

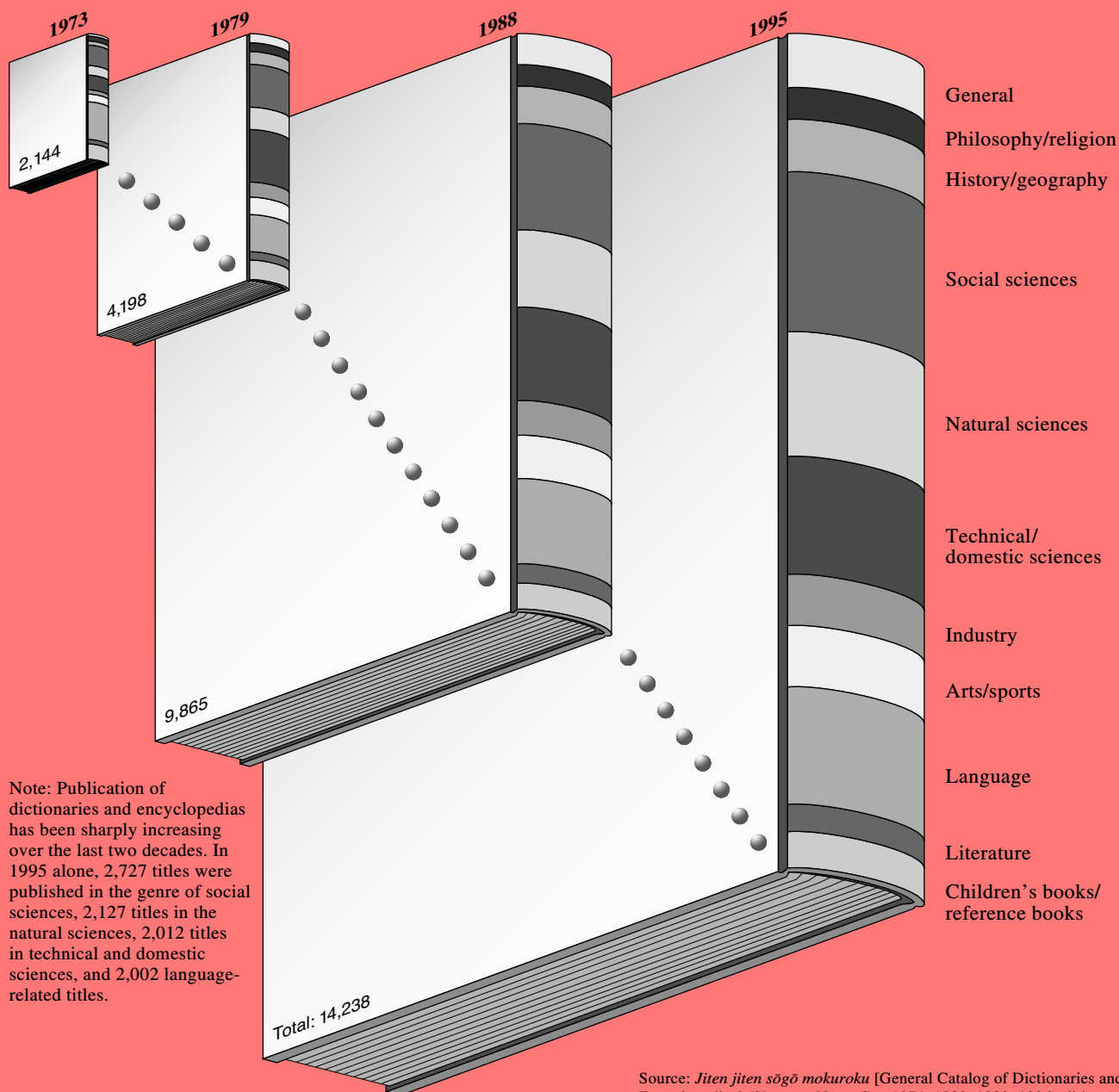
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Japanese Book News

NUMBER 23
FALL 1998

Chinese Characters and the Japanese Language 1
Japanese Theater in the 1990s
Japan-Turkey Exchange Through Books

Number of Dictionary/Encyclopedia Titles by Genre 1973-95



Source: *Jiten jiten sōgō mokuroku* [General Catalog of Dictionaries and Encyclopedias] (Shuppan News Co., 1974, 1980, 1989, 1996 editions)



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Shuppan News Co.

Editorial and Translation Services
Center for Intercultural Communication

Design

Michiyoshi Design Laboratory, Inc.

Printed in Japan
©The Japan Foundation 1998
ISSN 0918-9580

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From the Editor

What image do you have of the Japanese language? Many people think of Japanese as among the most difficult languages in the world to master. Takashima Toshio, a specialist in Chinese literature, believes that one reason for that reputation is because it adopted Chinese characters as the basis for its orthography more than 1,500 years ago. The usage of the characters and even their form have been transformed in Japan over the centuries since their initial borrowing, and the impact of this adopted orthography has been tremendous. In a series of three essays beginning in this issue, Takashima evaluates in easy-to-understand language the nature of that impact.

Our second essay, by drama critic Hasebe Hiroshi, deals with the contemporary theater scene in the 1990s. Theater in Japan has become an important stage for expression of the dilemmas faced by contemporary society.

Japanese Books Abroad features publishing of Japanese books in Turkey. A freelance journalist who travels frequently to Turkey, Nonaka Keiko shares her familiarity with the Turkish publishing scene and her personal experience from publishing a book of Japanese folk tales in Turkish.

For our second installment of "From the Publishing Scene," Koyama Tetsurō of Kyodo News writes on essayist Suga Atsuko, who died this year, and Kiyota Yoshiaki of Shuppan News Co. describes developments in dictionary and encyclopedia publishing.

In "In Their Own Words," Okuizumi Hikaru, whose works have recently drawn attention not only in Japanese but in other languages, writes of his strong conviction that encounter with and understanding of other cultures is the key to the future of humankind.

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Chinese Characters and the Japanese Language 1

Takashima Toshio

Japan did not have an orthography until more than 1,500 years ago, when Chinese characters were introduced sometime before the third century. Some people might conclude that Japan lacked an orthography until that time because its culture was backward, but it would be more correct to say that China's culture simply emerged much earlier, while that of Japan came later. The superiority or inferiority of cultures, as with people, has nothing to do with how early or late they were born. Japanese culture, as it happened, emerged long after Chinese culture had considerably advanced, so at the time the two came into contact, its language was not yet fully developed and it did not yet have a writing system of its own.

Japan, Korea, and China are often lumped together culturally because they all use Chinese ideographs (known in Japan as *kanji*) for their orthographies, and the assumption made that they belong to the Chinese linguistic family. In actuality, Japanese evolved from entirely different roots. Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages along with Tibetan, Thai, and Burmese. The origins from which Japanese evolved have not, in fact, been clearly established (some scholars assert that it is related to the Tamil language of southern India, but I do not believe this has been substantiated); there is no other related language anywhere on earth. Not only is Japanese of totally separate linguistic roots from Chinese; its grammar, syntax, and phonetics are completely different, as I shall show below.

Surely Japanese is indebted to Chinese, most might think, for having provided it with a writing system. By implication the adoption of kanji to write Japanese must have been fortunate. But this, too, is a misconception. Indeed, it was not so fortunate.

Why unfortunate? First, because the adoption of kanji effectively brought an end to the development of the indigenous language. Japanese at the time had developed to the point where it could express the specific and concrete (such as things one can see and hear), but there was little to express the abstract or conceptual. It could identify things individually but did not have terms to describe them generally or abstractly. In other words, the language was still in its infancy. If it had continued to grow naturally, no doubt the vocabulary of generalization and conceptualization would have evolved in due course. As it was, kanji were introduced (and it must be remembered that the orthography came from China, then a far more highly developed civilization than that of Japan), and Chinese words themselves were adopted. From that time, the indigenous language lost the capacity to coin new words and concepts truly its own.

The second reason that kanji are not such a boon to Japanese is that they were meant, obviously, for writing Chinese. The relationship between the Chinese language and its writing system is virtually ideal. Considering the nature of a vernacular and its orthography, Chinese is perhaps one of the most highly perfected, sophisticated lan-

guages in the entire world. That did not mean, however, that kanji were necessarily the ideal orthography for just any other language.

Suppose, for instance, that there was no orthography for writing down the English language, and that the only orthography that existed in the world was Chinese ideographs. English would have to be expressed using kanji. Just imagine how difficult that would be.

Yet that was exactly the situation that Japanese faced in antiquity. Chinese and Japanese were linguistically so completely different that the adoption of kanji caused great consternation and confusion. Indeed, those difficulties have continued over many centuries to this very day. But at the time, Japanese had no alternative but to adopt Chinese: it was the only orthography available to them. As far as they knew, this writing system was not just the writing system of China; it was the sole orthography in use by human civilization.

Linguistically Incongruous

Let us look briefly at Chinese characters and the Chinese language. As a general rule, all Chinese words are of one syllable: 日 (*ri*); 高 (*gao*); 捕 (*bu*). Like “sun,” “tall,” or “catch” in English, words of one syllable are the smallest units of pronunciation. Since the basic vocabulary of English consists predominantly of words of one syllable, this may be easy to understand. In Japanese, however, there are few one-syllable words, most being composed of two or more.

Chinese words are all basically words of one syllable and each of them is written with a separate character. In other words, each and every character possesses a specific sound and meaning. Individual kanji, then, are equivalent to individual English words such as “sun,” “tall,” and “catch.”

The number of ideographs normally used for writing in China is between 3,000 and 5,000. This roughly corresponds to the 3,000 to 5,000 words that make up the basic vocabulary of English. One could just as well call Chinese characters “Chinese words.”

So, while each Chinese character is a single syllable, in Japanese the ideographs were pronounced usually with two syllables. “Red,” in Chinese *chi*, is *seki* in Japanese. One reason for this was that Japanese do not pronounce consonants separately. This feature is very closely related to the problems of kanji usage in Japan.

Chinese is not an inflected language. Words are not inflected for different grammatical constructions as they are in English (go, went, gone; happy, happiness; have, has, had, etc.) The word *da* (big) is simply *da*, no matter whether it means “something big” or “bigness” or “become big.” Indeed, Japanese and English are similar in that they are both inflected languages (although the forms of inflection in Japanese are far more numerous than for English). Obviously, it was a very troublesome matter to

adapt an orthography intended for an uninflected language to the needs of an inflected one.

Inevitably, over the first several centuries after the introduction of kanji, Japanese made quite a few changes and adjustments in order to employ them to write their language, among which was the development of the phonetic syllabaries *katakana* and *hiragana*.

First, Japanese borrowed Chinese words verbatim and mixed them with their own vocabulary. They made some changes in the sounds of the characters in order to make them easier to pronounce. The changes may not have been intentional. Japanese probably tried to pronounce them as faithfully as possible to the original, but ended up pronouncing them Japanese-style.

The basic sounds that make up Chinese are quite complex, while those of Japanese are extremely simple. The Japanese tongue is accustomed to pronouncing only a limited number of sounds, and sounds that are different and distinguishable in Chinese become the same sound in Japanese. For example, words pronounced *yang*, *yong*, *you*, and *ye(p)* in Chinese all come out “yo” in Japanese. In Chinese each of these sounds is spoken in several distinct tones and corresponds to a number of different words. Since all these sounds ended up being reduced to “yo” in Japanese, inevitable adoption of kanji led to numerous homophones among words of totally unrelated meaning.

Chinese characters were also given Japanese readings. This means that many kanji have two readings, one based

on the Chinese pronunciation of the word (the *on* reading) and the other adopting the Japanese reading (*kun*). For “mountain” (*shan* in Chinese), for example, the *on* reading is *san* and the *kun* reading is *yama*. Of all the peoples surrounding China that borrowed its writing system, Japanese were the only ones to apply their own readings to kanji. Needless to say, these numerous innovations made the language extremely complex. For example, the Japanese word *noboru* is used to mean any of the various forms of “rise.” But Chinese is a highly developed language with different words for specific types of “rising,” discriminating for example, for “going up stairs,” for “smoke rising,” for “rising in an organization,” or for “prices rising.” And naturally the kanji are different for each usage. The discrimination could not have been maintained by simply reading all the different Chinese characters for “rising” as “noboru.”

Just the opposite phenomenon occurred as well: various Japanese words congregating around one kanji led to cases where one kanji might have ten or more readings. It was a situation that was inevitable, since Japanese and Chinese words by no means made a neat match.

