

Classical Japanese Literature in the Global Context: From the Perspectives of Translation and Approaches

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What challenges do studies on classical Japanese literature from an international perspective raise? The primary set of challenges may be about translation. This paper examines how expressions unique to Japanese text, including honorific words and undifferentiated subjects, can be communicated in other languages. For this purpose, I will take up *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*) as representative works of classical Japanese literature to compare some parts of the original texts with their English and Russian translations.

Another important set of challenges is probably about approaches. When a classical literary work is read overseas, the readers will connect the work to the history of literary studies accumulated in that cultural area and concepts used there. This paper also explores what challenges this perspective can present to research on classical Japanese literature by referring to studies in the Russian-speaking world.

I. Challenges in the Translation and Communication of the Original: Honorific Expressions

One of the characteristics of classical Japanese literary texts is the unclarified subjects of sentences. Let's consider this characteristic using some examples of English and Russian translations of sentences in *Kojiki* and *Genji Monogatari*.

1. Honorific Expressions in *Kojiki*

Here, let's take an example from the chapter of the kotomuke (pacification by persuasion) of Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni in *Kojiki*. Takemikazuchi is sent from Takamagahara to pacify Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni and asks Ōkuninushi, the lord of Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni, if the lord is ready to transfer his land. Then, Takeminakata, a son of Ōkuninushi, appears and challenges Takemikazuchi to a strength contest. When Takemikazuchi has his arm held by Takeminakata, the former changes his arm to a column of ice and then to a sword blade, ending up with Takeminakata retreating. Below is the original passage in Chinese characters from *Kojiki* followed by its Japanese rendering in parentheses.

如此白之間、其建御名方神、千引石擎 a. 手末而來、言、誰來我國而、忍々如此物言。然、欲為力競。1) 故、我、先欲取其 b. 御手。2) 故、令取其 c. 御手者、即取成立氷、亦、取成劍刃、故爾、懼而退居。(如此白す間に、其の建御名方神、千引の石を手末に擎げて来て、言ひしく、「誰ぞ我が国に来て、忍ぶ忍ぶ如此物言ふ。然らば、力競べをせむと欲ふ。故、我、先づ其の御手を取らむと欲ふ」といひき。故、其の御手を取らしむれば、即ち立氷に取り成し、亦、劍の刃に取り成しき。故爾くして、懼りて退き居りき。)

(Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀・Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 eds. and annot. *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 1・Kojiki* 新編日本古典文学全集 1・古事記, Shogakukan, 2017 [first

edition: 1997])

At points (b) and (c) in this passage, the honorific term “御手” is used to indicate an arm of Takemikazuchi, an *amatsukami* (*kami* of heaven) sent as a messenger from Takamagahara. Meanwhile, at point (a), the non-honorific term “手” is used to denote a hand of Takeminakata, who is a *kunitukami* (native *kami*).

The subject of sentence 1) “故、我、先欲取其 b. 御手” is “我” (the first person “I” indicating Takeminakata). Takeminakata says that he wants to hold an arm of Takemikazuchi first. In the next sentence 2) “故、令取其 c. 御手者、即取成立氷、亦、取成剣刃,” no personal pronoun or name is used, so the subject of the sentence is not clarified. However, the honorific term “御手” suggests that the subject of the action is Takemikazuchi. The verb “令取” is the causative form of “hold,” indicating that Takemikazuchi is the subject of the action of having his arm held.

The subjects of sentences 1) “故、我、先欲取其 b. 御手” and 2) “故、令取其 c. 御手者” are different. Nevertheless, the subject of sentence 2) is not clarified, and instead the honorific term for an arm “御手” is used to explicitly indicate whose arm it is and imply who holds the arm and who has his arm held. The use of an honorific expression in this passage plays a role in clarifying the subject.¹

Next, let’s look at how this passage is translated into English and Russian.

