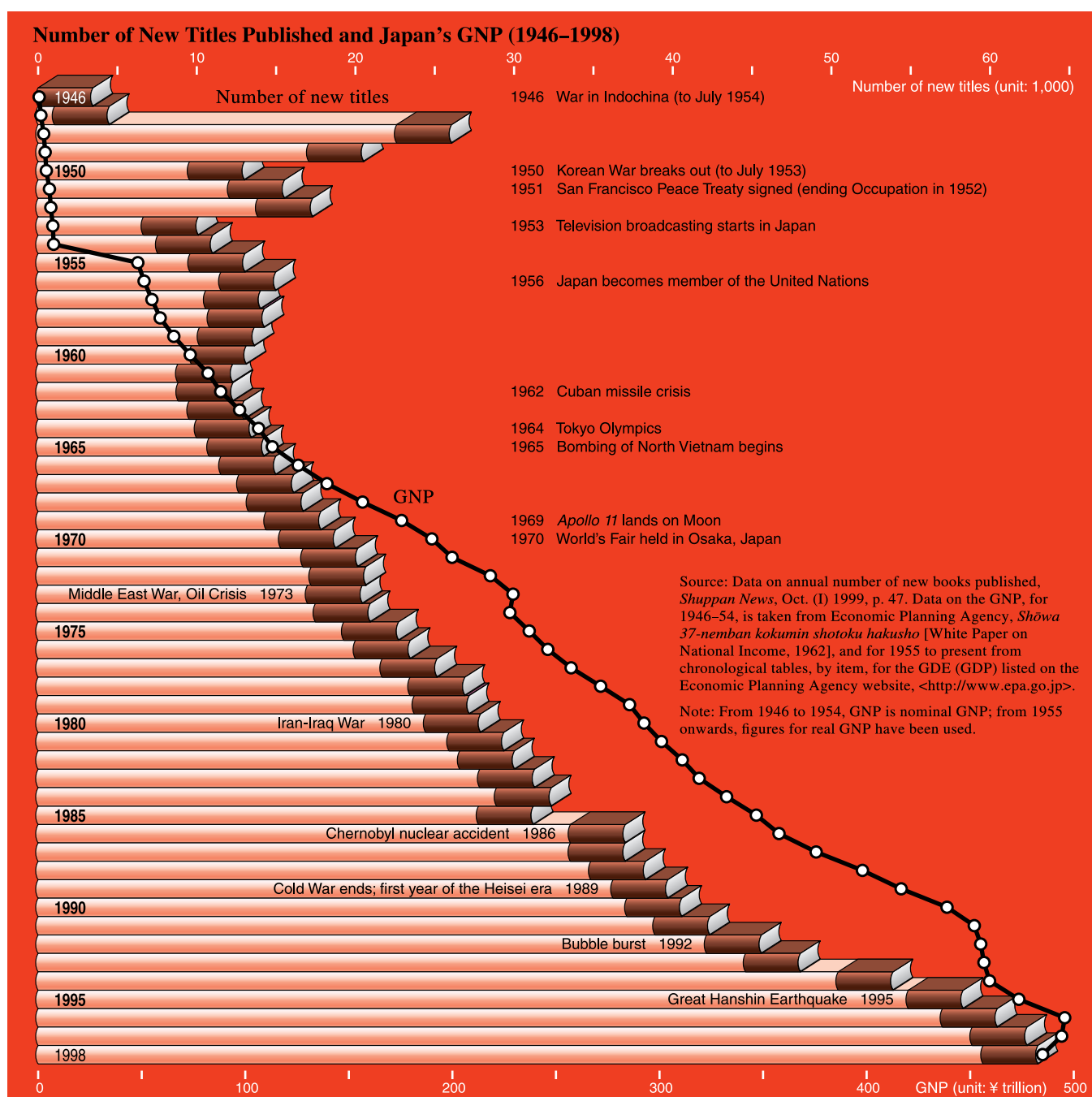


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NUMBER 28
WINTER 1999

Japanese Book News

Classroom Breakdown and Scholastic Decline
Zukan and the Evolution of a Genre
Japanese Comics in Indonesia



The Japan Foundation

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

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Bibliographic and Production Services
Shuppan News Co.

Editorial and Translation Services
Center for Intercultural Communication

Design

Michiyoshi Design Laboratory, Inc.

Printed in Japan

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ISSN 0918-9580

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From the Editor

Any discussion of Japanese school education today leads quickly to the topics of "classroom breakdown" and the reported decline in the scholastic performance of students. Tama University professor and specialist on educational issues Yamagishi Shunsuke examines these two issues of increasing concern not only to educators but the public at large. Although the high standard of elementary and secondary education achieved after World War II is believed to have contributed greatly to Japan's economic success, today educators are discovering signs of a general decline in the quality of student performance at both the school and university levels.

Japanese have a "passion for naming, classifying, and organizing things," says Ikeuchi Osamu, outlining the development of the *zukan* genre of illustrated encyclopedias and field guides. His article reveals that it was exemption of science from the use of state-approved school textbooks that allowed the *zukan* to flourish. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, educational policy encouraged the teaching of science by firsthand observation, and this approach to education elicited many fine handbooks, guides, and encyclopedias.

Japanese Books Abroad looks this time at how popular Japanese comics have become in Indonesia in the 1990s.

In From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō questions the general view of Etō Jun's suicide and contemplates the reasons the well-known literary critic did not wait to complete his life work on leading novelist Natsume Sōseki. In the second article, Ikari Haruo calls our attention to the titles of recently published books. The art of book titling seems to be taking a lesson from the merchandising wisdom of choosing brand names that tickle consumer buying impulses.

For In Their Own Words, internationally active poet and literary critic Ōoka Makoto writes about his experiences with translation and cross-cultural collaboration in writing *renshi*, or "linked verse."

We would like to thank Kiyota Yoshiaki of Shuppan News Co. and Miyajima Yoshinori of the Economic Planning Agency's Economic Research Institute for providing the data for the cover diagram of this issue.

Japanese Book News website:

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Classroom Breakdown and Scholastic Decline in Japan

Yamagishi Shunsuke

Education in any country has its bright sides and its dark. The bright side of Japanese education was once the excellence of its primary and secondary schools. A 1976 OECD report on Japan prepared by a team of examiners including former prime minister of France Edgar Faure and Britain's Ronald P. Dore, then professor at Sussex University, stated, "the Examiners' strong feeling has been that, compared to their own countries, Japanese achievements in these levels of education are very substantial." For nearly a quarter of a century thereafter, Japan's Ministry of Education, local boards of education, as well as elementary, junior high, and senior high schools hosted numerous inspection groups and study teams, not only from countries in the developing world but from the industrialized countries as well.

Ten years after the OECD report was published, Edwin O. Reischauer, then Harvard University professor and formerly U.S. ambassador to Japan, wrote in the introduction to Benjamin Duke's *The Japanese School: Lessons for Industrial America*, "In the past four decades, Japan has moved in U.S. minds from being an economic basket case to becoming an economic miracle." That impression of Japan continued to be current for a long time, until very recently. Reischauer observed the significant role the school education system had played in Japan's economic success, noting that "the quality and morale of persons becoming educators in Japan[,] . . . far more important than school facilities" and the "high regard the Japanese show their teachers and the respect for teaching as a high calling . . . [and the] strong supportive attitude for education on the part of Japanese families," were the crucial factors responsible for what Japanese education had achieved.

Thoroughly conversant with Japanese society and culture, Reischauer was well aware of the dark side of Japanese education. He did not overlook the notorious entrance-examination system that "rewards rote memory rather than reasoning," the "poor teaching and very little study" at the university level, and the English-language education practices that produce remarkably few fluent speakers and writers of English capable of taking an active role in international intellectual society. But he appeared to believe that the achievements were of such a scale that they could, in large part, compensate for such weaknesses.

Reischauer was not the only one to comment on the role of education in economic growth; many scholars of Japanese society from the United States and Europe have acclaimed it. While Japanese themselves were not particularly confident of their own educational system, they ultimately began to believe these high estimations voiced by outside observers.

The economic crisis that struck Japan in the 1990s, however, shook Japanese society, bringing profound changes to people's lifestyles and attitudes. These

changes are still going on, and education is very much part of it. People's confidence in the educational system that helped make Japan a world economic power and that sustained its growth has been seriously undermined. What has really caught them off guard, however, is the unexpected emergence of the problems of classroom breakdown and declining scholastic achievement, phenomena of the schools that seem all the more sinister because their causes are unknown.

The breakdown and collapse of classroom order (*gakkyū hōkai*), has been particularly startling. The teacher's attempts to call the class to order are to no avail: students continue to chatter and play among themselves, neither opening their textbooks nor taking out their notebooks. When chided or reprimanded, students talk back or speak insultingly to the teacher, sometimes even walking out of class. There have been cases when the entire class suddenly left the room.

Teaching, under such conditions, is obviously impossible. Similar situations occurred during a period about twenty years ago when violence and trouble in the schools became pronounced. Such cases, however, were generally confined to certain high schools and junior high schools where trouble-making students disrupted discipline and classroom order. This is the first time, moreover, that the specter of classroom breakdown has visited elementary schools, even first and other lower grades.

An NHK television program aired early in 1999 showed a lower-grade elementary school class in which some students, completely ignoring instructions, were wandering around the classroom at will. The veteran teacher in charge was completely at a loss to deal with the situation. The program helped to impress the general public with the seriousness of the classroom-breakdown phenomenon.

