

Article Abstracts

ELIZABETH OYLER discusses the Kakuichi-bon *Heike monogatari*'s “Nue” episode, a eulogistic piece that commemorates the aged Minamoto warrior Yorimasa as an embodiment of “poetic and military skills” (*bunburyōdō*). Appearing immediately after Yorimasa's suicide in a failed uprising, “Nue” describes paired sets of events that mark Yorimasa's life and culminate in two subjugations of a weird creature called a *nue*. Despite its celebratory form, the “Nue” episode treats Yorimasa's skills as poet and warrior with ambivalence, using the *nue* subjugation to reveal the monster as a mirror image of Yorimasa. By having the monster mirror Yorimasa's hybrid identity as poet and warrior, the “Nue” episode suggests that such a combination, the product of the tumultuous environment in which the Heike circulated, was unnatural.

JACK STONEMAN analyzes a twelfth-century set of poems about living “so deep in the mountains” (*yama fukami*) that were exchanged by the monks Saigyō and Jakuzen. He shows that the poems illuminate the imagery of religious reclusion in *waka* and that Saigyō in particular transformed and deepened the tropes of “grass huts” (*sōan*) and “mountain homes” (*yamazato*)—images that female poets had associated with hidden flowers and languishing women. Thus, just when monks were increasingly choosing to live in remote mountains and in reduced circumstances, Saigyō created a new poetic space for expressing the ideal of Buddhist renunciation. Noting that Kamo no Chōmei,

Matsuo Bashō, and other poets borrowed diction from Saigyō, Stoneman offers a close analysis of Saigyō's innovations.

Scholars acknowledge Xu Wei's *The Mad Drummer* (*Kuang gushi* 狂鼓史), as a late-blooming classic in a dramatic form—the *zaju*—that had flourished in the Yuan dynasty. They have largely ignored the question of its actual performance, however, because they have assumed that it was intended for private reading. Reconsidering the “performability” of *The Mad Drummer*, YUMING HE concludes that Xu Wei deployed exceptional musical expertise in the composition, creating exacting demands for the performers. Examining the work's deliberate difficulty and its internal reflections on the allure and challenges of restaging past performance, He expands our appreciation for the play and offers new perspectives on the composition, performance, and print circulation of dramatic works during the late Ming.

Zhang Shicheng was vanquished by his rival, the Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang, but he survived in the collective memory of Suzhou--the center of his fourteenth-century kingdom--down to the Republican era. Focusing on the Zhu-Zhang rivalry, SEUNGHYUN HAN explores the interplay between two historical traditions: that of official historiography of the Ming, which vilified Zhang as an illegitimate bandit, and that of Suzhou residents who, recalling Zhang as a benevolent ruler, attempted a more balanced interpretation. Drawing on stele inscriptions, folk accounts, and official histories, Han shows that shifts in state-societal relationships altered attitudes toward

Zhang; especially in the early nineteenth century, the Daoguang court's policy of fostering local activism encouraged a favorable view of Zhang.