Translation example 1: English (Philippi 1968)

As he was saying this, this same Take-mi-na-kata-no-kami came bearing a tremendous boulder on his finger-tips, and said: “Who is it who has come to our land and is talking so furtively? Come, let us test our strength; 1) I will first take your arm.”

2) When he allowed him to take his arm, he changed it into a column of ice, then again changed it into a sword blade. At this he was afraid and drew back. (Donald L. Philippi, trans. *Kojiki*. University of Tokyo Press, 1968, p. 133)

Sentence 1) “故、我先欲取其御手。” is translated as 1) “I will first take your arm.” Speaking to Takemikazuchi, Takeminakata declares his intention to take Takemikazuchi’s arm using the term “your arm.” In this sentence, the subject and the object of the action are clear. By contrast, in the next sentence 2) “When he allowed him to take his arm, he changed it into a column of ice,” it is unclear who “allowed him to take his arm” and who “changed it into a column of ice.” Therefore, the translator added a note to this sentence.

To clarify the subject, the translator’s note added to sentence 2) says: “Take-mi-na-kata grasped the arm of Take-mika-duti, who changed his arm magically into an icicle and sword-blade.” In addition, the translator also added the note to the sentence “At this he was afraid and drew back” to explain that the subject of the sentence is “Take-mi-na-kata.” The original sentence omits the subject by using no personal pronoun, and instead it uses an honorific expression to imply the omitted subject.

¹ Tetsuno Masahiro 鉄野昌弘. “‘Shingo’ o megutte” 「神語」をめぐって, *Man’yōshu kenkyū* 万葉集研究, vol. 26, 2004.

Translation example 2: English (Heldt 2014)

As he was saying this, the spirit Brave Southward Smelter came by, carting by his fingertips a boulder that it would take a thousand men to pull, and spoke saying: “Who is it who comes to our land and speaks so secretly and slyly? I challenge you to a contest of strength! I will grab your mighty arm first.”

1) He then offered Brave Southward Smelter his mighty arm, but straight-away it changed into an icicle and then into a sword blade. This Brave Southward Smelter, growing fearful, withdrew and sat down. (Gustav Heldt, trans. *The Kojiki. An account of ancient matters*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 46.)

Unlike Philippi’s translation, Heldt’s translation: 1) “He then offered Brave Southward Smelter his mighty arm” clearly indicates that it is Takeminakata (Brave Southward Smelter) that was offered the mighty arm. In addition, Heldt also clarifies that it is also Takeminakata (Brave Southward Smelter) that withdrew. Another difference from Philippi’s translation is Heldt’s use of the term “mighty arm” as a translation of “御手,” which seems to imply the relationship between the *amatsukami* (*kami* of heaven) and the *kunitukami* (native *kami*). In the context of English translation, however, it sounds strange that the challenger to a strength contest praises the opponent’s arm.

Translation example 3: Russian (Pinus, 1973)

Пока [он] так говорил, тот бог Такэминаката-но kami явился, подняв на кончиках пальцев скалу, что только тысяча человек притащить бы могли, и сказал: “Кто это в нашу страну пришел, и так шепотком-тишком разговаривает? А ну-ка, померяемся силой! Вот, я первый возьму тебя за руку”.

Потому 1) [бог Такэмикадзути] дал [ему] взять себя за руку, и тут же [свою руку] превратил в ледяную сосульку, а еще в лезвие меча ее превратил. И вот, 2) [бог Такэминаката] испугался и отступил. (Е.М. Pinus *Kojiki*, Volume 1, Moscow, 1973)

Since Russian does not use personal pronouns, this translation indicates the subjects of the relevant actions in parentheses in the sentences as 1) [бог Такэмикадзути (deity Takemikazuchi)] and 2) [бог Такэминаката (deity Takeminakata)]. The translation does not use any honorific expressions.