There were many until very recently who did not believe that such loss of classroom control was possible in Japanese schools; they included specialists in education and many dedicated teachers. One professor of the department of education of a national university at first wrote that he did not think the term classroom collapse was appropriate to the field of education, reminiscent as it is of "collapse of the bubble (*baburu hōkai*)," referring to the deep recession that set in when the overheated economy suddenly deflated. After he began visiting elementary schools to study the actual situation, however, he confessed that he ceased to have any reservations whatsoever about using the term.

There was no longer any doubt in his mind, the professor reported, of the severity and the reality of classroom breakdown, after watching one boy in music class suddenly stop playing his recorder. When asked to continue by teacher, he got up and ran out of the classroom, with most of the others in the class following along him. In another case, he observed a child of about ten, returning

to school after classes had ended to get something forgotten, turn on a veteran teacher with insults and shouts of hatred, throw chalk, and overturn a goldfish tank in rage.

In any era, at any time, are always a few children who cause trouble and pose special discipline problems. We need to know how widespread the classroom breakdown syndrome has become in Japan, but so far the problem has not been adequately measured. The Ministry of Education, citing the difficulty of conducting a nationwide survey, has so far done nothing. When specialists in education do studies on a limited scale, they invariably uncover cases such as those described above. Some believe that in the Tokyo Metropolitan area, one class out of every twelve is out of control, but that estimate is by no means certain.

One important source of information on this sinister problem that seems to be spreading through the schools like a plague is *Gakkyū hōkai* [Classroom Breakdown] (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999), a compilation of articles reporting on specific cases in the national daily *Asahi shimbun*. Through this book, one sees how the newspapers initially reported on the phenomenon.

The causes of classroom breakdown are not yet clearly identified, but a book entitled *Gakkō hōkai* [School Breakdown] by Kawakami Ryōichi (Sōshisha) (see this issue, p. 14) explains changes in the living environment that have contributed to the transformation in children, from the viewpoint of a junior high school teacher. With thirty-three years of teaching experience behind him, the author notes that more children in recent years find it difficult to sit properly in their chairs or stand at attention during school assemblies. Many are generally frail of build and seem unable to move their bodies easily and smoothly, and, while stubborn and self-centered, they tend to be afraid of others. They cannot easily put up with difficulty or pressure and their feelings are easily hurt, but they lack common consideration for others. Giving a number of examples, he shows the pronounced differences between today's junior high school students and those of twenty years ago.

Parents have changed a great deal as well. Kawakami points out that children betray little remorse even if caught shoplifting, and their parents are less likely to require children to show a sense of responsibility for their own actions. The eye of the community and adult society as a restraining factor on children's behavior, meanwhile, has noticeably weakened.

The issue of classroom breakdown is still at the stage when it is known mostly from often-sensationalized mass-media reporting. It has yet to be dealt with in systematic surveys or research, analyzing the conjunction of classroom phenomena with changes in juvenile behavior, examined against the backdrop of overall changes of society.

Classroom breakdown is a serious concern not just for educators but for the business leaders who exercise influence in Japanese society. It was reported that in seminars targeted at businesspeople ordinarily interested in little beyond matters of the economy, lectures on classroom collapse draw a noticeably larger crowd than usual. Their anxiety about what is happening to their young grandchildren, rather than their grown-up children, is notable.

Even more difficult for the general public to grasp than the phenomenon of classroom breakdown is that of the decline in scholastic achievement. Public concern about the trend appears to be limited, although those involved in education are seriously worried.

Following the defeat in World War II, the Japanese educational system underwent drastic reform. Not long after the curriculum was revised and teaching methods following American models were introduced to the schools, the decline in scholastic achievement became evident, stirring considerable controversy; the recent debate is apparently the first time since then that the issue has resurfaced.

It is understandable that educators, whose boast that their education system was among the most efficient and effective in the world is now being doused by charges of a "distressing decline in scholastic achievement," are feeling a bit shell-shocked. The cruel verdict has been passed down by university teachers. The jacket blurb for *Bunsū ga dekinai daigakusei* [University Students Can't Do Fractions] (Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1999) says: "You may find it difficult to believe, but two out of every ten university students cannot do primary school-level arithmetic."

These figures are the result of tests given by Nishimura Kazuo (one of the editors of the book and professor of the Institute of Economic Research, Kyoto University) and others to students in economics classes, featuring mainly arithmetic and mathematics problems at the elementary and junior-high school level—problems like $7/8 - 4/5 = ?$ and $2 \div 0.25 = ?$

The book says that more than 20 percent of the students in the faculty of economics of one of Japan's leading private universities could not do this kind of problem. Such students, it turns out, are not tested in mathematics in the highly competitive entrance examinations; since they have not seriously studied math for years, believes Nishimura, they simply forgot what they learned in primary school.

Most students in the national universities, for whom mathematics is a required subject for the entrance examinations, are strong in the subject. Judging from the test results for private university economics faculties in which basic mathematical ability is needed just to understand the lectures, private university students in general appear to be deplorably poor at math.

Pointing to the pronounced decline in the basic arithmetic and math skills of university students, especially those in the humanities at private universities, Nishimura calls for greater public attention to this trend, declaring that it stems directly from the decision by the humanities faculties of private universities to drop math and science-related subjects from their entrance examinations.

Nishimura blames the universities' way of administering entrance examinations for the problem, arguing that they deliberately invite students who cannot do math by allowing them to choose between math, geography, history, and social studies for their elective examination subject (English and Japanese only being required). In every other major country, math is a subject required for college entrance: the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the United States measures students' scholastic ability on

the basis of English and math skills; China, Korea, and all other leading countries of both East and West designate math as a required subject for university entrance examinations.

The problem with the scholastic achievement decline is not just a matter of being poor at math. Students in recent years do not ask questions and seem to have little appetite for learning; they will master the learning tasks they are assigned but show little interest in pursuing knowledge on their own. University faculty do not hide their indignation at the increasingly frequent number of students who enter engineering or science departments by choice, but have taken only one subject (either physics or chemistry) in high school and must receive remedial classes in high-school level subjects as soon as they get into university.

From April 2002, Japanese schools will go completely onto the five-day week and will put into effect a considerably revised set of Ministry of Education guidelines for the curriculum. Since the number of hours of classroom time will decrease, the content of the curriculum must be cut back. The ministry says its 30 percent trimming of

the curriculum has been done with meticulous care, but critics declare that such an educational policy will only accelerate the decline in scholastic achievement.

At a time when administrations in many nations of the West have made enhancement of the quality of primary and secondary education a priority task and are adopting educational reforms aimed at raising standards of scholastic achievement, critics charge that only Japan, ostensibly to ease the pressures of competitive education on children, is moving in the opposite direction with its cutbacks on curriculum that could aggravate the decline in scholastic standards.

The issue of declining scholastic achievement is difficult to verify scientifically or statistically, so it has been difficult to carry on a balanced discussion of the problems. The qualities that were once so highly praised and looked up to in Japan's primary and secondary education, are no longer even mentioned. One wonders whether the high estimation Japan's education system once enjoyed was nothing more than a fleeting dream. (*Yamagishi Shunsuke is professor at Tama University and a specialist on education.*)

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Zukan and the Evolution of a Genre

Ikeuchi Osamu

Japan has a reference genre called *zukan* (lit., “illustrated examples”), works that give information about a certain subject, such as birds or minerals, mainly using pictures and photographs. Libraries and bookstores generally set aside separate space for *zukan* of all kinds. *Zukan* for animals, annual events, architecture, celestial bodies, dinosaurs, edible wild plants, flowers, fish, garden plants, insects, minerals, mushrooms, natural history, plants, wild birds, and the like are a standard part of the typical household library.

Varying in size, from encyclopedic tomes to pocket-size handbooks, some depend mainly on photographs, others on illustrations, others on copper-plate reproductions or woodblock prints, and others on combinations of different art media. They may be in black-and-white or full color.

Zukan catalog the phenomena of the universe—from the stars in the skies to rocks and gems in the earth, from microorganisms invisible to the naked eye to flowers and grasses by the wayside, from the age of dinosaurs to modern, high-tech times—diagramming their form, identifying their names, and classifying them as necessary. They organize their subjects by type, map their distribution, and show their relationship to other phenomena. The immense diversity of *zukan* to be found reflect the Japanese passion for naming, classifying, and organizing things.

Usually the term *zukan* is attributed to plant taxonomist Makino Tomitarō (1862–1957). In 1947, Makino published his first book of plant taxonomy, entitled *Makino Nihon shokubutsu zukan* [Illustrated Flora of Japan]. Each page features illustrations of a botanical species and its names in Latin and Japanese, followed by explanatory comments. Revised and re-issued several times, the book is still read. A reprint copy of the book states: “. . . the original edition of *Makino Nihon shokubutsu zukan* marks the origin of the term *zukan* and the beginning of its use.”

Recent research has revealed, however, that Makino may not have been the first to use the term. An illustrated handbook on morning glories, *Asagao zukan*, was apparently published around 1800. The 1891 *Kōgei zukan* [Illustrated Book of Crafts] is a collection of craft motifs that displays almost all the characteristics of *zukan* we see today.

Nevertheless, the use of the word *zukan* was rather exceptional prior to the appearance of Makino’s book, with *zusesu* (“illustrated explanation”) and *zufu* (“illustrated records”), sometimes *taikan* (“general examples”) being the preferred terms. Throughout the pre-*zukan* Edo period (1603–1868), Japanese works of classification featured high-quality illustrations. Naturalists in the Western sense of the word, known as *hakubutsu gakusha* in Japan, studied animals and plants, and made drawings of them. Scholars who had artistic skill sketched or painted specimens themselves; if they were poor at sketching, they

hired professional artists. In this way, many finely illustrated books of natural science were created.

