

problem with the field. The next group of books in Japanese studies will surely struggle to solve this macro-level conundrum.

On a more micro scale, a word of concern for me arose as I read the book. We all have our own pet words that we love to return to again and again, and for Jacobowitz in this project it is “amanuensis” (surrogate writer), used about ten times in the present volume by my count. And, of course, in a book about writing technologies and media and their affordances and disabilities, we should not be surprised by the appearance of such a word. But at times it seems Jacobowitz is simply fond of the word, as he uses it in ways that drift from its typical English-language meaning. More precision in usage here would have been helpful.

Finally, on a minor note, there was occasionally also an odd Eurocentricist undercurrent to claims that whatever Japanese technology or historical development is “on par with any in the world” (p. 43), a note also sounded in the enlightening work of Sheldon Garon and Carol Gluck, as if we Japanologists still need to argue overtly for relevance. My sense is that these sorts of refrains are unnecessary and unhelpful to our field, and attest to or reify our own marginalization. But, to be sure, it is a refrain that Meiji figures themselves made; witness Isawa’s concern, quoted by Jacobowitz, that Japan develop a “worldwide standard for phonetic script” (p. 161). The question is whether there is a way we can show our relevance, proving it, rather than telling it.

By shifting our attention from overly and overtly aestheticized subsets to the entire array of writing writ large, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan* brackets problems and issues that have hitherto been seen as being confined to literature or art history and shows how they are related directly to major policies of modernization. The result is that the connections (too often obscured by otherwise interesting scholarship) between art movements like modernism, national and corporate technological movements like modernization, and world historical periods like modernity are elucidated. Here modernity, modernization, and early modernism converge into a clear picture that will be pored over by the field for a long time.

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*Memory, Reconciliation, and Reunions in South Korea: Crossing the Divide.*

By NAN KIM. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2015. xxvii, 255 pp. ISBN: 9780739184714 (cloth, also available in paper and as e-book).

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*Memory, Reconciliation, and Reunions in South Korea* is a welcome addition to the fields of Korean studies and post-Cold War studies, especially in the anglophone academia, where scholarly works on separated families from the Korean War (1950–53) are scarce. Nan Kim’s book investigates the Korean War’s lasting impact on the intimate space of family through a contextual analysis of the war, of the June inter-Korean summit of 2000, and of the North-South separated family reunions of August 2000.

The book’s introduction lays out Kim’s two main theoretical frameworks to analyze and illustrate the public representation and private lives of the separated families:

memory and liminality. The first section of the book, “Unsettling the Past,” examines Korea’s geopolitical liminality concerning the Korean War and its aftermath. The second section, “Centering the Margin,” highlights the complex affective modes that have shaped the lives of separated families, many of whom experienced social ostracization and discrimination due to their status. In this section, Kim closely follows the family reunions of August 2000 and critically examines media representations of the reunion scenes and emotional displays during the event. The last section, “Crossing Over,” focuses on the lives of the separated family members, with particular heed to ethics and moral dilemmas. She concludes the book by briefly presenting the obstacles faced by the separated families since the landmark reunions in 2000.

Kim defines liminality as “the state of between-ness or that of being on a threshold in space or in time” (p. 21). Investigating liminality at the state level, she analyzes geopolitics and the inter-Korea relationship over the past five decades and delineates the liminality of the Korean peninsula as neither in peace nor at war. She juxtaposes this state-level liminality with that of the individual subject by highlighting the contexts and processes in which separated families have become “liminal subjects” who are caught between opposing states and thus marginalized and stigmatized in their social and cultural spheres.

Kim examines how the liminal conditions of the state and subject also rendered how specific forms of family ritual, or the ways separated families mourned their lost kin, were shaped by the traumatic memory of family separation caused by the fratricidal war. Kim argues that the North-South family reunions of 2000 initially aimed to be “political rituals intended to foster new forms of national intimacy,” but they also “yield unintended and more enduring outcomes in the ways that they unsettled notions of war death and occasioned the reframing of Korean War memory” (p. 23). Here she engages with the psychoanalytic theory of melancholia, interpreted not as a pathological status but rather as a symptom caused by the “challenge to comprehend” the context and condition of sustained mourning. The book certainly helps readers to better comprehend the psychological condition of separated families dealing with lost kin whose actual status of survival is unknown.

