiki* 故事記 (*Records of Ancient Matters*), from 712, when Du Fu was born, we find very conspicuous influences of Chinese historical works, e.g., of the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*) or *Zuozhuan* 左傳

20 Konrad, N.I.: *Zapad i Vostok* (Occident and Orient). Moscow 1966, pp. 363-364.

(*Traditions of Zuo*).²¹ The same applies to the first mythical stories, those concerned with Izanami and Izanagi, which are similar to Nüwa and Fuxi in the Chinese tradition. Likewise the deities generated from Izanagi's body, as Amaterasu and Susa-no-o, remind us of the story of Pangu.²² On the other hand, *Kojiki* presents a good example of the problems involved with *wakan*, i.e., "alien form and native content",²³ since it is a book "written partly in Chinese, partly in Chinese characters used phonetically to represent individual syllables of Japanese names or words, and partly in Chinese characters used to express the meaning of whole Japanese words."²⁴

Giving birth to Japanese literature and culture through the Chinese midwife was really painful. No wonder that the next book the Japanese wrote of a similar kind, i.e. the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 or *Nihongi* 日本紀 in 720, was in Chinese.²⁵ On the other hand another important collection, the *Wakan Roeishu* 和漢朗詠集 (Sino-Japanese Anthology) from 1018, totalling 804 poems, there are only 216 Japanese poems, and among the 588 Chinese poems, 130 came from Bo Juyi's brush!²⁶ Bo Juyi (in Japanese Haku Kyoyi, or Haku Rakuten, i.e., Bo Letian 白樂天) always was and remained, certainly up to the dissolution of the Far Eastern interliterary community, the most important literary "mirage". In his excellent study "Chinese Culture and Japanese Identity: Traces of Po Jü-i in a Peripheral Country", Sukehiro Hirakawa tells us that in the No play called *Haku Rakuten* by Zeami (1363-1443), Bo Juyi is highlighted as a "courtier Prince of China" who visited Japan to subdue her with his art.²⁷ There he

21 Yan Shaotang: "The Emergence of Ancient Japanese Fiction and Its Linkage with Chinese Literature". *Cowrie. A Chinese Journal of Comparative Literature*, 1, 1986, 3, p. 57.

22 Ibid., pp. 58-59.

23 Pollack, D.: op. cit., p. 6.

24 Reischauer, E.O. and Fairbank, J.K.: *East Asia. The Great Tradition*. London, George Allen & Unwin LTD 1960, pp. 495-496.

25 Ibid., p. 496.

26 Hirakawa Sukehiro: "Chinese Culture and Japanese Identity: Traces of Po Chü-i in a Peripheral Country". *Tamkang Review*, XV, Autumn 1984 - Summer 1985, p. 206.

27 Ibid., p. 210.

met one of the Japanese gods of poetry Sumiyoshi no Kami in the disguise of an old fisherman. After a contest of poetry similar to that in the *Wakan Roeishu*, the Japanese gods and their chorus asked Bo Juyi to return to China. Allegedly the Japanese makers of *uta* are not any worse than their Chinese teachers:

So we bid you return to your home,
Swiftly over the waves of the shore!

And further:

As they hovered over the void of the sea,
Moved in the dance, the sleeves of their dancing dress
Stirred up a wind, a magic wind
That blew on the Chinese boat
And filled its sails
And sent it back again to the land of Han.²⁸

Bo Juyi was a chief witness not only for *Wakan Roeishu*, but even more for the preceding great works of Japanese literature of the Heian period around 1000 A.D., especially for Sei Shōnagon's 清少納言 (fl. ca. 1000) *Makura no sōshi* 枕草子 (*The Pillow Book*) and even more for Murasaki Shikibu's 紫式部 (ca. 978-ca. 1014) *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*), where Bo's poems are quoted more than ninety times.²⁹

The Japanese, in particular, were not always pleased when they became aware of their dependence on the "land of Han". But literary works of Korea, Japan and Vietnam, insofar as they were not written in one of the national variants of the Chinese *wenyan*, had a complementary function during the longer or shorter duration of the Far Eastern interliterary community. It may sound paradoxical to us today, yet works written in a foreign language constituted the main literary currents of their literatures. This was nothing extraordinary in the literary development in medieval

28 Ibid., p. 212.

29 Lao Mo: "Riben Ping'anchoa nuzuojia yu Zhongguo wenxue" (Japanese Women Writers During Heian Period and Chinese Literature). *Zhongguo bijiao wenxue* 中國比較文學 (Comparative Literature in China), 1, 1995, pp. 141-142.

Europe or Asia, but the dependence upon Chinese literature was usually much stronger due to the linguistic differences.

This complementary function in these three literatures changed with their development. To change it and later even to remove it, the *onnade* (woman's hand) helped. A study of Chinese literature reveals an interesting phenomenon. Literature written by men and that written by women plainly differed and did not develop not along the same lines. This was brought about by the almost negligible participation of Chinese women in the social and cultural life, with its intimate and family character, and with the different moral codes of the male and female world in China in comparison to Heian Japan. The developmental curve in literature written by Chinese women is different from that written by men. Literature written by men involves two curves: one featuring the development of poetry and the second that of fiction and drama. Women lagged behind regarding the first, and as to the second they practically did not figure in it at all, with the exception perhaps of a certain weak dramatic vision.³⁰

An essentially different situation appeared in the Japanese literature towards the end of the 1st millennium A.D. The year 894 marked the break-off of official relations between Japan and China. The man sent as the "last Ambassador" to China was Sugawara no Michizane 燕原道眞 (805-903), one of the best experts on Chinese literature.³¹ It is interesting to note that in the *Wakan Roeishu* there are 38 Chinese poems written by him, only his namesake Sugawara no Fumitoki 燕原文時 had more, 44 poems.³² Against the background of the decline of the Tang, we may understand the strains for the "Japaneseness", at least in the field of culture. The culturalist function of the Chinese literature in Japan substantially weakened. The appearance of *kana* permitted court ladies of the Heian period to write in a feminine style in Japanese. As a rule, they did not succeed in writing Chinese as their male partners did, for mastering the classical Chinese required much time and effort. On the other hand they were probably not behind, at least the most educated, in the knowledge of Chinese literature and

30 Gálik, M.: "On the Literature Written by Chinese Women". *Asian and African Studies* (Bratislava), XV, 1979, pp. 76-77.