Illustrated reference books of this kind can be traced back to older guides to medicinal plants. Study of medicinal herbs and trees was an ancient science called *honzōgaku*, a type of pharmacognosy. Specialists in this field had to be familiar with plants and minerals. For them, it was important above all to be learned in the study of medicinal plants. As time passed, *honzōgaku* as a medical science developed into a new field, *hakubutsugaku*, or natural history. Driven by innate human curiosity, people’s lore of plants, animals, and minerals grew increasingly detailed and broad. Natural history is fascinating to specialists and laymen alike. The peace and economic growth that characterized the Edo period gave people the leeway to indulge in such studies, encouraging the publication of *zukan*-type books in various fields.

In 1695, a horticulturalist in the Somei district of the city of Edo (now Tokyo), published a six-volume illustrated text on gardening, entitled *Kadan chikin shō*. Around that time, illustrated books (*zufu*, *taikan*) were being published in great variety. Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune and the heads of major daimyo houses, such as the Matsudaira, Hosokawa, Satake, Mōri, and Maeda, had a personal interest in natural history and hired naturalists and painters to produce many fine illustrated books. Ueno Masuzō, author of *Nihon hakubutsugaku shi* [A History of Japanese Natural History] (Kōdansha, 1989) writes: “If an ‘Edo-period Illustrated Books of Natural History’ gallery were actually to be set up, the first works I would collect would be Iwasaki Kan’en’s ninety-six-volume *Honzō zufu*, published in 1828, and Musashi Sekiju’s fifteen-volume *Mokuhachifu*, published in 1844.” The former is said to have been an outstanding work filled with scientifically accurate as well as beautiful illustrations; the latter is a guide to seashells with exquisite color illustrations.

After the Meiji era (1868–1912) began, the Ministry of Education published a number of illustrated books as supplementary readers for the schools. Among them was *Shokugaku chūkai* [Botanical Notes], each page carrying illustrations, classification, and comment. The book contained numerous true-to-life illustrations, thereby contributing greatly to the dissemination of botanical knowledge. There was also another book entitled *Yūyō shokubutsu zufu* [Illustrated Records of Useful Plants] (1891).

Makino Tomitarō himself published his first illustrated work, *Nihon shokubutsushi zuhen* [Japanese Plants Illustrated] in 1888, long before his aforementioned *zukan*. Around the time his first work appeared, similar books had started to come out in large numbers on plants and trees, including Murakoshi Michio’s *Dai shokubutsu zukan* [Great Illustrated Collection of Plants] (1907), Saida Kōtarō and Satō Reisuke’s *Naigai jitsuyō*

shokubutsu zusesu [Illustrated Notes of Useful Plants in Japan and Overseas] (1907), Sakaniwa Seiichirō's *Shimpen shokubutsu zusesu* [New Illustrated Notes of Plants] (1908), and Ogasawara Toshitaka's *Jitsuyō shin'an futsū shokubutsu zukai* [Illustration of Useful Common Plants] (1914).

Their titles include *zukan*, *zusesu*, and *zukai*, but they were almost the same in layout and design. Most took the form of a dictionary, and each page illustrated one or two species and gave explanatory notes. It was around that time that the typical *zukan* genre became established. Japan at the time had just experienced two wars, the first with China (1894–95) and the second with Russia (1904–5), and it had emerged a modern state. Its capitalist economy was maturing, its military strength had increased, and its educational system had improved. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Education began to compile its own textbooks to strengthen state control over education and the schools. It produced textbooks on morals, Japanese history, geography, and Japanese language. Science, surprisingly, was excluded from the subjects it controlled. Science education attached more importance to learning from nature itself than from textbooks.

A 1907 teaching manual, *Saikin rika kyōjuhō* [New Methods of Teaching Science], recommended the motto "Reading the book of nature's language with your own eyes" and declared that this meant having children ob-

serve existence close at hand. Teachers took their students out of the classroom on field trips, rather than sticking closely to the content of the textbooks and expecting students simply to memorize the facts. Students were encouraged to observe nature, and *zukan* were invaluable tools relied on by teachers and students to confirm what they saw. Even today, the succinct and readily available information they provide to science education through first-hand observation of flowering plants and insects contributes greatly to their popularity.

Educational policies gradually changed, and science textbooks compiled by the state were eventually published, but schools have continued to rely on *zukan* for daily reference, thereby sustaining this publishing tradition.

One particularly outstanding *zukan* is that by painter Tsuji Makoto, originally a supplement attached to a Rotary Club yearbook. Now included as one of the volumes of collected paintings by Tsuji, the *zukan* contains bird and animal species that disappeared in the wake of Japan's rapid industrialization. Among them are the *Mishima ushi* (the Mishima ox; *Bos taurus*), *Iriomote yamaneko* (Iriomote wildcat; *Mayailurus iriomotensis*), and *Nihon kawauso* (Japanese otter; *Lutra lutra whiteleyi*). This is one of the most distinctive illustrated works in the world. From its pages, creatures wiped out by the advance of human civilization stare back at us in elegantly drawn reproach. (*Ikeuchi Osamu is a scholar of German literature.*)

Further information about the books in the New Titles section starting on page 8 may be obtained by contacting the following publishers.

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Japanese Comics in Indonesia

Retno Kristi

Appropriate recognition of comic books has taken a long time to emerge in Indonesia. Their general image is of cheap reading that may be detrimental to children and damaging to their development. While in Europe and Japan, comics are very popular and even considered an art form, in Indonesia, they have virtually no place at all in the realm of national culture.

The comic genre emerged in the 1950s, at first influenced by Chinese culture, and later incorporating the spirit of Indonesian folk tales and *wayang* puppet drama stories. The 1960s and 1980s were decades when comics for teenagers flourished and the historical-novel comic was born. The publishing industry went slack in the 1980s, with even the very popular Andersen comic gradually disappearing from bookstores.

The introduction of the Japanese comic *Candy Candy* (by Igarashi Yumiko and Mizuki Kyōko, originally published 1975; translated into Indonesian by Elex Media Komputindo-Gramedia Group) in the 1990s ushered in a new era in the genre. This nine-volume series was a human-interest story that appealed to a wide spectrum of Indonesian readers, especially children.

Other Japanese comics to follow included *What's Michael?* (Kobayashi Makoto), *Dragon Ball* (Toriyama Akira), and *Sailor Moon* (Takeuchi Naoko). Finally the comic came into its own in Indonesia, and the fact that they were translated from Japanese seemed to have something to do with their new-found acceptance. Children became serious consumers of books with the appearance of these comics and at their demand, Elex Media Komputindo began to publish more and to be on the constant lookout for leading works from the major Japanese publishers. Monthly Japanese comic periodicals began to come out in Indonesia and new comic book titles increased monthly as well. From 1990 until this writing, Elex Media Komputindo alone has published some 2,000 titles.

Part of the success of Japanese comics has been the skill of editors in choosing the titles to be translated. Not just any Japanese comic is acceptable, for Indonesian public opinion is sensitive regarding the issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and class—the so-called SARA issues—sex, and violence. It is desirable that publications be both morally uplifting and entertaining. It is important to support the government effort to institute quality education for young children. The editors who have made the comic genre flourish see comics as a kind of bridge between picture book reading activity and cognitive reading. Japanese comic books, in other words, can provide a way to help develop children's interest in reading. At school, for example, children are often bored by their textbooks. By putting the material into a comic format, they become quite happy to learn, and will master even difficult subjects through them. The *Doraemon no omoshiro kōryaku shirizu* [Doraemon's Fun Strategies

Series] (Fujiko F. Fujio) for learning arithmetic is one example.

Comics are also a good media for teaching children about good and bad and for dramatizing issues in the social environments of home and school, such as what to do about friends who are mean or cause trouble. *Serial Cantik* (the “beauties” series), for example, has stories of teenage girls at school, competing with their classmates in schoolwork and for boyfriends. When children begin to forge very close friendships they often face dilemmas that they cannot share with their parents or peers. Parents may fail to exercise the proper tact in dealing with children of this age. The series vividly deals with these experiences. Authors of girls' comics (*shōjo manga*), such as Kawachi Yukari, Orihara Mito, Hikawa Kyōko, and Mashiba Hiromi, have a sensitive understanding of how children feel and what they need. The comics help children identify their problems and search for a way out. Some Indonesian parents find it easier to send their children messages through these comics; in reading them, children do not feel that they are being taught but learn to think about things through the story.

Finding comics with appropriate content is not the only hurdle Indonesian editors face. The catalogs of Japanese publishers often give such brief summaries that the story and content cannot be judged without actually purchasing the book. To protect the reading environment for children, special care must be taken to avoid works that deal with sex, show violence, or display prejudice. Sometimes, although the story is considered to have appeal, the illustrations may present problems for an Indonesian readership. The publisher can sometimes work with the Japanese publisher to overcome such problems. If the illustrations are good but the language is considered off-color for the Indonesian milieu, adjustments may be made in the translation, although this has not been done at Elex Media so far because of the care with which works are chosen.

Publishing Japanese comics in Indonesian requires translators who have a good knowledge of Japanese culture. Unfamiliar situations such as at the public bath, where people share a large tub, and cultural traditions, such as the tea ceremony, need to be handled so that children will be able to grasp what is going on. Since comics rarely include formal Japanese, but rely on colloquial and vernacular speech, translators need to have had actual experience living in Japan. In order to make the story meaningful to Indonesian readers, they have to know as much as possible about the lifestyles and attitudes of contemporary Japanese.