The above analysis suggests that, while the Japanese original implies the subject of the action in question using an honorific expression instead of clearly indicating it using a personal pronoun or name, English and Russian translations of the same sentence always clarify the subject using a personal pronoun, as seen in Philippi’s translation, or inserting a personal name or the like in the sentence. In both cases, the original Japanese sentence is not literally translated, and the subject of the action in question is clarified and explained in the sentence or a note.

It can be understood that a factor behind such issues is the difference between the linguistic structures of the languages. Translating Japanese text in English and Russian requires clarifying the subjects of actions. However, the unique Japanese style of implying the subject using an honorific expression is not translated into English or Russian but replaced with use of a personal

pronoun or the like. While this way of translation clarifies the omitted subject to communicate the meaning of the sentence, some cases of use of honorific expressions are related to cultural phenomena beyond the scope of communication of the meanings of sentences and linguistic codes. Let's consider this issue by analyzing the following examples.

2. Self-Honorific Expressions in *Kojiki*

Takemikazuchi is sent from Takamagahara to Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni and asks Ōkuninushi, the lord of Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni, if the lord is ready to transfer his land. In Takemikazuchi's statement, a word of Amaterasu (Takaki-no-kami) is included. The original passage in *Kojiki* reads as follows:

是以、此二神、降到出雲国伊那佐之小浜而、拔十掬劍、逆刺立于浪穂、趺坐其劍前、問其大国主神言、1) 天照大御神、高木神之命以問使之。 2) 汝之字志波祁流葦原中国者、
a. 我御子之所知国、 b. 言依賜。 故、汝心奈何。(是を以て、此の二はしらの神、(中略)其の大国主の神を問ひて言ひしく、「天照大御神・高木の神の命以て、問ひに使はせり。汝がうしはける葦原中国は、我が御子の知らさむ国と言依し賜ひき。故、汝が心は、如何に
 (神野志隆光 Kōnoshi Takamitsu ed. and annot. *Kojiki: shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 古事記 新編日本古典文学全集, Shogakukan, 2017 [first edition: 1997])

In the sentence “a. 我御子之所知国、b. 言依賜” included in Takemikazuchi's statement, the term “我御子” (the honorific term for “my child”) denotes a child of Amaterasu, instead of a child of Takemikazuchi. Amaterasu appears in the statement of Takemikazuchi and uses the honorific term “御子” to denote her own child. Moreover, in “b. 言依 + 賜,” she adds the honorific auxiliary verb “賜” to the verb “言依” (“entrust”), using a self-honorific expression for her own action. Sentence 2) as a whole means “Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni, which belongs to you, is entrusted [honorific] (by us) to the rule of my child [honorific].”

Since self-honorific expressions are used by deities to talk about themselves,² the use of honorific expressions here indicates that Amaterasu, the main deity of Takamagahara, herself talks. In the transition from sentence 1) “天照大御神、高木神之命以問使之” to sentence 2) “汝之字志波祁流葦原中国者、a. 我御子之所知国、b. 言依賜,” the subject shifts from Takemikazuchi to Amaterasu. The transition of subjects and undifferentiated subjects can be recognized as implying divine possession.³ Here, it can be thought that Amaterasu possesses Takemikazuchi to talk directly to Ōkuninushi through Takemikazuchi's mouth.⁴ Let's look at how such sentences including self-honorific expressions and unclarified subjects are translated into English and Russian.

² Miura Sukeyuki 三浦佑之. *Kodai jōji denshō no kenkyū* 古代叙事伝承の研究, Bensei Shuppan, 1992.

³ Fujii Sadakazu 藤井貞和. *Konihon-bungaku hassei ron* 古日本文学発生論, Shichosha, 1978.

⁴ Andassova Maral アンダソヴァ・マラル. “Kojiki to ‘Sharmanism’: Ashihara-no-Nakatsukuni to meimei suru koto ni tsuite” 古事記と『シャーマニズム』: 葦原中国と命名することについて. *Nihon bungaku* 日本文学, vol. 64: issue 5, May 2015.