And then, as mentioned before, Japanese created their own syllabaries (*kana*) by abbreviating kanji. Kanji all have a specific sound and a fixed meaning, but kana have only sound and do not carry specific meaning. They became sound symbols somewhat akin to an alphabet. The reason these symbols were developed was that writing Japanese using the Chinese ideographs alone had proved

Best-sellers in Literature, Jan.–June 1998

1. *Rūpu* [Loop], by Suzuki Kōji (Kadokawa Shoten, ¥1,600). A horror story centered around a father and son involved in development of an artificial form of life. This is the last of a trilogy, the other two being *Ringu* [Ring] and *Rasen* [Spiral], which have been made into movies. This series has sold a total of 4.8 million copies.
2. *Taiga no itteki* [Drop of Water in Mighty Stream], by Itsuki Hiroyuki (Gentōsha, ¥1,429). A confessional essay on humanity by the author, who believes that life is an endless cycle of suffering and despair. The sense of unease felt by many Japanese, who feel they no longer have something to guide them in life, is probably the factor behind the brisk sales of this book. The publisher has received many letters from readers saying the book gave them the courage to live. To be introduced in the New Titles section in the next issue of *Japanese Book News*.
3. *Otoko to iu mono* [The Male of the Species], by Watanabe Jun'ichi (Chūō Kōron Sha, ¥1,400). Candid essays, by the author of the best-seller *Shitsurakuen* [Lost Paradise], about men as “male animals,” in both physical and spiritual respects.
4. *Redi Jōkā* [Lady Joker], 2 vols., by Takamura Kaoru (Mainichi Shimbunsha, ¥1,700 each). A mystery based on the blackmailing of a large corporation that actually occurred causing public alarm throughout Japan. See *Japanese Book News*, No. 22, p. 19.
5. *Poppoya* [The Railway Worker], by Asada Jirō (Shūeisha, ¥1,500). A collection of eight short stories including the title story of a railway stationmaster who is posted on a soon-to-be deserted line in a remote part of Hokkaido, where he encounters the ghost of his daughter who died at an early age. Awarded the 117th Naoki Prize (see *Japanese Book News*, No. 19, p. 20).
6. *Hanemūn* [Honeymoon], by Yoshimoto Banana (Chūō Kōron Sha, ¥1,350). The first long novel in four years by the young, internationally known woman writer. Centers around Manaka and Hiroshi, who sign marriage papers at eighteen. After seeing a grandfather pass away and their pet dog die, they find themselves plunged in a loneliness they can only cure themselves.
7. *Hina no kioku* [Memory of the Countryside], by Uchida Yasuo (Yomiuri Shimbunsha, ¥1,500). The latest work in the Detective Asami Mitsuhiko series. Exercising his usual superb reasoning, Asami solves a dreadful serial murder case.
8. *Brain Valley*, 2 vols., by Sena Hideaki (Kadokawa Shoten, ¥1,400 each). The author is a biochemist and university teacher. Like his debut and best-selling work, *Parasaito ibu* [Parasite Eve], this second book is a horror story based on his knowledge of science. A wildly fantastic story unfolds, combining the latest scientific theories on the brain with supernatural phenomena such as UFOs and near-death experiences.
9. *Auto* [Out], by Kirino Natsuo (Kōdansha, ¥2,000). A long mystery depicting the mentality of a group of lonely “ordinary” housewives who happen to get deeply involved in a crime. The title “Out” suggests the sudden slip out away from the ordinary. See *Japanese Book News*, No. 21, p. 16.
10. *Tekii* [Malice], 2 vols., by Danielle Steel. Translation by Tenma Ryūkō. (Academy Shuppan, ¥1,000, ¥1,200). The latest work by Danielle Steel that led the way on the *New York Times* best-seller list. The translation has been a big hit in Japan. When a person, after enduring much suffering and despair, suddenly seizes good luck, a hellish trap lies in the shadow of the American dream.

(Based on book distributor Tōhan Corporation lists)

so awkward and inconvenient. One reason was the inflected nature of Japanese, as mentioned above: special symbols were needed to express the endings of inflected words. Two syllabary sets were created, *katakana* and *hiragana*, and used for different purposes.

The “ka” of *kana* suggests “not the real/genuine thing” or “provisional” and the “na” means “letter” or “character.” Kanji, by contrast, were known as “mana,” “ma” meaning “genuine.” In other words, *kana* were not considered characters specific to Japanese usage on a par with kanji, but temporary, lesser features subordinate to Chinese characters.

Kana were first made to represent only sounds, but in the course of time they came to indicate words as well. The same process occurred as did in the case of English.

Words like “night” and “knight” were undoubtedly pronounced exactly as they were spelled even though today the “gh” of “night” and the “k” of “knight” are not pronounced. If sound was consistent with characters, spelling would change along with pronunciation and you might think that both “night” and “knight” would become “nite.” But language has not developed that way. At present, both “night” and “knight” show not only sound, but represent the words. It is precisely this same process that occurred in the case of Japan’s *kana*. (*This article is based on an original essay by the author and abridged by the Japan Foundation with the author’s permission; Takashima Toshio is former professor of Chinese literature at Okayama University.*)

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Japanese Theater in the 1990s

Hasebe Hiroshi

The frenzy has passed. With the bursting of the bubble economy, Japan's reality has changed. The myth that flourished with economic growth that tomorrow promises a richer life than today's has crumbled, and people have begun to act according to a new discourse of self-reliance.

The change has been not only economic. The series of incidents and disasters including the Tokyo subway sarin gas attack and the Great Hanshin Earthquake ushered in a new age of anxiety in which words uttered on theater stages suddenly lost their efficacy. The small theaters, vanguards of the theater scene from the 1960s through the 1980s, have gradually slipped into the background. The challenge became discovery of what kind of theater would speak to audiences disturbed by a sense of deep-seated powerlessness and ennui. The following is a look at a number of leading dramatists of the 1990s who have attempted to meet that challenge.

Blue Skies and Desert

Boundless blue sky. Desert silently enfolding its human inhabitants. To bring back the feel of "realness" to the stage, some playwrights have turned for inspiration to the grandeur of nature. One such writer is Noda Hideki. After disbanding Yume no Yūminsha, a leading theatrical troupe of the 1980s, he went to study in Britain. Returning to Japan, he produced the play *Kiru* (a pun on the Japanese word *kiru*, meaning to wear or put on, and the English "kill"). The play anticipates the advent of a transnational world in which national borders are meaningless.

Born in the Land of Sheep, Temujin aspires to conquer the entire world, a dream he envisions achieving by making everyone wear clothing of his own design. In the process of carrying out his plan, he burns his sheep and crosses the Great Wall of China in order to marry Silk, from the Land of Silk. Not satisfied with acquiring only silk, however, he attacks his enemies in the west in pursuit of a new material, hemp.

The plot thus mirrors the history of Genghis Khan's invasion of China and subsequent conquest of western Asia. While transposing this idea to a fantasy world of fashion design, the play questions the meaning of the concept of state. The notions of statehood and inherent national culture, it suggests, are mere fancies engendered by the modern age. In the broader picture of human history, they are of little significance.

Instead, what dominates the play is the sky. The sky encapsulates not only the vast empire of Genghis Khan but all of Asia and the entire world. People are blessed by the sky the instant they are born, and the sky bids them farewell when they die. The sky was here long before humans made their appearance on earth. Moreover, the sky smiles on all people equally. Cannot people also treat each other as the sky does, with impartial beneficence? Human history has been a repeated cycle of discrimination of one group against another, despite our all being born into the

world equally naked and vulnerable. Beneath the surface of this play is an indictment of the brutality of history.

Another recent work in this vein is Miyazawa Akio's *Suna no kuni no tōi koe* [Distant Voices in the Land of Sand] (1994). This play depicts life at a guard post on the border between a city and a desert. No explanation is given of why the guards at the post have been stationed there. It is clear that the original need the guards were formed to fulfill no longer exists, and they simply while away the days aimlessly.

The guards begin to fall prey to a sense of spiritual emptiness. A meaningless empty space in a room becomes for them an unbearable burden. They strive to somehow fill the tedium of time as well. They seem to fear that, unless they fill in these emptinesses, the sand of the surrounding desert might seep into the emptiness of their souls.

The only hope of salvation from the spiritual hunger, from the unquenchable thirst engendered by the desert sand, appears in the form of mysterious voices. One of the guards begins to notice the voices coming from nowhere in particular. They may be only hallucinations, but in any case the guard, at the bidding of the voices, leaves the post and disappears into the desert.

A week later, the guard returns to the post, but he has no recollection of what happened in the intervening time. Moreover, as if the incident is of no consequence, the play continues with him simply slipping back into the uneventful routine of the post, without any kind of dramatic scene. After that, another guard disappears into the desert.

Precisely by leaving the disappearances unexplained, Miyazawa strikingly evokes the gravity of the situation. Through this device, he points to the emptiness within our own hearts. The hearing of voices may be regarded not as a medical disorder but rather as a privileged experience allowed only to those who dare to open their hearts and ears to hear the voices. The voices from the desert that never conform to social norms and institutions come to assume meaningfulness as real.

New Challenges on the Stage

Drama is the art of portraying humanity. Another trend of recent theater that has been well received is the return-to-the-basics theme, scrutinizing people's inner life in quest of "the real."

British director David Leveaux, who with producer Kadoi Hitoshi formed the Theatre Project Tokyo in 1993, carefully extracts from drama the elements of sexuality at the depths of the human heart. Sexuality in this sense refers not simply to physical sexuality but rather to economic, social, and political relations that have their source in physical sexuality. Each season, Leveaux stages two or three carefully selected works that depict female sexuality confronted by difficult circumstances in which the protagonists ultimately emerge defiant.

The first of these was Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, which was staged again in 1998 with a partly changed cast. The proprietor of a back-street haberdashery, Madame Raquin is by no measure affluent, but she is a proud woman of strict moral standards. She takes in Thérèse, who was orphaned as a child, and arranges for her to marry her son, Camille. Thérèse, however, is engaged in a secret affair with Camille's friend, Laurant.

In the play's first act, Laurant steals through a window into a room unoccupied by the Raquins. In the attic, he and Thérèse let loose their physical desire for each other like two caged beasts. Leveaux's production focuses on this explosion of repressed sexuality amid the "proper" norms of a bourgeois household.

Of all the issues we face, sexuality confronts us with the starkest, most unequivocal reality. Through various plays that take up this theme—including Henrik Ibsen's *Fruenfra Havet* [The Lady from the Sea] and *Hedda Gabler*, Sophocles's *Electra*, and Mishima Yukio's "Aoi no ue" (included in *The Modern Noh Plays*)—David Leveaux lays bare the apparently generous structures of control that hang over us like dark clouds, in this way probing the question of what it means to be alive.

While David Leveaux seeks the real in emotional intensity, Hirata Oriza attempts to reinstate the real through an unsparing protest against the conventions of the stage. In the plays he writes and produces for his troupe Seinendan, the actors never project their voices in the usual theatrical manner. Rather, a number of different groups appear on stage carrying on normal conversations simultaneously. Nor do the actors turn full-face toward the audience, but speak their lines instead toward the wings or even toward the back of the stage. The scripts, moreover, are little different from everyday conversation. There are no eloquent soliloquies or theatrical gesturing.

Notable among Hirata's works is *Tokyo nōto* [Tokyo Notes] (1992, 1998), winner of the Kishida

Drama Award. This play is set in the lobby of an art museum. One after another, small groups of visitors to the museum stop to sit on the lobby sofas and talk. One group comprises a woman, her lover, and a lawyer. The woman has unexpectedly inherited paintings which, for tax purposes, she is planning to donate to the museum. The three are joined by a member of the museum's curatorial staff who has come to attend to them. Another group is a large family which is about to dine in the museum's restaurant. The members of the family are concerned about their aging parents. Although each of the groups thus bears ample potential for human drama, nothing of particular importance takes place within the play itself.

What is intimidating about *Tokyo nōto*, however, is its setting. The year is 2004, and the outbreak of a large-scale war in Europe has triggered an evacuation of treasured art works to Japan for safekeeping. A war on the other side of the world thus casts its shadow into the lobby of an art museum in Japan.

Like *Barukan dōbutsuen* [Balkan Zoo] (1997), *Tokyo nōto* may be regarded as a refined portrait of the war consciousness of today's Japanese, who viewed conflicts such as the Gulf War and Bosnian War through the buffer of the mass media. No one could respond with anything like militant fervor. By this Hirata illustrates how the Japanese public have been conditioned to maintain their calm and composure.

It is safe to assume that, for as long as the genre itself survives, drama will always be acted out by real people on stage. Whatever the limitations of this format, that is precisely what makes the theater an ideal vehicle for exploring the nature of life. Japanese theater of the 1990s is like an ongoing study of the conditions for humanity's survival in the next century, and each performance is a kind of interim report on the progress of that inquiry. (*Hasebe Hiroshi is a drama critic.*)

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The Saison Foundation Sponsorship Program for Publication of a Series in the Japanese Social Science and Humanities in German Translation

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The Saison Foundation, a private foundation based in Tokyo, is launching a medium-term sponsorship program for the translation and publication of a series of Japanese works in the social sciences and humanities in German.