Japanese comics have strong appeal to Indonesian readers. The themes of human relations, growing up, friendship, the environment, and other topics are ones that speak to their concerns as well. Although editorial selection is bound to be quite strict, the number of titles in translation is sure to grow in the years ahead. (*Retno Kristi is an editor of children's books at Elex Media Komputindo, Jakarta.*)

The Suicide of Etō Jun

Koyama Tetsurō

On July 21, 1999, well-known literary critic Etō Jun committed suicide. Modern Japan has a history of suicides by distinguished literary figures—Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Dazai Osamu, Mishima Yukio, Kawabata Yasunari—and the front-page reports of the death of leading postwar literary critic Etō clearly presented him as following in their footsteps. The *Bungei Shunju* edition of Etō's *Tsuma to watashi* [My Wife and I], an account of his care of his wife, who died of cancer in November 1998, had just been published, leading the reports to portray his suicide as “following” his wife in death. It is my belief, however, that we should not just accept a person's suicide, which invariably leaves behind many puzzling questions, in such laudable terms alone.

Etō married Miura Keiko while they were still both students; they never had children and were an inseparable pair. It is without a doubt that Keiko's death came as a tremendous blow to Etō. Nevertheless, even after her passing, he continued in his post as chair of the Japan Writers' Association until he suffered a slight stroke in June 1999. The association of about 2,350 novelists, literary critics, modern poets, *tanka* and *haiku* poets, and others is devoted to protection of authors' rights. Its chair, along with that of the Japan P.E.N. Club, represents the most honored of positions in organizations for writers in Japan. If he had not suffered a stroke, he would probably have continued in that post. Judging from the phrase in his suicide note, “Etō Jun was a wreck,” we may surmise that the direct reason for his death was his illness.

The greatest riddle of Etō's suicide is that he ended his life without completing *Sōseki to sono jidai* [Natsume Sōseki and His Times], the major work he had been writing in serialized form for many years that was quite

close to coming to an end. It would have been complete after only a few more installments. For Etō, who had made his debut in the field of literary criticism with a book he wrote as a student, *Sōseki to sono jidai* was his life work.

Originally to be complete in four parts, this study was extended to five, and though he could very well have simply concentrated on completing it, he was also involved in a number of other writing projects. Just before his death he had started a new series entitled “Yōnen jidai” [Childhood] (*Bungakukai*, August issue, published by Bungei Shunjū). To bring *Sōseki to sono jidai* to an end, Etō would have had to discuss Sōseki's final and uncompleted work *Meian* [Light and Darkness], and Etō's thesis is that *Meian* was a failed work. I remember him telling me that some time before his death. No doubt the thought of having to end on such a negative note was distasteful to him.

Another factor that may have discouraged Etō from completing his life work was that his political stance differed from Sōseki's. The two great names of modern Japanese literature, Sōseki and Mori Ōgai, represented a sharp contrast on issues of life and literature in general. Sōseki tended to distance himself from such topics as the emperor system and politics, while Ōgai did express interest. Etō was a conservative who often expressed his opinions on the emperor system and politics. As he advanced in age, he increasingly diverged in views from the thought of Sōseki, the writer to whom his career was so deeply indebted.

It is worth noting that the prominent figures of literary circles who have died by suicide in the past thirty years, Mishima, Kawabata, and Etō, were all men who held to distinctively Japanese values. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

Titles That Sell Books

Ikari Haruo

A book entitled *Katte wa ikenai* [What Not To Buy] has become a million seller in Japan. A compendium of widely distributed, top-selling products, giving reasons why not to buy them, the book has become so popular that the manufacturers of the products it warns against have lashed back, declaring that its claims should not be taken at face value. The counterattack has even led to the publication of the book *Katte wa ikenai wa katte wa ikenai* [Don't Buy “What Not To Buy”], which is also selling briskly.

Unlike in many other countries, where publishers usually sell books outright to wholesalers and retailers, in Japan publishers distribute new publications under a consignment system that allows retailers to return unsold copies. In hopes of selling all copies that get into the bookstores, thereby minimizing the number of returns, publishers try to give books punchy, eye-catching titles—ideally ones that will make book-buyers want to read them on the basis of the title alone. Foreign works published in translation in Japan are often retitled for this reason, often diverging considerably from the original.

Styles in book titles seem to follow fluctuations in popular tastes. Recently the trend is toward short sentences describing the books' contents in clear, simple language, such as *Chiisai koto ni kuyokuyo suru na!* [Don't Sweat the Small Stuff], *Ano kane de nani ga kaeta ka* [What That Money Could Have Bought], *Kabu wa kōshite kainasai* [This Is How You Should Buy Stocks], *Me kara uroko: Okanemōke no hōsoku* [Eye-opening Principles of Money-making], *Nantoka kaisha o kaete yarō* [Where There's a Will, There's a Way to Change Your Company], and *Nihonjin wa naze Eigo ga dekinai ka* [Why Japanese Can't Speak English].

During a certain period, mystery novels invariably included the words *satsujin jiken* (murder case), as in *Kyōto noroi-dera satsujin jiken* [The Murder Case of the Cursed Kyoto Temple]. I remember being amazed at one point at the plethora of *satsujin jiken* titles on bookstore shelves; it was certainly a measure of Japanese reader's love of murder mysteries. More recently, however, people appear to be tiring of that formula, and the trend

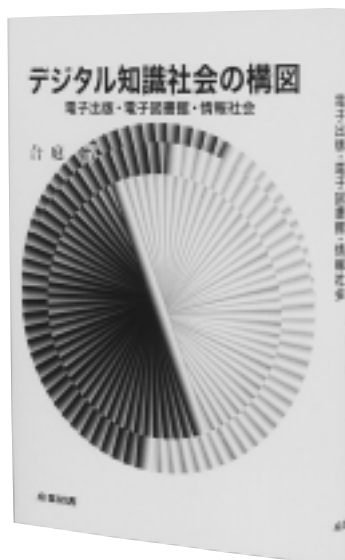
Continued on p. 8

New Titles

MEDIA/JOURNALISM

***Dejitaru chishiki shakai no kōzu* [The Structure of the Digital-Knowledge Society].** Aiba Atsushi. Sangyō Tosho, 1999. 193 × 130 mm. 274 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-7828-0123-8.

Former opinion journal editor Aiba identifies “information” (computerization) and globalization as the two main undercurrents shaping contemporary society. The book examines the impact of computers and the Internet on society.



Cover design: Yoshida Yoshihiro

In industrially advanced countries, the tertiary sector, the main arena of information production, distribution, and consumption, is superseding the primary and secondary industries as the driving force of society. If this trend can be encouraged in an orderly manner, the author maintains, it could pave the way for correcting the power imbalance between the developed and developing worlds. One of the defining characteristics of the contemporary age, he says, is the key role that information access plays in closing the North-South gap. In adapting to that new context, societies are redefining the way various forms of media should be used. Dubbing the result the “digital-knowledge society,” Aiba considers the inherent problems and potentials.

Like the “good news” that propagators of the Gospel tried to spread in a previous time, today “information” is providing the new perspective from which to reevaluate the history of the past two millennia.

***Komyunikēshon* [Communication].** Tamura Norio. Kashiwa Shobō, 1999. 210 × 147 mm. 252 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-7601-1727-X.

A specialist in communications studies reviews the progress of research and considers the potential of communication theory in contemporary society. Explaining the circumstances under which the concept of communication developed in the scientifically advanced, twentieth-century United States, the author



Cover design: Hirai Masayoshi

suggests that modern and contemporary American intellectual history, as shaped by George Herbert Mead, Harold Dwight Lasswell, Warren Weaver, and others, may be seen as the ongoing redefinition of communication. The advancement of science and technology in some respects erodes the self-control of both individuals and societies, he argues, so it is necessary to redefine communication in line with new objectives. Social controls over the development, management, and distribution of energy should be established, for example.

This study explores the ways in which the various icons generated by contemporary science and technology could be utilized to formulate a common vision for humanity.

Continued from p. 7

is favoring a more literary tone, as for example in *Totsugawa keibu: Kaze no banka* [Inspector Totsugawa: Elegy of the Wind].

In the area of literature per se, many publications have simple, rather unassuming titles. Although works such as *Shizumanu taiyō* [The Sun Never Sets], *Tsuma to watashi* [My Wife and I] and *Otoko to onna* [Men and Women] have sold well, their titles don’t carry much impact. More striking titles in the literary field include *Hachigatsu no Marukusu* [Marx in August] and *Yawarakana hoho* [Soft Cheeks].

When bookstore customers are not looking for any particular title but simply browsing, they scan quickly until an intriguing word or phrase catches their attention. They pass over titles that include unfamiliar words, are difficult to understand, or fail to tweak their interest, moving

on quickly. After the title the next thing they generally notice is the author’s name. Readers who already like a particular author may buy a book by that author simply after making sure they haven’t read it before, sometimes without even checking the content. Few authors are fortunate to be so popular, so in getting bookstore browsers to even pick up a work by any of the vast majority of unknown authors, the title is the key. The ideal title is one that makes the customer feel compelled to buy the book without even checking between the covers.

Most editors would like to think that a book will sell well provided the content is good, but in Japan, in particular, it appears to be titles that sell books. The best editors, it may even be said, are those with a knack for devising punchy titles that will sell their books. (*Ikari Haruo is an essayist.*)

Masu media no jidai wa dono yō ni owaru ka [How Will the Mass Media Age End?]. Yano Naoaki. Yōsensha, 1998. 193 × 132 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-89691-351-5.

Looking back over the past decade or so of his career in the media industry, computer journalist Yano Naoaki considers the coexistence of old and new media in the contemporary age.

Part 1 draws on the author's experience as editor-in-chief of the computer magazines *Asahi Pasokon* and *Doors* to sketch the development of personal computers and the Internet. Part 2 traces the drastic changes transforming the media in recent years and analyzes the nature of Internet websites that are the source of these media-shaking changes.