Translation example 1: English (Philippi 1968)

[. . .] then, sitting cross-legged atop the point of the sword, they inquired of the deity Opo-kuni-nushi-no-kami, saying: 1) “We have been dispatched by the command of Amaterasu-opo-mi-kami and Taka-ki-no-kami to inquire: 2) ‘the Central Land of the Reed Plains, over which you hold sway, is a land entrusted to the rule of my offspring; what is your intention with regard to this?’” (Donald L. Philippi, trans. *Kojiki*. University of Tokyo Press, 1968, pp. 129–130)

Sentence 1) “We have been dispatched . . .” is Takemikazuchi’s statement, and sentence 2) and subsequent clauses are what Amaterasu and Takaki-no-kami say. The subject in this English translation is Amaterasu just as in the Japanese original sentence, which is not in direct speech, though.

Translation example 2: English (Heldt 2014)

Unsheathing sword ten hand spans long, they stood them upside down on the crest of the waves, sat cross-legged on their points, and questioned the spirit Great Master, saying: 1) “We have been sent at the mighty command of the great and mighty spirit Heaven Shining and the spirit Lofty Tree to ask you this: 2) “The central realm of reed plains you now rule is a land entrusted to our heir. What will you do?” (Gustav Heldt, trans. *The Kojiki. An account of ancient matters*. Columbia University Press, 2014, p. 46)

Sentence 1) “We have been sent . . .” is what Takemikazuchi says, and sentence 2) and the subsequent sentence are what Amaterasu and Takaki-no-kami state. Just as in the Japanese original sentence, the subject is Amaterasu in this English translation too, although the Japanese original is not in direct speech. Both Philippi’s and Heldt’s translations use colons and quotation marks to indicate Amaterasu’s words in Takemikazuchi’s statement. In addition, Heldt’s translation inserts “this” after “ask you” for an explanation purpose. Moreover, both English translations do not translate the self-honorific expressions.

The original Japanese passage suggests not only that Amaterasu is the subject of sentence 2) but also that Amaterasu possesses Takemikazuchi, and the voices of both deities are described. The style of the Japanese original implies that a phenomenon of divine possession occurs here. In the English translations, the statement of Amaterasu is in direct speech, which merely reports other people’s statements as they are. The style of direct speech, therefore, does not work well to describe the phenomenon of divine possession, which can be understood from the original Japanese text. In this sentence, Takemikazuchi serves as a divine medium to convey Amaterasu’s message, and the voices of Amaterasu and Takemikazuchi overlap with each other. Seeking solutions to the question how this style of representing such phenomena can be translated into English or Russian is a challenge I would offer to subsequent attempts to translate *Kojiki*.

3. Honorific Expressions in *Genji Monogatari*

髪はいとふさやかにて、長くはあらねど、下り端、肩のほときよげに、すべていとねぢけたるところなく、をかしげなる人と a. 見えたり。むべこそ親の世になくは思ふ

らめと、をかしく b. 見たまふ。(“Utsusemi 空蟬,” *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 12 · Genji monogatari 1*, Shogakukan, 1971, p. 194.)

Mitani Kuniaki argues that *Genji Monogatari* is a book written in the late ancient period, when nobles were highly class-conscious and had to use honorific expressions for other people ranked higher than them, and that storytellers had to use honorific expressions as terms for the emperor's actions.⁵ The term b. “見たまふ” (the honorific term for “think”) is used by the storyteller to describe Genji's action. By contrast, the term a. “見えたり” does not include any honorific word. This is because the sentence including this term is a first-person statement of Genji about impressions in his mind. In this way, the existence or absence of an honorific word determines whether the subject is the storyteller who describes the protagonist's actions objectively or Genji the protagonist himself.

