

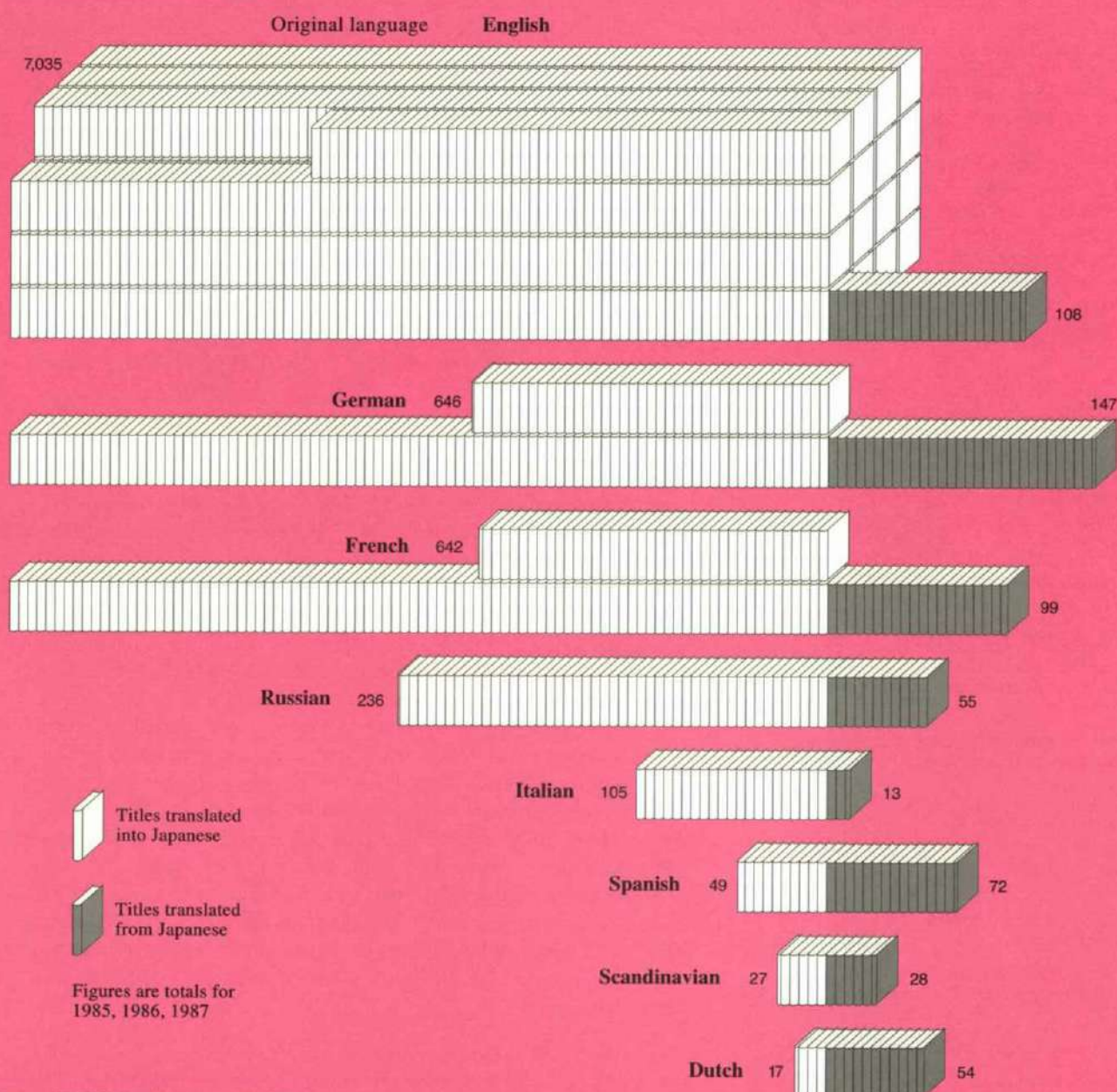
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NUMBER 12  
WINTER 1995

# Japanese Book News

The Perils of Taboo  
The System on Trial  
"Exporting" Copyright in the West

## The Translation Imbalance



Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1993



The Japan Foundation



*Japanese Book News* is published quarterly by the Japan Foundation mainly to apprise publishers, editors, translators, scholars and libraries of the latest trends in Japanese publishing and selected new titles introduced with brief descriptions of the content. Articles and information included provide a window for Japanese books that contribute to the reservoir of human knowledge and the advancement of mutual understanding between Japan and the rest of the world. New titles are chosen for annotation by members of the advisory board from among notable current publications for their potential interest to readers in other countries, insight into Japanese society, institutions, attitudes, and culture, and perspective on issues and topics of domestic as well as international concern. The opinions and views expressed in the essays and new title summaries are not necessarily those of the Japan Foundation or the advisory board.

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## From the Editor

The year 1995, now drawing to a close, will long be remembered not only for the many ways the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II was remembered and commemorated, but for the Great Hanshin Earthquake that shook the archipelago literally, and the Aum Shinrikyō incidents beginning with the release of poisonous sarin gas in Tokyo subways on March 20, which shook the country figuratively. No other incidents since the end of World War II have had such a pervasive impact on Japanese society.

In both the Kobe disaster and the Aum Shinrikyō case, Japan's mechanisms for crisis-management have come under severe scrutiny. Couldn't the death toll have been lower? How could a religious cult be left to commit so many serious crimes before being stopped? Both cases brought to light the weaknesses and inherent contradictions of the social system that has sustained Japan since 1945. Non-fiction writer Inose Naoki looks at the taboos and dilemmas that made already serious situations worse before anything could be done from a journalistic standpoint. Economist Ōsawa Machiko and historian Jeff Kingston analyze the weaknesses of the Japanese system from an economic point of view.

Even the Japanese government's slow response to volunteer offers from overseas to help with rescue and relief work immediately after the quake revealed that the authorities are more concerned with laws, systems, and precedents than with real life. The spontaneity and dedication of the many volunteers—most of them young people—who went to help the people in the quake-stricken area was a telling sign of the growing gap in attitudes between the people and the government.

In our Japanese Books Abroad section, Japan Foreign-Rights Centre managing director Kurita Akiko continues her series on "exporting copyright" with a look at how trends in translation of Japanese literature have changed. The graph on this issue's cover provides a graphic reference to this article.

Cover: The statistics given in this table are based on language, rather than country, of origin. Some titles published overseas are included, but their numbers are negligible; these figures can be considered a good approximation of the translation balance in Japan. Comparable figures for languages of the Asian region could not be obtained.



# The Perils of Taboo

Inose Naoki

The gravity of Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake disaster and the Aum Shinrikyō-related incidents can be attributed in many ways to the nature of the institutions that govern Japanese society today. The earthquake hit Kobe and the surrounding area on January 17, 1995, but Self-Defense Forces personnel were not fully mobilized to help with rescue operations until two days later. The delay, which undoubtedly contributed to the scale of the disaster, was caused in part by the Hyōgo prefectural governor's reluctance to send for SDF help immediately and in part by the SDF's inability to move into the stricken area on its own initiative until so requested.

The source of all this hesitation, even in the face of crisis, is the taboo that has prevailed since the end of World War II concerning anything related to the military. The SDF is still not fully recognized as constitutional by some Japanese. The consequences of this taboo became abundantly clear during the quake emergency. Even more serious was the tremendous amount of time required to reach a consensus, an important matter in a group-oriented society like Japan. Responsibility is not shouldered by any particular individual, but is shared equally by each member, so everyone has to be convinced that the decision is correct. Once a consensus is reached, of course, all members of the group act in unison, and objectives are quickly achieved. This method works well in normal times, but not in an emergency.

## Institutionalized Irresponsibility

The Aum Shinrikyō crimes were made possible partly by the Religious Corporation Law, which, as part of the freedom of religion guaranteed in Article 20 of the Constitution, exempts religious groups from government intervention. Prior to 1945, there was widespread suppression of other religions under State Shinto, which centered around the emperor. After the war, the pendulum swung to the other extreme with the Religious Corporation Law, under which almost no restraints are imposed upon religious organizations. Organizations certified under this law are tax exempt. It has been taboo even to attempt to revise the Law, which was set up in early postwar days, because of the dark, still-vivid memories of religious suppression under the prewar emperor system.

The deadly flower that we know as the Aum Shinrikyō cult blossomed in soil made hospitable by religion's immunity from legal or government supervision. Worse, postwar society, with its taboo regarding all military matters, has become extremely ignorant about the realities of weaponry of any kind—ignorant and also very vulnerable. That blindness enabled the cult to go beyond guns and simple explosives to gain direct access to the technology of the killer sarin gas.

The quake disaster and the Aum affair can be seen as the consequences of issues postwar Japanese did their



Aerial view of central Kobe ablaze at 11:10 a.m., a few hours after the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred on January 17, 1995. Photograph: Kyodo News Service.

best to avoid. So determined was society to distance itself from the past and move into the future that it simply shut out anything related to prewar or wartime conditions, thus spawning the curious institutions described above.

My book *Mikado no shōzō* [A Portrayal of the Emperor] (Shōgakukan, 1986) is an attempt to describe the nature of these institutions. Karel G. van Wolferen, in *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (Macmillan London Limited, 1989), showed how no group takes ultimate responsibility in Japan, be it top-level bureaucrats, political factions, or business leaders, the powerful Nōkyō (agricultural cooperatives), police, mass media, or underworld crime syndicates. He talks about the absence of a central government agency that supervises and controls the entire nation. *Mikado no shōzō* demonstrates the "absence of the center" phenomenon in the power structure of the Japanese state. No one takes responsibility because no central organization exists. The groups, however, move in accordance with certain agreements that have never been fully described in words.

The institutionalized irresponsibility of the Japanese bureaucracy, and, in particular, the police, is vividly depicted in journalist Egawa Shōko's *Ōmu Shinrikyō: Tsuiseki nisen-nihyaku nichi* [My 2,200-Day Investigation of Aum Shinrikyō] (Bungei Shunjū, 1995). Egawa has bitterly attacked the cult ever since the disappearance of the lawyer Sakamoto Tsutsumi and his family in 1989.

My attempt at a "portrayal" of the Japanese begins by going back to prewar times. If asked to choose a writer whose work articulates the Japanese experience of war most clearly, I would name Ōoka Shōhei. I strongly recommend two of his works: *Furyōki* [Prisoner of War] (Sōgensha, 1952, out of print; included in the "Shinchō Bunko" pocket-size series), and *Reite senki* [An Account



of the Battle at Leyte] (3 vols., Chūō Kōron Sha, 1971; included in the "Chūkō Bunko" pocket-size series). Both vividly depict the realities of the war, as seen through the detached gaze of an ordinary businessman who, having been drafted into the military service, suffers many cruel and painful hardships, but survives.

Couldn't that war have been avoided? This question has been asked over and over in postwar Japan, but the even more painful question is why the intelligentsia did not do anything to stop it. The process by which Japanese intellectuals gradually accepted the ideology of the war is discussed in Yoshimoto Takaaki's *Geijutsu-teki teikō to zassetsu* [Artistic Resistance and Frustration] (Miraisha, 1959, out of print; included in the *Yoshimoto Takaaki zen-chosaku shū* [The Complete Works of Yoshimoto Takaaki], Keisō Shobō). This work provides a penetrating analysis of the leftist poets' conversion from opposition to praise of the war. The "conversion" (*tenkō*) was not a mere change of ideological commitments; it was the whittling away of the Western learning prewar intellectuals had superficially acquired by traditional thinking, customs and practices. Around the same time Yoshimoto's book was published, another important work on this subject appeared, *Tenkō* [Conversion] (2 vols., Heibonsha, 1978), edited by the Shisō-no-Kagaku Kenkyūkai. It contains soul-searching accounts of many intellectuals' experience of *tenkō*, and shows why Japanese got caught up in the momentum that led to war. These accounts tell us why intellectuals who had been such eager students of Western culture came under the spell of fanaticism.