Cover design: Kumazawa Masato

Yano believes the recent technological revolution in the media has two facets: while on the one hand the scope of communication has reached global proportions, on the other it is becoming increasingly personalized and localized. From this angle, he approaches the transformation of the media in terms of ethical issues. In a civil society, one of the biggest challenges is to come to grips with conflicts between individuals and groups.

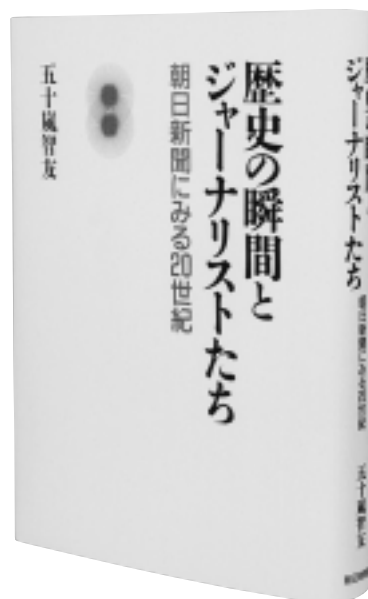
Rekishi no shunkan to jānarisuto tachi [Historic Moments and Japanese Journalists]. Igarashi Chiyū.

Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 216 × 151 mm. 512 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-02-257336-8.

Written by an *Asahi Shimbun* journalist who has spent several years compiling a history of the Asahi Shimbun company, this book examines the ways in which Japanese journalism has reacted to the major events of the twentieth century.

In various respects, the early years of the century were a time of confusion for Japan as it strove to place itself on a par with the Western powers. While working as writers for the *Asahi Shimbun*, Natsume Sōseki, Ishikawa Takuboku, and other literary figures of the era expressed through poetic intuition both the deficiencies and the distortions of Japan's process of adopting modern civilization. The present book describes how it thereafter became difficult for Japanese journalists to speak out freely from the cutting edge of history, and how this fact led, through the periods of war, occupation and postwar economic boom, to suspension of responsibility in the Japanese press and to the erosion of journalists' ability to learn from contact with the outside world.

From this unique angle, the book reappraises the history of the *Asahi Shimbun*—and that of other newspapers, for that matter—in terms of the gradual fading of Japanese journalists' critical judgment in responding to important moments in history.



Cover design: Tada Susumu

MODERN HISTORY

Kakusareta Peri no "shirohata" [Perry's Hidden "White Flags"].

Miwa Kimitada. Sophia University Press, 1999. 194 × 135 mm. 410 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-7972-6001-7.

When Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay at Uraga in 1853 and forced Japan to open its doors to the outside world, he presented two white flags to the Japanese government. In a peremptory gesture designed to intimidate the shogunate into abandoning any intention it might have had of war with the United States, Perry indicated that the flags were to be used when the Japanese eventually decided to declare their surrender.



Cover design: Takami Aya

Focusing on this incident, this book reviews the history of U.S.–Japan relations in terms of the sensibilities and perceptions of the two countries. The author contends the gunboat-diplomacy beginning of U.S.–Japan relations has continued to be a thorn in Japan's side. Japanese educator Nitobe Inazō, known for his role as a “bridge across the Pacific” in the early days of that relationship, moreover, deliberately cast himself as the symbol of that unspoken but lingering issue.

The author analyzes the bilateral relationship from the middle of the nineteenth century to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan's unconditional surrender in World War II, through the prism of each country's images of the

other, and points to the challenges Japan faces today in forging equitable relations with the United States and China in the post-Cold War era.

***Katō hyakka jiten* [Encyclopedia of the Underclass].** Osatake Takeki (Koishikawa Zenji, ed.). Hihyōsha, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. 342 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-8265-0276-1.

This unusual dictionary of underclass argots is a compilation of articles published in *Hōritsu shimbun* (Law Newspaper) from 1910 to 1918. The author is Osatake Takeki (1880–1946), a member of the legal profession in the early decades of the twentieth century and student of the history of crime. In his later years, before World War II, he served as a Supreme Court judge. Writing under the pen name Uka Sanjin (“Rain Flower Mountain Man”) in his thirties, he continued the series for nine years.

The argots compiled in the dictionary are those used among the lower strata of society in relation to crime, gambling, pickpocketing, fraud, theft, speculation, local fairs, street stall selling, peddling, prostitution, lowbrow theater, and so forth. The explanations of each entry reveal the extensive research that was done, and the entries related to the world of crime are especially detailed. Writing under a pseudonym, the judge did not hesitate to use language condemning the malfeasance he observed or in his revelations of the shameful, dark side of the political

and bureaucratic worlds of the time. The book can be read as a primary document on Japan’s modern society. The original text was revised in order to make it more accessible to contemporary readers.

***Kusabana no niou kokka* [A Nation Fragrant with Flowers].** Oketani Hideaki. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 193 × 132 mm. 250 pp. ¥1,905. ISBN 4-16-355200-6.

Author Oketani is a literary critic known for identifying in Japanese modernism the workings of what he regards as the romantic irony inherent in modernism as a whole. The present work is the culmination of his critical explorations.



Cover design: Sekiguchi Seiji

The book focuses on Saigō Takamori (1827–77), a leading figure in the historic movement that overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate and instigated the Meiji Restoration (1868). Although Saigō became a key member of the subsequent Meiji government, he later opposed its treatment of disaffected ex-samurai and led a rebellion in his native Kagoshima in southern Kyushu. Saigō’s struggle made him a hero of symbolic significance in Japan’s modern history.

Writing in old orthographic conventions, the author gives an elegant, lyrical account of Saigō’s fateful role in the formative years of the Meiji state.

***Nihon no kindai 10: Toshi e* [A History of Modern Japan 10: The Transformation of the City].** Suzuki Hiroyuki. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999. 197 × 134 mm. 426 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-12-490110-0.

This volume of the History of Modern Japan series takes a new look at the changes that have transformed urban culture in Japan since the Meiji Restoration (1868).

Japanese cities are often described as “chaotic” and “disorderly” in comparison with those in the West, and throughout his career as an architectural critic the author has questioned that appraisal. Convinced that, despite their appearance of disorder at first glance, these cities must have an underlying order of their own, he believes that a more useful approach to the issue is to consider how that hidden order may be identified and elucidated. Part of the essential role of the city, he suggests, lies in its function as a guide to historical memory.

Focusing on the forms mingled in the city of Tokyo that symbolize the boundaries between modern and pre-modern and between East and West, this book is an attempt to reconstruct both the vitality and pathos of cities.



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha



Cover design: Usui Shintarō

***Nihon no kindai 12: Gakureki kizoku no eikō to zasetsu* [A History of Modern Japan 12: The Glory and the Decline of the Educated Elite].** Takeuchi Yō. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999. 196 × 134 mm. 374 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-12-490112-7.

The people who took part in the Meiji Restoration of 1868, whether they were part of the leadership elite or not, shared a keen awareness that established status and class hierarchies were the obstacles to resolving the social problems they faced. Thirty years later, however, by the time the reformers had been replaced by a new generation, that consciousness was gradually fading.



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

Takeuchi Yō is a specialist in the sociology of education in modern Japan. In this book, he looks back to the 1890s, when the system of national universities was established, with Tokyo Imperial University at its apex, and considers the major changes in society that have taken place since that time from the perspective of the milieu where priority was placed on educational pedigree. The deep psychological complex over academic credentials infected people across the social spectrum—military men, politicians, writers, and businessmen alike—which, he says, undermined the integrity of society. He also describes how the popularization of higher education from the mid-1960s stripped university students and graduates of their elite social status.

***Shōkoku shugi* [Advocacy of Small-nation Status].** Tanaka Akira.

Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 173 × 104 mm. 210 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430609-4.

The urge to “catch up with” and “overtake” the Western powers has been a key motivating force in Japan’s modern history. Viewed today, however, 130 years after the Meiji Restoration (1868), the fault lines in the policy platform built on that objective are clearly visible. This book shows historian Tanaka Akira’s approach to getting a new grasp on the course of events from the Meiji Restoration onward.

While the role of Meiji leaders was certainly crucial, a broader consideration of the international circumstances of the time reveals that their success was largely a product of chance. In this book, Tanaka reconstructs the lineage of advocacy of small-nation status for modern Japan. There were those who frowned on modernization motivated by the urge for great-power status and were convinced that Japan should remain a small country in terms of international status and power. If such forces had held sway, he suggests, Japan’s modern history to 1945 would have evolved quite differently.



BIOGRAPHY

***Gohho no yuigon* [Vincent van Gogh’s Final Message].** Kobayashi Hideki. Jōhō Center Shuppankyoku, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. 386 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7958-2912-8.

This book puts forward the intriguing view that a preliminary drawing attributed to Vincent van Gogh for one of the artist’s best known oil paintings, *Vincent’s Bedroom in Arles*, is an imitation. From that hypothesis he explores the possibility that it may have been a cause of the great painter’s suicide.

Drawing on his own experience as an artist, the author demonstrates, by analyzing the composition of the drawing and the objects depicted in it, that it differs significantly in style from van Gogh’s other works. The author infers from this and other evidence that it is actually the work of an imitator whose presence haunted the artist toward the end of his life.



Cover design: Kobayashi Hideki

Kobayashi points out that the usual adjectives used to describe van Gogh—“burning,” “insane,” and so on—are the products of the popular image that spread after his death. As evidence of the discrepancy between that image and the real van Gogh, the author points to the artist’s diary and letters from the closing years of his life. These writings reveal a man of the modern age, quite unlike the van Gogh of which we usually read, troubled by the specter of his imitator.