Furthermore, Mitani Kuniaki refers to such expressions as “free direct discourse,” which allows the readers to read subjectively. Mitani explains, “While reading text, the readers are surprised at a sentence without any honorific expressions and read it as if it is a first-person sentence.” He claims that this style of expressions is unique to narrative literature.⁶

Now, let's look at how this kind of discourse is translated in English and Russian translations of *Genji Monogatari*.

Translation example 1: English (Arthur Waley, 1960)

Her hair grew very thick, but was cut short so as to hang on a level with her shoulders. It was very fine and smooth. 1) How exciting it must be to have such a girl for one's daughter! Small wonder if Iyo no Kami was proud of her. 2) If she was a little less restless, he thought, she would be quite perfect. (Arthur Waley trans. *The Tale of Genji: a novel in six parts*. New York: Modern Library. 1960, p. 48.)

Sentence 1) “How exciting it must be to have such a girl for one's daughter! Small wonder if Iyo no Kami was proud of her” uses neither direct nor indirect speech and expresses impressions from the first-person perspective in the sentence. An exclamation mark (!) expresses the strong impression a speaker has in a scene and indicates the first-person expression of impression of the speaker. The exclamation mark here indicates the subjective impression of Genji. Sentence 2) “If she was a little less restless, he thought, she would be quite perfect” is in indirect speech, as seen in the phrase “he thought.” Sentence 1), written in a similar style to the original, seems to attempt to allow the readers to read subjectively.

Translation example 2: English (Edward G. Seidensticker, 1978)

Though not particularly long, the hair was rich and thick, and very beautiful where it fell about the shoulders. 1) He could detect no marked flaws, and saw why her father, the

⁵ Mitani Kuniaki 三谷邦明. *Genji monogatari no gensetsu* 源氏物語の言説, Kanrin Shobo, 2002; Mitani Kuniaki *Genji monogatari no hōhō: 'mono no magire' no kyokuhoku* 源氏物語の方法:「もののまぎれ」の極北, Kanrin Shobo, 2007.

⁶ See Mitani 2002 and 2007, the same as 5 above.

governor of Iyo, so cherished her. (Edward G. Seidensticker trans. *The Tale of Genji*. Tokyo: C.E. Tuttle. 1978, p. 50)

Here is no statement of Genji about impressions in his mind, and the storyteller describes what is in his mind subjectively as seen in sentence 1) “He could detect . . . and saw why . . . It can be thought that this translation is not intended to allow the readers to read subjectively.

Translation example 3: Russian (T. A. Sokolova-Delusina, 1991–1993)

По плечам живописно рассыпаются не очень длинные, но чрезвычайно густые волосы. На первый взгляд наружность ее 1) кажется безупречной. «Право, не зря ее отец так ею гордится, - 2) думает Гэндзи, с любопытством разглядывая эту прелестную особу. - Боюсь только, что ей недостает скромности». (Сикибу Мурасаки «Повесть о Гэндзи» перевод Т.Л. Соколовой-Делюсиной, Москва, 1991–1993. Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 Russian Translation by T. A. Sokolova-Delusina, 1991–1993)

English translation of the Russian translation

On her shoulders is beautiful, not so long but very thick hanging hair. At a glance, her appearance 1) seems flawless. “I see. I can understand that her parents are proud of her,” Genji 2) is thinking while gazing at this beautiful girl amazedly (curiously). [. . .]

What deserves attention here is how the translator translates a. “見えたり” and b. “見たまふ” into Russian. The term a. “見えたり” is translated as 1) “кажется” (“seems”), which is an impersonal verb that expresses human feelings and indicates “spontaneity” independent from intention.⁷ Although the intended subject of the impersonal verb (to whom it seems so) is often expressed in the dative case, the sentence in question is translated in Russian as “На первый взгляд наружность ее 1) кажется безупречной” (“At a glance, her appearance seems flawless”) without clarifying to whom it seems so using the dative case. The impersonal verb is used with no subject indicated. Meanwhile, the term b. “見たまふ” is translated into Russian as 2) “думает” (“is thinking”) using a third-person singular verb.⁸ It can be said that the subject of the action is Genji. The transition from a. “見えたり” to b. “見たまふ” is translated as a transition from an impersonal verb to a third-person verb with a clarified subject, that is, a transition from a subjective description to an objective description. The passage is intended to allow the readers to enjoy the scene subjectively.⁹

