

ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

Observing that elite Japanese women of the Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi periods were expected to spend their final years as Buddhist lay renunciants, LORI MEEKS examines why nunhood came to be defined as a stage in the life cycle of Japanese women and how literary expectations of lay renunciants changed over time. Although Heian sources discuss lay renunciation as a practice undertaken by members of both sexes who sought to make spiritual preparations for death, texts of the late Kamakura and Muromachi periods valorize nunhood as a marker of the loyal widow. Analyzing the dress, hair, and religious activities associated with women's retirement into renunciate life, Meeks shows how many of the practices associated with female renunciation remained constant, even as the meaning of nunhood shifted from a domain associated with death preparation to one associated with widowhood.

TIMOTHY VAN COMPERNOLLE examines the bestselling "novels of ambition" (*risshi shōsetsu*) that appeared at the end of the Meiji era—just when the school system had become so rigid as to narrow opportunities in the metropolis for social advancement. Focusing on the works of the now forgotten author Horiuchi Shensen (1873–?), who was a staff writer for the magazine *Seikō* (Success), Van Compernelle argues that these novels created an imaginative literary space in which a rural society under siege from both capitalism and urbanization was symbolically rejuvenated and then made the only authentic and meaningful place for rising in the world and achieving success. He further demonstrates how this subgenre of the modern novel, in mapping out a particular social topography, engaged with early-twentieth-century debates over the relationship between the country, city, and nation in a rapidly modernizing Japan.

XIAOSHAN YANG examines the controversy concerning why Wang Anshi (1021–1086) should have omitted many canonical poets, such as Li Bai, Du Fu, and Han Yu, when compiling his anthology, *Tang bai jia shixuan*—the largest anthology of Tang poetry up to its time. Yang argues that Wang's anthology is not as idiosyncratic as many commentators contended but is instead derivative of a tradition that started in the Tang itself and would endure throughout the Yuan period. In this tradition, major Tang poets were routinely underrepresented or even excluded. Noting the discordance between anthology compilation and canon formation, Yang cautions us against assuming that anthologies played a crucial role in shaping Tang poetic canons as we know them today, especially when we are dealing with the tradition prior to the Ming period. To trace changes in the circulation of knowledge between Inner Asia and the wider Qing empire,

MATTHEW W. MOSCA analyzes the case of *Khungghar*—a term used by Mongols for the Ottoman Empire but poorly understood by Han Chinese. From 1644 to roughly 1755, Han Chinese officials and geographers were largely unfamiliar with information possessed by the Manchus and Mongols managing the empire's inland frontiers. From 1755 to 1799, the transmission of intelligence between these two groups increased at the Qing court. Between 1800 and the 1911, Han Chinese geographers debated the location,

identity, and strength of *Khungghar*, but they based their claims on textual research, and the role of frontier reports waned. The circulation of frontier knowledge throughout the Qing empire, Mosca shows, was greatly influenced by changes in the relationships between different segments of the imperial elite.