

IBO, OA.153

Yoshikawa, Kojiro, *Bunjaku no. kachi* [*The Value of Delicacy*] (Tokyo, 1982: Chikuma), 158–9

Records a conversation with IB. Yoshikawa's view was that China had not attached as much importance to fiction as the West. Historical literature was respected at the expense of novels and drama. Lyric poetry based on everyday life had been valued, but there was little epic poetry. In short, history had been regarded as the key ingredient in civilisation. Yoshikawa wanted to amend the new standard imported from the West, the standard (originating from Aristotle) that attaches greater importance to fiction. When he talked with IB, he told him his thoughts on literature from the Chinese perspective. IB replied that it was very difficult to produce great literature in that way. Yoshikawa said that perhaps it was necessary to rethink what literary greatness is: China (and the East in general) has no Homer or Shakespeare, but the West has no great writers like Sima Qian (c.140–c.86 BC), father of Chinese historiography, author of *Shi*, the first general history of China centered on a series of biographies, or Du Fu (712–70), one of China's greatest poets.