### Fanatical Patriotism

Another noteworthy book on the same subject is Hashikawa Bunsō's *Nihon Romanha hihan josetsu* [An Introductory Critique of the Japanese Romantics] (Miraisha, 1960, out of print; included in the *Hashikawa Bunsō chosakushū* [Collected Works of Hashikawa Bunsō], Chikuma Shobō). The Japanese Romantic School was a nationalistic literary movement active from the mid-1930s through World War II. The author notes that Japanese nationalism during the war was not a Western-style nationalism required to build a nation-state, but tradition-bound, fanatical patriotism. He sees nationalism as an eighteenth-to-nineteenth-century phenomenon and patriotism as a product of a country's climate and culture, particular to a certain place and emerging from primitive mores. This book examines how young intellectuals abandoned the Western learning they had worked so hard to acquire and returned to tradition.

The nationalism of the Meiji era (1868–1912) was somewhat healthier than the pathological nationalism of World War II. The development of the individual at that time was linked to the advancement of the state. A typical history of the mind-set of Meiji Japanese can be found in a tetralogy of memoirs by Ishimitsu Makiyo, *Jōka no hito* [Men of the Castle] (Ryūseikaku, 1958, out of print; included in the "Chūkō Bunko" series). An imperial army officer, Ishimitsu was born in 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration. After graduating from the Army Academy, he went to the Taiwan front as a lieutenant during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. Later, he

studied Russian affairs and spent the rest of his life in espionage. Until his death in 1942, he devoted his life to his country, and although he was ultimately betrayed by the state, he harbored no grudge. His story is a tragic one, but rather refreshing because he did not become cynical. A contrast may be found in Shiba Ryōtarō's *Saka no ue no kumo* [Clouds over the Hill] (6 vols., Bungei Shunjū, 1944–47; included in the "Bunshun Bunko" pocket-size series). This is a historical novel of a poet and two military officers from Matsuyama, a city on Shikoku. If Shiba's story is about the people who lived on front avenues of Meiji society, Ishimitsu's tetralogy is about those who frequented its back alleys. Reading about the lives of such military officers gives readers a deeper understanding of the process of Japan's modernization.

After World War II, Japanese threw all their energies into economic development and put all military issues out of their minds. One of the people who found this situation deeply troubling was the novelist Mishima Yukio. In his works, he confronted the issue of nationalism, which had become a taboo subject in postwar Japan. A fervent supporter of the emperor system, he grew to be quite fanatical in his later years, but *Kinkakuji* [*The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*] (Shinchōsha, 1956; included in the "Shinchō Bunko" series; Eng. tr. 1959), a novel he wrote when he was 31, is one of his masterpieces. Written in a flowery style, the novel tells of a young poor priest suffering from an inferiority complex due to his stammering. This young priest sets fire to the Temple of the Golden Pavilion, a national treasure. The man plans to commit suicide, perishing in the fire along with the three-storied pavilion. The first and second floors of the pavilion fill with smoke, and he reaches the third floor which has a small, gilded room called the Kikyōchō ("The Ultimate"). There he finds the door locked, and he cannot open it. He then runs for his life out of the pavilion. Had the room been unlocked, he would have died there. Mishima deliberately leaves the "ultimate" room unoccupied.

With emptiness at the center, Mishima meant to show the relative futility of human activity in the face of this great void. Perhaps to illustrate his own sense of futility, Mishima shocked the country by committing ritual suicide by the traditional *seppuku* method in 1970.

Such acts of extreme nationalistic fervor shock Japanese and non-Japanese alike and force people to think about the position of the emperor, who has long been the object of nationalistic reverence. For non-Japanese, the Japanese emperor (*tennō*) is perceived as a living, individual being, either a monarch or the person who carries out religious rituals. But for Japanese, the image of the emperor is different. The emperor was considered a divine being until the end of World War II. Since 1945, he has become a symbol of the nation—without political power like the British royal family—as stipulated in the postwar Constitution. Neither view reflects reality, however, since the emperor system in Japan has nothing to do with the emperor as a person, but instead is important as an institution upon which the Japanese, as a group, can focus. (*Inose Naoki is a writer and journalist.*)



# The System on Trial

Ōsawa Machiko and Jeff Kingston

This has been a very bad year for the Japanese system. The best and the brightest and the system they manage have never looked so bad. Public confidence in the institutions of Japan and those who lead them has weakened considerably due to a confluence of adverse events. The legitimacy of the Japanese system has rested on economic success and a sense that this success reflected the competence of government leaders. Unrelentingly bad news on the economic front has worked to undermine public faith in Japan's modern mandarins. Trust has also been shaken by the revelations concerning money politics and the loaning of money to cronies that have contributed significantly to the banking crisis. The direct involvement of bureaucrats in corrupt activities does not appear to be widespread, but the fact that public servants were involved at all has opened people's eyes. Moreover, the magnificent mandarins appear to have been asleep at the wheel while the economy was run into the ditch, and banks abetted speculators in driving up land prices beyond the reach of most workers.

The social contract has been violated; gains and pain have not been equally shared. There has been a process of polarization between "haves" and "have nots," while firms have fiddled with the security workers have taken as the quid pro quo for loyalty and commitment. Ongoing changes and reforms have been interpreted as signs that a sclerotic system is finally fumbling its way to necessary adjustments.

Since the income doubling plan announced by Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato almost thirty-five years ago, the acquisition of money has obsessed society. Many have lamented the decline of traditional norms and values, but with scant effect. The primacy of materialism was never more evident than during the "bubble" economy. In a society outwardly proclaiming itself uniformly middle class, great chasms and fissures appeared, undermining the social consensus. For the millions who did not slurp at the trough of the overheated economy, the emergence of a society deeply divided into "haves" and "have nots" proved deeply troubling.

## A New Kind of Capitalism?

Japan's troubles may seem slight and enviable by the standard of other industrialized societies, but there is a prevailing popular and academic angst in Japan about the Japanese system. The problems of recession, rising gun crimes, terrorism and incipient signs of social breakdown associated with the West have grown along with scrutiny and eroded confidence in the system. For many Japanese, Bill Emmott's *The Sun Also Sets* (1989), has proven all too prophetic.

Chalmers Johnson, in his seminal *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (1982) has provoked extensive scholarly debate about the nature of Japanese capitalism. His arguments in *MITI* concerning the central role of the state

in Japanese development and the different nature of Japanese capitalism have been elaborated and critiqued by numerous authors. In recent years, James Fallows' *Looking at the Sun* (Pantheon, 1994), David Williams' *Japan: Beyond the End of History* (Routledge, 1994), and most recently, Eamonn Fingleton's *Blindside: Why Japan Is Still on Track to Overtake the U.S. by the Year 2000* (Simon & Schuster, 1995) have taken Johnson's emphasis on a powerful state and the different form of Japanese capitalism a step further. Despite substantial differences, these three books find common ground in arguing that the Japanese system has been widely underestimated and misunderstood and that it does represent a hybrid form of capitalism wherein interventionist state policies are effective in advancing a neo-mercantilist agenda. To a much greater and consistent extent than in other capitalist economies, market forces are channeled and directed by government policies and regulations. Rather than patiently waiting for the Japanese system to mature in the image of the amorphous West, these authors suggest that we must now see Japan's neo-mercantilist, producer-oriented society for what it is. Fallows suggests that the failure to recognize the profound differences of the Japanese model has handicapped efforts to respond to the challenge of Japan. Fallows is no fan of the Japanese system, but insists that the West must understand that the rules of the game are changing and adapt accordingly. Williams approves and argues that the emergence of Japanese capitalism is comparable in historical importance with the French and Russian revolutions.

## The Question of Deregulation

The prolonged recession has exposed the cracks in the economic system and provoked debate about whether the Japanese system is becoming obsolete. Deregulation has become the mantra of business groups and politicians, provoking discomfort but little real reform among bureaucrats. Lifetime employment, seniority-based pay, and enterprise unions, the three jewels of the Japanese employment system, appear to be of declining importance. Ironically, the employment system which won so much admiration in the 1980s is now viewed as one of the key problems burdening Japan, Inc.

Fingleton disagrees, suggesting that the Japanese system is evolving. In his view, the symptoms of malaise have been misdiagnosed and exaggerated; the fundamental strengths of the system remain intact. In *Blindside*, the mandarins are still on top of their game and have a winning formula destined to vault Japan to world economic leadership. He asserts that employment security remains valuable and viable. In a world where developing and marketing new technology products will determine success, Fingleton maintains that Japan's *keiretsu* corporate structure (a *bête noire* of deregulators)



and supportive government policies will ensure future dominance.

The world looks a lot different from the tatami-eye view. Reeling from a "bubble" economy-induced hang-over, corporate Japan and government officials have jettisoned the hubris of the late 1980s in exchange for a more understandable angst about what ails the system. Deregulation has emerged as the panacea for the ills of the recession-plagued economy, indicating widespread doubts about the continued relevance and desirability of strong state capitalism. There is a sense that in muting market forces, the government has fostered inefficiency and provoked harmful trade frictions. This folly was exposed with the rapid appreciation of the yen and the declining competitiveness of Japanese exports. It is maintained that deregulation will lower the cost of production and restore lost competitiveness.

Is the "iron triangle," the nexus of bureaucratic, business, and political interests, beginning to fall apart? Is this desirable? Not so fast, say some analysts. In *Kisei kanwa to iu akumu* [The Bad Dream of Deregulation] (Bungei Shunjū, 1995), Uchihashi Katsuhito and Group 2001 argue against pell-mell deregulation. They survey America's experience with deregulation and find it wanting. Arguing that the true benefits are limited and overshadowed by the huge costs, they describe deregulation as destabilizing and the cause of bankruptcies, loss of jobs, and lower wages. The Hiraiwa Report, which was prepared during the administration of Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro and advocated rapid and thoroughgoing deregulation, is strongly criticized in this book. The editors suggest that conditions are unfavorable now for deregulation in Japan because international competition is especially intense and threatens to destroy corporate Japan. When the U.S. deregulated, international competition was not nearly so intense, so the impact of deregulation was not as negative as it is likely to be if implemented under current conditions. Thus, the benefits have been overstated and the costs have not been fully calculated.

In *Kisei hakai* [The Collapse of Regulation] (Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995), Chūjō Ushio counters that the Group 2001 report fails to fully consider the high costs of regulations and how they limit economic growth, raise the costs of doing business, reduce competitiveness, and harm consumer interests. According to Chūjō, regulations reduce business opportunities and stifle entrepreneurial initiative. While acknowledging the need for certain regulations to protect the weak and needy, he questions the efficacy of the current regulatory system and makes a vigorous case for the benefits of deregulation and the necessity for decentralization. In his view, no less is needed to initiate an overdue dynamic transformation of the Japanese economy.