Just as *Kojiki* does, *Genji Monogatari* has many parts where the subjects of actions are not clarified and honorific words are used to imply the subjects. Moreover, when no honorific expressions are used, subjective descriptions from the perspectives of characters are instead used as seen in a. “見えたり.” It is said that this shift from a third-person narrative to a first-

⁷ Uda Fumio 宇多文雄. *Roshiago bupō binran Shinpan* ロシア語文法便覧 新版, Toyo Shoten, 2016.

⁸ See Uda 2016, the same as 7 above.

⁹ Andassova Maral アンダソヴァ・マラル. “Igengokan ni okeru gensetsu bunseki: *Genji monogatari* Roshiagoyaku no jirei kara” 異言語間における言説分析：『源氏物語』ロシア語訳の事例から, *Monogatari kenkyū* 物語研究 issue 18, March 2018.

person description helps communicate the sentence to the readers in a first-person manner and assimilates the readers into narrative space. While the English and Russian translations analyzed here attempt to allow the readers to read the passage subjectively by using an exclamation mark or an impersonal verb, they do not use the style of use or absence of honorific expressions.

As seen in *Kojiki* and *Genji Monogatari*, unclarified subjects and the use of honorific expressions aimed at implying subjects can be viewed as the characteristics of Japanese. These characteristics lead us to consider not only grammatical issues but also the cultural issue of possession or the issue of the readers' position and their understanding of text. What methods are necessary to translate these styles and the context behind them into English and Russian? Answering this question is also a very important challenge.

II. Issue of Literary Genres and Approaches: Focusing on the Russian-speaking world

In the Russian-speaking world, there is a strong tendency to treat literary works as representing the characteristics of each era from the perspective of developmental stages. The ancient period is seen as the time of oral literature and folklore, and the medieval era is viewed as the time when religion exercised great influence, while the modern and contemporary times are treated as the time of modernism. Each literary genre established in Europe is positioned in one of such developmental stages. In this way of thinking, it is believed to be difficult to apply a methodology effective for studying the literature of an era to the literature of another era. Therefore, the effective approach toward traditional literature (folklore and oral literature) is recognized as different from the effective approach toward modern literature.¹⁰

1. Studies on *Kojiki* and Argument as a Literary Work

In the 1980s, Kōnosshi Takamitsu advocated the position that *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 should be argued as separate literary works, and he positioned these two books, which had so far been treated collectively as “*kiki*-mythology,” as works containing different cosmologies.¹¹ Despite the major impacts that his argument had on the relevant academic circles, Kōnosshi Takamitsu was criticized for his application of literary criticism targeting each work as an approach toward modern literature¹² to the purpose of understanding the ancient books.¹³ A factor behind the criticisms against Kōnosshi's argument is probably the recognition that *Kojiki* is a book that reveals the thought and magical world view of ancient people.

This recognition is in common with the way *Kojiki* is treated in the Russian-speaking world. Russian scholars recognize *Kojiki* as a book that shows the tradition of ancient oral

¹⁰ In the Russian division of the 16th International Bakhtin Conference (in Shanghai, China, on September 6 to 10, 2017), I gave a presentation titled “Overview of the Bakhtinian Theory of Polyphonic Novels and Ancient Japanese Literature,” where I discussed with scholars from the Russian-speaking world the appropriateness of use of modern literary approaches to study *Kojiki*.

¹¹ Kōnosshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光. *Kojiki no sekaikan* 古事記の世界観, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1986.

¹² Miyoshi Yukio 三好行雄. *Sakuhinron no kokoromi* 作品論の試み, Shibundo, 1967.