31 Morris, I.: *The World of the Shining Prince. Court Life in Ancient Japan*. Harmondsworth, Penguin Books 1979, p. 19.

32 Hirakawa Sukehiro: op. cit., p. 206.

culture. As ensues from a recent study, Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shōnagon were highly educated and well-read women of their time, well-acquainted with such works as *The Book of Poetry*, *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*), *Daode jing* 道德經 (*Sacred Book of Dao and De*), *Zhuangzi* *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Shiji* 史記 (*Historical Records*), *Hanshu* 漢書 *A* (*History of Earlier Han*), the poetry of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427), Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831) and some works of Buddhist content, as *Fahuajing* 法華經 (*Saddharma-pundarika Sutra*), i.e., *Lotos Sutra*.³³ In general, it might perhaps be said that the complementary function in Japanese literature began to dominate the culturalist one sometime at the beginning of the 11th cent. It was necessary to grasp critically and creatively the perennial alien, i.e., the Chinese legacy, to select from the indigenous sources and materials the most valuable elements, using the most suitable style for the readership, and to fuse both parts, giving and receiving, alien and indigenous into a new workable systemo-structural entity of the Japanese national literature.

The two functions mentioned here, certainly do not fully reflect the complete picture of the Far Eastern interliterary community, or rather of the relation between China and Japan and vice versa. The selective function of the receiving literature, which was in nearly all cases the Japanese literature, needs very careful reconsideration. Bo Juyi was not very happy that the Japanese did not prefer his *Xin yuefu* 新樂府 (*New Folk-Song Style Poems*), however this seems to be only partially true. In a study entitled *Bo Juyi he "Yuanshi wuyu"* 白居易合源氏物語 (Bo Juyi and the *Genji Monogatari*) many examples are quoted of Bo Juyi's *fengyu shi* 讽諭詩 satirical poems,³⁴ although the Japanese preferred more "beautiful" than "instructive", and "were never to be much impressed by the Chinese insistence that a tone of high moral seriousness always be the concomitant of lyrical attractiveness."³⁵ In Chinese traditional literature, I dare to say, "beautiful" was as a rule always connected with "good" and "aesthetic" with "ethical". The Japanese stressed "beautiful" without connecting it with something "instructive", "didactical", and the like. They have done

33 Cf. Lao Mo: op. cit., pp. 137 and 141.

34 He Yin and Pei Yijin, in *Comparative Literature in China*, 2, 1985, pp. 44-50.

35 Pollack, D.: pp. 56-57.

this certainly up to the end of the Heian era. In one of his early books, J. Ingram Bryan states: "It is in this love and exploitation of beautiful things and places that the Japanese are an incarnation of the ancient Greeks. In regard of nature, the Japanese do not admire expansive views so much as little glimpses of beauty. They appreciate not so much great mountain heights and ranges, nor endless sea vistas, lakes or plains, so much as they appreciate definite scenes or facts representing much in little: the *multum in parvo* of the ancients; or, better still, *Quam multa! Quam paucis!* That is, the concise in style and the pregnant in meaning, which is, to the Japanese, the essential characteristic of a fine poem equally with a fine painting."³⁶ I am quite sure that Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (884-946), who certainly knew Confucius well, and later Chinese *artes poeticae*, came close to the spirit of poetry of high aesthetic value when he wrote: "By multiplication of our thoughts and language we express our love of flowers, our envy of birds, our emotion at the haze that ushers in the spring, or our grief at beholding the dew."³⁷ Only "cramped scholar" would not observe here the impact of Confucius' words from the *Analects* about the *Book of Poetry*, the knowledge of which "will widen your acquaintances with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees."³⁸ Ki no Tsurayuki used a more poetic form of expression. Another statement of his reminds us of the even older text from the *Book of Documents*: "When the moon shines on the snow or when the flowers brighten the trees, we yield to time's presence and observe its manifestation — so our hearts work within us and express themselves in words."³⁹ In the Chinese source we read: "Poetry expresses in words the intent of the heart (or mind), songs prolong the words in chanting..."⁴⁰

36 Bryan, J.I.: *The Literature of Japan*. London, Thornton Butterworth LTD 1929, p. 77.

37 Quoted according to Bryan, J.I.: op. cit., p. 72.

38 *The Analects of Confucius*. Transl. and annot. by Arthur Waley. London, George Allen & Unwin LTD 1964, p. 212.

39 Quoted according to Miner, E.: *Japanese Linked Poetry*. Princeton, Princeton University Press 1979, p. 21.

40 Quoted according to Liu, James J.Y.: *Chinese Theories of Literature*. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press 1975, p. 69.

In ancient Chinese the character *mei* 美, i.e. beautiful, meant also good. Günther Debon and Rolf Trauzettel see the beginning of the division between the Chinese ethics and aesthetics in the statement of Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) in a letter to Zhong You 鍾繇 (151-230), the famous calligrapher: "Who in a piece of jade presents a picture of virtue, is a superior man, who is able to distinguish its beauty, is a poet."⁴¹ In spite of the efforts of modern Chinese students of aesthetics, not much is to be found, especially in Chinese traditional treatises, that could be compared with the Japanese understanding of the subject. The concepts similar to *mono no aware* (enchantment with things), *yugen* (beauty of gentle, hidden gracefulness), or *sabi* (tranquil loneliness) are difficult to find, and maybe do not even exist. They certainly do not serve as the corner-stones of literary or artistic theory and practice as in the case of Murasaki Shikibu, Zeami Motokiyo 世阿彌 or Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694).