The essays in Okazaki Tetsuji and Okuno Masahiro, eds., *Gendai Nihon keizai shisutemu no genryū* [Sources of Japan's Contemporary Economic System] (Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1993) describe the origins of the current economic system. Echoing Chalmers Johnson, the authors argue that most of the key features of the Japanese system can be traced to the wartime control-led economy of the 1930s and 1940s. At that time, bureau-

crats gained significant regulatory powers, which were reinforced during the U.S. Occupation (1945–52), and these remain a hallmark of Japan's economic system. Noguchi Yukio, in *Sen-kyūhyaku-yonjū-nen taisei* [The 1940 System] (Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995) also examines the origins of the contemporary system and the influence of the wartime controlled economy. He points out how features of this system hastened Japan's recovery and facilitated the "economic miracle." The financial and employment systems facilitated rapid growth, but have been overtaken by ongoing structural changes. Noguchi advocates reform, but this is difficult given the lack of labor mobility, the nature of the financial system, and large pockets of low productivity. He argues that the institutionalization of the prevailing system favors the status quo and inhibits entrepreneurial impulses. In his view, Japan's producer-oriented society has generated wealth without prosperity; the neglect of the household sector continues, since the gains of a high yen have not been passed on to consumers.

Shimada Haruo in *Nihon no koyō* [Employment in Japan] (Chikuma Shobō, 1994) focuses on the problems arising from the employment system. This once greatly admired model for industrial relations has come under increasing criticism because of the rigidities that impair companies' ability to cope with changes in the economic structure. Shimada argues that the Japanese model is only sustainable under conditions of rapid growth and is no longer affordable or advantageous due to less favorable economic conditions. The reduction of high domestic prices has lessened a form of subsidy that consumers paid to enable companies to maintain this system.

In addition, the appreciation of the yen has led to a hollowing out of Japanese industry and the relocation of factories and jobs overseas. He advocates creating a new system of wages and employment more attuned to prevailing conditions and prospects for continued slow growth. This will involve, inter alia, more flexible work arrangements, more reliance on merit, greater mobility and less reliance on the characteristics and patterns that made Japan into a preeminent mass-production society. Social and educational policies must also be adjusted to facilitate these corporate changes. Shimada promotes deregulation and open markets in order to facilitate this transformation and lessen international trade frictions. He portrays accession to these longstanding U.S. demands as being in Japan's own interests.

White collar productivity is relatively low in Japan and a major cause for concern. Yoshida Kazuo's *Nihongata keiei shisutemu no kōzai* [The Merits and Demerits of the Japanese Economic System] (Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha) limns the pros and cons of the Japanese management system, concluding that the positive aspects outweigh the problems. Low unemployment, a flexible production system, and pooled information are some of the obvious benefits. In addition, he asserts that there is more equality in corporate Japan than in the United States and Europe where the gap between ordinary workers and managers is greater. Yoshida recognizes the need for some adaptation but argues that the fundamental principles of Japanese management are still the most appropriate for Japanese companies.



## Lowering Prices

Lastly, as more Japanese travel abroad and the media report on good bargains overseas, consumers have finally noticed price gouging in Japan. With the advent of *kakaku hakai* (the price revolution) in 1994, Japanese consumers have demonstrated with a vengeance that, like consumers all over the world, they enjoy a good bargain and are very price sensitive. It used to be conventional wisdom that lowering prices could destroy a brand's image in Japan, but now smart retailers are ringing up sales by challenging this myth.

The reasons for high prices in Japan and the process of decreasing prices are examined in Itō Motoshige in *Nihon no bukka wa naze takai no ka* [Why Prices Are So High in Japan] (NTT Shuppan, 1995). He describes the extent of price differences, why prices in Japan are so high compared to other countries, and the forces that have led to lower prices. In Itō's view, the distribution system, the practice of cultivating exclusive brand im-

ages, regulations, and import restrictions explain the high prices. In addition, the existence of *keiretsu* purchasing practices restricts competition. The structural changes necessitated by the strong yen, the economic recession, deregulation, and streamlined distribution channels are credited with lowering selected prices. Itō asserts that trade and foreign investment have accelerated globalization of the Japanese economy and in combination with new technologies have transformed the distribution system. In addition, pricing power in Japan has shifted somewhat from producers to retailers, and from retailers to consumers. He believes that these changes in the distribution system have stimulated the economy. However, it appears that the process of decreasing prices has not yet gone far enough and depends on the government following through on deregulation. (*Ōsawa Machiko is Professor of Economics at Asia University; Jeff Kingston is Associate Professor of History at Temple University, Japan.*)

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## “Exporting” Copyright: Japan’s Changing Image in the West

Kurita Akiko

Since Yoshimoto Banana’s *Kitchen* became a bestseller in Italy, setting off a sort of “Banana boom” in several other Western countries, I have frequently been asked to explain how this novel differs from previous publications of Japanese fiction. I think the best answer is that it broke away completely from the long-established tendency (in Europe and the United States) to stress the exotic side of Japan’s image. Readers the world over were probably attracted by the welcome realization that young people in Japan experience the same kinds of loss, pain, and love in its many forms as other people do; they found common ground in the novel, expressed in the quick tempo of its changes of scene, vivid character portrayals, and apt metaphors.

In an essay submitted in a competition held on the American West Coast, the high school student who placed first wrote that *Kitchen* tore down the stereotypes of Japanese youth that had been created by the media. From his descriptions of characters’ activities, such as eating, the student became aware of interesting cultural differences. Even Yoshimoto’s acknowledgments at the end, expressing gratitude for the assistance of others while modestly disparaging her own “small effort,” impressed the student with the nature of Japanese culture and manners. I think these comments speak for readers in other countries as well. They are certainly the kind of thing that an exporter of copyright like myself, trying to be a cultural intermediary, most hopes to hear.

Nevertheless, the look of the dust jackets of the ten or so translations of *Kitchen* published in Western languages suggests that really not all that much has changed in the stereotyped way Japan is regarded. One shows a

young geisha, her back turned to show the powdered nape of her neck above the kimono collar (Britain), and another is a photo of rice crackers cleverly wrapped in the shape of wooden *kokeshi* dolls (Holland). Such designs, which are completely unrelated to the content of the book, embody the lingering compulsion to imprint anything Japanese with preconceived images.

### Trends in Japanese Literature Translation

The country currently most active in the translation of Japanese literature is France, followed by Germany and Italy. Surprisingly, the number of American publishers securing translation rights is relatively small, if the publications from Kōdansha International/America are not counted. British publishers most frequently go to the American editions to obtain subsidiary rights to English translations already published in the United States.

In alternative years since 1991 an international cultural exchange symposium of translators of Japanese literature has been held in Japan co-sponsored by the Japan Pen Club, the Yomiuri Shimbunsha, and other organizations and planned by the Japan Foreign-Rights Centre. At the first symposium, conducted under the theme “How to Spread Japanese Culture,” the French participant gave a presentation that vividly portrayed the growing interest in Japan in her country: she described how popular Japanese films and plays are performed in France, and how they provide a base for understanding Japanese culture. With increasing numbers of young people recognizing Japan as an economic superpower, courses in the Japanese language are being offered not only in universities, but in high schools and middle schools as well. Around three hundred students are studying Japanese language and literature at two prestigious universities in Paris. We also learned that since around 1985, publishing houses large and small have been actively interested in Japanese literature, and have been working with translators and selecting books that represent a wide range of



The covers of ten editions of Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen* (clockwise from top left): English (U.K.), Danish, French, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Dutch, Swedish, Japanese



literature. About twenty titles have been published in France every year since 1990. Our agency alone has handled copyrights for such writers as Ariyoshi Sawako, Edogawa Ranpo, Ishikawa Jun, Irokawa Takehiro, Kōno Taeko, Matsumoto Seichō, Murakami Haruki, Murakami Ryū, Nosaka Akiyuki, Ōba Minako, Ogawa Yōko, Okuizumi Hikaru, Tsushima Yūko, Umezaki Haruo, and Yoshimoto Banana, among others.

The state of Japanese translation into French, German, and Italian is completely different from what it was twenty years ago. A generation of translators has emerged in those countries who can work with the original texts and translate directly from the Japanese. In France, Germany, and Italy, some publishers have appointed a special consultant for Japanese fiction, a remarkable reflection of the changed situation. For the publishers, however, it is hard to break even when the first printing is 3,000–4,000 copies on the average, and attracting a wider readership and training more young translators are important issues to all of them.

### Trade Imbalance Unaffected

Journalists frequently ask about the import-export balance in copyrights. On that topic, they usually have Europe and particularly the United States in mind, probably because of the harsh criticism Japan has been receiving for its huge export surplus. It is difficult to give exact figures, for besides copyright agents (currently nine firms), publishers themselves sometimes handle copyrights directly. And for several years now, some of the major printers and distributors have been moving into the field as well, and the recorded data are not complete. Judging from statistics reported so far, however, I would venture to say that with Europe, the ratio of Japan's copyright exports to imports stands at 1:25, and with the United States, 1:37, but these figures must not be taken as anything but my own best "guestimate."

Regarding the type of books from Japan that tend to be imported by particular countries, there is some information—although it may be slightly dated by now—available from the time of the 1990 Frankfurt Book Fair. The theme of the Fair that year was "Japan," and a catalog was published in two volumes, by the Japan Book Publishers Association: *I. Japanese Literature in Foreign Languages* and *II. Japanese Publications in Foreign Languages (Social Sciences & Humanities, Science & Technology, Arts, Hobbies & Sports and Children's Books)*. The catalog lists publications coming out in Europe and the United States during the years 1945–90 (actually, through 1989) which can be roughly summarized as follows.

The *Literature* volume was originally compiled by the Japan Pen Club based on information obtained from libraries. It covers fiction, plays and scripts, poetry, essays, criticism, and children's books, mostly picture books and information books with photographs. In addition to single volumes it lists short story collections, anthologies, poetry appearing in periodicals, as well as volumes of criticism. The total number of items listed comes to 15,000, which would probably be the equivalent of 2,000–3,000 single volumes.

The second volume of the catalog was compiled by the

Japan Foreign-Rights Centre with the cooperation of Nippon Shuppan Hambai Inc. on the basis of information acquired from questionnaires sent out to publishers. About half of the 5,335 titles listed are illustrated volumes on Japanese art, cooking, and so forth, and Japanese language-related books, which from the start were targeted to the foreign market as they were edited. The total that were translated, therefore, is about 2,600. Children's books comprise 1,301 in all, some of which overlap with listings in Part I. We can assume that the remaining 1,300 or so items are general works other than literature and children's books, and translations of specialized studies.

A total of 30 specialized works dealing with information and quality control in the field of management science were published expressly for American readers, and their yearly sales have been very good. There is a particular reason for this: when quality control methods were introduced from the United States after World War II, they were improved upon and developed further in Japan, whereupon they were re-exported to America. Today these methods are studied and used widely in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere.

Far fewer books in the field of economics generally reach foreign readers, however, despite all the attention that Japan's impressive economic development has received. The reason, in a nutshell, is differences in language and culture. If a book written for a Japanese audience is too faithfully translated, it does not always make sense to all of its intended audience. Such translations may be understood within Asia, but for readers in other parts of the world, considerable revision and editing are necessary to rephrase, add background information and explanation, and remove unnecessary material. It is simply not practical or possible for authors who hold the copyright, the editors, or the agents to do the work each book needs. The ideal arrangement in producing clear and readable books in business or management for foreign readers is for author and translator to work together from the outset, but in actuality such joint enterprises are difficult to carry out.