The strengths of the book are its detailed accounts and sophisticated analyses of the historical, political, and social contexts of the separated families and their limited, temporary, and conditional reunions of 2000 right after the historic inter-Korean summit between the South Korean president, Kim Dae Jung, and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il. However, Kim’s strong consideration of historical context contrasts with the relative lack of representation of personal voices and narratives. She indirectly acknowledges this problem by explaining the difficulties she experienced in gaining access to and recruiting potential interviewees, which in turn highlights the lasting hardships—whether they be social, political, or emotional—that the separated families endured. It is apparent in the book that not only was separation a traumatic experience, but also the families’ political, social, and cultural hardships remained as trauma in progress. Nonetheless, more in-depth accounts of separated family members would have enriched Kim’s book and substantiated her theoretical analysis of liminality, memory, and their connections to melancholia and performative rituals. More ethnographic treatment of the separated family members would have set her book further apart from the conventional history books on the Korean War and postwar politics.

Nevertheless, *Memory, Reconciliation, and Reunions in South Korea* makes an important contribution to the fields of Korean studies and Cold War studies at large by investigating a topic that has been much publicized but lacked critical examination. With the resumption of reunions following a series of inter-Korean summits in 2018, the families separated by the Korean War are again in the media spotlight and at the center of Korean efforts to remember their collective past. Kim’s study of the 2000

family reunions provides essential insights into the present-day politics and sentiments that permeate these gatherings, including their use as political tools by both governments. This book would work well in both undergraduate and graduate courses that deal with such topics as the Korean War, postwar Korean society and family, and (post-)Cold War politics in the two Koreas.

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*To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History.* By MARK RAVINA. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. xiv, 312 pp. ISBN: 9780195327717 (cloth, also available as e-book).  
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Entrenched historical narratives defy change. Certainly, that is true of accounts of the Meiji Restoration, which long have focused on the impact of Westernization and modernization. Emory University's Mark Ravina is a defier, determined in this synthetic survey to demonstrate that other factors better explain Japan's transformation between the 1840s and 1881. His gives us neither new actors nor fresh sources. Rather, he impressively rereads and recasts the old material to provide new interpretations of what caused Japan's course change in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji years.

The central question people were asking then, he says, was: "How could the Japanese polity be turned into a Japanese nation-state?" (p. 7). For answers, he posits, people of all stripes looked everywhere—to the past, to the present, to the West, to the East, to Japan itself—driven by two sets of tensions: "radical nostalgia" that drew on olden times to justify innovation, and "cosmopolitan chauvinism" (p. 9) that tied Western ideas to Japan's own traditions. Explaining radical nostalgia, Ravina quotes new Meiji rulers who saw the "modern" military draft as a "return to ancient ways" (p. 5) and claimed that the powerful Tokugawa domains or *han* had been temporary, created to fill a power vacuum when the imperial institution declined. To illustrate cosmopolitan chauvinism, he shows anti-foreign writers insisting that models from "the contemporary West could help restore a lost Japanese past" (p. 81). One of the work's many astute observations is that these state builders had little reticence about adapting things from abroad, because they saw them not as foreign but as "'universal' best practices": "How could the benefits of 'civilization' possibly make Japan less Japanese?" (p. 9).

Ravina never equates contemporary practices with ancient ones. Premodern East Asian diplomacy, he shows, had demanded ambiguous borders and indirect rule, in contrast to the imperialist nineteenth-century world where "a single sovereign held exclusive political and legal power over a clearly delineated territory" (p. 55). Indeed, it was the inability to grasp adequately the rules of the radically new era that caused the shogunate's collapse. But his argument is that nearly all Japanese actors in the challenging environment of the 1800s drew on whatever practices they found useful, regardless of origin. The loyalist Yoshida Shōin would "repel the Western 'barbarians' by emulating Napoleon" (p. 114), and the early Meiji leaders would justify expansionism by drawing on the "global isomorphism" of Asia's eighth century (p. 205).