This fascinating book expands the range of clues and viewpoints for studying the causes of van Gogh's suicide.

Hanryo: Takamure Itsue o aishita otoko [Partner: The Man Who Loved Takamure Itsue]. Kurihara Yōko. Heibonsha, 1999. 193 × 130 mm. 274 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-582-82426-9. This is a biography of Hashimoto Kenzō (1897–1976), the husband of Takamure Itsue (1894–1964), a well-known poet and pioneering researcher in women's history. Takamure is known not only for her devotion to the feminist movement but also for her portrayal of the history of Japanese modernization as a process of national order being established with the emperor at the center. The medium of both her feminism and view of history centering around the emperor was actually a concept articulated by Hashimoto, *ittai-ai*, or “love of unity,” which indicates an ideal of communication attained by intentionally excluding third parties. It may help explain the emotions of modern Japanese who were forced to accept the survival-of-the-fittest dynamics introduced from the West.

Both Takamure and Hashimoto were near-legendary figures of their time, but this biography approaches these myths realistically, taking clues from the “love of unity” concept. Author Kurihara, a scholar of women's studies, portrays Hashimoto's astute appraisal of his wife's talents.



Majutsushi: Mihara Osamu to Nishitetsu Raionzu [The “Magician”: Mihara Osamu and the Nishitetsu Lions]. Tateishi Yasunori. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 193 × 134 mm. 550 pp. ¥2,381. ISBN 4-16-355100-X. Mihara served as manager of several professional Japanese baseball clubs over twenty-six years starting soon after the end of World War II. His leadership of the Nishitetsu Lions based in Fukuoka prefecture is well known. This book is a documentary of his life and work, written by a nonfiction writer also native to Fukuoka.



Cover design: Ogata Shūichi

What drew the author's attention to Mihara was his many years of “resistance”—with success—to the Yomiuri Giants, the team that played, and still does, the leading role in Japan's professional baseball world. Mihara accepted offers to become manager of lesser clubs and endeavored to make them strong enough to beat the Giants in the competition for the championship. His most notable success was in his leadership of the Lions until they beat the Giants in the Japan Series for three consecutive years, 1956–58. People called such success “Mihara magic,” hence the title of this book. What strategies and ingenuity did he employ? What can we learn from them? This book is a discussion of how to make an organization successful with few resources, by tracing in detail his merciless rationalism and skillful techniques of controlling players' minds.

Utaemon densetsu [Legend of Utaemon]. Watanabe Tamotsu. Shinchōsha, 1999. 196 × 133 mm. 292 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-10-394104-9. A drama critic sets down in this book his knowledge and impressions of Nakamura Utaemon VI, the actor who stands at the pinnacle of Kabuki today. It begins by talking about a Kabuki play staged at the Meijiza theater in March 1993. Despite his advanced age and illness, the 75-year-old Utaemon performed, playing the role of an old woman. As this woman beggar recounted the story of her own past, the audience could clearly envision one scene after another—the delight of a young woman with her husband and child, the profound grief of a widow over the loss of her husband, the mad desperation of a woman whose child has been stolen by a hawk, and the recovery of a middle-aged woman to her senses.



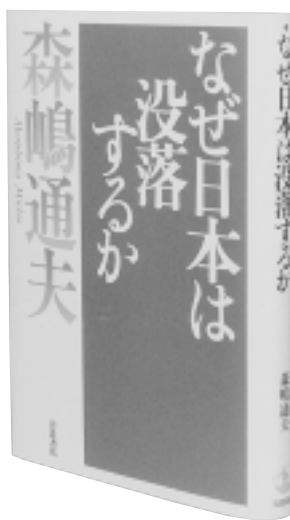
Cover design: Shinchōsha

Utaemon deftly showed that the experience of aging is not always something negative, but a process of the accumulation of mysterious layers of time. The author testifies to that fact with emphasis, drawing the conclusion from his many years of activities as a drama critic, and using as a hint a quotation from fifteenth-century Noh actor and playwright Zeami, to the effect that life is limited but “Noh will go on forever.”

JAPAN/JAPANESE

Naze Nihon wa botsuraku suruka [Why Is Japan in Decline?]. Mori-shima Michio. Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 187 × 133 mm. 206 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-00-001550-8.

This book examines the assumption that Japan is facing a historic crisis and seeks ways to escape from it. Author Morishima is a social scientist who incorporated multilayered realism into the field of mathematical economics through a critical analysis of Marxism. Employed in the book is the demographic interpretation of history, a method of predicting social changes by looking at qualitative and quantitative changes in the structure of population.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

According to Morishima, the gap between children and adults and the resultant loss of spirit on the part of the younger generations (what social scientist Émile Durkheim called anomie) is at the core of problems to be discussed. If the integrity of Japanese society continues to weaken, it will no longer be able to deal with both internal and external problems. The key to overcoming anomie, he argues, is restoration of relations with other Asian nations and involvement in the Asian economic community in a different form from that attempted before the end of World War II.



Cover design: Mōri Kazue

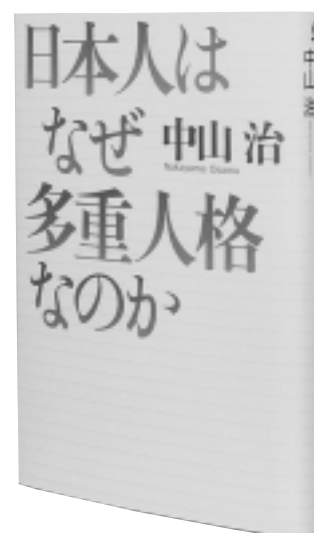
Nihon shakai de ikiru to iu koto [Living in Japanese Society]. Abe Kin'ya. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 194 × 133 mm. 212 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-02-257356-2.

Abe, the author of this book, is a specialist in the history of medieval European society and an analyst of Japanese society from that perspective. Around the time of the rise of the *École des Annales* in France, he began trying to illuminate the realities of social discrimination and the tacit solidarity of mass groups premised on that discrimination.

The Japanese term *seken* (world, society, etc.) is used to refer to the community in a negative sense for the members who belong to it. Abe points out that, while an indispensable concept to the study of Japanese society, *seken* has been slighted by Japanese scholars. This negligence stems from forgetting how the concepts that form the basis of science can emerge out of common parlance, he argues, and study of history can play an important role in remedying the situation. He suggests that analysis of the ordinary usage of the word *seken* could open up a path that leads to universal understanding of Japanese society from within.

Nihonjin wa naze tajū jinkaku nanoka [Why Do Japanese Have Multiple Personalities?]. Nakayama Osamu. Yōsensha, 1999. 194 × 133 mm. 244 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-89691-371-X.

This book examines the Japanese psyche through the social psychology method of analysis. "Since Japanese people display multiple personality traits," argues the author, "Japan as a state can be said to display a multiple personality." This conclusion is based on his perception that there may be a serious malaise behind the injudicious remarks often heard from politicians (and the ease with which they later retract them), as well as the way people allow them to get away with such behavior.



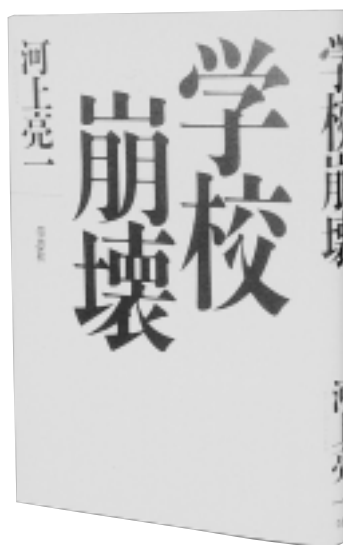
Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

Japanese morals in modern and contemporary times are obviously different from what prevailed from ancient through premodern times. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the self has been split between the "self vs. other" characterized by submission to the pressure of Western powers, on the one hand, and the "self vs. self" that seeks to reject submission, on the other. The surfacing of this conflict can be observed from time to time. Author Nakayama takes one step further existing psychological approaches that diagnose Japanese as "sick," and draws closer to the study of history and society in probing the cause of their malaise.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Gakkō hōkai [School Breakdown]. Kawakami Ryōichi. Sōshisha, 1999. 193 × 134 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-7942-0867-7.

About ten years ago a “new breed of children” began appearing in Japanese schools, says Kawakami Ryōichi, a public junior high school teacher for thirty-three years. The book is his realistic and multifaceted report on and analysis of the changes in the schools and in students over the last decade.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

The new breed of children are fragile and easily hurt, tend to be indifferent to others, and seem incapable of following the basic rules of daily life. But they are ordinary students otherwise. Until a decade ago, incidents of bullying, truancy, suicide, knifing, and even murder used to be perpetrated by a few trouble-making students, but now they may be committed by youngsters who seem perfectly normal. It is impossible to predict, says Kawakami, when and what they will do. The factors behind this phenomenon, he believes, are the changes in society and among adults, as well as resulting from the decline in the vigor of school education, which has lost the support of local communities.

The role of the schools, he argues, is to improve students' scholastic performance, teach them the norms of daily life and human relations, and cultivate their ability to become independent citizens contributing to

society. He urges that more attention be paid to the fundamental question of what education is for.

Nenkin kaikaku ron [A Study of Pension Reform]. Hatta Tatsuo and Oguchi Noriyoshi. Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 1999. 216 × 151 mm. 388 pp. ¥4,400. ISBN 4-532-13168-5.

Under the current Japanese pension system, vast gaps have developed among the generations in what they pay and will later receive. The Ministry of Health and Welfare and the people who live on pensions have dismissed the situation as inter-generational mutual help, but for the younger generations it is tantamount to exploitation.