By far the largest number of translated books in the humanities and social sciences are related to religion. About 400 titles in Part II of the catalog deal with religion in some way, including biographies of the founders of religious groups, philosophy, dialogues, and others. One reason for this large number may be that religious groups themselves often shoulder the costs of translation, production, and sometimes distribution.

Among the specialized works, it is noteworthy that 260 titles are in medicine. While the translation and production of a certain number of these were probably financed privately, the relatively large number is nonetheless testimony to the superior quality of research and clinical medicine in Japan. In my next article, I want to talk about the issues in transmitting culture and plan to present some specific cases illustrating the sources of Japan's net import surplus in copyrights. (*Kurita Akiko is managing director of the Japan Foreign-Rights Centre and executive director of the Association for 100 Japanese Books.*)



## New Titles

### HISTORY

*Ajia josei kōryūshi: Meiji, Taishōki hen* [The History of Asian Women: The Meiji and Taishō Years]. Yamazaki Tomoko. Chikuma Shobō, 1995. 215 × 153 mm. 314 pp. ¥2,900. ISBN 4-480-85681-1.

In her research on women's history, Yamazaki (b. 1932) departs from the conventional focus on the West and elite women and considers instead interaction among women in the Asia region. In the present study, she focuses on the years of Japan's Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–27) eras.



Cover design: Nakajima Kaoru

In the course of her investigation into Japanese women's history, Yamazaki realized that her subject—non-elite women—could not be adequately dealt with using Western perspectives and models. She sees affinity between ordinary Japanese women and women in the rest of Asia, and argues that the efforts to liberate grass-roots Japanese women overlap with other Asian countries' endeavors to cast off Western and Japanese oppression and intervention and set about building democratic societies. Among the women she sketches here are Zheng Yuxiu, an exile from China who urged prominent anarchist Ishikawa Sanshirō to

leave Japan; Kawahara Misako, who went to Mongolia to promote education for women and girls; and Sōma Kokkō, whose support and encouragement helped Korean women who opened a domestic science school for women in Seoul.

*Kekkaku no bunkashi: Kindai Nihon ni okeru yamai no imēji* [A Cultural History of Tuberculosis in Modern Japan]. Fukuda Mahito. Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai (University of Nagoya Press), 1995. 193 × 131 mm. 430 pp. ¥4,635. ISBN 4-8158-0246-7.

The author attempts to illuminate the ethos of modern Japanese society through an analysis of attitudes toward tuberculosis in Japan's modernization era.



Cover design: Ishikawa Kyūyō; illustration: Kuroda Seiki

As Japan launched itself into the modern era, the nationwide campaign to make the country wealthy and strong swept many Japanese away from their provincial homes and into the cities to work in factories or the armed forces. The squalid conditions in which many lived and worked made tuberculosis so widespread it became almost a national disease, taking many lives. For young people living in this environment, what to think of the disease became a serious problem and many romanticized it. Some young literati even yearned to contract tuberculosis for aesthetic reasons and died after deliberately exposing themselves.

The book includes detailed explanatory notes and a valuable list of reference works.

*Osaragi Jirō, haisen nikki* [Osaragi Jirō's War Diary]. Osaragi Jirō. Sōshisha, 1995. 193 × 135 mm. 354 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-7942-0600-3. Osaragi Jirō (1897–1973) was one of modern Japan's finest writers of popular fiction. This volume is his diary from the final stages of the second world war, extending from September 10, 1944 to October 10, 1945.

Osaragi belonged to the elite. He graduated from the political science department of Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) and worked for a time in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From around the end of the Taishō period (1912–26), however, he gained a considerable following as a writer of light novels aimed at the then burgeoning urban masses. His works exhibit a critical eye and civic spirit derived from familiarity with Western culture.

The diary reveals how the novelist saw Japanese society as the country's defeat drew near. It shows how, even while witness to a momentous turning point in history and for his own society, Osaragi possessed both the critical detachment afforded by knowledge of history and an intuitive, down-to-earth perspective acquired as a writer of popular fiction. This volume offers valuable insights into both wartime Japanese society and the thinking of this intriguing author.



Cover design: Nakajima Kaoru



*Samazama naru sengo* [Facets of Postwar Japan]. Hosaka Masayasu. Bungei Shunjū, 1995. 193 × 134 mm. 478 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-16-349930-X.

Hosaka is a nonfiction writer with a strong interest in the history of the modern Japanese spirit. In this collection of essays, he looks at fifty years of postwar Japanese society through portraits of a diverse group of individuals who lived through the period.

His selection of subjects ranges across all levels and sectors of society, from the emperor to ordinary city dwellers. Among the more famous of these are General Tōjō Hideki, the wartime prime minister who was sent to the gallows by the Tokyo Tribunal; Nosaka Sanzō, leader of the Japan Communist Party at the time of Japan's defeat; and actor/singer Tsuruta Kōji, who played *kamikaze* suicide pilots in several made-for-TV films.



Cover design: Kawakami Shigeo; illustration: Tanaka Yasuo

The author's handling of the problem of evaluating General Tōjō—a topic he dealt with previously in his major study, *Tōjō Hideki to Tennō no jidai* [The Age of Tōjō Hideki and the Shōwa Emperor]—provides some useful hints on approaching postwar Japan as a whole. In his view, if Tōjō had not been arrested and detained after the war he would have been brutally dealt with by the people themselves. The Japanese public viewed the war only in terms of this deep resentment toward Tōjō, says Hosaka, and evaded the issue of its own war responsibility.



*Sensō to sei: Kindai kōshō seido, ianjo seido o megutte* [War and Sex: The "Comfort Stations" and Licensed Prostitution in Modern Japan]. Kawada Fumiko. Akashi Shoten, 1995. 188 × 129 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,880. ISBN 4-7503-0693-2.

The recent fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II has prompted a rush of attempts to reexamine the war and what it meant from many different perspectives. One issue bound up closely with Japan's former colonization and occupation of Asian countries that had drawn particular attention is the issue of "comfort women" (who were forced to provide sexual services for Japanese troops during the war).

Based on extensive records and accounts by some of the women who survived the ordeal, this volume retraces the development of the wartime "comfort stations" and the broader system of institutionalized prostitution in modern Japan. Nonfiction writer Kawada was one of the first to write about this issue, and she has continued to support the victims' ongoing campaign for recognition and compensation.

It is easy to see why the topic of the "comfort women" was taboo among the prewar and wartime generations of Japanese, for the story told in this book is truly appalling. More than simply the barbarism of the military, these actions have links with other distortions evident in Japan's modern era that resulted from the state's forceful "wealthy nation, strong army" ideology. In this way, the author finds in the issue of "comfort women" a useful vantage point from which to launch a broader critique of Japan's modern history.

## CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

*Fuhai no jōken: Yasuda Yojūrō to sekai no shichō* [Conditions of Invincibility: Yasuda Yojūrō and World Trends]. Romano Vulpitta. Chūō Kōron Sha, 1995. 191 × 131 mm. 306 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-12-002404-0.

Yasuda Yojūrō (1910–81) remains a constant source of interest to Japanese intellectuals. Before the second world war, he preached the virtues of traditional Japanese culture and was an influential figure in nationalist circles. Many student draftees are said to have taken copies of his works to the front when they were mobilized in the closing stages of the war. After the war, Yasuda was denounced as a collaborator for the military regime and thereafter largely ignored. He died in obscurity in 1981. Nonetheless, his ideas continue to sound one of the keynotes of modern Japanese thought.



Cover design: Chūō Kōronsha

Through a comparison of Yasuda with such thinkers as Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile and American poet and critic Ezra Pound, the author of the present volume, an Italian, discusses how Yasuda's thought basically had much in common with that of other thinkers in the world. His earnest aspirations led to his demise, but by virtue of those same aspirations, his demise was made memorable. The nobility of his defeat ultimately became the "condition of his invincibility."

The author, formerly an Italian diplomat, has taught modern Japanese literature at the Oriental University, Naples and is now professor at



Kyōto Sangyō University. The present work was written originally in Japanese.

**Ishibashi Tanzan: Riberarisuto no shinzui** [Ishibashi Tanzan: Liberalist Par Excellence]. Masuda Hiroshi. Chūō Kōron Sha, 1995. 173 × 109 mm. 270 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-12-101243-7.

Though never a member of the academic establishment, Ishibashi Tanzan (1884–1973) was a liberal intellectual who founded his own journal as a forum for literary, economic and political critique. This critical biography offers a reevaluation of Ishibashi's life and achievements from today's vantage point. Ishibashi opposed the expansionist and militarist policies which followed Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05, urging instead that Japan be content to remain a lesser power. He was prime minister for a brief period in 1956–57, and in his final years advocated the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations and the end of the Cold-War order.

The author, a specialist in the history of Japanese foreign policy, stresses that many of Ishibashi's political ideas grew out of his keen sense of economic and military crisis, and points to their continuing relevance and validity even today.



**Takeuchi Yoshimi: Aru hōhō no denki** [Takeuchi Yoshimi: One Man's Approach]. Tsurumi Shunsuke. Rinsen Shoten, 1995. 187 × 119 mm. 278 pp. ¥2,060. ISBN 4-8457-0977-5. Published as part of a series on independent Japanese scholars outside academia, this is a biography of the

highly respected Chinese literature scholar and critic, Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910–77).

In 1941, soon after the outbreak of hostilities in the Pacific, Takeuchi wrote a manifesto in favor of the Greater East Asia War (in the January 1942 issue of the journal *Chūgoku bungaku*) as a means of liberating East Asia from foreign invaders. What he saw firsthand as a soldier in the war and Japan's ultimate defeat, however, betrayed his noble ideals. As a critic and opinion leader after the war, he did not simply ignore his wartime manifesto, but built his subsequent life and thought based on the painful lesson of having accepted the war along with his countrymen. Having been proved wrong in the past did not mean to him that he had to start all over again in a totally opposite direction. Rather, he tried to find out and defend what truths there had been in his former thinking.



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

Describing Takeuchi's success in learning the lessons of error as "the power of failure," the author sees his life as demonstrating one valid method for coming to grips with the past. By reading the novels of Lu Xun (1881–1936) and relating them to his own life, Takeuchi uncovered the problems within himself—a self he viewed as a metaphor for Japanese in general—and spent the rest of his life trying to unravel them. This struggle highlights the conscientious quest that marked the life of an eminent scholar of Chinese literature.

## ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

**Nihon no bukka wa naze takai no ka: Kakaku to ryūtsū no keizai gaku** [Why Prices Are So High in Japan: The Economics of Price and Distribution]. Itō Motoshige, Itō Kenkyūshitsu. NTT Shuppan, 1995. 210 × 148 mm. 296 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-87188-359-0.

Japan's commodity prices have been decreasing for the first time since the end of the war. Since the 1985 Plaza Accord, which paved the way for the rapid appreciation of the yen, Japan's high domestic prices have become notorious worldwide. The strong yen and the collapse of the producer-led structure that kept prices high triggered "price wars" that brought retail prices down drastically. The author sees the price wars not simply as the result of retailers' price competition, but in the context of a larger, economic structural change involving distribution, production, and trade. This book looks at the issues surrounding this phenomenon as it appears in five market areas: electrical appliances, food, clothing, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. The author, a specialist in the field of international economics, sees in the price revolution a ground swell of change affecting all areas of Japan's economy, from production to distribution to consumption, which, he says, may lead to the emergence of a value-creating system. New types of value-added products are already appearing while the prices of old products are falling.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu



*Nihon no keizai hatten to gijutsu fukyū* [Japan's Economic Development and the Spread of Technology]. Kiyokawa Yukihiro. Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995. 215 × 153 mm. 358 pp. ¥4,635. ISBN 4-492-37077-3.