The selective function of Japanese literature proved to be special because of the peculiar biliterariness and bilingualism of the Japanese readers and writers. Chinese *literati* were never biliterary or bilingual with the exception of the very rare knowledge of Sanskrit which was necessary for the translation of the Buddhist literature that later spread via China into Korea and Japan. A knowledge of the peculiar forms of *wenyan* in Korea, Japan and in Vietnam obviated the necessity of translation during the considerable period of this interliterary community. A new situation ensued in the 17th century when the development of towns and urban culture, particularly in Japan, began to demand the translations of Chinese literary works from the vernacular language (*baihua*) which was difficult to understand for non-Chinese scholars and entirely incomprehensible to others. During the period between 1661 and 1895 the most frequently translated work from Chinese into Japanese was the novel *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳 *Water Margin*. The Japanese translated it eleven times between those years, for the first time in 1727.⁴² The large number of translations was caused

41 Debon, G.: "Literaturtheorie und Literaturkritik Chinas". In: Debon, G.(ed.): *Ostasiatische Literaturen*. Wiesbaden, AULA Verlag 1984, p. 44 and Trauzettel R.: "Das Schöne und das Gute. Aesthetische Überlegungen im chinesischen Altertum". In: Schmidt-Glintzer, H. (ed.): *Das andere China. Festschrift für Wolfgang Bauer zum 65. Geburtstag*. Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz 1995, pp. 311-312.

42 Tam Yue-him *et alii*: op. cit., pp. 60 and 350.

by the Japanese interest in the stories of *gunki* (military tales) kind. On the other hand the best Chinese novel of the traditional period, Cao Xueqin's 曹雪芹 (ca. 1715-1764) *Hongloumeng* 紅樓夢 (*A Dream of the Red Chamber*) was published in Japan for the first time between 1920-1924.⁴³ The popularity of the *Tale of Genji* was so great that the Japanese did not need a novel that was at least partly typologically similar to Murasaki's masterpiece.

The Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese literatures were also indebted to the Chinese in the field of genre. In some cases it proved extremely strong, e.g. in Japan, in the *kansi* poetry ('Chinese poem'), or in Korea in the *hansi* poetry. The Japanese proved to be the most broad-minded. The whole interliterary community generally took over the formerly Chinese division of literary genres into "high" and "low", the former including poetry, historical prose and prose without plot. The works in the vernacular were put into the latter category. An exception to this was Japan which considered it proper to acknowledge that the "high" literature also consists of fictional works like *monogatari* 物語, *gunki* 軍記 or *senki* 戰記 (also military tales) and lyric genres like *tanka* 短歌, *renga* 連歌 or *haiku* 俳句.

Already at the end of the 16th century it became evident that the Japanese literary system was the most open one, and capable, if not to receive, at least take into account the existence even of European works. *Aesop's Fables* were printed in Japan in 1593, and also extracts from Homer, Cicero and other Greek and Roman writers.⁴⁴ After a short enthralment with the Neo-Confucian writings in the 17th century, and simultaneous study of *kokugaku* 國學 (National Learning), Nagasaki in the 18th century became a center of *rangaku* 蘭學 (Dutch Learning), but these last were concerned mainly with natural and technical subjects. Zeami's Sumiyoshi no Kami with his magic wind blew the Chinese boat back to the "land of Qing", he also prevented the importation of Western literature, even in the Chinese translation, at least up until 1854. The treaty of peace and commerce between Japan and United States began a new period in the relations between Japan and the world.

43 Ibid., p. 306.

44 Janeira, A.M.: *Japanese and Western Literature*. Rutland — Vermont — Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Co. 1970, p. 121.

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From 1854 and especially after 1868, it is not possible to look at the relations between Japan and the world from the well frog perspective. At that time the Japanese vision encompassed a great part of the cultural world, including the most important countries of Europe, America and partly of Asia. To the perennial alien (China) many other aliens acceded, and the "challenges of the Other" became variegated and manysided. The Zhuangzian rock bird had to shoulder the blue sky even higher and his journeys to the "southern darkness" could be compared to the possible flight paths of big airlines today.

What happened in Meiji and in a part of Taishō era (1868-1918) is the first stage of the genesis not only of the Japanese, but of modern Asian cultures as well. That took place during the rise of the colonial and semi-colonial system in various countries. This was as a result of the extraordinarily strong Euro-American impact in the domain of social consciousness.

Conditions for such a genesis did not come to maturity in each country at the same time; moreover, they were dependent on the intracultural situation, on the country's relationship to the imperialist powers (or power, as, for instance, in China in 1842 and in Japan in 1853), on the strength of traditions or innovative abilities, on "convergent currents" that were being formed within the bosom of the indigenous structures; further, on the willingness of the ruling strata in the different Asian countries, also in Japan or in China, to help in the solution of issues relating to this momentous and decisive meeting, even at the cost of certain concessions in the philosophical domain or in the field of culture, literature and art. This applies also to the overall dialectics between the tradition and innovation, and, if you will, to "identity and canon", and their practical application.