The foundation will provide partial financial support annually for a period of five years to a German publisher interested in establishing a series on modern and contemporary Japanese social science and humanities literature in German translation. The German publisher will be responsible for dealing with Japanese publishers and will have the authority to make decisions regarding the publication of the series, in which two books are expected to be published each year.

The Saison Foundation hopes to announce the launching of the series in 1999 and start actual publication in the year 2000.

For further information, contact: The Saison Foundation, 6-13, Kyobashi 1-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031
Tel: 81-3-3335-5566; Fax: 81-3-3535-5565.

Japan-Turkey Exchange Through Books

Nonaka Keiko

About ten years ago, when I lived in Turkey, there were only a very few books published that had anything to do with Japan. Since most of them were already translated works of contemporary literature like Kawabata Yasunari's *Yukiguni* [Snow Country], Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's *Rashōmon*, and Mishima Yukio's *Shiosai* [The Sound of Waves] and *Utage no ato* [After the Banquet], local literary critics generally concluded that the leading novelist of Japan must be the internationally known Mishima.

Over the years, however, I have observed that other writers, such as Abe Kōbō and Dazai Osamu, translations of whose works were brought in via Europe, have begun to attract attention, and that a broader appreciation of Japanese literature is beginning to grow. When Ōe Kenzaburō won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994, his *Kojinteki na taiken* [A Personal Matter] was translated into Turkish with amazing speed, and I remember my surprise at seeing how quickly it turned up on bookstore shelves; but that publication, like all the others, was made possible by retranslation from already available English or French translations from the original Japanese.

In 1992, a Turkish edition of Matsuo Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* [Narrow Road to the Deep North] came out, and although it created poetry of quite a different tone from the original and with a taste little like the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic of the Japanese, the harmony that was produced with the unique sounds of the Turkish language was quite beautiful. Somewhat later, at a bookstore owned by a friend in Ankara, I met the translator, Coşkun Yerli, who impressed me with his enthusiasm for writing haiku and his fascination with Japanese literature.

Beyond Retranslations

Books available in Turkey that introduce Japanese culture in general include a Turkish edition of Ruth Benedict's famous *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* and a work by Turkish scholar Bozkurt Güvenç on Japanese culture. There are also translations of Western-language analyses of Japan's amazing economic growth and related topics, no doubt reflecting interest among Turks in learning from the Japanese model. Recently, the number of young Japanese who have taken up residence in Istanbul has increased and there is even a mini-community newspaper entitled *Bir başka İstanbul* [The Other Face of Istanbul] published in Japanese.

I would also like to add here that Turkey is a cartoon mecca. Perhaps reflecting the complex make-up of their society and political scene, cartoons of a quite cynical flavor are an indispensable staple of magazine and newspaper publications. It is not at all surprising that the Yomiuri International Cartoon Prize has been awarded twice to Turkish cartoon artists, in 1982 and 1994, for they have an exquisite and unique tradition of black humor, an excellent sense for the absurd, and a wealth of anecdotes and puns.

The people of Turkey in general are very favorably disposed to Japan and express interest in learning more about it in many fields spanning culture, society, politics, and literature. Nevertheless, not much progress has been made in introducing Japanese publications there. Friends in the Turkish publishing industry say that the language barrier is very high when it comes to the possibility of translating not from a European language but directly from Japanese into Turkish.

Exchange between the two countries, nevertheless, is steadily increasing both on the national as well as local or private-sector levels. We can only hope that, once the number of people in Turkey interested in Japan and the number of Japanese with a special love of Turkey increase on both sides, there will be more people conversant with each other's language and the barriers will be surmounted. Books, after all, make excellent bridges for learning about each other.

Folktales' Universal Language

In 1994, I contributed one small book to that bridge in the form of a collection of Japanese folktales retold in Turkish entitled *Zipangu ışığı* [Lights of Zipangu]. The publication came just in time for the annual book fair held in Istanbul and I was even able to be there to sign copies of the book at the publisher's booth. The opportunity to do the book originally came while I was living in Germany, when the late Hüseyin Çölgeçen, owner of Orta Doğu, a Turkey-based publisher in Oberhausen, came to ask my help with the plan.

Orta Doğu puts out books serving the 2 million-some population of Turks in Germany, and it was Çölgeçen's idea to publish a collection of Japan's folktales in order to help the children of Turkish residents learn about the literatures of other countries. Çölgeçen readily granted my fervent wish that the book be published in the home country of Turkey as well, and eventually an arrangement was made for joint publication with Say Publishers of Istanbul.

Zipangu ışığı contains eighteen folktales including the typical classics, "Kaguyahime" [The Bamboo Princess], "Tsuru no ongaeshi" [The Crane's Reward], and "Urashima Tarō." Folktales are often said to contain elements common throughout the world and indeed, I was told by the publisher and many readers of many similar stories in Turkey's own folklore. Unfortunately, Hüseyin Çölgeçen passed away suddenly not long after the book was published, so every time I take this book in hand, I am always vividly reminded of the man who truly brought it into the world.

In bringing out the folktale anthology, I realized the special opportunity it offered to introduce Japan's traditional culture and customs, so I wanted to make it a book that would offer full visual as well as story-telling satisfaction. I therefore asked an old friend's husband, maker of original dolls Sugita Akitoshi, to do the cover and illustrations. It was a book made possible by the efforts of many people, and it is my sincere hope that it will be treasured by many children and contribute to establishing links of common memory between Japan and Turkey. (Nonaka Keiko is a journalist specializing in the study of contemporary Turkey.)

Suga Atsuko: Essayist between Cultures

Koyama Tetsurō

Among authors being read today in Japan is essayist Suga Atsuko, who passed away in March 1998 at the age of sixty-nine. Suga published five collections of essays during her lifetime—*Mirano kiri no fūkei* [The Mists of Milan], *Korushia shoten no nakamatachi* [The Corsia Bookstore Circle], *Venetsia no yado* [Lodgings in Venice], *Toriesute no saka michi* [The Hilly Roads of Trieste] and *Yurusunāru no kutsu* [Yourcenar's Shoes]—and two new volumes of her essays have been published posthumously. All of these publications are running to several printings as the Suga Atsuko boom quietly gains momentum.

A scholar of Italian literature, Suga translated several works by Italian authors (including Natalia Ginzburg, Antonio Tabucchi, and Italo Calvino) into Japanese. Plans have been finalized for the publication of her complete works from Kawade Shobō Shinsha which will include these translations along with her essays.

After graduating from university in the immediate postwar period, Suga went to study in France and later, at the age of twenty-eight, to Italy, where she married. Her Italian husband was co-proprietor of a publishing and bookselling company established by a left-wing Catholic group that had been part of the wartime resistance movement. Suga met many writers, editors and other members of the Italian publishing world, and began translating works of Japanese literature into Italian. These include an

anthology of Japanese modern and contemporary literature from Higuchi Ichiyō to Shōno Junzō, and works by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Kawabata Yasunari.

Tragedy struck in 1967, however, when Suga's husband died suddenly. He was forty-one years old, Suga thirty-eight. Four years later, Suga returned to Japan. She became active in volunteer work and taught Japanese and European literature at Sophia University until shortly before her death.

In the 1990s, at the age of sixty one, Suga Atsuko appeared in the literary limelight when she won both the Prize for Women Writers and the Kōdansha Prize for Essay Writing for *Mirano kiri no fūkei*, a book reminiscing on her thirteen years in Italy. She carefully retraces each cherished memory to graphically re-create the past in a lucid evocative style that was acclaimed by critics.

In her determination to set her own course in life without sacrificing herself as a woman and in her pursuit of self-fulfillment as a human being, Suga Atsuko was representative of Japanese women of the postwar era. In her essays one discerns her determination to live flexibly yet confidently amid the stresses of encounter between Japanese and Western cultures. Today, when a sense of directionlessness haunts Japanese society, readers can re-discover in Suga's writing the discipline as well as the beauty of individual integrity and self-reliance. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

Reference Works Keep Pace with the Times

Kiyota Yoshiaki

According to *Jiten jiten sōgō mokuroku 96* [General Catalog of Dictionaries and Encyclopedias] (Shuppan News Co., 1996), there are currently 14,686 dictionaries and encyclopedias (including handy reference books) in print in Japan—almost double the number in 1985 (8,000 titles). The flood of dictionaries and encyclopedias springs from a growing need for precise and revised definitions for words and concepts.

The reference book market has changed quite a bit since the introduction several years ago of electronic (CD-ROM disk) editions. CD-ROM editions of several leading dictionaries, including *Kōjien* (Iwanami Shoten), *Daijirin* (Sanseidō), and *Daijisen* (Shōgakukan), have been well received. Dozens of other dictionaries and encyclopedias have also been published in CD-ROM form, and their user-friendliness is spurring the expansion of the reference work market, expected to grow even more this coming autumn, with the release of several new encyclopedias.

A number of multi-volume reference books have attracted particular attention. One is *Shūeisha sekai bungaku daijiten* [Shūeisha's Dictionary of World Literature] which began publication in 1997. In the field of Japanese history, *Kokushi daijiten* [Dictionary of Japanese History] (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998) and *Nihonshi kōjien* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Japanese History] (Yamakawa Shuppan Sha, 1997) have been welcomed as comprehen-

sive resources. The latter two titles have been in the works for twenty years.

Kindai Nihon shakai undō shi jinbutsu jiten [Who's Who of Social Movements in Modern Japan] (Nichigai Associates, 1996) is a one-of-its-kind source certain to be useful in the social sciences. Kōdansha's *Jinbutsu 20 seiki* [A Who's Who of the Twentieth Century], scheduled to be published this autumn, offers a review of twentieth-century history through a selection of 2,000 internationally known figures with particularly dramatic careers, including 520 Japanese.

Also notable are *Minkan-gaku jiten* [Dictionary of Private-Sector Research] (Sanseidō, 1997), *Chihō-shi jiten* [Dictionary of Local History] (Kōbundō, 1997), and *Chihō shōshuppan jiten* [Dictionary of Small and Local Publishing] (Nichigai Associates, 1997).

Dictionaries and encyclopedias must still be distinctive and authoritative in order to be successful, and with the diversification of values in society today, their variety and specialization is steadily increasing. A number of the recently published dictionaries and encyclopedias make absorbing reading in themselves. The spread of CD-ROM and Internet use is sure to fuel demand for reference works that can be used in electronic and multimedia contexts. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director, Shuppan News Company.*)

New Titles

MEDIA

Shuppangaku josetsu [Introduction to Publishing Studies]. Minowa Shigeo. Nihon Editor School Shuppanbu, 1997. 216×151 mm. 232 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-88888-267-3.

This is a book that can totally change your perceptions of publishing. Originally written as a dissertation, it is technical in content, but written in plain language, making it possible for the layman to get quite a good idea of what publishing is like. Involved in the publishing of academic books at Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (which publishes English books as the University of Tokyo Press) for many years, author Minowa helped to make it one of the most respected publishers in the country. He is also known for promoting ties between university presses in Japan and overseas. He is currently professor at Kanagawa University.



Cover design: Michiyoshi Gow

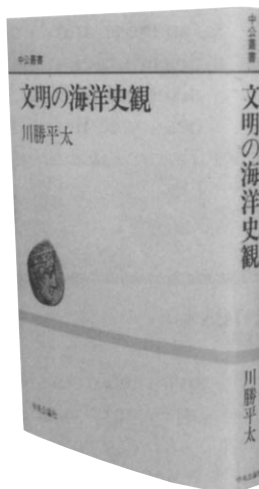
While the printing and publishing of books goes back very far in the history of humankind, it has never been studied as systematically as other media, such as newspaper publishing and broadcasting. From early on, Minowa has advocated the necessity to separate the profession from “various illusions” and make it an independent subject of research. The

present book discusses what conditions have to be met for the study of publishing to proceed and provides a blueprint for it to follow.

HISTORY

Bunmei no kaiyō shikan [A Maritime View of the History of Civilization]. Kawakatsu Heita. Chūō Kōron Sha, 1997. 191×131 mm. 292 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-12-002715-5.

Observation of economic currents in historical perspective helps provide insights into society different from those gained through studies from the viewpoints of political science or law. This is because economics is less subject to constraints imposed by the powers and authorities of each age.



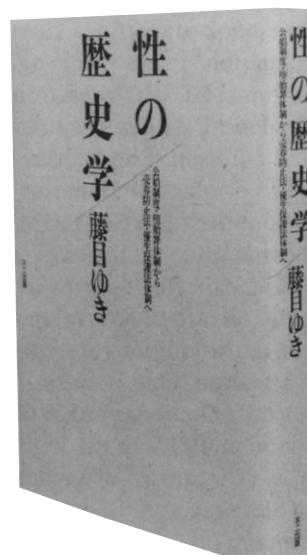
Author Kawakatsu points out that social history has been examined mainly from a point of view of the land, and suggests the potential for study from the viewpoint of the sea. By focusing on the seas as the arena of relations between the peoples or states in a region, we can place social history oriented to the state in relative perspective. “The modern age,” he says in his preface, “originated in the seas of Asia,” meaning that new civilizations came into being in Europe and Japan “as a response to the impact of maritime Asia.” He draws extensively on historical sources and scholarship from both East and West to substantiate this thesis.