Japan's record of economic development since the beginning of this century stands out among those of China, India and its other neighbors in Asia. Specialist in Asian economics Kiyokawa offers an original accounting of the factors behind Japan's success. Two features, he says, are characteristic of Japan's economic progress: a vigorous effort to introduce, improve, and disseminate foreign and existing technology, and expansion of indigenous industries such as farming, silkworm raising, and silk-reeling.



Cover design: Tokyo Zukan

The author attributes the improvement and dissemination of technology to the presence of various economic organizations and institutions. This line of inquiry leads him to explore a range of cases, from technical advancement in agriculture (hybridization, farm machinery and related techniques) and manufacturing (silk and cotton). Through this analysis, he elucidates the key concept of "industrialization from the bottom up" that he considers central to Japan's economic development. This study, as he mentions in the preface, stems not so much from research on the history of the Japanese economy as from his study of Asian history.

*Sengo seijishi* [Postwar Japanese Politics]. Ishikawa Masumi. Iwanami Shoten, 1995. 173 × 105 mm. 264 pp. ¥650. ISBN 4-00-430367-2.

Since the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost its exclusive grip on power, Japanese politics has slipped deeper and deeper into confusion. In this book, seasoned political journalist Ishikawa reviews the fifty years of postwar Japanese politics in search of clues to guide the country out of its current political turmoil.

The book is distinguished by its emphasis not on evaluations of the course of Japanese politics since the war but rather on the information necessary to change its direction now. To that end, the author is particularly thorough in his account of facts about the conflicts both within the LDP and between the LDP and the opposition camp. In his view, the recent decline in voter turnouts for national elections stems from a combination of growing mistrust in politicians and marked decreases in voter turnout in the Upper House election every twelfth year (namely in the Year of the Boar, according to the 12-sign Chinese zodiac), which coincides with local elections held a little earlier. Local assemblymen, who usually play the leading role in campaigning for candidates in the national elections, do not do so because their own election has ended just a few months earlier. This phenomenon, he reasons, is therefore not in itself an indication of any real or potential change in the structure of Japanese politics itself. The book includes a useful summary of the results of all elections for both houses of the Diet from 1946 through 1992.



*Sen-kyūhyaku-yonjū-nen taisei: Saraba "senji keizai"* [The 1940 System: Farewell to the "Wartime Economy"]. Noguchi Yukio. Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995. 195 × 134 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-492-39204-1.

This work, part of the widespread reflection on Japan's troubled past, is an economic history by a specialist in public economics who finds in Japan's wartime system the origins of the present-day economic structure.



Cover design: Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha

While most histories of contemporary Japan consider the end of the war in 1945 a major turning point, Noguchi maintains that many of the hallmarks of today's economy—including corporate-style organization, lifelong employment, seniority-oriented wage increments, centralized bureaucratic control, income tax withholding at the source—originated when the country was mustering its strength for all-out war. The same economic system, he argues, steered and sustained Japan both during the war and in the subsequent period of rapid growth, and is the underlying cause of Japan's inability to adapt properly to the demands of today's changing international climate. While emphasizing the urgent need to create new key industries and rationalize low-productivity industrial sectors, the author calls for a critical reappraisal of the existing systems of bureaucratic control and inefficient management organization.



**Tōkyō mondai no seijigaku** [Politics of Tokyo Problems]. Toki Hiroshi. Nihon Hyōron Sha, 1995. 188 × 129 mm. 268 pp. ¥1,854. ISBN 4-535-58187-8.

In an apparent backlash against the sixteen-year-old administration of outgoing governor Suzuki Shun'ichi, Tokyo residents installed former scriptwriter and actor (backed by none of the major parties) Aoshima Yukio in the 1995 Tokyo gubernatorial election. In this volume, political scientist Toki takes a critical look at the metropolitan government under Suzuki's leadership.



Cover design: Suzuki Toshihide

The Tokyo metropolitan government budget is on a par with that of China, and the governorship carries tremendous executive powers often compared with the authority of presidents and demands a high level of administrative skill. While recognizing the merits of the administration led by Suzuki, a seasoned bureaucrat and skilled manager, the author examines how it nevertheless lost touch with the needs of the electorate. He fiercely criticizes its poor handling of such problems as high land prices and the concentration of population, business, and information in the capital since the mid-1980s. The book is also useful as a general guide to the structure and history of the metropolitan government. It covers the entire history of Tokyo from the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912), and studies the administrations under the governors who were Suzuki's predecessors.

## EDUCATION

**Kyōiku kaikaku no yukue: Jiyūka to koseika o motomete** [The Future of Educational Reform: Toward Freedom and Individuality in Learning]. Amano Ikuo. Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (Tokyo University Press), 1995. 188 × 130 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,751. ISBN 4-13-002071-4.

In Japan's modern history, the nation's education system has undergone three main phases of reform: modernization in the Meiji period (1868–1912), democratization immediately after World War II, and liberalization since the late 1970s. In this book, the scholar of education Amano reviews this history of reform in an effort to get to the root of the problems of Japan's current education system.



Following Western models, education policy in Japan's era of modernization created a school system based on control and competition. This led to increasingly strict school rules and intense rivalry among students for choice school placings determined through an extremely competitive, rote-learning oriented examination system. Against this historical background, the author points to the need for a new model of education to meet the contemporary learner's increasingly diverse demands for information and knowledge in an ongoing, lifelong process of education and training. He sheds light upon the potential of developing the special learning abilities of the computer-age generation.

## CULTURE AND SOCIETY

**Kodomo no namida: Aru zai-Nichi Chōsenjin no dokusho henreki** [A Child's Tears: Memorable Reading of a Korean Resident of Japan]. Suh Kyung Sik. Kashiwa Shobō, 1995. 194 × 133 mm. 190 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-7601-1139-5.

We tend to forget most of the books we read as children. But some we do remember. The details may be gone but the vague memory of things that deeply moved or impressed us remains. With age and experience, we may even come to realize that many of those literary encounters in our early lives shaped fundamental aspects of our personalities.

In this book, Suh Kyung Sik, an ethnic Korean resident in Japan, performs a kind of self-analysis by considering the books he read in his childhood. Suh is a lecturer in Asian intellectual history at Rikkyō University and the youngest brother of Suh Sung, author of *Gokuchū jūkyū nen* [Nineteen Years in Prison] (see *JBN*, No. 9, p. 13). He grew up in Kyoto in the 1960s, just as Japan's economic growth was hitting full stride. His family lived in an area with many other Korean and working-class households—an environment in which people generally looked askance at a child who loved to read. While looking back on those years, which he associates with books like German poet and novelist Erich Kästner's *Das Fliegend Klassenzimmer* [The Flying Classroom] and



Cover design: Ishida Hiromi; illustration: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo



Yoshikawa Eiji's *Sangokushi* [A History of Three Kingdoms], the author considers what it means for him to be a Korean living in Japan.

**Masu tonō ketsubetsu** [Goodbye the Masses]. Hamano Yasuki. BNN, 1995. 193 × 132 mm. 302 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-89369-348-4.

Opinion leaders in Japan tend to think that the imminent "digital revolution" represented by multimedia technology is something that will bring about reinforcement of social controls. On the other hand, in this volume, the author reviews the development of the mass media in the twentieth century, while at the same time scrutinizing the possibility that recent media trends suggest the birth from the womb of the conformist-oriented mass society of a new type of mature individual, based on his own involvement in media change as a researcher.



Cover design: Murakami Mitsunobu

Media—the means people use to communicate and interact—vary from society to society and from era to era. The conditions of their development, availability and use are indices of a society's maturity. As the author sees it, today's media, particularly in Japan, excel in the first area but clearly lag behind in the other two. He shows why the media have not progressed to the point where the general populace can make full use of them for self expression or mutual criticism, and offers numerous practical suggestions on how to redress this situation through computer education.

**Nihon-gata "kyōyō" no unmei: Rekishi shakaigaku teki kōsatsu** [The Fate of Japanese-style "Cultivation"]. Tsutsui Kiyotada. Iwanami Shoten, 1995. 193 × 132 mm. 192 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-00-001713-6.

The idea of "cultivation" in the sense of building a well-rounded personality, well-versed in Western thought and in literature, was the bedrock of Japanese intellectual society going back to the latter part of the Meiji era (1868–1912). Called *kyōyō* for the first time by philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō during the Taishō era (1912–26), it was the pursuit of broad learning closely linked with the search for purpose in life and became the very *raison d'être* of the educated elite. Today, however, the word as associated with elitism is all but obsolete and now the object of derision.

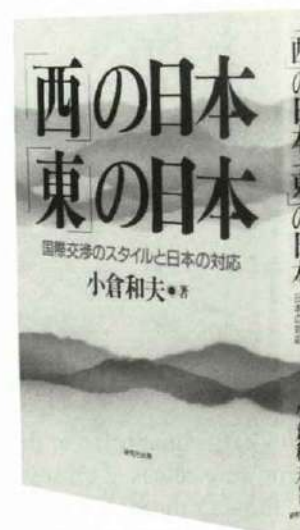
This volume identifies *kyōyō* as an integral part of Japan's modernization process and traces its emergence and development from a historical sociology perspective. Cultivation in this Westernized mode was inextricably linked to the higher schools that prepared students for imperial universities in Japan's prewar education system. They offered a broad, liberal arts education in the Western humanist tradition. In the author's view, this understanding of "culture" had its roots in the Meiji-period drive to "enlighten" and "edify" the general population—that is, to instill in people the values of thrift (as a means of getting ahead in the world) and of patriotism and filial duty (as the moral bases of human existence). In his account, the "cultivation" of



the privileged class was the prerequisite for this "edification" of the masses, the interlinking of the two processes helping to drive Japan toward modernity.

The author is professor of sociology at Kyoto University and author of *Gendai shisō no shakai-shi* [A Social History of Contemporary Thought].

**"Nishi" no Nihon, "Higashi" no Nihon: Kokusai kōshō no sutairu to Nihon no taiō** [Japan of the "East," Japan of the "West": International Negotiating Styles and the Japanese Response]. Ogura Kazuo. Kenkyūsha Shuppan, 1995. 194 × 131 mm. 320 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-327-37657-4.



Cover design: Kumagai Hiroto

Ogura, a veteran diplomat and currently ambassador to Vietnam, applies a wealth of information from various source materials both foreign and domestic to reconstruct the history of Japanese diplomacy. He focuses on how Japan has coped with the different diplomatic approaches of South Korea, China, Russia (the Soviet Union), the United States, and European countries. Noting that a nation's style of diplomatic negotiation reflects much about the culture and outlook of its people, he considers the clash, in foreign relations, of the Western adherence to law and principles with the non-Western emphasis on respect and etiquette. He points out that, though a member of the non-Western group, Japan has had to employ both approaches in order to carry through and sustain its process of modernization. He also elucidates



some of the problems affecting diplomatic relations among non-Western countries. In their bilateral relations, for example, each uses the other as a "card" in dealing with the Western powers, a practice which, in Ogura's view, is the central tragedy of Japan-China relations.

***Ōmu Shinrikyō to wa nani ka: Gendai shakai ni toikakeru mono*** [The Aum Shinrikyo Phenomenon: Contemporary Society on Trial]. Inoue Nobutaka, Takeda Michio, Kitabatake Kiyoyasu. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1995. 172 × 105 mm. 190 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-02-273051-X.