In the whole domain of the social conditions of these countries the systemo-structural entities began with a dynamic process of change. The transformation was always initiated by wide-ranging educational work, which included the construction or organization of new kinds of schools, from the elementary grade up to the universities, following European models. Delegations were sent on study tours to Europe or to the U.S.A. (China even sent a delegation to Japan), and students were sent to institutions of higher learning. Newspapers and journals started to appear in Asian countries for the first time. These last especially played an enormous part in the transformation. Other factors that helped in no small measure to

destroy or at least to disrupt the inertia of the entire complex of social consciousness and traditions in Asian countries were the numerous cultural societies, corporations and associations which, by their activity, contributed to the various changes. Modern philosophical trends and a partly new social organization helped in the development of individualism, which was only slightly developed in China and Japan. A new national or patriotic consciousness was formed, which was not needed before in China which adhered to the so-called Sino-centric world order, nor in Japan where the Japano-centric world order began to be propagated by some as mentioned above.⁴⁵

The literature as such, whether critical or creative which originated during this period of genesis and initial development, was socially strongly concerned and oriented towards the deflection of the aesthetic or ethical function in its traditional apprehension. As Jintaro Fujii asserted, during this period "no literary work truly deserving to be called literature was produced"⁴⁶ and according to Armando Martins Janeira, Japanese literature "had dropped to its lowest level."⁴⁷ Maybe this is too strict a judgment. I would not be so rigorous about the Chinese literature of this period, although I think that only little axiologically valuable was written and published during this stage. In traditional Asian literatures, pride of place went to poetry as the basic kind of literature, which in Japan or in China, was predominantly of lyric character. At the time of the genesis and the initial development of modern Asian literatures, Japanese and Chinese inclusive, the highest place came to be occupied by fiction (this involved novels and short stories, although not always close to European kinds) and by the essay as a form of non-plot prose.⁴⁸

45 A very good analysis of the rise and initial development in some Asian literatures (Chinese, Japanese, Bengali, Iranian and Armenian) may be found in the book: *Setkání a proměny. Vznik moderní literatury v Asii* (Meetings and Transformations. The Rise of Modern Literature in Asia). Prague, Odeon 1976. Its partly different English version appeared in three thin volumes: *Contributions to the Study of the Rise and Development of Modern Literatures in Asia*, Prague, Academia 1965-1970.

46 Fujii Jintaro: *Outline of Japanese History in the Meiji Era*. Tokyo, Obunsha 1957, p. 81.

47 Janeira, A.M.: op. cit., p. 128.

48 *Setkání a proměny*, pp. 231-241.

During this period the *wakan* problem completely ceased to be a trauma for the Japanese. Japan seemed to overtake the "culturalist" function in relation to China. Japan became not only the *lapis refugii* for the revolutionary or anti-Manchu oriented intellectuals and students but the chief intermediary for the whole world culture. Just as the Japanese during the Nara Era, and even before, took over nearly everything progressive from China, the Chinese repeated this experience in a modern way when borrowing the new things from Europe or America. Japan took the lead and China followed. If the Japanese organized *Bansho torishirabesho* 蕃書取調所 (Office for the Study of Foreign Writings) in 1856, the Chinese imitated them with the *Tongwenguan* 通文館 (Translation Office) in 1861. Even before 1870 Japanese students had left illegally or had been sent legally to study abroad and between 1872-1875 120 Chinese students were sent to America. The *Yokohama mainichi shimbun* (Yokohama Daily News) started in 1871, and the *Shenbao* in Shanghai in 1872. The Japanese had their Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901) and the Chinese their Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929). Fukuzawa Yukichi preached *Datsu-A-ron* (*Dissociation from Asia*), not only from China! "Western civilization spreads like measles," he wrote in this article. "The epidemic now ranging in Tokyo began at Nagasaki in Kyushu and then fanned out as if carried by the advancing warmth of spring... Not only can we not prevent the spread of civilization, but as men of wisdom we should endeavour to promote its spread so that the people may enjoy its beneficial effects."⁴⁹ Once being a pride of the Far Eastern civilization, China, together with Korea, according to Fukuzawa, "will lose their independence, will lie in ruin, their territory divided amongst the civilized nations of the world,"⁵⁰ Japan included. He was not completely right when he accused both the Chinese and Koreans of the resisting modernity and of the preservation of old, outdated values. There were differences in the attitudes toward the changes in the high political echelons and among the new intelligentsia and the students. The Japanese proved to be much wiser, both in the political and social fields, and also among the intellectual strata.

The conditions for the modernization were best prepared in Japan. Certain changes that were necessary within the whole framework of social

49 Quoted according to Iriye Akira (ed.): op. cit., pp. 328-329.

50 Ibid., p. 329.

being and consciousness were most radical and most consistent in Japan, where, for instance, Nishi Amane (1829-1897), the father of Japan's new philosophy, while preparing a draft of a new syllabus for philosophical studies in Japanese institutions of higher learning in 1877, excluded from it all teachings of Oriental provenance.⁵¹ A consistent or a wholesale Westernization could not be realized, for it would entail a loss of the Japanese cultural identity. Finally, a compromise was adopted. Creative contacts began to be established with various Western philosophical disciplines, but the traditional ethics of the Confucian-Shintoist kind was preserved or brought to life. Later in 1912, the philosopher Inoue Tetsujirō (1855-1944) set up a system of ethical principles that took into consideration the following characteristic premises: the immutability of the Japanese political structure, the identity of loyalty to the Emperor with Japanese nationalism, faith in a divine origin of the imperial family, ancestral worship and strong family solidarity.⁵² This, more than any other change within the framework of social consciousness, probably made traditional Japan into a modern country, with its advantages and shortcomings.