For the author, the sea is a metaphor for the world that belongs to no one. Although the present book tends to

accord quite real substance to that world, it can be useful in considering a model for our future world.

Sei no rekishigaku [The Historical Study of Sex]. Fujime Yuki. Fuji Shuppan, 1998. 210×147 mm. 446 pp. ¥4,800. ISBN 4-938303-18-3. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan’s central government prohibited abortion in order to encourage the increase of the country’s population and strengthen its army. It also revised the old licensing of prostitution and established a stricter system for state supervision of prostitution. The system eventually weakened with the growth of capitalism, the women’s movement, and support for the birth-control movement. After World War II, the U.S. occupation authorities banned prostitution, and in 1956 the Japanese government enacted the Prostitution Prevention Law. Earlier, in 1948, government restrictions on abortion were virtually removed with the establishment of the Eugenic Protection Law.

This book, a voluminous scholarly study of prostitution and birth control by an up-and-coming historian (b. 1959), is based on her doctoral dissertation. The history of prostitution remained beyond the pale of academic research until quite recently. Based on the latest achievements and methodology of feminism overseas, author Fujime looks back on the history of premodern and modern Japanese state control over sex and reproduction, and reviews related social movements. To obtain an overall, well-integrated picture of the subject,



Cover design: Yamazaki Kazuo

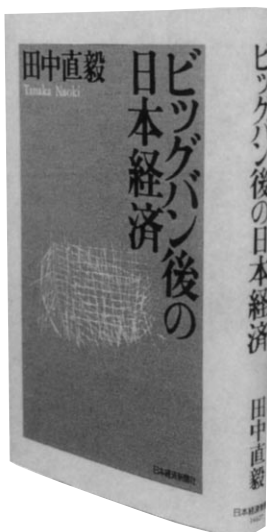
she adopts a three-way approach from the perspectives of “sex,” “class,” and “nation.” This book is a pioneering work for feminism in Japan that provides a rich trove of theoretical knowledge upon which women can further pursue the self-determination of their sex.

ECONOMICS

Bigguban go no Nihon keizai [The Japanese Economy after the Big Bang]. Tanaka Naoki. Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1998. 193 × 130 mm. 270 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-532-14627-5.

In this book, economic critic Tanaka (b. 1945), who specializes in modern economic methodology, analyzes the trends in the Japanese economy from the burst of the Bubble to the financial market deregulation “Big Bang,” elucidating their implications in plain language for a general readership.

The author believes that the drastic changes in the Japanese economy over the recent years, if read in historical perspective, can be seen as signs indicating an inevitable shift from a state-led, controlled economy to a private-sector-led free economy. Insight into this inevitability should be linked to the context of the lifestyle of the individuals who support the market, and the buying and selling of goods and services based on personal autonomy and self-responsibility will gradually become established practices within Japanese society.

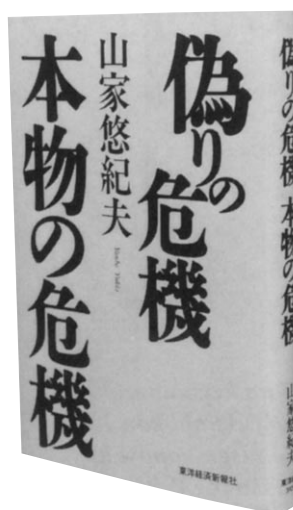


Cover design: Kawakami Shigeo

Itsuwari no kiki, honmono no kiki [False Crisis and Real Crisis]. Yanbe Yukio. Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1997. 194 × 134 mm. 280 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-492-39254-8.

This book, for a general readership by an economic critic and high-ranking executive of Dai-Ichi Kangyō Bank, one of Japan’s largest commercial banks, attempts to neutralize the arguments among economic observers that the Japanese economy is in crisis. According to author Yanbe, the economic crisis widely talked about today is of four types—“structural crisis,” “deindustrialization crisis,” “high-cost crisis,” and “fiscal crisis”—and all of them are specious.

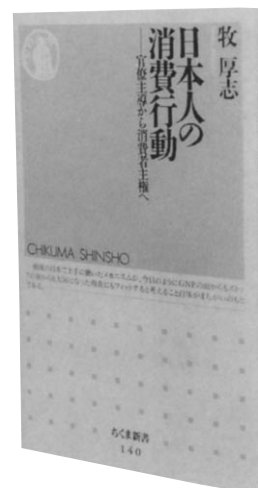
The wide currency of these crisis theories itself could bring about a real crisis in the Japanese economy, Yanbe warns, because their advocates only look at the economy from the viewpoint of the state or the corporation. He urges the restudy of the economy with focus on the role of local communities and regions, requirements of welfare, and considerations of leisure.



Cover design: Horibe Tetsurō

Nihonjin no shōhi kōdō [Japanese Consumer Behavior]. Maki Atsushi. Chikuma Shobō, 1998. 173 × 106 mm. 220 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-480-05740-4.

The Japanese economy has undergone dramatic changes since World War II, starting with postwar reconstruction, followed by rapid economic growth, the oil shocks, and the Bubble and its burst. Over these decades, households, corporations, and the government all converged in



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

their common pursuit of the goal of “raising the standard of living.” With the country now an economic superpower, the goals of these three sectors are now oriented toward three completely different vectors.

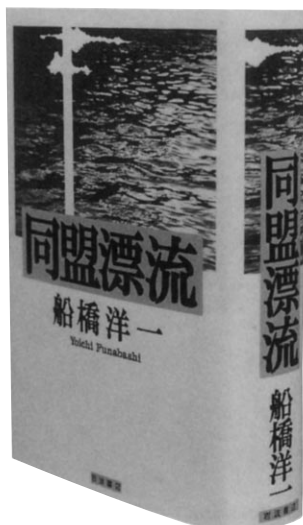
The economic scale of the metropolitan area centered around Tokyo is now even larger than that of Japan as a whole in the 1960s. The bureaucratized mechanisms of the economy have grown so large that they are suffering from institutional fatigue, with symptoms such as the closing of a major securities firm, bankruptcies of commercial banks, and financial scandals.

Author Maki, professor at Keiō University, shows the past, present, and future of consumer behavior in Japan based on detailed data and stresses the importance of individuals having an economic world view founded on efficient and fair-competition-based market principles. He also argues that, for the sake of the future of Japan, the prerogatives of the consumer must be established and he provides guidelines to that end.

POLITICS

Dōmei hyōryū [Drifting Alliances]. Funabashi Yōichi. Iwanami Shoten, 1997. 193 × 132 mm. 522 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-00-024105-2.

Now that the Cold War structure is gone, the Japan-U.S. security treaty, signed at the height of the Cold War, needs reconsidering in a completely different light. The present book is a report on Japan-U.S. relations in the



Cover design: Kurata Akinori

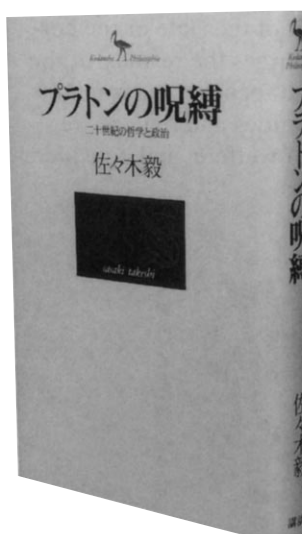
context of world history. The author was U.S. bureau chief for the *Asahi shimbun*, stationed in Washington 1993–97.

In the 1990s a host of knotty problems erupted that were difficult to deal with within the old framework of bilateral relations between Washington and Tokyo, including the rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl by three U.S. servicemen, the revelations of North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons program, and the resurfacing of tensions between China and Taiwan. The present book shows that those most aware of the complexity of the problems are probably leaders in the U.S. and Japanese governments. Throughout, the book is sympathetic to the hardships of government leaders, and this is not only a strong-point but also a weakpoint of Funabashi's report. He does not seem to believe it possible that an international order might emerge in which Japan would be on an equal footing with the United States or with other Asian countries.

***Puraton no jubaku: Nijusseiki no tetsugaku to seiji* [Plato's Spell: Twentieth-Century Philosophy and Politics]. Sasaki Takeshi. Kōdansha, 1998, 194 × 131 mm. 276 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-06-208938-6.**

"Plato's spell" refers to the pervasive influence the philosophy of the great Greek thinker still exercises over people of the twentieth century. Plato's thought, especially his discourse on the state, *Politeia*, was "politicized" at the beginning of this century as it was swept into the current of Realpolitik.

Observing the fragility of the Greek tradition of democracy, Plato considered it ideal for an outstanding person (philosopher king) to govern the state. This ideal was coopted as the philosophical basis for rightist totalitarianism (fascism) and leftist totalitarianism (communism) amid the political turbulence of the first half of the twentieth century. In the present book, University of Tokyo professor Sasaki traces how Platonism was supported in the first half of the century and how it was severely censured later on. He shows how the shift came about, analyzing arguments in favor of Platonism and how it has been reinterpreted in the latter half of the century with the ascendancy of democracy. He thus considers the entire twentieth century in terms of philosophy and politics.



Cover design: Kanie Seiji

***Shushō kantei no ketsudan: Naikaku kanbō fukuchōkan Ishihara Nobuo no nisen-roppyaku nichi* [Decisions in the Prime Minister's Office: Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo's 2,600 Days]. Mikuriya Takashi and Watanabe Akio. Chūō Kōron Sha, 1997. 197 × 134 mm. 266 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-12-002724-4.**

The post of Deputy Cabinet Secretary represents the pinnacle of Japan's bureaucracy. This top seat was occupied by Ishihara Nobuo for the unusually long term of seven years from 1987 to 1995. He served seven prime ministers during that period, and his assignment coincided with a series of events of enormous magnitude, including the death of Emperor Shōwa,

the burst of the Bubble economy, the split of the Liberal Democratic Party that led to the end of its four-decade grip on power, and the emergence of the coalition government by non-LDP parties. Then the LDP and its long-time rival party Socialist Party joined forces and took power. In addition, the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred not long before Ishihara's retirement.

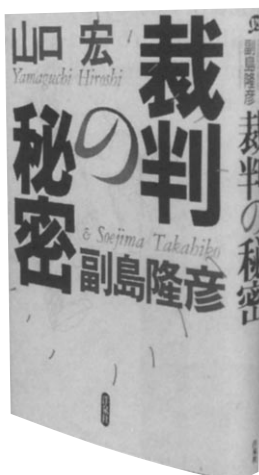
Throughout these turbulent years Ishihara remained at the helm of the bureaucracy at the request of one prime minister after another. The present book looks back over the seven years through interviews of the now-retired public servant by two political scientists, Mikuriya Takashi (professor of Tokyo Metropolitan University) and Watanabe Akio (professor of Aoyama Gakuin University). Ishihara gives a candid inside account of how Japanese politics works and how policies are implemented, as viewed from the position where politics and government administration meet. His accounts reveal previously unknown episodes about each cabinet, making the book all the more interesting. This volume offers a glimpse of the dynamics of and the behind-the-scenes workings of Japan's often murky political world, especially relationships between politicians and bureaucrats and the distance that ought to be maintained between them.



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Sha

Saiban no himitsu [Secrets of the Court]. Yamaguchi Hiroshi and Soejima Takahiko. Yōsensha, 1997. 194 × 133 mm. 268 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-89691-279-9.

In the United States, where the jury system is practiced, many excellent movies have been dealing with court trials. The courts make decisions relatively quickly in settling cases in the United States and Europe. In Japan there are few trial films because court decisions takes so much time that the stories rarely lend themselves to drama. Even in the case of a controversial incident, people usually have almost completely forgotten about it by the time the decision is made years later. Strong dissatisfaction and public criticism of this situation led to a revision in the Civil Procedure Code in 1996, paving the way for "intensive, speedy trials," starting in 1998.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

The present book, written by a practicing lawyer for a general readership, is a critical inside story about civil trials in divorce cases, inheritance disputes, medical care suits, suits against the government, and so forth, giving specific cases, to show why Japanese trials are so slow. The author proposes changes in the judicial system, such as simplification of routine business, strengthening of enforcement practices so as to ensure that court decisions are properly acted on, and disclosure of information kept by the authorities. The book provides a glimpse of the realities of Japanese trials and the judges who preside over them.

Jishin to shakai, jō: "Hanshin Daishinsai" ki [Earthquakes and Society, Part 1: The Great Hanshin Earthquake]. Sotooka Hidetoshi. Misuzu Shobō, 1997. 194 × 131 mm. 368 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-622-03662-2.