Cover design: Kimura Yūji and Kawasaki Yōko

In March 1995, large quantities of the lethal gas sarin were released on several subways moving through Tokyo during the morning rush hour in an apparent attempt at indiscriminate mass murder. Believing the religious cult Aum Shinrikyo to be behind the incident, police have since arrested several of the cult's members, including its leader, Asahara Shōkō (real name Matsumoto Chizuo). This book examines the cult's teachings and the motives behind its activities in the broader social context in which it arose. The coauthors—two religious studies scholars and a journalist—see the cult and its behavior as symptomatic of a society which has pushed the separation of science from human values, and of the mind from the body, to the extreme. They point to a basic lack of understanding of religion on the part of the Japanese people in general, and criticize the media for failing to recognize that fact. This is an accessible and compact overview of the social psyche of contemporary Japan.

## DOCUMENTARY

***Amerika jōnarizumu*** [American Journalism]. Shimoyama Susumu. Maruzen Co., 1995. 173 × 105 mm. 268 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-621-05146-6. To Japanese reporters of the postwar era, the American style of journalism has been something to admire and emulate. President Nixon's resignation over the Watergate scandal symbolized an enviably open society and testified to the determination of both individual reporters and the journalistic establishment not to bow to unjust authority. This volume is a report on the present state of investigative journalism in the United States by a young Japanese journalist whose respect for such professional integrity took him to Columbia University to study in its Graduate School of Journalism.

The first thing the author learned about American investigative journalism was that it is now in crisis. Such reporting originally made its mark through small, provincial newspapers carving out market niches with hot-selling scoops. These newspapers were soon gobbled up by big business, however, and they listed their stocks and realigned themselves according to the logic of capital. Thus constrained by the demands of vested interests, many of the most accomplished reporters were forced to retire or find work elsewhere.

In an account itself constructed through the techniques of investigative reporting, the author balances his distress at this current crisis in U.S. journalism with his conviction that the hard-nosed news-hound is still alive and well.



Cover design: Yakushiji Chikahiko

***Nippon hinkon saizensen: Kēsu wākā to yobareru hitobito*** ["Case Workers" on the Poverty Line in Japan]. Hisada Megumi. Bungei Shunjū, 1994. 194 × 133 mm. 302 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-16-349110-4. Certain complaints notwithstanding, Japan boasts a generally peaceful and materially abundant society. In recent years, however, cracks have started to appear in this veneer of universal content. A susceptibility to natural disasters like the Great Hanshin Earthquake is one thing, but people are beginning to sense in the country's human-perpetrated problems—from the Tokyo sarin gas attack to the prolonged recession—a profound void at the heart of their prosperity.



Cover design: Kawakami Shigeo

That feeling is already well known to Japan's poor and needy. Written by an up-and-coming non-fiction writer who makes a specialty of topics that contradict Japan's image of itself, this book reports on the activities of poverty relief workers known as "case workers." Every now and then, affluent, mainstream Japan is shocked by news of the reality of poverty in its midst—of a mother who has starved to death or a welfare recipient who dies alone and without kin. Welfare workers bear the brunt of a short-lived public outcry for not preventing the tragedy, only to be quickly forgotten again. The facts of the matter are not so simple. By their very existence, people on relief in Japan belie to the myth of a prosperous society for all, and case workers are often the only ones there to extend a helping hand. By describing the often distressing and largely



thankless efforts of these social workers, this book bears witness to the deeper incongruities of Japanese society.

*Sen-kyū-hyaku-kyūjū-go nen ichi gatsu, Kōbe: "Hanshin dai shinsai" ka no seishinkai tachi* [Kobe, January, 1995: Psychiatric Relief Workers in the Aftermath of the Great Hanshin Earthquake]. Nakai Hisao, ed. Misuzu Shobō, 1995. 210 × 148 mm. 296 pp. ¥1,545. ISBN 4-622-03797-1.

The powerful earthquake that struck Kobe and surrounding areas on January 17, 1995 left a death toll of over 5,000 and destroyed most of central Kobe. As the first major tremor in Japan to hit a modern urban center, the disaster prompted a diverse array of relief efforts. One aspect of that response was the assistance provided by psychiatrists who promptly gathered in the city from all over the country. This volume is a collective account of their experiences and contributions in the quake's aftermath. Editor Nakai is a professor at Kobe University and a leading figure in the field of psychiatry in Japan.



The book begins with Nakai's personal recollections of the earthquake, followed by reports of the group's activities over the next six weeks. It vividly evokes the day-to-day struggles of a population united by crisis: the medical personnel, including the psychiatrists themselves, who assembled from around the nation; fire-fighters, police, and members of the Self-Defense Forces, who worked stoically under trying conditions; and

the local residents, who coped with the tragedy through mutual support and encouragement. On one level the book is a faithful lens through which to view the realities of this disaster, and on other a message of hope for humanity as a whole.

*"Zaigai" Nihonjin* [Japanese Living Abroad]. Yanagihara Kazuko. Shōbunsha, 1994. 215 × 152 mm. 574 pp. ¥2,900. ISBN 4-7949-6182-0.

This book is the product of the author's journey to 65 cities in 40 countries to interview 108 expatriate Japanese. Her subjects represent a wide spectrum of backgrounds and occupations, including chefs, artists, engineers, businessmen, and a presidential advisor. Their conversations were not limited to a fixed pattern of topics, and each person told his or her own story of success, failure, or conflict. On one point, however, they are in general agreement: they have no regrets.



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

For the reader, the book evokes the vastness and diversity of the world and considers the place of Japan and the Japanese in that broad context. In doing so, it explodes the superficial outlook many Japanese have on the world as well as their stereotypical image of themselves. By offering a more realistic picture of today's world, the book has the potential to change the way many readers view their own lives.

The author is a non-fiction writer who has also published *Kanbojia no nijū yon shoku no kureyon* [Cambodia's Twenty-four-Colored Crayons], among other works.

## LITERATURE

*Magurebu, yūwaku to shite* [Maghreb, A Temptation]. Ogawa Kunio. Kōdansha, 1995. 194 × 134 mm. 274 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-06-205561-9.

Feeling that "words just are drying up inside me," a writer sets off on a journey in an effort to replenish his dwindling literary reservoir. "What I yearned for," he reflects, "was a life of idleness and silence, but the real enticement was words, words, words." While studying in Paris in his youth, he took a motorcycle trip along the Mediterranean coast to Tangier. Now, at the age of 62 and with a heart condition that makes his plan almost suicidal, he resolves to see the North Africa that eluded him on his earlier excursion. He visits Maghreb, the home town of a friend from his Paris days, but finds the friend has since passed away. Later he meets a fellow Japanese who has in fact renounced the world for a life of idleness and silence in a remote corner of North Africa. With that encounter, the writer experiences an earthshaking premonition about how he should spend the rest of his life, a rebirth of spirit that the author calls a "resurrection." Amid the throngs of desert peoples, in the voices of the medicine peddlers and street entertainers calling out to passersby, the traveller rediscovers the living essence of language. In this way, he finally recovers his own facility with words, and the novel itself is the fruit of that rehabilitation. Against a graphically sketched backdrop of



Cover design: Tsukasa Osamu



North African landscapes, the author draws a striking portrait of a soul adrift, distressed, and finally reborn.

**Midori iro no nigotta ocha aruiwa kōfuku no sampomichi** [Thick Green Tea, or The Path of Happiness]. Yamamoto Masayo. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1994. 193 × 121 mm. 170 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-309-00938-7.

This novel sketches the daily life of a family of four. The father is contentedly retired, the mother slightly frail but devoted to taking care of her family, and the older of the two sisters is single, a 33-year-old writer. The central character is the younger daughter, Tarako, who, though unable to walk because of a disability, has also published two collections of poetry. Described through Tarako's eyes, the family is close and they each accept each other's way of life.



Cover design: Nakajima Kaboru; illustration: Ibaraki Takano

But their family life seems always on the verge of crisis. Even when the father undergoes surgery for cancer, the event is treated like any other in the routine of an average family. This happy, studied ordinariness teeters in a precarious balance, which ordinary people perhaps actually feel in their everyday lives. The normality depicted in this novel has a vivid sense of reality that comes through the filter of potent abstraction. A casual portrayal of this slice of everyday family life through that filter gives the work a unique flavor. The book's dual title represents a compromise, one title being the author's preference and the other her editor's suggestion.

**Ōinaru hi ni: Moeagaru midori no ki, dai san bu** [On Great Days: A Green Tree in Flames, Part 3]. Ōe Kenzaburō. Shinchōsha, 1995. 197 × 138 mm. 358 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-10-303615-X.

This is Nobel Prize-winning Ōe's self-announced "last" novel and the last volume in his trilogy *Moeagaru midori no ki* [A Green Tree in Flames]. Through this series, which concerns the trials and ultimate triumph of a young man who aspires to "learn the wisdom of *tamashii* (spirit)," Ōe aims for nothing less than the spiritual salvation of contemporary humanity.



Cover design: Tsukasa Osamu

While involved with a revolutionary political faction, the young man becomes an unwitting accomplice in a murder. He returns to his home town, a woodland community in Shikoku, where, after apparently displaying a mysterious healing power, he is worshipped by the villagers as "the Savior." With him as their leader, they create a religious sect, called A Green Tree in Flames, which explicitly excludes the premise of God's existence from its teachings. The young leader is left crippled after his former rival faction attacks him and smashes his knees. The expansion of the religious group itself, meanwhile, leads to internal friction and the threat of a split over its management. Deciding that individual salvation is more important than the organization, the young man sets out in his wheelchair on a pilgrimage. Once again, however, he is attacked by members of his former rival faction and killed. His death is a moment of self-realization: as "the

Savior," he dies both to cleanse this unjust world of violence and to redeem his own sinner's soul.

**Rennyō: Ware fukaki fuchi yori** [The Monk Rennyō: Up from the Abyss]. Itsuki Hiroyuki. Chūō Kōron Sha, 1995. 193 × 134 mm. 242 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-12-002435-0.

This book is a four-act play on the life of Rennyō (1415–99), a Buddhist monk of the Muromachi period (1333–1568). A member of the Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land) sect founded by Shinran (1173–1262), Rennyō became the eighth abbot of the sect's central temple—Honganji Temple, in Kyoto—and led a Shinshū revival by popularizing its *nembutsu* method of invoking the name of the Amida Buddha. This dramatization of Rennyō's life is novelist Itsuki's first venture as a playwright.



Cover design and illustration: Sata Yoshirō

At the time Rennyō headed Honganji Temple, Kyoto lay devastated by civil war and famine, and the temple, too, was reduced to utter poverty. Despite that, Rennyō had a total of five wives and fathered 27 children. Exploiting the accessibility and immediacy of drama, the play portrays this human side of Rennyō behind the historical figure, showing him as an ordinary man who knew hardship, sorrow and loneliness. It depicts him as a man brimming with earthly desires and a boundless sexual vitality, showing in plain language how his painful awareness of these strong desires makes him all the more devoted to the Amida Buddha, who saves all sinful persons as taught by Shinran, and how his honest per-



sonality and teachings won many followers.

**Shikaban, Seishun den deke deke** [Original Edition: The Rock 'n' Roll of Youth]. Ashihara Sunao. Sakuhinsha, 1995. 194 × 132 mm. 428 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-87893-220-1.