If the Japanese between 1854 and 1894 had enough time to change the whole political and social order, to adopt a constitution modelled partly after that of Prussia, and an army and navy of European type, to build a modern school system and to introduce industrialization on a large scale, in China almost nothing happened except for the concessions granted to the Western powers, including Russia and Japan. Three years after the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, between June 11 and September 21, 1898, a group of scholars headed with Kang Youwei 康有爲 (1858-1927), supported by some other reformers, with the help of Guangxu Emperor (reigned 1875-1908) succeeded in promulgating some forty decrees, including the reform of administration, creation of a ministry of economy, establishment of modern schools and colleges, reorganization of the army, etc. They were only partly put into practice and several of the reformers were executed, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, two most important, escaped by fleeing to Japan. According to Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank pro-

51 Piovesana, G.K., S.J.: "Contemporary Japanese Philosophy". In: Riepe, D. (ed.): *Asian Philosophy Today*. London, Gordon and Breach Science Publishers 1981, p. 223.

52 Ibid., pp. 232-235.

bably "many more changes were taking place in China than has been generally recognized. Nevertheless, the rate of internal change seems to have been much greater in Japan... Japan, with an already mobile society, could easily be diverted into new direction of motion by the external impact, whereas China was characterized by inertia, what had first to be overcome."⁵³ A whole century later, in 1949, new structural modifications were possible. Then the overwhelming majority of Chinese chose the worst possible alternative: a communist way of further development. In China, politics never went together with culture in such a reasonably dialectical way as in Japan, nor die they ever support each other, so that their collaboration could be mutually prosperous. The "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976) is a unique example in the history of the whole world of the precarious "unity" between politics and culture.

Although the conditions for the dissolution of the interliterary community of the Far East were prepared partly during the Tokugawa period and certainly from the second half of the 17th century, during the time of the genesis and initial development of modern literatures of this area, not only the indigenous literary structures began to be disrupted, but likewise their closest interliterary assignment, the traditional interliterary community, gradually disappeared right up to the beginning of the 1920s. The first to break away from this community was Japan, then Korea, Mongolia, and Vietnam followed. (Mongolia was also partly connected especially with Chinese popular fiction.) In the new conditions following the definitive fall of the "sinocentric world order", the individual literatures of the Far East sought possible ways of development that would be independent from China, who was weak both economically and politically, in the midst of cultural chaos and in creative infertility. Every literature of this region tried to make contact with the literature and culture of the European cultural area within a framework provided by the overall sociopolitical and cultural situation both within their own countries and outside of them. Thanks to the unprecedented communication facilities, the interliterary process reached far beyond the borders of a geographically limited "sinocentric world order".

53 Reischauer, E.O. and Fairbank, J.K.: op. cit., pp. 671-672.

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The period of the genesis and the rise of modern Asian literatures, including the Japanese and Chinese, is according to my understanding of the world interliterary process, only the first stage in this modern and inevitable development. If we look at the literary history from a comparative perspective, it began very early in Turkey (1839), in Bengal about 1860, in Iran 1875, in Japan some years after the beginning of the Meiji Revolution and almost at the close of the 19th century in China. My colleagues in Bratislava called the next stage the "emancipation period" in the development of modern Asian literatures.⁵⁴ Although the term "emancipation" is not used in the literary sphere, and I do not ask anybody to follow my colleagues in calling this phenomenon in this way, on the whole it aptly characterized the period in modern Asian literatures which began in the majority of Asian countries between 1887 and 1918, hence in the course of three decades, and came to an end approximately at the time of World War II. Essentially this involved a more or less final extrication from the shackles of their own fettering traditions which, in view of their feudal normativeness, their outdated aestheticism, their affinity to old axiological requirements, dynamically no longer satisfied the demands of the modern era. On the other hand, the anti-traditional tendencies act according to the feedback principle and in an effort to prevent the complete destruction of a nation's own, indigenous structure, built according to the principles of the national identity, they induce conscious or at least an unconscious contact with the vital elements in the traditional system. As regards creatively following the literary merits of the European cultural realm, a typical feature of the interliterary process is its far greater differentiation as compared to the preceding period. True, the development went on in the initial stages, as in the time of the rise and the initial development, but emphasis was now laid on the well-tested Euro-American forms and creative devices. For the most part literature became socially concerned (this holds especially for China), although modernist trends were accepted and adapted to the needs of the receiving literatures.

54 *Premeny a návraty. Cesty k emancipácii literatúr Ázie a Afriky* (Transformations and Returns. Ways to the Emancipation of Asian and African Literatures). Bratislava, Slovenský spisovateľ 1989.

In Japan, the year 1887 may be considered as the beginning of the so-called "emancipation stage", when Futabatei Shimei 三葉亭四迷 (1864-1909) completed the first part of his novel *Ukigumo* 浮雲 (*The Drifting Clouds*), indeed, the first truly modern work in Japanese revolutionary literature. In China, it was the year 1918, when Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) wrote and published his short story *Kuangren riji* 狂人日記 (*Diary of a Madman*). At this stage, the Western impact proved even stronger than it had been during the preceding period, intervening to a greater or a smaller degree into all domains of the social consciousness and social being, and in fact, this stage could hardly be imagined without it. Thus, Futabatei's *The Drifting Clouds* could not conceivably have been written without the impact of the Russian classical literature, particularly such authors as I.S. Turgenev, I.A. Goncharov and F.M. Dostoyevsky. Futabatei as a student grew up in the milieu of Russian teachers who knew very little Japanese and thus he had an opportunity to become familiar with the entire Russian course of study of middle school standard, through both Russian written and spoken word. He came to know Russian literature through A.S. Pushkin, N.V. Gogol, M.Yu. Lermontov, L.N. Tolstoy and through the literary criticism of V.G. Belinsky.⁵⁵ The father of modern Chinese literature Lu Xun knew no Russian, but for him Japanese and German became the door to the foreign literary world. His first story in the vernacular *Diary of a Madman* bears the evident and provable traces of Fr. Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, L. Andreyev's *My Records* and V. Garshin's *Red Flower*.⁵⁶ I could go on analysing one after another more or less significant representatives of Far Eastern and Asian literatures.