The Great Hanshin Earthquake, which struck the Kobe region in 1995, was significant not only as a major natural disaster but also as the catalyst of important social changes in Japan, regardless of whether or not they were directly a result of the quake. Specialists in various fields have commented on the pervasive impact of the quake on Japanese society.



In this book, journalist Sotooka (b. 1953) joins the debate by considering the historical and social conditions under which the disaster occurred. In his view, crucial aspects of Japan's social infrastructure, including its communications, medical, administrative, and disaster-prevention and management systems, were already deficient by the time the earthquake hit. He maintains that, given Japan's vulnerability to natural calamities, there was ample reason and opportunity for these shortcomings to be rectified before disaster struck. That they were not, he says, betrays the unconscious complacency of the Japanese government and people toward the powers of nature, and he explains how that complacency came about.

OL tachi no rejisutansu [The "OL Resistance"]. Ogasawara Yūko. Chūō Kōron Sha. 1998. 173 × 109 mm. 190 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-101401-4.

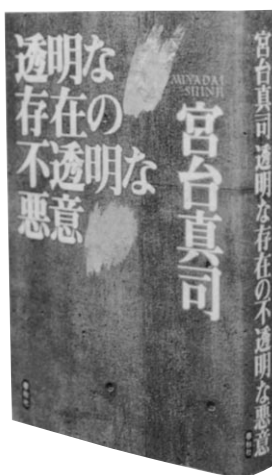
With enactment in 1986 of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law for Men and Women, new employees are categorized into one of two different employment tracks: the "integrated track" for candidates for promotion to managerial posts and the "general track" (clerical work) for those in supporting positions. While women in the former category are increasing in number, the present book focuses on women workers in the latter, who, called "OLs" (lit., office ladies), assume no managerial duties but perform routine jobs that require few special skills.

Under the prevailing system that does not accept men and women as capable of equal performance, the work OLs do wins them little credit career-wise and contributes not at all to their advancement as workers. Their defiance comes from the cool view that there is no point in working as hard as men since it is not rewarded or appreciated. Untrammelled by vested interests, they are free of worries. They circulate gossip about their boss and put off jobs they are asked to do by superiors they do not like. A smart (male) manager curries favor with these OLs, because if he is disliked by them and loses their cooperation, it can mean the delay of the work of his entire department and even cast doubt on his supervisory skills, endangering his chances of promotion. The author vividly describes this power game between OLs and male white-collar workers, while warning at the same time that such



tactics will only perpetuate the division of gender roles in the corporation.

Tōmei na sonzai no futōmei na akui [The Unscrutable Malice of an “Invisible Entity”]. Miyadai Shinji. Shunjūsha. 1997. 189×129 mm. 278 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-393-33175-3. In 1997, a fourteen-year-old boy killed an eleven-year-old boy, decapitated the corpse, and left the head at the gate of his own junior high school. The offender further shocked the public when he sent the media a statement taunting the police for the poor progress on their investigation into the crime and calling himself “an invisible entity.”



Cover design: Ashizawa Taii

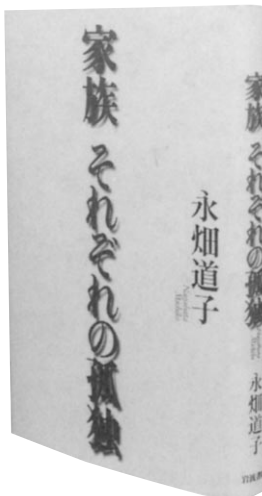
Sociologist Miyadai Shinji is known for his outspoken position on recent changes in the nature of child-related social problems, including the phenomenon of voluntary prostitution among high school girls (*enjo kōsai*). In this book, he performs an exhaustive analysis of the case of the Kobe murder and the response it aroused in society. In the background of the incident, he argues, are issues that run deep within Japanese society, namely, that with achievement of its postwar economic objectives, Japan is becoming a society devoid of a clear direction.

Despite the new reality of uncertainty, however, parents, schools, and society at large expect children to hold the same values that applied in previous decades. It is in the mismatch of those outmoded values with changing social realities, he says, that the essential nature of this shocking murder and other juvenile problems can be found. In developing these

views he takes an eclectic approach, including his dialogues with various other critics who have been active in the ongoing discussion on this issue.

EDUCATION/STUDY

Kazoku: Sorezore no kodoku [Family and the Isolated Individual]. Nagahata Michiko. Iwanami Shoten. 1998. 193×132 mm. 230 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-00-002823-5. When the perpetrator of a series of gruesome attacks in Kobe last year was revealed to be a fourteen-year-old boy, the Japanese public was incredulous. In the subsequent months, pocket-knife assaults and other heinous acts of juvenile delinquency made the news one after another.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

This book's epigraph poignantly encapsulates the author's heartfelt sense of crisis in the face of these events: “What,” it reads, “has planted evil in the hearts of children?” Children have always been believed to be pure and innocent. It makes no sense that they should commit violent crimes for no reason. In the author's view, the ultimate causes of these crimes must be looked for among adults—in the schools, in families, and in society itself. From that viewpoint, she argues for a return to open-minded education aimed at developing well-balanced human beings, and above all for a revival of family values that foster love and impart meaning to life.

The author grew up during the immediate postwar period. While

raising her own children, she has remained active as a nonfiction and women's history writer. In the present work, she draws on the full scope of her experience in a broad-ranging discourse on education, family, and life.

Saishū kōgi [Final Lectures]. Nishiwaki Junzaburō et al. Jitsugyō no Nihon Sha, 1997. 216×151 mm. 546 pp. ¥4,300. ISBN 4-408-10256-3. This is a collection of the final lectures in the careers of seventeen distinguished Japanese academics of the postwar era. It is a unique record of the thoughts of eminent scholars, who made important contributions in fields ranging from philosophy and literature to sociology, economics, and medicine. Each lecture is interwoven with a final reckoning of the speaker's career, thoughts on various aspects of the lives they experienced, and even a sense of the atmosphere in the lecture room where it was originally delivered. The volume also includes an introductory essay by writer Nakamura Shin'ichirō and a poem by poet Nishiwaki Junzaburō entitled “Last Lecture.”



Cover design: Shimokawa Masatoshi

Eleven of the seventeen scholars are deceased. The oldest lecture is that by Yanaihara Tadao (1893–1961), who, much later, served as president of the University of Tokyo. It is a bitter speech, delivered as he was forced to resign from the university in 1937 after being denounced by the military authorities for publishing an anti-war paper. From this to the most recent one, given by sociologist Katō Hidetoshi in 1990, all the lectures bear the mark of a special, once-in-a-lifetime moment, reflecting

the individual personality and academic outlook of each scholar while also poignantly conveying a sense of the rich rewards and satisfaction of a life of learning.

Published in a deluxe edition, this is a fitting choice for the commemorative publication marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of Jitsugyō no Nihon Sha.

CUSTOMS/FOLKLORE

***Shōwa daidokoro natsukashi zukan* [Nostalgia from the Kitchens of Shōwa]. Koizumi Kazuko.** Heibonsha, 1998. 217 × 165 mm. 118 pp. ¥1,524. ISBN 4-582-63334-X.

Of all the changes that have occurred in Japan in the last fifty years, perhaps the most radical is the transformation of the average Japanese kitchen. This book is a pictorial retrospective on the objects and implements that have been rapidly disappearing from Japanese kitchens. The author (b. 1933) is a doctor of engineering with a special interest in the history of Japanese domestic furniture and everyday implements.



Cover design: Yamaguchi Momoshi

The reshaping of the Japanese kitchen gained momentum soon after Japan's surrender in World War II, when demands grew louder for the modernization of kitchens. In many ways the typical Japanese kitchen until then symbolized the social position of Japanese women: generally located in a part of the house where the sun rarely shone, it was a dark, inconvenient, and often even unhy-

gienic place. The reform of the kitchen was a largely inevitable consequence of changing social values, but it was also spurred by the spread of handy household electric appliances. The result was the disappearance from Japanese homes of items which until the author's generation were a natural part of everyday life.

This book introduces those implements to today's readers through photographs and explanations of how they were used. Many of the items shown are quite beautiful in addition to being functional and efficient implements. While providing an often surprising insight into the lifestyle of former generations of Japanese, the book is also a poignant reminder of the urgent need to resolve today's problems of mass waste and throw-away goods.

SCIENCE

***Men'ekigaku kojīn jugyō* [Private Lessons in Immunology]. Tada Tomio and Minami Shimbō.** Shinchōsha. 1997. 192 × 133 mm. 166 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-10-416102-0.

This book is a collection of dialogues on the significance of immunology, a topic that enjoys considerable attention these days, between Tada Tomio (immunologist and former University of Tokyo professor, known for his creations of new noh plays) and Minami Shimbō (an illustrator/essayist whose works are sustained by his keen philosophical insights).



Cover design: Minami Shimbō

Immunology is the attempt to understand the unconscious activities of human beings, as well as interaction between humanity and other living beings through the medium of the physical senses. The struggle between the self and the other is common to all living things, and this is a perspective from which the history of human society can be restudied. Unlike the sciences of the age of philosophy that shed light upon human society of a hopeful kind, immunology rather turns attention to those darker sides of human society that are tinged with anxiety and fear.

In this book, Tada, a highly respected specialist of long research experience and solid knowledge of the overall trends of the field of immunology, answers questions in plain language raised by Minami, the intelligent layman reputed for frankly asking vital questions of those in specialized fields. The result is an intriguing synergism of two unique minds.

ARTS

***Kamon no hanashi: Uwa-eshi ga kataru monshō no bi* [Family Crests: An Artisan's View of the Art of Crest Design]. Awasaka Tsumao.** Shinchōsha, 1997. 191 × 130 mm. 316 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-10-600528-X.

It may be surprising for people in other countries to learn that Japanese families of all classes have traditionally had family crests. In the West, the family crest was a privilege of the aristocracy, and while the ideograph



Cover design: Shinchōsha

for crest is, like almost all kanji characters, of Chinese origin, it is said that crests were never used for personal or family identification in China itself.

This volume is an extensive handbook on the distinctively Japanese *mon*, or crests and emblems. The author is a third-generation *monshō uwae-shi* (crest artisan) and also enjoys a reputation as a novelist.

Japanese *mon* originated among the court nobles of the Heian period (794–1192), but during Edo times (1603–1868) their use spread from the aristocracy to the samurai class and even to the merchants and townspeople at the lower strata of society. All crests are designed basically within circles about two to four centimeters in diameter. Some three hundred motifs have been used in crest designs, of which there are believed to be around 20,000. The motifs include celestial and natural features as well as numerous plants and familiar objects of everyday use.

Readers can enjoy the visual treat of the book's many boldly and stylishly presented pictorial reproductions of crest designs, while also gaining a glimpse into traditional Japanese aesthetic sensibilities and the spirit of the Edo artisan.

Tennō to seppun: Amerika senryōka no Nihon eiga ken'etsu [The Emperor and Kissing: Censorship of Japanese Films under the U.S. Occupation]. Hirano Kyōko. Sōshisha, 1998. 194 × 134 mm. 412 pp. ¥2,900. ISBN 4-7942-0776-X.

Following the end of World War II in August 1945, Japan was occupied by

mainly U.S. forces for almost seven years. Based on thorough research in original historical sources kept in Japan and the United States and interviews with many individuals from both countries, this book examines the censorship of Japanese films by the occupation authorities.

Born in 1952, the author obtained a doctoral degree in cinema studies at New York University. Living in New York, she is now director of the films section of the Japan Society.

The title of this book represents two features of U.S. censorship during the occupation. How to portray the emperor was the most difficult issue the occupation authorities dealt with. "Kissing" symbolized democracy and a change of generations, which was promoted by encouraging "kissing," an act Japanese had considered something that should not be done in public, on the film screen. It was a policy that reflected the strong determination of the United States to change Japanese culture at its very foundations. With the intensification of the Cold War, however, the policy began to gradually change. The book demonstrates in successive works of Japanese cinema what the censorship was like and what effects it had on Japanese society and culture.

JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE

"Iro" to "ai" no hikaku bunkashi [A Comparative Cultural History of "Eroticism" and "Love"]. Saeki Junko. Iwanami Shoten, 1997. 193 × 133 mm. 396 pp. ¥4,000. ISBN 4-00-002781-6.

In this empirical study, the author, a scholar of comparative literature, examines how Japanese of the modernizing period received and understood the Christian view of humanity, basing her analysis primarily on the responses of Japanese writers from that era.