If benefits are paid out of funds received for the year as in the case of the current pension system, the larger the population of older people grows, the heavier the burden on the younger generations. In order to attain fairness among the generations given the rapid aging of population, the author argues, the “funded” plan approach (periodical setting aside of funds) should be adopted. He deplores the fact that few experts have studied the validity of that approach.

Based on a variety of simulation analyses, the book shows in specific terms how the pension plans could be shifted to the periodic funding formula, refuting the view of the government that such a shift is hard to make.

Shijō shakai no shisōshi [The Intellectual History of the Market Society]. Mamiya Yōsuke. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999. 173 × 109 mm. 186 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-101465-0. A pocket-size compact history of economic theory, this book begins with an account of Adam Smith's theorization of the emergence of market-based society through the “invisible hand” in his famous work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) against the background of the Industrial Revolution in England. It then sketches the rise, as antithetical to that idea, of the historical school in Germany and socialism, as well as a shift from political economy to pure economics, and the Keynesian revolution in the twentieth century.



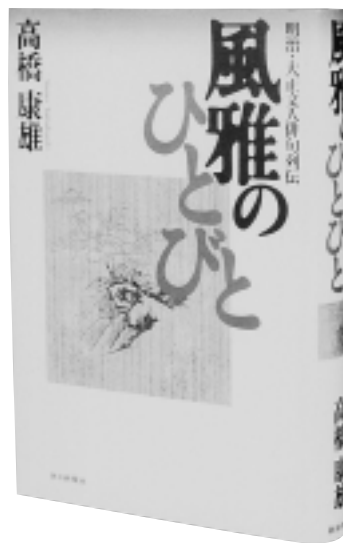
The book is not a comprehensive history, says the author in the afterword, but a “history of economic philosophy as a history of specific issues” revolving around the philosophies of thinkers confronting the rise of economics and changes in the market society. A feature of the book lies in its discussion of interpretations of freedom. The author writes, “When you look back over the history of economic thought, you can see that liberalism rises and declines in cycles,” and he concludes that the development of economic thought was the history of freedom. He advocates genuine freedom instead of the laissez-faire variety that leads to self-indulgence.

The revision of a 1991 text for university lecture use, the book does not cover subsequent developments, but it is an essential guidebook to the history of economic theory.

Fūga no hitobito: Meiji, Taishō bunjin haiku retsuden [People of Taste: *Haiku* Poems by Literary Figures of Meiji and Taishō Eras]. Takahashi Yasuo. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 380 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-02-330576-6.

Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that seeks to capture the phenomena of nature in seventeen syllables (three lines of five, seven, and five syllables each), and today amateur *haiku* poets can be found all over the world.

The book examines the relationship to *haiku* of social thinkers and the novelists and other literary figures who built the foundations of modern Japanese literature in the Meiji and Taishō eras, and traces the rich vein of “literati *haiku*” (*bunjin haiku*).



Cover design: Ogasawara Chiyo

More than three hundred people, well-known and obscure, appear in the book, including Ozaki Kōyō (1867–1903), who formed the literary coterie Ken'yūsha, and encouraged its members to write *haiku*, as well as Kōda Rohan (1867–1947), Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), and Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902). The book describes the values and “refined taste” they pursued, introducing more than 3,000 *haiku* poems. At the end is a list of the names that appear in the book with brief profiles and a collection of *haiku* by thirty-seven selected literary figures. The book is based

on installments of a column that appeared in a monthly *haiku* magazine.

Jitsuroku rōkyokushi [A True History of *Rōkyoku* Ballads]. Yui Jirō. Tōhō Shobō, 1999. 215 × 153 mm. 448 pp. ¥5,600. ISBN 4-88592-048-5.

Rōkyoku, the form of ballad also called *naniwa-bushi*, is a type of narrative singing mainly on the themes of *giri* and *ninjō* (duty and human sentiments), chanted to the accompaniment of a shamisen. A popular form of stage entertainment that developed in Osaka toward the end of the Edo period (1603–1867), it flourished in the first half of the twentieth century.



Cover design: Illustrated by Hayashiya Kikuzō

Based on a series originally published in the monthly magazine, *Gekkan rōkyoku*, starting in June 1988 and lasting for more than eight years until the sudden death of the author not long after the ninety-ninth installment, this chronological account divides the history of *rōkyoku* into stages: incipience (Meiji era, 1868–1912), vigorous growth (Taishō era, 1912–26), heyday (pre-World War II Shōwa era, 1926–45), stagnation in the years after the war (1946–49), revival in radio broadcasts (1950–53), postwar popularity and later decline (1954–56), and the current period of groping for a new appreciation of the genre.

This authoritative study of *rōkyoku* is significant in that it fills in blanks in the history of the genre between

the end of World War II and around 1970, drawing on extensive research in numerous sources. The author was a stage-entertainment producer for NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) for many years. The chronology of the genre and genealogical tables of the often-hereditary *rōkyoku* families make it a valuable reference source. The book may be read as a reference work on society and the performing arts.

Kiteki no kemuri ima izuko [Whither the Wisps from the Steam Locomotive's Whistle?]. Satō Kiichi. Shinchōsha, 1999. 196 × 132 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-10-429501-9. In this unique excursion into literary criticism, train-enthusiast Satō—or as he calls himself, “railway epicurean”—interprets seven works of modern Japanese literature, focusing on their passages describing rail journeys.

Natsume Sōseki's novel *Sanshirō*, for example, opens with the twenty-three-year-old main character traveling by train from Kumamoto to Tokyo to study at Tokyo Imperial University. To Satō, a key interest of this scene lies in such details as the kind of train *Sanshirō* would have boarded and where and when it would have stopped. Using actual rail and ferry guidebooks from the time in which the story is set, he infers the scheduled times at which *Sanshirō*'s train would have departed and stopped along the way. From the position of a fellow passenger, Satō explains the characters' changing moods, their reactions to the encounters and partings of their journeys,



Cover design: Shinchōsha

and how these foreshadow their subsequent actions.

Since retiring from a long career as a high school language and literature teacher, Satō has devoted himself fulltime to the passion for railways he has nurtured since childhood. Such a distinctive collection of critical essays could only have emerged from this rare combination of enthusiasm for both literature and railroads.

***Seikimatsu no yogensha, Natsume Sōseki* [Turn-of-the-Century Prophet: Natsume Sōseki]. Komori Yōichi.** Kōdansha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 286 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-06-208767-7.

Natsume Sōseki, one of the luminaries of modern Japanese literature, spent little more than ten years (1905–1916) writing novels. One gift that distinguished him as a writer was his ability to discern the relationships that even the most familiar, everyday objects or events had with broader, even international circumstances. Sōseki rejected the ideology of “progress” that swept his age. In his view, whatever the advances of science, the world capitalism that demanded such progress remained unchanged, and so-called great causes of militarism and revolution would always smother the supposed “freedom of the individual” in the modern state. The issues surrounding the individual and the modern state that Sōseki saw with such prescience at the beginning of the twentieth century—“a century of war and

revolution”—are those the world still faces today at the century’s end.

Reading Sōseki for what it foretold of the future, this book stands out among countless other critical works on Sōseki because the author declares his intention of personally adopting Sōseki’s way of thinking as a practical strategy for living in the new century. The book thus proposes an approach to dealing with contemporary life through not only reading but also “living by Sōseki.”

FICTION

***Eiji* [Eiji]. Shigematsu Kiyoshi.** Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 193 × 132 mm. 348 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-02-257352-X.

Following the succession of shocking crimes involving junior high school-age youth in recent years, including the juvenile murders and assaults in Kobe in 1997 and the 1998 knifing of a school teacher, the “age of fourteen” has become a topic of particular concern in Japanese public awareness. This novel is one of a succession of fictional works about fourteen-year-olds that have appeared recently as part of that trend.

The characterization of the main character in this novel, Eiji, does not follow the formula of the “ordinary but unpredictable youth” but rather stereotypes him as an “average” Japanese teenager. The series of

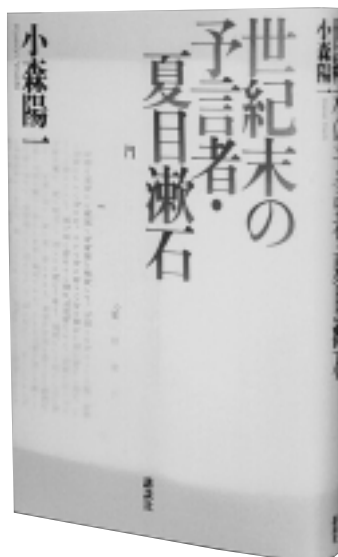
assaults depicted in the story are perpetrated not by Eiji but by one of his classmates. Indifferent to the reproaches of adults and the sense of crisis conveyed in the media, the world of fourteen-year-olds is seen to move along according to its own daily rhythms and rules.

Written by a thirty-six-year-old novelist, this story is a commentary on one level of the contemporary Japanese family as seen through the eyes of adolescents, and on another a work for young readers that depicts the energies that drive them through the confusing experience of puberty.

***Hadashi to kaigara* [Bare Feet and Seashells]. Miki Taku.** Shūeisha, 1999. 194 × 134 mm. 502 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-08-774394-2.

This novel opens with the main character, a boy named Kanō Toyozō, gazing into the water from the bow of a ship plowing through the waves. The sea symbolizes the world and the advancing ship the boy himself as he makes his way in life.