Set in provincial Japan during the height of Beatlemania in the late 1960s, this is an autobiographical novel about a group of high school students who form a rock band. They devote themselves to practice, taste the thrill of applause when they play at the school festival, and later separate as they graduate.



Cover design: Shibukawa Ikuyoshi

The author originally wrote the book for pleasure, not intending to have it published. Later, however, he spent six months condensing it to half its original size in order to submit it to a literary journal. The revised novel won the Kawade Shobō Shinsha's literary prize and went on to capture Japan's premiere award for new entertainment literature, the Naoki Prize. Despite this success, the author appears to attach special significance to his maiden work in its original form, for the present volume is his "private publication" of the full-length, unrevised version. It offers a richer portrait of life in a provincial city in Shikoku described in the dialect of the region, and conveys more realistically the incoherent, over-excited, zig-zagging enthusiasm of youth.

The author's own critical comments on the band, largely cut from the prize-winning edition, point to the same passion that brought the band back together to mark the publication of the book.

## ESSAYS

**Bibari hiruzu kompurekkusu** [Beverly Hills Complex]. Kaji Masakazu. Photographs by Tatsuki Yoshihiro. Bungei Shunjū, 1995. 193 × 133 mm. 303 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-16-350240-8.

The problems dividing Japan and the United States go well beyond friction on the economic level. While many may be simply the growing pains of a new bilateral relationship being forged amid the current changes in the global order, our mental attitudes seem very slow in adjusting to the new developments.

This book is a comparison of Japan and the United States written from the author's firsthand experience of both societies: he traveled to the United States as a young man, spent more than ten years establishing a firm business footing in Los Angeles, and returned to Japan with an acute sense of the dissimilarities between the two countries. Having grown accustomed to the American lifestyle, for instance, he finds Japan's high-cost housing, cumbrous bureaucracy and complex distribution system quite outrageous. On the other hand, he draws on personal experience to highlight the social problems—drugs, guns, racial conflict—that apparently drove him from the United States back to Japan. This keen, dual perspective confirms the considerable differences in lifestyle and culture that continue to plague Japan-U.S. relations.



Cover design: Sekiguchi Seiji; illustration: Yagi Mihoko.

**Kaifuku suru kazoku** [Family Recovery]. Ōe Kenzaburō. Illustrations by Ōe Yukari. Kōdansha, 1995. 224 × 155 mm. 200 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-06-207510-5.

Ōe's real-life challenge of raising and living with his intellectually disabled son, Hikari, is a major thematic focal point for much of his fiction. In the essays collected in this volume, which were originally published in a quarterly medical journal, Ōe writes even more candidly as a member of a disabled person's family.



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

The essays were written over a five-year period that included several important events for the Ōe family. Some of these, such as the hospitalization of Ōe's mother-in-law, were setbacks, but others were milestone accomplishments: Hikari's debut as a composer, both on CD and in concert; Ōe's first trip with him abroad; their appearance on television; and Ōe's winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Not surprisingly, then, the essays convey the family's strong sense of achievement, particularly in Hikari's success as a composer in spite of his persisting condition. "The healed," Ōe writes, "do not simply return to square one, the point where they were before they got sick. They can move on in a forward, upward direction, gaining confidence and momentum as they go," and with that unique energy produce works drawn from the very depths of their souls.

This is a chronicle of one family's incredible triumph over thirty-one years of hardship. Ōe's wife, Yukari,



adds a further dimension to the family's spiritual portrait with a series of gentle light-ink illustrations.

**Kao [Faces].** Minami Shimbō. Chikuma Shobō, 1995. 186 × 155mm. 322 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-480-81370-5. This unique volume brings together 150 short, amusing pieces originally published as a series in a *manga*-comic magazine under the title "Gammen kagaku" ("The Science of Faces"). The author, a columnist and illustrator, claims his humorous insight into faces derives from having his own triangular mug laughed at since he was a child.



Cover design: Minami Shimbō

Although we casually pick up myriad subtle messages from one another's faces all the time, we would be hard pressed to explain or verbalize them. Unlike computers, which "read" only a literal kind of information, we can find fun in faces—a famous person may look like a cartoon character, a fish-like a person, or even a person like a fish. That humor cannot be recognized by any computer; it is the product of some analyzable mechanism of the human brain, but this is not a book of empirical science. Instead, the author probes, ponders and pokes fun at faces with a determined cheekiness, using jokes, quizzes, and prankish face collages to attack his subject in an engaging variety of ways.

Readers should beware: this book may induce spasms of laughter, not to mention assenting nods at the surprising yet surprisingly perceptive comments of an author who sees an entire cosmos of enjoyment in the study of faces.

## LITERARY CRITICISM

**Ajia eiga ni miru Nihon, I: Chūgoku, Taiwan, Honkon hen [Japan in Asian Cinema, Part 1: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong].** Momma Takashi. Shakai Hyōron Sha, 1995. 195 × 132 mm. 286 pp. ¥2,781. ISBN 4-7845-0941-0. Japanese people are said to be more concerned than most about how they appear to people from other countries. This self-consciousness may be a consequence of Japan's relative lack of direct contact, historically, with the rest of the world. It may also be why Japanese people have a tendency to turn defensive and over-react when confronted by images of "the Japanese" that conflict with their image of themselves.

The film industry is a case in point. Foreign films which show Japanese in stupid or bad-guy roles are rarely released in movie theaters in Japan. Not surprisingly, then, films from other Asian countries are particularly scarce in the Japanese movie market.

This book is an exhaustive study of the way Japanese people have been depicted in Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong films from the birth of cinema to the present day. It delves intriguingly into both the changes in those portraits over time and the subtle differences between the three cinematic traditions. The author is a young film critic (b. 1964) who also planned and managed film events for a major department store for nine



Cover design: Kuwatani Hayato

years starting in 1968. He plans to add three more volumes to the series, including one on images of Japan in films from Southeast Asia and another exploring how non-Japanese are portrayed in Japanese films.

**Bungaku no puroguramu [Literature's Program].** Yamashiro Mutsumi. Ōta Shuppan, 1995. 194 × 134 mm. 206 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-87233-205-9.

To ask "What is literary criticism?" might now be considered a passé exercise that reveals little more than the inquirer's own limited understanding of the issue. On the other hand, a return to such basics may be precisely what the field needs today as literature struggles for direction and literary criticism becomes just another market in the commercialization of knowledge.



Cover design: Azuma Yukimi

The present volume is the first collection of essays by this young critic, winner of the 35th Gunzō New Writer's Prize for criticism. It comprises four of the six key critiques she has written to date: one each on literary critics Kobayashi Hideo and Yasuda Yojūrō and on writer Sakaguchi Ango, and another of linguistic theory. In each work, the author points to what might be called the primary literary urge, and from that vantage point conducts an impressive inquiry into the *raison d'être* of literature. Her insights are particularly keen in her comparison of Sakaguchi and Yasuda, whose apparent differences she identifies as two sides of one literary coin. Though the writing shows signs of impatience and imma-



turity in places, this itself underlines the author's enthusiasm for the task at hand.

**Sengo bungaku o tou: Sono taiken to rinen** [Postwar Japanese Literature: Ideas and Experience]. Kawamura Minato. Iwanami Shoten, 1995. 173 × 105 mm. 244 pp. ¥620. ISBN 4-00-430371-0.

Like many countries, Japan marked the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II with a host of commemorative events and activities. But while for most of the world the postwar era is now clearly a thing of the past, Japan has yet to come to terms with the war and transcend its lingering "postwar" frames of reference.

This book is a review of postwar, particularly post-1950, Japanese literature. Treating key works under ten topic categories—including "Perspectives on China," "The Struggle Over the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty," "The Vietnam War," "Sex," "Cars Take Over Japan," "The Family," "Americanization," and "Literature of Koreans Residing in Japan"—the author weighs the achievements of their authors as the voices of the times. He delves into how Japan is still haunted by the specter of the war, a ghoul it has failed to lay to rest. Meanwhile, the general direction of Japanese literature in the postwar years is seen in one of increasing isolation and a detachment from reality. This insularity in literature, the author reflects, is but one aspect of Japan's broader cultural and social alienation from the international community, and particularly from its neighbors in Asia.



**Sengo shidan shishi** [Postwar Japanese Poetry: A Personal History]. Oda Kyūrō. Shinchōsha, 1995. 196 × 137 mm. 462 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-10-400901-6.

Despite its modest subtitle, this book provides a comprehensive picture of virtually every significant development in Japanese modern poetry (*gendai-shi*, or simply *shi*, as distinct from the traditional *haiku* and *tanka* poetry) from 1945 to 1965. Its "personal" aspect lies in the fact that the life and career of the author (b. 1931) are integrally bound up with the works, relationships and lives of many of Japan's leading postwar modern poets. Oda edited a poetry magazine while in college and at 25 launched a publishing company specializing in poetic works.



Cover design: Shinchōsha; illustration: Takiguchi Shūzō

While drawing on personal experience, Oda constructs this history with a true editor's touch, carefully arranging facts, anecdotes and quotations in a tapestry of information and personal expression. In his prose he displays a tight control polished by decades of close and custodial observation of Japanese poets and poetry. His unsparing use of quotations suggests not only a writer's wish to convey the atmosphere of the period in question but also a journalist's determination to leave behind an accurate chronicle of poetic circles in postwar Japan. He also includes an array of valuable reference data, including photographs, a chronological chart, and a name index extending to almost 1,000 entries.

**Waga "tenkō" [My "Conversion"]**. Yoshimoto Takaaki. Bungei Shunjū, 1995. 194 × 134 mm. 198 pp. ¥1,100. ISBN 4-16-349900-8.

Yoshimoto has been a leading intellectual figure within the Japanese left since joining the protest against the ratification of the Japan-U.S. security treaty in 1960. This volume, mainly based on interviews, turns his critical eye toward the current political situation in Japan.

The book's title, an allusion to state-coerced conversion from, or willing renunciation of, socialism and communism, was provided by the publisher's editorial staff. Yoshimoto makes it clear, however, that it is not the one he would have used, since he has not "converted." His view, rather, is that the current political climate has robbed the left of its counter-establishment mantle and soon will even render the term "left" obsolete in political nomenclature.



Cover design: Miyagawa Ichirō

From about 1972, the number of Japanese working in tertiary industries surpassed that in secondary industries, and high-rise buildings began shooting up in most urban centers. It was around this time, the author argues, that Japan turned the corner from production-based capitalism toward consumption capitalism. At the same time, the author grew skeptical of socialism as certain facts came increasingly to light, such as that many people in the Soviet bloc lived under oppressive and austere conditions. From this historical analysis, the author gives a thought-provoking account of how his own interest thereafter shifted toward urbanization and the rise of mass culture.



## Events and Trends

### Reflections on Fifty Years

Studies by the Research Institute for Publications show that the first half of 1995, as events like the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the Aum Shinrikyō affair shook the nation out of its complacency, has been tough on publishing. The number of bookstore customers has plummeted and few books sold rapidly as soon as they hit the shelves. Almost every book on the bestseller list has been there since last year.