Before its introduction from the West, body-soul dualism of the kind central to Christianity had never appeared in the Japanese cultural tradition. The Japanese concept of love was also different: in both rural folk traditions and the manners of urban



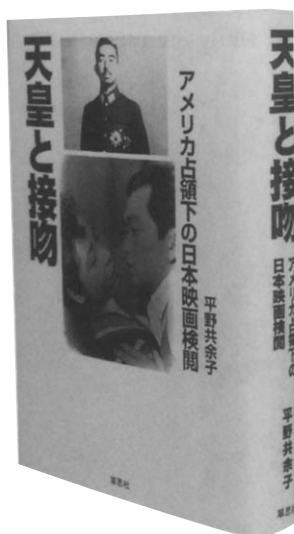
centers, ideas of love revolved around a broad-minded eroticism based on purely secular customs, and it was difficult for Japanese to understand the Christian idea of spiritual love. In the author's view, it was the literati of the early Meiji period (i.e., from 1868 to around 1890) who undertook the task of reconciling the very different but related notions of sensual and spiritual love, the works of writers such as Natsume Sōseki and Mori Ōgai being the classic cases in point.

This book prompts us to consider both the strengths and weaknesses of Japan's traditional culture which did not itself produce a concept of transcendent being.

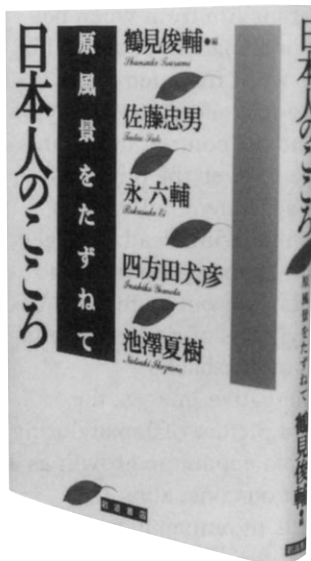
Nihonjin no kokoro—Genfūkei o tazunete [The Japanese Mind: A Look at Its Archetypes]. Tsurumi Shunsuke, ed. Iwanami Shoten, 1997. 193 × 133 mm. 280 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-00-001741-1.

This book is a collection of dialogues between leading Japanese philosopher and critic Tsurumi Shunsuke (b. 1923) and Satō Tadao (cinema), Ei Rokusuke (popular music), Yomota Inuhiko (manga), and Ikezawa Natsuki (fiction) on separate occasions over four years, 1994–97, in the attempt to capture what it is to be Japanese.

Discourses on Japan and its people by observers so far have tended to discuss and understand the Japanese mind as something fixed and specific, whereas in this book Tsurumi focuses on individual Japanese responses to various phenomena related to their country and countrymen and evokes an image that is wide in scope and broad in scale. Discussed here are the



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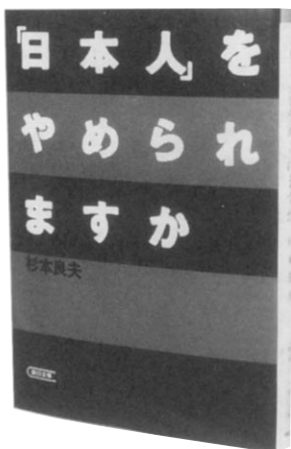


Cover design: Kurata Akinori

characteristics of Japanese films as compared with those of films produced in other parts of the world, the history of Japanese popular songs, the problems of contemporary manga as viewed in the context of today's European thought, and the sources of inspiration in fiction writing. Aiming to organize what is happening in contemporary Japan in broad and deep perspective, the book offers excellent insights for understanding its society and culture today.

“Nihonjin” o yameraremasuka [Could You Stop Being “Japanese”?]. Sugimoto Yoshio. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1996. 148 × 105 mm. 252 pp. ¥612. ISBN 4-02-261153-7. To whom do people refer when they talk about “the Japanese”? Though seemingly self-evident, on closer inquiry the answer to this question is far from obvious.

Born in 1939, Sugimoto Yoshio took leave from his job as a newspaper journalist in 1967 to study at



Cover design: Kusaka Mitsunori

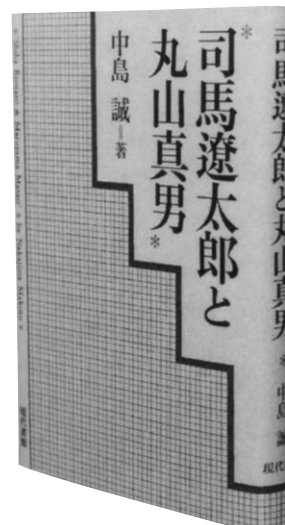
the University of Pittsburgh in the United States. He then moved to Australia, and is now a professor at Latrobe University in Melbourne.

Following his first experience studying abroad, Sugimoto was faced with the choice of either returning to Japan or renouncing his homeland and pursuing an academic career overseas. When it came to making the decision, he writes, he felt panicked for a number of different reasons. Probing the source of these fears, he arrived at the concept of *seki*, a term which can be applied to various forms of official membership, including such cases as family registry (*koseki*) and nationality (*kokuseki*). Through its family registry and residence registration systems, the Japanese government maintains a rigorous system of information about births, marriages and other personal facts of all residents. Sugimoto suspects it is these registry systems that embody the underlying consciousness by which Japanese nationality, Japanese citizenship, being “a Japanese,” Japanese ethnicity, and Japanese culture are so closely associated, and almost equated, with one another.

A specialist in the field of comparative sociology, the author provides a wealth of examples from the United States, Australia, and elsewhere to support his argument identifying the family registry system as the chief obstacle to Japan's internationalization. If Japanese people could shake free of the web of registrations that surrounds them, he suggests, they would be better able to envision a freer way of life.

Shiba Ryōtarō to Maruyama Masao [Shiba Ryōtarō and Maruyama Masao]. Nakajima Makoto. Gendai Shokan, 1998. 195 × 131 mm. 238 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-7684-6726-1. Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–1996) was a leading postwar writer of historical fiction, while Maruyama Masao (1914–1996) was a political scientist and thinker who exerted enormous influence upon intellectuals in the postwar period. Both devoted their careers to studying Japan's history, people, and state, and coincidentally passed away the same year.

Critic Nakajima points out that when both Shiba and Maruyama talk



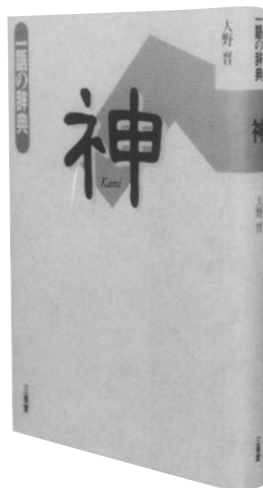
Cover design: Shiota Susumu

about the emergence of Japan's modern nation-state and subsequent decades, they are generous in their evaluation of the Meiji state, or the regime that controlled the country from around the end of the Edo period (1603–1867) through the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, but are bitterly critical of the state in the Taishō (1912–26) and Shōwa (1926–1989) eras. Today, at a time when the traditional polity is breaking down and the nature of the state is becoming harder and harder to define, the author tries to focus again on the history, nation, and state of Japan through the medium of these two great minds.

LANGUAGE

Ichigo no jiten: “Kamī” [Lexicon of One Word: Kami]. Ōno Susumu. Sanseidō, 1997. 188 × 132 mm. 142 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-385-42200-1. This volume is part of a series elucidating the meaning and application in Japan of various concepts introduced from other countries, a category of ideas that has played an enormous role in the history of the Japanese language. In this work, respected linguist Ōno takes up the concept of *kami*, or god.

In searching for the origin of the word *kami*, the author focuses on the existence of a similar word in the ancient Tamil language of southern India. Basing his thesis on the view that the Tamil and Japanese cultures



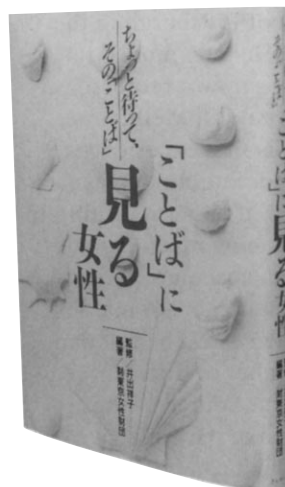
Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

developed similar manners and customs from a common ancient root, Ōno probes the possibility that the Japanese concept of *kami* has its source not in the Japanese archipelago but in a much broader geographical context. His hypothesis is thus grounded in an approach that threatens to undermine the established, nationalistic understanding of the origin and meaning of *kami*.

“Kotoba” ni miru josei: Chotto matte sono “kotoba” [The Image of Women in Words: Hey, Watch What You Say!]. Ide Sachiko and Tokyo Josei Zaidan, eds. Crayon House, 1998. 216 × 151 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,905. ISBN 4-906379-73-7.

Everyday Japanese communication is peppered with expressions that discriminate against women. People still remark that someone is “doing well for a woman” or “too argumentative for a woman,” and statistics show that more than half of Japanese married women refer to their husbands as *shujin*, a term carrying the connotation of “master.” In the world of government, the word until recently long used to refer to women was *fujin*, which originally meant wife. Today the preferred term is *josei*.

This book is written and edited by women united in the cause of reforming Japan’s male-dominated society by identifying and making an issue of every instance of prejudice and discrimination against women in the vocabulary, orthography, and between-the-lines context of Japanese communication. The contributors—writers, linguists, and specialists in the field of women’s studies—take up various topics on this theme, includ-



Cover design: Hayashi Yoshie

ing proverbs and idioms passed down through successive generations of Japanese society, images of women in popular songs, and expressions relating to women in dictionaries of the Japanese language. This concerted effort concretely identifies important features of contemporary Japanese society from the perspective of language.

FICTION

Akame Shijūyataki shinjū misui [Attempted Double Love Suicide at Akame Shijūyataki Falls]. Kurumatani Chōkitsu. Bungei Shunjū, 1998. 193 × 133 mm. 274 pp. ¥1,619. ISBN 4-16-317420-6.

Known as a short-story writer, with this work Kurumatani makes his debut in the long novel genre. The story is told as a memoir by the 45-year-old main character, recounting



Cover design: Sekiguchi Seiji

the period of his life from when he quit his job in his late twenties to his return to the work force ten years later. Feeling lost and at the mercy of forces beyond his control, he regards the existence of even the other residents of his apartment building as like that of “the living dead.” He gets involved with a young woman who appears at his door one night, and begins seeing visions of a sacred realm in the tattoo on her back.

Through negative images, the novel offers a picture of Japan during the era of rapid economic growth as a society intent on concealing the darker aspects of human nature.

Chi to hone [Blood and Bones]. Yan Sogiru. Gentōsha, 1998. 195 × 131 mm. 515 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-87728-210-6.

Written by an ethnic Korean residing in Japan, this long novel is the revised version of a story originally published in serialized form. Born in Osaka in 1936, Yan is also the author of *Takushi doraibā nisshi* [Diary of a Taxi Driver], *Takushi kyōsōkyoku* [Taxi Rhapsody], and *Yoru no kawa o watare* [Cross the River at Night], among other works.

The novel is a realistic account of the lives of people in an Osaka slum, many of whom are Koreans. The main character is a Japan-born Korean who feels profoundly out of place in Japanese society and oppressed by the adversity history has destined him to bear. Determined to accept his dual identity rather than be fully assimilated into Japanese society, he is constantly wracked by the contradictions of the world around him.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

It is a story that makes one think about the weight of family and country for the individual.

Nazo no haha [The Mysterious Mother]. Kuze Teruhiko. Asahi Shimbunsha. 1998. 216 × 152 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-02-257220-5.

This is the most recent novel by Kuze, a commercial television director and a writer known for his highly aesthetic style.

Set in Tokyo immediately after World War II, it is the story of a writer's relationship with one of his readers, a young girl. The character of the writer is modeled on novelist Dazai Osamu (1909–48), who lived the final decade of his life during and just after the war. Dazai was a lonely figure who wrote as a means to endure the pain of having made several unsuccessful suicide attempts. He was also a moralist who maintained a stony critical gaze on wartime Japan.

In some of his television dramas, the author has also drawn on the works of leading script writer Mukōda Kuniko, a writer who observed postwar Japan from an unconventional perspective and has a special interest in portraying people who have passed into oblivion under the shadow of Japan's modernization process. In the present novel, the author gives full expression to the descriptive talents he refined through his adaptations of other writers' works for television.

Depicting the early era of postwar society as a thematic treasure trove, this work seems to anticipate the imminent advent, after fifty years of "postwar-ness," of new images of the recent past.



Cover design: Nakajima Kaoru

Teki [Enemy]. Tsutsui Yasutaka. Shinchōsha, 1998. 197 × 136 mm. 314 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-10-600662-6.

In less than fifty years, Japanese life expectancy has leapt so sharply that now one out of every six or seven Japanese is aged sixty-five or older. At both the collective and the individual levels, this aging of Japanese society is causing grave concern.