¹³ Furuhashi Nobuyoshi 古橋信孝. “Kodai-bungaku kenkyū no <hōhō>: Bungakushi e” 古代文学研究の <方法>: 文学史へ. *Nihon bungaku* 日本文学, vol. 59: issue 5, May 2010.

literature,¹⁴ and they believe that it is inappropriate to use an effective approach toward modern literature to study *Kojiki*, recognized as a work of traditional literature.

2. Mitani Kuniaki and <Polyphony>

Although Mitani Kuniaki applies the concept of polyphony, which Mikhail Bakhtin advocated, Bakhtin himself maintained that only Dostoevsky's works could be called polyphonic novels.¹⁵ Bakhtin viewed <voices> as values, ideas and the internal world view of each individual. He also argued that conflict between plural voices, or values, had occurred only in modern and subsequent literature because authoritarian values alone were powerful in premodern times. For example, in epic literature, most descriptions are written to praise the king, lord or hero, and sentences do not include plural different values that challenge each other. Bakhtin argued that only in the literature of modern society, where multiple social classes conflicted with each other and individuals' internal spiritual worlds were valued, polyphonic novels could exist as an arena for multiple diverse values.

Despite such limitations imposed by Bakhtin on the concept, Mitani Kuniaki applies Bakhtin's argument of <polyphony> to discussion on the <identification> between the storyteller, characters and the reader.¹⁶

Many methodological approaches have been used as universal concepts regardless of the times, culture and the academic discipline. However, it is probably important to correctly recognize in what historical, philosophical and cultural contexts those methodological approaches originated and how effective they were for having the condition of studies widely understood.

These issues are also faced in the attempts to introduce Japanese literary works to readers abroad. When works of classical Japanese literature are introduced to Russian-speaking readers, already established European literary genres are applied to such classical Japanese works, or already established concepts are used to explain such classical Japanese works. For example, *zuibitsu* 随筆 are treated as “Эссе” in Russian and “essays” in English, *Genji Monogatari* is classified as “роман” in Russian and a “novel” in English, while *waka* 和歌 and *kanshi* 漢詩 are dealt with as “поэзия” in Russian and “poetry” in English.¹⁷ I believe, nevertheless, that, when introducing classical Japanese literature to overseas readers and studying it abroad, we have to place importance on the context unique to Japan or East Asia and the background for each work's creation.

¹⁴ N.I. Konrad. *Japanese Literature: Examples and Commentaries*, Leningrad, 1927. E. M. Pinus, trans. *Kojiki*, Volume 1, Moscow, 1973. L.M. Ermakova, A.N. Mesheryakov, trans. *Kojiki*, Volumes 2 and 3, Saint Petersburg, 1994.

¹⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin “Проблемы творчества Достоевского” (Japanese translation by Kuwano Takashi 桑野隆. *Dostoevsky no sōsaku no mondai* ドストエフスキーの創作の問題, Heibonsha, 2013).

¹⁶ See Mitani 2002 and 2007, the same as 5 above.

¹⁷ See Konrad 1927, the same as 14 above.

3. Internationality and Interdisciplinarity

The academic world in Japan is fractionalized, so neighboring disciplines cannot share discussions from each other's perspective. By contrast, Japanese studies in the Russian-speaking world are conducted from a boarder perspective. Below are examples of remarkable treatises.¹⁸

A.R. Sadokova, *Mythology of the Japanese: Literature and Folklore*, doctoral dissertation, Moscow, 2000.

A.V. Koltinin, *Deities and Demons in China, Korea and Japan*, Moscow, 2013.

I believe that Japanese scholars should be aware of the necessity of sharing discussions with neighboring disciplines in the Japanese academic world. I also believe that the Japanese academic world would pose questions and conduct research from broader perspectives.

¹⁸ Database of the National Library of Russia: <https://search.rsl.ru/ru/#ff=18.04.2018&cs=fdatedesc>