Euro-American literatures, or knowledge about them, reached the literature of Asian countries by ways described in the theories of comparative literature in the form of external or internal contacts, through periodicals and other materials, visits to or studies in foreign countries, sale or exchange of books, and particularly through the translations of foreign lite-

55 Miyoshi Masao: *Accomplices of Silence. The Modern Japanese Novel*. Berkeley, University of California Press 1974, p. 18. B. Lewin has a different opinion asserting that Futabatei had only one teacher of Russian literature. See his *Futabatei Shimei in seinem Beziehungen zur russischen Literatur*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz 1955, pp. 40-47.

56 Gálik, M.: *Milestones in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation (1898-1979)*. Bratislava-Wiesbaden, Veda-Otto Harrassowitz 1986, pp. 24-32.

ratures. In general it may be said that during the "emancipation" period the majority of translations from foreign literatures are given more or less exact, stylistically and artistically adequate forms of the originals, in comparison with the preceding stage where for the most part abbreviated, truncated and adapted translations appeared, in order that they would satisfy the systemo-structural entities of the indigenous literary forms, which were still partly traditional, and would also be suitable to fulfil other extraliterary functions, e.g. political or social ones.

Starting from the premise of the determining role of the receiving phenomena in the interliterary process, and realizing that further components of social consciousness play a decisive role in it, then it is understood that a number of factors may effect the choice, mode of reception and restructuralization in the receiving environment, e.g. the knowledge of foreign literatures, politico-economic situation, possibilities of the studies in different countries abroad, receiving subject (translator, author, reader), literary trends in new literary structures, associations of creative writers, poets or critics.

Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862-1922), who spent four years (1884-1888) in Germany, falling asleep with Schiller in one hand and with Schopenhauer in another,⁵⁷ wrote a *tanka* where we find these words: "He threw with courage a fell of piebald colt/ with the aim to hit the gods of Olympus."⁵⁸

"He" in this short piece of writing is Mori Ōgai himself or another Japanese writer of modern times, who similarly to the rude Susa-no-o, came to Takama-ga-hara (The Plain of Heaven). This abode in Mori's poem symbolizes the Other of the foreign, yet unknown, but very important for Japan's future world. Mythical Susa-no-o fell into the room of the weaving girl (or girls) of Amaterasu, his older sister, provoked the citizens of Takama-ga-hara, to their justified deeds.⁵⁹ The new Susa-no-o

57 Ivanova, G.D.: *Mori Ogai* (in Russian). Moscow, Nauka 1982, p. 31.

58 Ibid., p. 34.

59 According to *Kojiki*: "As the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity [i.e. Amaterasu, M.G.] sat in her awful weaning hall seeing the weaving of the august garments of the Deities, he [i.e. Susa-no-o, M.G.] broke a hole in the top of the weaving hall, and through it let fall a heavenly piebald horse which he had flayed with a backward flaying, at whose sight [the weaving girls, M.G.] were so much alarmed that *impegerunt privates partes adversis radiis et obierunt* [italics are mine, M.G.]." See *Ko-ji-ki* "Records of Ancient Things". Transl. and with Introduction and Notes

presents an Olympian "challenge", i.e. alien gods, he considers and elaborates for his own and his national literature the legacy of the Other, which really should be studied and creatively processed in the new works of literature and art written in the language of his own country.

A thorough study of different modern literatures of Asian countries, Japan and China inclusive, will help to elaborate, in this period of overall globalization, a geoliterary map that will show the external and internal contacts with Euro-American, and in the last three decades, also with that of African and Latin American countries. It will especially set down more exactly the internal elements, i.e. those that found their way into the new structure of the receiving literatures. This should be the chief object of the research with the aim to show the inner response both to the foreign impact and to the domestic tradition.

This is not an easy task since the methods of the study of interliterary process are not always perfect and not all literary comparatists possess the necessary knowledge for this kind of work. A close look at the modern Chinese literature after 1918 reveals that the geoliterary map follows or links up with ancient and medieval European mythologies, with Greek tragedy, partly also with the *Bible*, but then leaps over two millenia of European development in order to make contact with the French 17th century classicism. The greatest attention was devoted to European realist or romantic literature of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and this was because of the acquired sense for literary evolutionism. Then interest shifted to the *littérature engagée*, and later to symbolism and expressionism, thought the latter to a lesser extent. The Chinese never attempted to follow the steps of European dadaists or surrealists.⁶⁰ The important exceptions among the literary modernists were the followers of Japanese

by Basil Hall Chamberlain. Tokyo, The Asiatic Society of Japan 1973, pp. 63-64. According to *Nihongi* the original text was different: "Moreover, when he [i.e. Su-sa-no-o, M.G.] saw that Ama-terasu no Oho-kami was in her sacred weaving hall, engaged in weaving the garments of the Gods, he flayed a piebald colt of Heaven, and breaking a hole in the roof-tiles of the hall, flung it in. Then Ama-terasu no Oho-kami started with alarm, and wounded herself with the shuttle..." See *Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest times to A.D. 697*. Transl. from the original Chinese and Japanese by W.G. Aston. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Co. 1972 (fifth printing 1980), p. 41.

60 Gálik, M.: *Milestones in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation (1898-1979)*, pp. 262-263.

Neo-sensualists (Shin-kankakuha), like Liu Naou 劉呐鷗 (1900-1934) and Mu Shiying 穆時英 (1912-1940).⁶¹

The Chinese first looked at the Euro-American literature mostly through the Japanese prism, e.g. Lu Xun, his younger brother Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967), the members of the Chuangzaoshe 創造社 Creation Society, Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), Yu Dafu 郁達夫 (1896-1945) and others from this group. Only later, and in smaller measure, was it through the study of other individual literatures, such as many Japanese, beginning with Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867-1916).