Being old, or more precisely being old in the contemporary information society, is the theme of this novel. The author has produced numerous popular and controversial novels, spanning the spectrum of genres from science fiction to so-called serious literature, wielding in each one his uncommon talent for spinning original ideas and a captivating prose style.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

The story centers around Watanabe Gisuke, a seventy-five-year-old retired university professor who, being a widower who never had children, lives alone. The novel tells "the whole story" of Watanabe's life, everything from trivial everyday events to his sexual impulses, his reminiscences, and his dreams and hallucinations; and it even includes communications among strangers he reads, as a third party, via the Internet. All of this is seen from Watanabe's viewpoint, the viewpoint, that is, of an old man approaching the ultimate frontier of death, where reality and fantasy mingle. A humorous and snappily written treatment of a serious theme, this is one of the choicest fruits of the recent crop of Japanese literature.

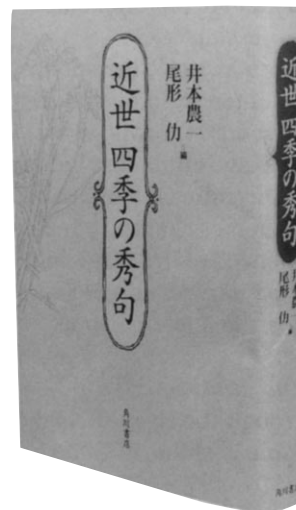
LITERATURE

Kinsei shiki no shūku [Superb Haiku of the Premodern Era]. Imoto Nōichi and Ogata Tsutomu, eds. Kadokawa Shoten, 1998. 188 × 128 mm. 342 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-04-884108-4.

The simplicity and manageability of the haiku's five-seven-five syllabic structure has enabled it to remain a widely popular poetic form even today. Particularly with the aging of Japanese society and the increased leisure time of people generally, in various manifestations haiku is enjoying quite a revival.

This book is a collection of haiku from the premodern period, when the haiku form was first developed. Seventy-five haiku scholars selected and provided critical commentaries on the verses, which are arranged according to the four seasons. The poems vividly reflect the lifestyle of an age before the influence of modern Western culture, giving contemporary readers a taste of the distinctive natural and social features of premodern Japan, as well as of the refined sensitivity to the immediate environment that developed under those conditions.

As the problem of how human beings should live at a time when protection of the global environment demands increasingly urgent attention, this book offers useful hints on the role haiku could play in meeting that challenge in the coming century.



Cover design: Kumagai Hiroto



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

***Kuishimbō no ryōriya desu* [Restaurant for Gastronomes]. Hashimoto Ken'ichi.** Shōbunsha. 1998. 192 × 132 mm. 190 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7949-6336-X.

Famous among foreign tourists as Japan's former capital, Kyoto also attracts many students and scholars from all over the world. Tucked away in the northeastern part of the city, behind the campus of Kyoto University, stands an eye-catching, stalwart wooden building, a Japanese-style restaurant widely reputed for its delicious seafood and as a rendezvous named Ryōzanpaku.

This book is a delightful collection of essays about food written by the Ryōzanpaku proprietor, a man of action who may go out fishing with fishermen or travel far in quest of the highest-quality ingredients. He even worked under a master sake brewer at one time. The essays reflect this unique vitality and depth of experience in his profession.

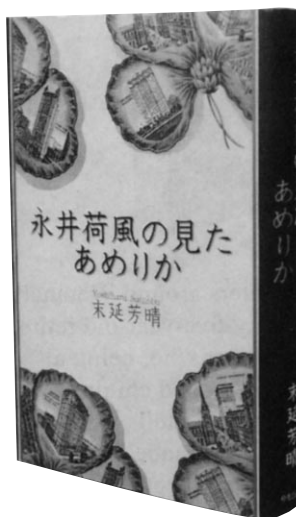
Born in Kyoto in 1948, the author relates various interesting episodes from his own youth as a college student in far-off Kagoshima that led to his entry into the culinary profession (chapter. 1). Another chapter, "Speaking of Ingredients," offers engaging insights into the intricacies and seasonal variety of Japanese cuisine.

***Nagai Kafū no mita Amerika* [America through the Eyes of Nagai Kafū]. Suenobu Yoshiharu.** Chūō Kōron Sha, 1997. 197 × 133 mm. 340 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-12-002738-4. Many of Japan's intellectuals and persons of culture display elements of fascist thinking, so in times of crisis they have tended to fall in with

the establishment, adapting to whatever trend currently grips the mainstream. There have been a few prominent figures among them, however, who have lived differently. This minority includes writer Nagai Kafū (1879–1959).

In reaction against his father, a scholar of Chinese literature, Nagai developed a passion for Western culture as a young man. The accounts he wrote in his youth of his travels in the United States and France testify to his frame of mind during that period of his life. Later, as Japanese society grew increasingly militaristic, Nagai gradually sought to formulate a personal and intellectual basis for resistance by harking back to the urban culture of premodern Japan, a shift of focus that had profound implications for him personally.

This book recreates Nagai's experience in the United States from a wealth of historical records and shows how the seeds of his subsequent change in thinking were already apparent at that time. A striking insight into the mind of a complex young man.

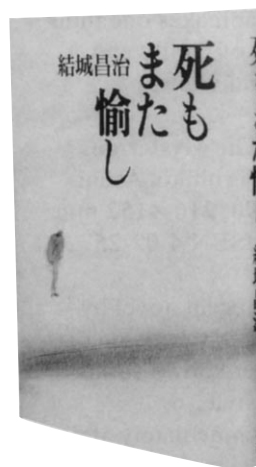


Cover design: Ōtani Yoshitomo

***Shi mo mata tanoshi* [Death Is Fun Too]. Yūki Shōji.** Kōdansha, 1998. 193 × 132 mm. 234 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-06-208985-8.

This is a book a mystery writer originally dictated in ten hours the year before his death in January 1996 at the age of sixty-eight.

In April 1945, while the country was still under the system mobilizing its civil society and economy for all-out war, author Yūki volunteered as a naval cadet at age eighteen, deter-



Cover design: Ōizumi Taku

mined to die for his country. He survived, however, because of Japan's surrender four months later. Later, while under medical treatment for tuberculosis, he met a well-known haiku poet and began writing haiku.

Looking back upon his life centered around haiku, other forms of poetry, and mysteries, he writes what he thinks about death in the present book. "There need be no particular meaning in death. To die is to return to nothingness or void (*mu*), so who can say it is good or bad?" he writes.

"We can't tell what the other world will be like until we die," he also says, "So, while alive, we should enjoy ourselves living. By leading the remaining short time of life happily, we will come to feel that death may be fun, too."

There is solace in these words, from a man for whom death was very close during the war and during his battle with tuberculosis, a disease considered fatal until a few decades ago, because they were expressed not long before he died. Two collections of his poems are also included in the book.

***Yukkuri to, tabi* [Traveling in Leisurely Style]. Takada Hiroshi.** Iwanami Shoten. 1998. 193 × 132 mm. 250 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-00-002346-2.

Many people complain that Japan today is too uniform, that every part of it looks the same, that it feels small, and so on. This author, however, says these are merely the laments of people who do not really travel in the true sense—those for whom traveling means simply taking high-speed conveyances to and from tourist spots or major cities.

Japanese literature itself could not have developed as it did without the crucial element of travel. From the ancient classic *Ise monogatari* [Tales of Ise] onward, Saigyō, Bashō and countless others have kept the notion of wayfaring at the very core of the literary tradition. While trying to imbue his own heart with the attitude and sentiments of those past masters, the present author journeys around Japan. Moving as slowly as circumstances permit, he allows himself to be drawn wherever the spirit of travel takes him. In this way, he discovers the tremendous diversity to be enjoyed.

Introducing local histories, folk traditions, climate and culture, and more, this book is a veritable guidebook to the true makeup of Japan. Born in 1932, the author is an essayist widely appreciated for his breadth of knowledge and thoughtfully introspective prose style.



BIOGRAPHY

***Tensai densetsu: Yokoyama Yasushi* [Legend of a Genius: Yokoyama Yasushi]. Kobayashi Nobuhiko.** Bungei Shunjū. 1998. 193 × 133 mm. 318 pp. ¥1,429. ISBN 4-16-353750-3.

Manzai is a form of comic dialogue usually performed by two fast-talking comedians, and the subject of this work, Yokoyama Yasushi, was one of the genre's most successful performers. Together with partner Nishikawa Kiyoshi, Yokoyama enjoyed great popularity during the



Cover design: Minegishi Tōru

1980s. A *manzai* boom had arisen early in the decade, but because it was largely the artificial creation of television broadcasters, it soon subsided. While many *manzai* artists subsequently drifted out of the spotlight, the Yokoyama and Nishikawa duo continued to enjoy success at the very forefront of their profession.

Later, however, Nishikawa ran for political office (the Diet) and was elected. This left Yokoyama without a partner, which in the art of *manzai* is the all-important factor. Known for his loose lifestyle in the best of times, and with no other means of making a living, Yokoyama's life quickly degenerated. After falling in with bad company, he was beaten up and suffered a cerebral contusion that deprived him of the ability to speak. Four years later, firmly in the grip of alcoholism, he died at fifty-one.

In this book, the author, a writer with a deep knowledge of the performing arts and especially comedy, retraces the short life of this uncomparable entertainer, focusing on his own relationship with Yokoyama. His account includes critical remarks about the fickleness of the television industry, which lauded Yokoyama as a "genius" only after his death, and about the effects television has had on the comic arts.

***Terurin jiden* [The Autobiography of Terurin]. Teruya Rinsuke. Kitanaka Masakazu, ed.** Misuzu Shobō. 1998. 194 × 131 mm. 438 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-622-04254-1.

"Terurin" is the nickname of the book's author, a comedian and singer from Okinawa. Okinawa is Japan's



Cover design: Tamura Yoshiya

southernmost prefecture, comprised of many small islands and a population of less than 1.3 million people. Though Terurin himself is not well known outside Okinawa, this autobiography has aroused interest throughout the country.

The book's success has something to do with the fact that Okinawa holds special significance for most Japanese. During World War II, the subtropical islands of Okinawa became the site of the only land battles of that war that were fought on Japanese soil, and the local residents thus suffered greatly. After the war, Okinawa was long occupied by the American armed forces, and even since its return to Japan, much of the island territory remains taken up with American military bases.

Until the beginning of the seventeenth century Okinawa was an independent kingdom. In 1611 it was placed under the overlordship of the feudal clan of the Satsuma domain (now in western Kagoshima Prefecture), and with the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the archipelago was made part of the nation of Japan.

Despite the varied trials of his homeland, Terurin himself remains unflinchingly optimistic. The approach to life reflected in this autobiography—an open, frank attitude and a flexibility with which to weather adversity with humor—may be considered one of the archetypal features of the Okinawan character. Underlying that cheerfulness is the confidence Okinawans have in their unique local culture as a cultural tradition distinct from that of mainland Japan.

Events and Trends

119th Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winners of Japan's prestigious Akutagawa and Naoki literary prizes were announced on July 16. The 119th Akutagawa prize was awarded to Hanamura Mangetsu for "Gerumaniumu no yoru" [Germanium Nights] (*Bungakukai*, June issue) and Fujisawa Shū for *Buenosairesu gozen reiji* [Twelve Midnight, Buenos Aires] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha), and the Naoki prize to Kurumatani Chōkitsu for *Akame Shijūyataki shinjū misui* [Double Love Suicide Attempt at Akame Shijūyataki Falls] (Bungei Shunjū).

The main character in Hanamura's "Gerumaniumu no yoru" is a young man who commits a murder and escapes to a monastery-cum-relief house he had once stayed at. There he encounters violence in a world isolated from the outside. The experience prompts the protagonist to think about the relationship between God and humanity. The author is also a recipient of the Shōsetsu Subaru New Talent prize and the Yoshikawa Eiji Literary Prize for New Talent.

Fujisawa's prize comes after having been earlier nominated three times. He is known for his portrayals of convulsive violence, but his prize-winning story is about the warm relationship that unfolds between a man who leaves Tokyo to go back to his birthplace in Niigata and an old woman with a slight case of senile dementia who comes to stay at the inn where he has begun to work. Fujisawa became a writer after working for the editorial department of the *Tosho shimbun* (a book review newspaper) and has an avid following among young people.

Kurumatani's *Akame Shijūyataki shinjū misui* is a story about a man who quits his job as a white-collar worker in Tokyo and moves to the Kansai area where he meets a woman and finds himself in a situation where he is forced to attempt double suicide with her. Kurumatani is a recipient of the Mishima Yukio prize for *Shio-*

tsubo no saji [Salt-Pot Spoon] (Shinchōsha). He won the Naoki prize against the competition of much-talked-about books such as Yan Sogiru's *Chi to hone* [Blood and Bones] (Gentōsha) and Nakanishi Rei's *Kyōdai* [Brothers] (Bungei Shunjū).

Many of the recent Akutagawa and Naoki prize-winning works sell very well, including Tsuji Hitonari's *Kai-kyō no hikari* [Lights on the Channel] (Shinchōsha) and Yū Miri's *Kazoku shinema* [Family Cinema] (Kōdansha), both winners of the 116th Akutagawa prize, and Asada Jirō's *Poppoya* [The Railway Worker] (Shūeisha) and Shinoda Setsuko's *Onna-tachi no jihādo* [Women's Jihad] (Shūeisha), winners of the 117th Naoki prize. No winners were selected for the previous 118th Naoki or Akutagawa prizes.

