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Editorial Intent

Special Number: “Looking Back on the Past”

We are pleased to present the sixth issue of the *Kokugakuin Japan Studies* (KJS). As a journal dedicated to disseminating the research achievements of Kokugakuin University scholars, KJS has continually published studies that explore “Japanese culture” from various perspectives.

Building on this foundation, the theme of this issue is “Looking Back on the Past.” This carries deeper meaning beyond simply addressing historical events; it also involves consciously reflecting on and questioning both the perspectives that existed in the past and our perspectives toward the past.

Iwahashi’s article focuses on the astronomical phenomenon known today in Japan as an aurora, highlighting how it was observed and recorded as a “red vapor” across the country in Meiwa 7 (1770). The article looks back on how it was perceived, received, and interpreted.

Kashiwagi’s article looks at the position of folklore studies in the development of postwar Shinto research. It addresses how the folkloric aspects of Shinto have been viewed, how research on these aspects has been situated within Shinto studies, and how recent folklore scholarship has approached and focused in on specific aspects of shrines and Shinto. The paper also discusses future directions for research.

Saitō’s paper revisits the postwar educational thought of Ashida Enosuke, focusing on his slogan, “let us grow together,” which represents the culmination of his philosophy. Saitō, who has previously examined Ashida’s thought during the Meiji period (1868–1912), explores how Ashida’s educational philosophy evolved after Japan’s loss in World War II while taking into account its prewar developments. In doing so, the paper addresses the perspectives Ashida held regarding the relationship between teachers and children.

Each paper in this issue looks back on the past, critically examining the perspectives directed toward specific subjects and considering how cognitive and conceptual frameworks were formed through processes of negotiation rather than being self-evident or given. We hope that this issue will serve as a catalyst for further reflections on the past and even deeper discussions.

KJS Editorial Committee