

PREFACE

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Perspectives on East Asia gathers eight contributions from international scholars in different research areas within East Asian Studies. The Japanese studies section includes four articles, two by young Italian scholars Edoardo Gerlini and Pierantonio Zanotti, one by Prof. Massimiliano Tomasi, an Italian scholar who teaches Japanese language and literature and is the director of the Center of East Asian Studies at Western Washington University and one by Prof. Takei Kyozo, a world-renowned expert on Japanese drama.

Prof. Takei's contribution, through the introduction of an editorial rarity of the XVII century, shows the connections between two kinds of *hyōbanki* (compilations of rankings and critiques of kabuki actors and courtesans), underlining how classical rhetorical figures were successfully used for entertainment purposes during the Edo period, without losing their vitality in contexts that were far from their original matrix. Dr. Gerlini's article, written in Japanese, presents an inter-textual analysis centered on Chinese poetry written by the Japanese literate Sugawara no Michizane (IX-X century). Dr. Zanotti's work deals with poetry as well, but it is focused on the modern poet Yamamura Bochō (1884-1924) and on his poetry devoted to linguistic experimentation with a specific reference to his peculiar use of scientific lexicon. Prof. Tomasi's article analyzes the contribution of Christianity to modern Japanese literature, which can be traced in the artistic and ideological proposals of some writers who led the development of modern Japanese fiction.

The Chinese studies section includes four articles by young scholars, three Italian scholars and a Chinese scholar. The first article in this section is by Dr. Barberis, a sociologist that has been carrying out research on Chinese migrants in Italy for many years. He provides here a sociological perspective on family networks within the community of Chinese migrated entrepreneurs in Italy. The second article in this section, by Dr. Lioi, sinologist and translator, gives new insight on the influence on Chinese literature by two giants of Chinese Modern cultural world, Qian Zhongshu e Yang Jiang, a century after their birth. The third article, by Dr. Zappone, sinologist and linguist, presents an analysis of modern Chinese diplomatic language, providing a diachronic perspective on its

changes in the past fifty years. The last article, by Dr. Zhou, analyzes different aspects of imperial politics in the border areas of the Chinese empire starting from the XV century in the area of today's Shaanxi.

The eight contributions span centuries of history of China and Japan and cover very distant topics with different approaches, giving the reader a glimpse into some of the debated issues in the field of East Asian studies.