

Preface

The essays in this volume are revisions of presentations delivered at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of California at Los Angeles in January 2001. Scholars at those two institutions cooperated with the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in organizing seminars on the theme “Historiography and Japanese Consciousness of Values and Norms.”

At Santa Barbara, professors from Canada, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States concentrated on cultural and intellectual exchange among China, Japan, and the West from the sixteenth century through the early twentieth century. The give-and-take of language and ideas in the contacts of people from several cultural backgrounds conditioned the understanding and writing of history (and also other areas such as science) throughout those four centuries. Part 1 of this book, “People, Words, and Things,” edited by Joshua Fogel, examines this cultural and intellectual exchange.

At Los Angeles, researchers from Nichibunken and the University of California focused on how understandings of history affected and were affected by other fields of endeavor such as literature, philology, theatrical performance, and aesthetics, as well as the writing of history itself. Part 2 of this volume, for which I take editorial responsibility, collects revised versions of the papers that were first delivered in this seminar under the title “Historical Consciousness in Japanese Texts.”

The work presented here is the first published product of a team research project that is investigating the connections between historiography—understood broadly to include the writing of history and the use of history in other media—and the formation of values and norms in Japan. The project, based at Nichibunken, has received Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research for the academic years 2000-2002 from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. As is usual with Nichibunken team research efforts, we have striven to stretch our comprehension of things by making the study interdisciplinary. In this case, when the topic is history and historiography, we have invited not only historians, but also specialists in literature, language, philology, and philosophy to contribute their perspectives and expert knowledge.

More of an interim report than a final synthesis of the entire three-year project, this volume is offered in the format Nichibunken has adopted for symposium proceedings. The nature of our discussions in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles gave these meetings much of the flavor of one of the international symposiums that Nichibunken has,

James C. BAXTER

over the years, organized in Kyoto or co-organized overseas. Although the number of participants in these California meetings was smaller than the number at most of our conferences, we believe that the content and quality of the work merits publication in the international symposium style.

James C. BAXTER
International Research Center for Japanese Studies
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