As a non-Japanologist, I am not able to sketch here the geoliterary map of modern Japanese literature after the fall of the Far Eastern interliterary community. Very probably it is rather different from that of modern Chinese literature due to the social, political and literary development and also the indigenous literary traditions. What I shall try to do here is to specify more clearly that feedback principle of the “emancipation” period, and probably also the literature of the present and future time: “conscious or at least unconscious contact-making with the vital elements in the traditional system” (as mentioned above), or in the already innovated receiving structure, i.e., in the modern Japanese and Chinese literature. I confess that I am not familiar with more recent theories focused on the “invention of tradition”, spoken of in the “Conference Draft” elaborated by Professor Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit, but I dare to say that the tradition did not need to be invented, since it was always to a greater or lesser degree present in all modern Asian literatures of the era under consideration, i.e. approximately between 1887-1945. The concept of influence is misleading for many researchers up to this time. Only in the 1960s, after lengthy and animated discussion, Professor Anna Balakian, pronounced an ingenious sentence:

“One is sometimes led to wonder whether any study of influence is truly justified unless it succeeds in elucidating the particular qualities of the borrower, in revealing along with the influence, and almost inspite of it,

61 Cf. Yan Jiayan: "Qianyan" (Preface). In: Yan Jiayan: *Xin'ganjuepai xiaoshuo xuan* (A Selection From the Neo-sensualist Works). Peking, People's Literature Publishing House 1985, pp. 1-38 and Leo Ou-fan Lee's introduction to the book of the same title, but different content, published in Taipei 1988, pp. 1-16.

what is infinitively more important: the turning point at which the writer frees himself of the influence and finds his originality.”⁶²

In a discussion with Hijiya-Kirschnereit on December 1, 1994 here in Berlin, I mentioned this topic, which was probably one of the most important of this conference, and she pointed out her study “Innovation als Renovation. Zur literarhistorischen Bedeutung von Tayama Katais Erzählung 'Futon'”⁶³ from the year 1978 as an example where, on the background of the “influence” or impact, the “invention of tradition” is at least partly elucidated. It is a pity that this excellent piece of criticism was not translated into English or Japanese, however in it the tradition was only alluded to, and not systematically followed, or critically explained. On the other hand the analysis of the “influence” coming mainly from Gerhart Hauptmann's *Einsame Menschen* is made in a paradigmatic manner. Later she tried to follow the problem in an essay entitled: “Annotations on the Concept of Tradition in Modern Japanese Literature”, but here she frankly admitted that it could be characterized only as a “preliminary outline”,⁶⁴ although it is, in fact, much more; it needs only more detailed and broad elaboration. This is a very difficult task.

If we re-read the above argument by Balakian, we see that the tradition is not mentioned there: as a Western comparatist studying mostly literatures written in English, French or German, she did not need to stress the aspect of the tradition so much. With the Oriental literatures, coming into contact with the completely different Western cultural and social backgrounds, it would be necessary to include tradition as one of the sources of the new originality.

I understand Hijiya-Kirschnereit's irritation when she read or even heard the unceasing self-assertions of Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) about his appurtenance to indigenous traditions. My next words are to be understood only as that of the admirer of the Japanese literature and not of

62 Balakian, A.: *Influence and Literary Fortune: The Equivocal Junction of Two Methods*. Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, 11, 1962, p. 29.

63 Hijiya-Kirschnereit, I.: *Was heißt: Japanische Literatur verstehen*. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp 1990, pp. 29-58.

64 In: O'Neill, P.G. (ed.): *Tradition and Modern Japan*. Tenterdeen, Paul Norbury Publications LTD 1981, pp. 206-216 and 301 f. I know this study from its slightly changed version: “Gedanken zum Traditionsbegriff in der modernen japanischen Literatur”. In: Hijiya-Kirschnereit, I.: op. cit., pp. 118-133.

an expert. It is known that Kawabata was an indefatigable reader of Heian literature and of Murasaki Shikibu's or Sei Shonagon's art, and was more generally aware of the traditional sensibility of sadness, awareness over the transience of men and things that is clearly seen in his books. Of course, Kawabata's own works are different from Japanese traditional literature. If I compare my own reading of his *Nemureru bijo* (*House of the Sleeping Beauties*) from the year 1960,⁶⁵ some passages from *The Tale of Genji* and two wonderful chapters The Cult of Beauty and The Women of Heian and their Relation to Men,⁶⁶ it comes to me that the *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* is an example of a fractured image in an extremely complicated mirror, reflecting both the European impact, domestic traditions and originality of mind of the modern, sensitive and talented author. The old and impotent Eguchi is a 20th century pedant, both to an European neurotic individual and to a Heian aristocrat, who implements old ritual (in his new, modern way) when he comes five times to lie by the side of the sleeping beauties. There is a silence and an emptiness (*sunyata*) between him and the girls which similarly has much to do with the character not only of the Heian literature, but the traditional Japanese literature in general. There are no love poems, no "next-morning letters", no "third-night cakes", and, of course, no love making.⁶⁷ There is a death in Kawabata's novel, but it is not Eguchi, but the sleeping girl who dies. Eguchi recalls the experiences with the women he enjoyed and waits his end. When looking at the bodies of young girls and pondering over his own deeds from his life he hopes to achieve proper purgation (similar to *katharsis* of Aristotle) and obtain peace of mind. The shadow of death and impermanence runs through *The House of the Sleeping Beauties* just as it does through *The Tale of Genji*. Eguchi's feelings may be described with Murasaki's poem:

This world of ours —
Why should we lament it?

⁶⁵ *House of the Sleeping Beauties and Other Stories*. Translated by E.G. Seidensticker. Tokyo, Kodansha International 1969.

⁶⁶ Morris, I.: op. cit., pp.183-261.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 223-229.