Fastest Million Seller

The book that became Japan's fastest million seller was shrouded in secrecy until the day before it appeared in bookstores on April 9. *Daddy* (Gentōsha), by popular singer Gō Hiromi, revealed that Gō and his wife Nitani Yurie were to be divorced. The story leading up to the surprise announcement made in the book were discussed in great detail on television talk shows and in the gossip columns of tabloids, weeklies, and the entertainment media for weeks thereafter. The book aroused such strong curiosity among readers that within two weeks, most of the 1 million copies of the first several printings had been sold. After that, however, sales have reportedly leveled off.

Gentōsha planned the book as a publishing coup from the beginning, providing its distributors no advance information of its author, title, or content whatsoever, and the unprecedented secrecy has drawn considerable attention as a new strategy in bookselling. Nitani Yurie is also the author of a million seller, *Ai sareru riyū* [Reasons for Being Loved] (Asahi Shimbunsha), published back in 1990.

DiCaprio Boom

Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio has been a high-ranking favorite

among female Japanese movie fans since he starred in the *Romeo and Juliet* two years ago, but from the time of his appearance in the international hit and 11-Academy-award-winning movie *Titanic*, his popularity has soared.

The publishing world has done its best to profit from the DiCaprio boom, and collections of photographs and various related titles have been coming out in a steady stream. Two leading titles that have been selling well are a special movie edition of *Titanic* by Shūeisha and *Leonardo DiCaprio*, published by Tokuma Shoten as a supplement to its bi-monthly movie magazine, *Flix*. Kindai Eigasha has put on sale a thick special edition on DiCaprio as volume 3 of its *Junior Screen* series and Shinkō Music offers *Leonardo DiCaprio Portraits*.

The major benefactors of the DiCaprio boom have been the movie magazines. *Screen*, *Road Show*, *Flix*, and others in the genre have been expanding their sales steadily since the end of the last year, further assisted by the popularity fanned by Brad Pitt in his performance in *Seven Years in Tibet*.

Japanese Edition of *Premier* Launched

In April, the Japanese edition of the leading world film magazine *Premier* was inaugurated. Published by Hachette Filipacchi Japan Co. Ltd. and marketed by Kadokawa Shoten, the magazine was formerly put out by Kadokawa but ceased publication in May 1995, so it actually represents a resumption of publication.

The magazine distinguished itself from its rivals, which center around color plates and interviews with movie stars, by emphasizing substantive, good-reading articles. Sixty to seventy percent of the Japanese edition will be original articles and the remainder translations from the U.S. and French editions. The price is lower than other movie magazines.

Books on Dangers of Hormone Disrupting Chemicals

On May 15, a full-page spread ad appeared in major national newspapers stating that "cup noodle containers do

not emit hormone-disrupting chemicals.” The ad was placed by the instant noodle industry. Their aim was to douse a controversy in the media over the possibility that endocrine-disrupting chemicals harmful to the human body might seep into instant noodle products when hot water is poured into their foam containers.

The industry was understandably alarmed. Japanese are extremely sensitive about the question of such hormone disrupters and the newspapers and television have given over considerable time and space to reporting on their dangers. Mass-circulation magazines sport sensational headlines weekly.

The controversy was ignited by the publication of two translated books. The first to sound alarm was *Our Stolen Future*, an international best-seller, by Theo Colburn et al., that deals with abnormalities found in

animals in different parts of the world and the effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Published by Shōeisha, the Japanese edition is still selling briskly a year since it came out. Selling equally well is the Japanese edition of *The Feminization of Nature* by Deborah Cadbury, put out by Shūeisha.

A number of original Japanese works on dioxin and hormone disrupters have recently been published. An unprecedented six titles on these topics were published in 1997 and in the first five months of 1998 alone, fourteen more have come out, a trend that suggests the Japanese sense of the crisis posed by these issues.

Flexible Resale Prices for Weekly

There has been on-going debate about the pros and cons of the resale price maintenance system for books

and magazines, in which publishers dictate retail prices. It has been agreed that the system will continue for the time being, but a new move has been attracting attention as a flexible application of the system. The Shōgakukan publishing house decided to let the resale price for its weekly magazine *Shūkan Post* be freely set by retailers for a limited period, starting with the May 22 issue. Each issue of this weekly is sold for 300 yen during the first week. After the next issue comes out, retailers may set their own prices for back numbers.

Retailers have shown not much interest, however. Partly because of limited space, most of large bookstores, kiosks, and convenience stores are reluctant to carry back numbers. It has yet to be known whether rival publishers will follow suit and how far such a new move can spread.

The Japan Foundation's Translation and Publication Assistance Program

We provide financial assistance to worthwhile projects for the translation of notable Japanese works into foreign languages in order to promote a deeper understanding of Japan and Japanese culture abroad. Application deadline for the fiscal year 1999–2000 is December 1, 1998. For further information about the application procedure, please contact the Japan Foundation Media Department (Tel: 81-3-5562-3532, Fax: 81-3-5562-3501). The following are the examples of publications completed under this program during fiscal year 1997.

Botchan [Botchan] (in Bengali), Natsume Sōseki. Dipak De, trans. Calcutta: Baulmon Prakashan.

Botchan [Botchan] (in Spanish), Natsume Sōseki. Fernando Rodriguez-Izquierdo, trans. Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu Publishers.

Furui Yoshikichi sakuhin shū [Ravine and Other Stories] (in English), Furui Yoshikichi. Meredith Anne McKinney, trans. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press.

Ginga tetsudō no yoru [Night of the Milky Way Railway] (in Latvian), Miyazawa Kenji. Brigita Krumina et al., trans. Riga: Publishing House “Spriditis” Ltd.

Hakai [The Broken Commandment (El Precepto Roto)] (in Spanish), Shimazaki Tōson. Montse Watkins, trans. Tokyo: Gendai Kikakushitsu Publishers.

Kantoku Ozu Yasujirō [Yasujiro Ozu] (in French), Hasumi Shigehiko. Rene De Ceccatty and Ryoji Nakamura, trans. Paris: Editions des Cahiers du Cinéma.

Kinkakuji [The Temple of the Golden Pavilion (Złota Pagoda)] (in Polish), Mishima Yukio. Anna Zielinska-Elliott, trans. Warsaw: Wilga Publishers Co., Ltd.

Kinu to meisatsu [Silk and Insight] (in English), Mishima Yukio. Satō Hiroaki, trans. Armonk, NY: M.E.Sharpe.

Koe [The Voice (La Voix)] (in French), Kawada Junzō. Silvie Jeanne, trans. Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

Michi ariki [The Way] (in Mongolian), Miura Ayako. Delgerekhsetseg Tsedev, trans. Ulan Bator: Nahya Co., Ltd. Publishing Department.

Momotarō no haha [Momotaro's Mother] (in Russian), Ishida Eiichirō. Alexander M. Kabanoff, trans. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Centre for Oriental Studies.

Nihon bungakushi josetsu [Introduction to the History of Japanese Literature (Istoria Literaturii Japoneze)] (in Rumanian), Katō Shūichi. Yamaguchi Kazuko, trans. Bucharest: The Nipponica Foundation.

Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays (in English), Karen Brazell, ed. Donald Keene et al., trans. New York: Columbia University Press.

Anthology of the Contemporary Japanese Short Stories [Antologija Suvremene Japanske Novele] (in Croatian), Tanaka Kazuo, ed. Mirna Potkovic-Endrighetti, trans. Rijeka: Adamic.

The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories (in English), Theodore Goossen, ed. J. Thomas Rimer et al., trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shōwashi I: 1926–45, II: 1945–89 [A History of Showa Japan, 1926–89] (in English), Nakamura Takafusa. Edwin Norman Whenmouth, trans. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.

Wakan rōei shū [Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing: The Wakan roei shu] (in English). J. Thomas Rimer & Jonathan Chaves, ed. & trans. New York: Columbia University Press.

Encounters with the Different

When I was in my late twenties, before I started writing fiction, I studied the Old Testament at graduate school. Biblical studies is a minor field of learning in Japan, and very few universities offer such courses. There were two main reasons why I, not even a Christian, was studying the Old Testament. One was that I had met a teacher whose work in the field I admired, and the other was my fascination with the Old Testament that depicted a world so different from Japanese culture.

I had decided I wanted to study something as different as possible from anything I already knew, and for someone accustomed to the norms of Japanese culture, the texts of the ancient Jews are filled with ideas and sensibilities so unfamiliar that it seemed the more I studied them the more difficult they became. I hoped, nonetheless, to gain new perspective on Japan by exposure to that radically different world.

Similarly, when I began writing fiction I did not want to simply follow the existing aesthetic sensibilities and forms cultivated in the Japanese literary tradition. I was certain that, in order to expand and enrich the expressive potential of the language—the basis of Japanese culture—it is necessary not merely to refine that tradition but rather to expose it to the impact of difference and diversity.

Such an impact was felt a century ago when Japan's modern literature was just beginning to emerge under the powerful influence of Western literature. A kind of collision occurred between the centuries-old Japanese literary tradition and the completely dissimilar literature of the West, and out of that came a blossoming of imagination and expression, exemplified by the work of writers such as Natsume Sōseki and Tsubouchi Shōyō. After that, however, the general trend of Japan's modern history has been toward the elimination of difference. Particularly since the end of World War II, a process of exclusion of the different has prevailed, unconsciously yet comprehensively, causing Japanese culture to wither even while its economy prospered.

In my own works, I seek to re-infuse the Japanese novel with the quality of difference. I believe that this is how the novel, a literary form that is hybrid to begin with, ought to be.

My novel *Ishi no raireki* has been translated into French, Dutch, and English. It is a fantasy comprised of three interwoven narratives—the experiences of a soldier fighting in the Philippines during World War II, the insidious violence that erupted in some elements of the student protest movement after its debacle in the early 1970s, and the present day. By juxtaposing these stories of the wartime and postwar periods, I attempted to show that there has been no real reckoning of the many issues exposed by that tragic war—acts of dehumanizing violence, irresponsible institutions, and the dark ideology of death, to name a few. Rather, these issues have remained with us throughout the postwar era, right up to the present day.

A kind of myth has held sway throughout the postwar era that Japan underwent a rebirth after August 15,

Okuizumi Hikaru

1945, beginning with its unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers. Most Japanese have been taken in by this myth, according to which the institutions and ideas of prewar and wartime Japan had to be totally rejected. Postwar Japanese society supposedly began to function according to completely different principles. It is true that after the war Japan adopted a new constitution, and the emperor was no longer to be considered divine. However, careful scrutiny of the numerous instances of violence and tragedy in Japan's postwar history reveals that the actual institutions and ways of thinking upon which Japanese society is based have changed hardly at all since before 1945.

The above is a highly simplified account of the central themes of my work. A novel, however, is not to read solely for its main or author-intended themes. A novel is constructed from numerous details, and as a text it must have the breadth to allow diverse readings. Each reader must be able to freely imagine his or her own version of the story's narrative world. My hope as an author is that my works will indeed be read in diverse ways. For this reason, I am gratified that, through the skills of two highly talented translators, my novel has reached people whose native language is not Japanese. I must confess, nonetheless, that it is a curious sensation to think of what I have written coming out in a whole different language.

On second thought, of course, it is no less curious that a writer like myself, living in the Far East at the end of the twentieth century, should have read and been deeply influenced by texts written in the Middle East more than two thousand years ago. Human history is full of such curiosities. I suspect it is in the miracle of such encounters, such collisions of disparate things from various places and ages, that we find hope.

Okuizumi Hikaru was born in Yamagata Prefecture in 1956. He graduated from International Christian University and began studying for a doctoral degree in cultural studies before turning to writing. He first drew the attention of critics when his short story "Chi no tori ten no gyogun" [Birds of Earth, Fish of Heaven], appeared in the literary magazine *Subaru*. He currently teaches part-time at Tama Art University. In 1993, he won the Noma Literary Newcomer's Award for his *Novārisu no in'yō* [Citations from Novalis] and in 1994 he was awarded the Akutagawa prize for *Ishi no raireki* (translated into French by Rose-Marie Makino-Fayolle as *Les pierres*; Actes Sud, 1996, into Dutch by Jacques Westerhoven as *De stenen getuigen*; Meulenhoff Amsterdam, 1998, and into English by James Westerhoven as *The Stones Cry Out*, Harcourt Brace, forthcoming). Among other works, known for their mystery-like turns of plot, are *Taki* (Shūeisha) [The Waterfall], *Ashi to yuri* (Shūeisha) [Reeds and Lilies], and "Wagahai wa neko de aru" *satsujin jiken* (Shinchōsha) [The "I Am a Cat" Murder Case].