The impetus provided by the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II led to the publication of some 100 titles, including: *Nijus-seiki no sensō* [Twentieth Century Wars] (Asahi Sonorama); *Nihon zankoku monogatari* [Stories of Japan's Brutality] (5 vols., Heibonsha); *Sengo gojūnen* [The Fifty Postwar Years] (Mainichi Shimbunsha); *Nempyō Hiroshima, kaku-jidai gojūnen no kiroku* [Hiroshima Chronology: Recording the First Fifty Years of the Nuclear Age] (Chūgoku Shimbunsha); *Sengo gojūnen, sono toki Nihon wa* [What Has Japan Been Doing These Fifty Years?] (6 vols., Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai). Small paperbacks are selling well, such as Sataka Makoto's *Sengo o yomu, gojussatsu no fikushon* [Reading about the Postwar Era: Fifty Works of Fiction] (Iwanami Shoten), and *Sengo o kataru* [Accounts of the Postwar Years] (Iwanami Shoten, ed.).

The first half of 1995 also saw the publication of quake-related books (over 100 titles) ranging from photograph collections recording the Great Hanshin Earthquake to practical manuals on how to prepare for and what to do in case of an earthquake, as well as scientific volumes on the geological mechanisms of earthquakes. Particularly noteworthy among all the collections of photographs and eyewitness accounts of the quake that shook the Kobe-Osaka area is the *Hanshin Daishinsai zen kiroku* [Complete Record of the Great Hanshin Earthquake] by the Kōbe

Shimbun Sōgō Shuppan Center. The Aum Shinrikyō affair has also prompted the writing of some thirty books on the cult and new religion in general.

### Atomic Bomb Translations

The 50th anniversary of the end of World War II occasioned the translation and publication in Taiwan in August of children's books on the atom-bomb experience. Under the postwar Kuomintang government, there was no interest in the dropping of the atomic bomb because people were taught to be critical of Japan's war of aggression and the defeat of the evil Japanese was a fact to be welcomed. Almost no book was written and little was known among the general public about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Two of the children's books are Chinese editions from English versions (by a Canadian translator) of Japanese books. One is *Sembazuru* [A Thousand Cranes] by Toyota Kiyoshi, the true story of a girl who was affected by radiation in the bombing of Hiroshima and died from leukemia at the age of 12. The original Japanese of the other translation is unknown, but it is about a girl who was the victim of the Nagasaki bombing. She is picked on because of her keloid scars, and her friends gather around to build up her confidence and courage which is displayed in the blue ribbon she wins in a school brush writing competition. The translator is one of the leading women writers in Taiwan, and she comments that she realized the sacrifices of the Japanese common people in the war for the first time through these books.

There is also *A-Bomb Haiku*, a collection of poems by Matsuo Atsuyuki, a victim of the bombing at Nagasaki, who died in 1983 at the age of 79. The new version is an update of *Gembaku kushō* [Collection of Poems on the Atomic Bomb], published in 1972, but now put out by Shinjusha, with English translations included. Matsuo, who lost his wife and three children in the bombing, enshrines his wrath and sadness in these poems. This volume contains entries (also translated in English) from his diary right before and after August 9, 1945 and 200 poems

written from that time until 1973.

The translator of this book, Midorikawa Masumi, says the author wanted "to allow people around the world who don't know anything about the A-bombing to read my poems."

### Translation of Japanese Literature Overseas

The Mainichi newspaper says that Japanese literature being translated overseas is shifting focus from great authors to young writers of popular fiction. In New York, for example, few readers paid much attention to Japanese literature. After Ōe Kenzaburō was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, his works appeared briefly in the bookstores, but almost as immediately vanished. Novels by authors like Yoshimoto Banana and Murakami Ryū, on the other hand, have been receiving steady attention, and even *The New York Times* ran a review of Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*.

Some scholars of Japanese literature lament the trend, declaring that few of the new authors' works reflect serious literary traditions or ideas.

In France, works by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Kawabata Yasunari, and Mishima Yukio have been translated, but recently, translations of contemporary authors like Yoshimoto Banana, Murakami Haruki, and Yamada Eimi, are proving more popular. Since the boom that began seven or eight years ago in the publishing of foreign literature, new Japanese authors are frequently introduced. Prior to that time, only about one translation of contemporary Japanese literature might appear annually, but last year there were twenty titles. More than Japanese culture, readers seem to be interested in contemporary similarities and good stories.

As always, a great deal of Japanese literature is being translated in Korea, some selling extremely well. Up until the latter half of the 1970s, winners of the Akutagawa prize would be immediately translated and published. That practice fell off during the 1980s. In the 1990s, Murakami Haruki has made a major splash among Korean fiction fans. Observers speculate that this interest is due to the industrialization of Korea, creating situations that the urban



youth of the two countries increasingly share.

## Sign Language Book Boom

Sales of books on sign language for people with hearing disabilities exploded this year. Average sales of introductory books on signing at Kōsaidō Shuppan are normally 2,000–3,000 copies per month, but in August 1995 alone it sold more than 100,000 copies. At least thirty books on sign language have been published by different publishers, and some outlets have even set up special corners devoted to such books.

The great interest seems attributable to the popularity of two television dramas started in April featuring hearing-impaired heroes. The main purchasing strata are female high school students and women in their twenties. Both the TV programs are love stories in which hearing-impaired characters overcome their disability by conveying their feelings of love through sign language.

## Literary Prizes

In July the winners of the 113th Akutagawa and Naoki prizes were chosen, the former awarded to Hosaka Kazushi for "Kono hito no iki" [This Person's Threshold] (*Shinchō*, March issue, 1995) and the latter to Akasegawa Shun for *Hakkyū zan'ei* [The Afterglow of Baseball] (Bungei Shunjū, 1995). The selection was given more attention than usual because there were no winners for the 112th prizes.

The Akutagawa prize winning story, "Kono hito no iki," is about the encounter of a man in his mid-thirties with a woman who was his senior in the same club when they were college students, depicting his daily life in a straightforward style. "This is a book that makes you feel good," commented a selection committee member. No doubt the series of foreboding events this year, including the Hanshin earthquake disaster and the sarin gas incident, made the serenity of Hosaka's fiction was all the more appealing.

The Naoki prize winning work, *Hakkyū zan'ei*, is a baseball novel about the joys and sorrows of life, skillfully written by a veteran writer.

The author has been a candidate for the Naoki Prize five times previously. He is the older brother of Otsuji Katsuhiko (real name Akasegawa Gempei) who won the 84th Akutagawa prize.

In September, the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō prize (sponsored by Chūō Kōron Sha), was awarded to Tsuji Kunio for *Saigyō kaden* [A Life of Saigyō] (Shinchōsha, 1995), selected from among novels and plays written over the past one year. This year's winning work is a novel tracing the life of the 12th-century poet Saigyō, who was born into a samurai family and became a Buddhist monk. During his mendicant travels around the country, he produced many outstanding *waka* poems. It provides a vivid portrayal of the poet-monk, who ranked poetry above politics, and declared that poetry, or arts in general, should be the core of human affairs. The novel quickly became a top bestseller.

## Picto-ROM Publishing

The Picto-ROM, a new style of electronic publication in which the reader turns the pages of a video image of an open book, is on the way to becoming reality.

Creators of this system are the software company Keiyōsha and the Picto-ROM Publishing Institute started by a consortium of nineteen publishers. In August, as a first step in its commercial use of CD-ROMs, Yagi Shoten published *Bunshō Kurabu*, a journal of literary articles contributed by readers during the Taishō era (1912–26) and the early part of the Shōwa era (1926–89). Leading authors like Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Kikuchi Kan, and Satō Haruo wrote for this magazine, making it a priceless resource for understanding Japan's literary world at that time. A complete set of 155 issues and indexing information are available on ten CDs.

The magazine has also gone on sale in a microfilm version, but the CD-ROM version has the advantage of faster retrieval and the capacity to enlarge desired sections.

The rapid appearance of the Picto-gram applications owes much to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry's electronic library pro-

gram. The publishers belonging to the Picto-ROM Institute put their resources into electronic format for test-use as software at Keiō and other university libraries. In addition to *Bunshō Kurabu*, they are planning to put 1.6 million pages of materials in CD-ROM format, including *Teikoku gikai giji sokkiroku* [Stenographic Records of Imperial Diet Proceedings], *Marukusu Engerusu zenshū* [Complete Works of Marx and Engels], the movie magazine *Kinema Jumpō*, and the *manga* magazine *Shōnen Sunday*.

## Trends à la Toilet

With at least ten titles appearing on the subject since the end of 1994, the toilet has become an important publishing topic. An increase in women authors is recently notable.

*Sekai no toire kaidō o yuku* [Down Comfort Road to the World's Toilets] (TOTO Shuppan) published in June this year, introduces thirty of the "best toilets" in Europe, the United States, and Asia as well as thirteen in Japan. Criteria for "best" are design, consideration for the needs of disabled people and method of waste disposal. Author Sakamoto Saiko is a director of the Japan Toilet Association and a "comfort stylist" who provides corporations, local governments and individuals with ideas for pleasanter, more comfortable living. Making use of her travels to different parts of the world over the past ten years to see 1,200 of the world's toilets firsthand, she proposes better waste treatment methods that are friendly to the earth's environment.

*Mattāhorun no kūchū toire* [Mid-air Toilets of the Matterhorn] published by TOTO in February, is made up of light essays by mountain climber Imai Michiko describing privy experiences on some of the world's mountain peaks. The author, also a urologist, believes that open discussion of the toilet has been unfairly avoided and points out how important the toilet is medically.

The popularity of these books seems to reflect people's increasing interest in better, more comfortable surroundings, as well as growing concern about proper waste treatment, conservation of water resources and other environmental issues.



## Japanese Book Design 2

Michiyoshi Gow

Two well-known book design awards are aimed at encouraging artists in this profession. One is the Hara Hiromu Prize, sponsored by the Tokyo Art Directors Club (founded in 1952). The prize was established in 1988 to commemorate the achievements of the widely respected graphic designer Hara Hiromu (1903–86). The Club's members select a winner for the award from among outstanding work produced during the fiscal year.

The second award is the Kōdansha Book Design Prize, established as one of five award divisions (in addition to illustration, photography, picture books, and science books) aimed at the promotion of publishing culture in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the publisher's founding. The prizes seek to promote the opening up of new artistic fields, improvement of quality, and development of the field of publishing. A five-member screening committee selects one winner from numerous candidates submitted each year.

These two award-winning books are presented here.

### *Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950* (8th Tokyo Art Directors Club Prize, Hara Hiromu Prize)

This is the catalog prepared for the Philadelphia Museum of Art's "Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950" exhibit. Essays on history, government, sales, organizations, and education are included with introductions to works in the fields of industrial design, furniture, textiles, fashion, packaging, and graphics. The red and white colors of the jacket are reminiscent of the Japanese flag. The photographs of representative works for each genre and historical period are exquisitely done and the texts succinct, well written, and edited with the history of the design movement in mind. It is an elegant book reflecting a high standard of both content as well as design and printing skill. The designer is Katsui Mitsuo, also known for his important work in design education.

### *Catalogue de l'exposition "Rétrospective Magritte"* (26th Kōdansha Book Design Prize)

Artist Renè Magritte (1898–1967) joined the surrealists during the international movement of the 1920s and went on to create artistic ideas and a mystical mood distinctively his own, establishing a unique place in twentieth-century art. One hundred and twenty-odd works were assembled for this large-scale retrospective exhibition. With the artist's alluringly fantastic paintings and detailed commentaries presented so that each turn of a page deepens the reader's understanding, the volume features many innovations in the art exhibition catalog genre. Designer Yahagi Kijūrō's creativity is at its best in this work.

Back-cover photographs by Sakurai Tadahisa



*Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950.*  
Kathryn B. Hiesinger and Felice Fisher.  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994. 300 × 310  
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87633-0928 (Museum). Language: English.  
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