Let us view it as we do the cherries
That blossom on the hills.⁶⁸

The Chinese, in my opinion, did not use their own tradition in their post-1918 literature, to such an extent, as the Japanese in their post-1887 literature. There are some reasons for this. The Chinese up to 1840s were never obliged to confront themselves with alien literature as the Japanese had during the last one and half of millenium, i.e. during the whole course of their national history. It is true that the Chinese had to confront the Buddhist impact, but this impact was more or less self-imposed, and with some exceptions, was followed voluntarily. After the year 1918, and especially since the first days of the May Fourth Movement 1919, modern Chinese mostly followed the works of Euro-American writers accessible to them, and at least some took completely negative attitudes to the indigenous traditional literature. Lu Xun, usually regarded as the best modern Chinese writer, in 1925 commended Chinese youths "to read few Chinese books or not to read them at all".⁶⁹ Although this view was most extreme, and Lu Xun himself did not cling to it, one may see that in the 1920s it was possible in China to spread opinions that were already obsolete in Japan in the 1880s. Later at the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War, in 1938, Mao Zedong wrote his well-known and later much quoted instruction: "Foreign stereotypes (*yang bagu* 洋八股) must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to the rest, they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style which the common people of China love."⁷⁰

As a result of Mao's challenge, two discussions bearing on the "national forms" took place in China during the years 1939-1940 and 1944. These discussions diverged in their results: all the participants wished to set up "national forms" in literature, some on the basis of old Chinese literary forms (mostly of popular nature), others through reforms of the new literary forms that ensued after the May Fourth Movement.⁷¹

68 Ibid., p. 124.

69 *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (The Complete Works of Lu Xun). Vol. 3. Peking, People's Publishing House 1956, p. 9.

70 *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Vol. 2. Peking 1965, p. 210.

71 Gálik, M.: "Main Issues in the Discussion on 'National Forms' in Modern Chinese Literature". *Asian and African Studies* (Bratislava), X, 1974, pp. 97-111.

But no one among the Chinese writers or critics suggested the idea of going back to the deeper study of the spirit of the traditional Chinese literature, its values, ideals and aesthetic or other typical means of expression. Apart from that, under the "foreign stereotypes", the most valuable part of the modern literary legacy of Western countries had been condemned.

Only in 1985, some Chinese writers, as Han Shaogong 韓少功 (*1953) and Zheng Wanlong 鄭萬隆 (*1944), began a movement concerned with the "search for roots" (*xun gen* 尋根), and with their works of fiction show this concern, having the local cultures, customs, or old Chinese myths as their topics.⁷² The impulses for this discussion came from American and Latin American works. I shall briefly analyze here only the latter. When the "national forms" were being discussed in China, Latin American countries took full advantage of the exodus of European intelligentsia from Franco's Spain and Hitler's Germany, who later helped, through their researches into the national spirit of those countries, to find prominent places in the world literature. According to Emir Rodríguez Monegal, the beginning of the 1940s "was the time of great essayists, who prepared themselves to define appropriately the essence of the 'Mexican' or 'Argentinian', who tried to find out where are the roots of the Latin-American identity..."⁷³ China, in contrast to Latin America, has never had works comparable to *The Labyrinth of the Solitude* by Octavio Paz (*1914) or *Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez (*1928). Contemporary Chinese men of letters did not search very intensively of deeply for their "roots", but followed Márquez' novel with fervor and often without much literary taste or achievement. Han Shaogong's *Bababa* 爸爸爸, a long short story about an imbecile, his Chinese mythical ancestors and village,⁷⁴ is a Chinese imitation of the descendants of José Arcadio

72 Lang-Tan, Goat-Koei: "Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Identität. Zum Phänomen der "xungen wenxue" in der chinesischen Gegenwartsliteratur (1984-1987)". *Drachenboot*, 1, 1987, pp. 30-34.

73 Monegal, E.R.: *Die Lateinamerikanische Literatur*. In: Wilpert, G.v. und Iwask, I. (eds.): *Moderne Weltliteratur. Die Gegenwartsliterature Europas und Amerikas*. Stuttgart, Alfred Kröner Verlag 1978, pp. 159-160.

74 Originally published in *Renmin wenxue* (People's Literature), 6, 1985, pp. 83-102 and translated into German by Karin Hasselblatt. See "Papapa", *Drachenboot*, 1, pp. 41-62.

Buendía, whose daughter-in-law Rebecca, is similarly idiotic like Bing Zai in Han's story.⁷⁵

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To search for the Great Principle in southern darkness, was for me to define at least approximately the *wakan* dialectics within the framework of the intercultural (or rather interliterary) community of the Far East. I have pointed to three different functions of this community: culturalist, complementary and selective. The selective one, conditioning the creative possibilities, proved to be the most important during at least the second millennium A.D. and contributed mostly to the creation of the greatest works of the Japanese traditional literature.

During the Meiji Revolution, and partly also before it, the *wakan* problem ceased to be a trauma for the Japanese, but it did become one for the Chinese in the next decades both in the cultural and political arena. The Japanese-Western confrontation in Meiji and post-Meiji eras proceeded much more smoothly (but not without difficulties) than the Sino-Western one, and also with much better results. Complete Westernization was shown to be impossible for both countries due to the ethnocentric problems and the preservation of national identities, and the Japanese, using the experience of their *wakan* history, adjusted the old methods to the new conditions.

Especially during the period preceding and following the World War II, the Japanese were able, much better than the Chinese, or any other nation of the former interliterary community of the Far East, to follow their own traditional literary legacy, to develop it together with the achievements of world literature and to produce writers and works of world fame and importance.

75 Originally appeared as *Cien años de Soledad* in 1967 and translated into English by Gregory Rabassa under the title *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, New York, Harper & Row 1970.