Toyozō is an elementary school fifth-grader who was living in Manchuria when World War II ended. In 1946, he and his mother, elder brother, and grandfather return to Japan aboard a repatriation ship, bringing with them the ashes of Toyozō’s father and grandmother. The homeland Toyozō experiences for the first time lies in ruins, and the family is forced to rely on distant relatives for help and lodging. Despite being crippled in his left leg by polio, Toyozō is undaunted even in



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu



Cover design: Kusaka Jun'ichi & Kawashima Hiroyo



Cover design: Tada Susumu

the face of derision because of his disability; he remains proud and determined to do well.

Recounting the five-year period of Toyozō's life up to his graduation from junior high school, the novel depicts his gradual awakening to the world of literature. A largely autobiographical work, it captures with a fresh and realistic touch both the peculiar circumstances of Japan's immediate postwar period and the universal process of growing up.

***Piriodo* [Period]. Nonami Asa.**

Futabasha, 1999. 194 × 132 mm. 362 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-575-23371-4.

This novel revolves around a forty-year-old divorcée who works as a freelance photographer. When her lover's wife is murdered, it is discovered that the slaying was a hit job arranged by the husband. The plot unfolds in an interweaving of the murder case and a subplot about the main character's older brother, who has terminal cancer, and the problems facing him and his family. The protagonist tries desperately to prevent her brother's family from falling apart.

Although involving a homicide, this novel is less a murder mystery than a portrait, sketched through the experience of a single woman living in Tokyo, of family breakdown and hope for revival.



Cover design: Kakiki Sakae

***Tōkyō seibun rōzu* [Tokyo Seven Roses]. Inoue Hisashi.** Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 193 × 133 mm. 782 pp. ¥2,381. ISBN 4-16-318380-9.

The story revolves around a seller of *uchiwa* fans who finds it impossible to accept foreign culture, but also deals with the Japanese prostitutes who served American soldiers stationed in Japan after the war. Thrown in for good measure is the issue of orthographic reform and the debate over abolition of Chinese ideographs and its replacement with a Latin alphabet. History and changing times clash as well-intentioned bureaucrats of the victorious nation try to promote (impose) democratization (simplification) of the Japanese language and in other fields. Author Inoue vividly describes the turmoil exercising his well-known talents for caricature and parody to the utmost.



Cover design: An'no Mitsumasa

The story as a whole is presented like a comedy in the theater, but its theme has serious connotations in today's context, for the thrusting on a defeated nation of the culture of the victor nation can be seen all over the world, and only those who are forced to accept really know the pain it inflicts. This novel will be of particular interest to people interested in how foreign cultures are accepted, an issue of increasing importance today.

***Vaiburētā* [Vibrator]. Akasaka Mari.** Kōdansha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 180 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-06-209540-8. A thirty-one-year-old documentary writer, being unusually sensitive to her sensory perceptions, is distressed when she starts hearing an uncontrollable voice in her subconscious and suffers from an eating disorder and addiction to alcohol. She encounters a long-distance truck driver, and as she travels with him, finally recovers. While talking with the driver, she realizes that her emotions had become virtually frozen over while in junior high school.



Cover design: Tokiwa Hibiki

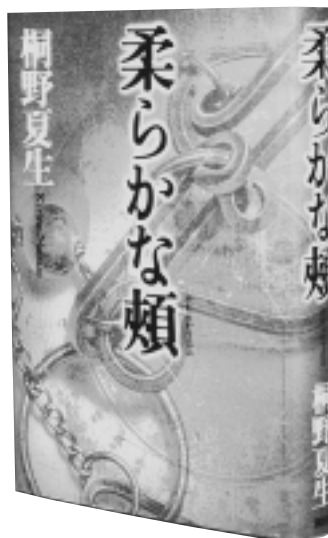
The process of her healing is depicted in a distinctive, high-paced writing style, using language that closely reflects her physical and physiological sensibilities. The sense of isolation and apathy of young people living in contemporary society is skillfully captured. This book, by a promising new writer of serious literature, was nominated for the Akutagawa Prize and, although ultimately passed over for the award, was considered even at the final stage of screening.

Wangan rapusodī [Bay Side Rhapsody]. **Morita Ryūji.** Kadokawa Shoten, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 286 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-04-873156-4. In this story of pure love, rather rare today, a Hokkaido University student in Sapporo becomes infatuated with the stepmother of a junior high school student he tutors privately. She, aged thirty-three, is the wife of a ramen noodle shop owner. She meets the college student in secret, but their affair is revealed. They run away to Tokyo and take up residence in a bay-side apartment, but their idyll eventually collapses. The woman leaves, and the student returns to his hometown in Kagoshima, where he works in a night club for women. He later decides to go back to Sapporo. Unlike most contemporary young people who hesitate to form relations with others, the student in this story throws away everything for the woman. Each scene is portrayed with detail and style, and the book has earned a reputation as a superior love story.



Cover design: Takahashi Masayuki

Yawarakana hoho [Soft Cheeks]. **Kirino Natsuo.** Kōdansha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 366 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-06-207919-4. Kirino was awarded the Naoki Prize this year for this book, her sixth long novel. The story begins when a five-year-old girl is found missing from a summer resort in Hokkaido. Her mother, Kasumi, the main character of the story, sleeps with the owner of the cottage where her family is vaca-



Cover design: Tada Kazuhiro

tioning, and the morning after their tryst, the girl is found missing. Kasumi is a woman with a dark past, having left a poor life in her native village in Hokkaido, leaving her mother behind, to go to Tokyo.

Although a mystery story, more pages are devoted to description of the main character's inner thoughts and feelings, her childhood, and the complications between characters and in their subconscious than to the solution of the mystery. Several explanations regarding what happened are offered in the form of the characters' dreams, but each time, the culprit is different, and the situation looks different too. This book is an example of the new type of mystery that deals directly with themes of contemporary society.

ESSAYS/DIALOGUES

Chūnen igo [Middle Age and Older]. **Sono Ayako.** Kōbunsha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 242 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-334-97213-6. This collection of twenty-four essays deals with the psyche of people in middle age and older from various angles, on the themes of education, money, justice, spouses, friends, and physical strength. The author, a well-known Catholic novelist, drawing on citations from the Bible as well as on her own experiences, discusses life in and after middle age. Noting that most of the people she finds interesting are middle aged or older, she



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

concludes that only when people reach middle age do they become maturely "human." Written in a terse, no-nonsense style, this book is stimulating and encouraging to readers in midlife and older.

Haha naru iro [Motherly Colors]. **Shimura Fukumi.** Kyūryūdō, 1999. 215 × 150 mm. 244 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-7630-9903-5. Designated a "living national treasure" (bearer of Important Intangible Cultural Assets) in 1990, the author is a specialist in dyes and dye colors. This book is a collection of her essays on her work (dyeing and weaving) and daily life, as well as traditional colors in Japan. It also includes her poems and accounts of her trips to Germany, Scandinavia, and Russia. Written in serene, highly polished language, her prose and



Cover design: Shimura Fukumi

poetry form a fabric themselves, an achievement like her dyeing and weaving, done manually with every thought and feeling dwelling in her hands. The book throughout expresses her awe and appreciation of the mysteries of nature, her gratitude to plants as well as her devotion to colors, the pursuit of which is for her a kind of pilgrimage.

***Kashihon'ya no boku wa manga ni muchū datta* [Son of a Rental Manga Library Owner, I Was Absorbed in Comics].** Hasegawa Yutaka. Sōshisha, 1999. 193 × 134 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-7942-0874-X.

Thirty percent of books published in Japan are *manga* (comics). Although there was once a day when large publishers showed no interest in comic books, today many major publishing houses could not survive without them. The popularity of Japanese animation films and comics, not only in Japan but in other parts of the world, originated in the rental *manga* culture that thrived until the 1960s.

The author's family opened a rental *manga* business just before he entered elementary school, and he became engrossed in reading *manga*. This book is both a record of his family and childhood and a history of postwar *manga* in Japan from the perspective of a rental dealer. It is also a valuable record of what Japan was like in the 1950s and 1960s.



Cover design: Kusaka Jun'ichi

***Murakami Ryū taidanshū: Sonzai no taegataki sarusa* [Salsa, the Unbearable Existence].** Murakami Ryū. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 194 × 133mm. 478 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-16-355380-0.

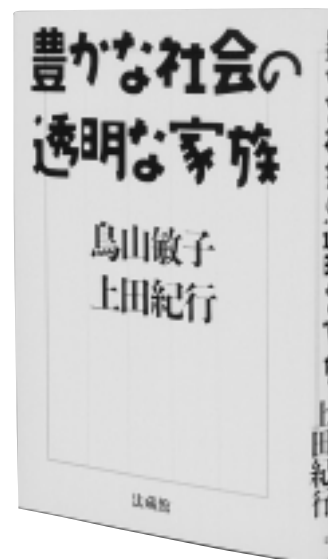
This is a collection of separate dialogues of novelist Murakami Ryū with twelve persons (novelist, critic, musical composer, philosopher, psychologist, newspaper reporter, film critic and university president, film writer, freelancer, literary critic, immunologist, and advocate of psychological economics). The topics of dialogue vary depending on the specialty of the person Murakami talks with, but the common concern is what to make of the contemporary situation, particularly in Japan. With the burst of the bubble economy, with the collapse of the government's longtime practice of protecting weaker financial institutions through administrative regulations and guidance, with the breakdown of the seniority-oriented wage and promotion system, and with school girls selling sexual services, where is Japan heading? This book offers a glimpse of what Japanese artists, scholars and others think about these pressing issues.



Cover design: Suzuki Seichi

***Yutakana shakai no tōmei na kazoku* [Invisible Families in the Affluent Society].** Toriyama Toshiko and Ueda Noriyuki. Hōzōkan, 1998. 194 × 134 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-8318-7237-7.

This is a collection of dialogues. Toriyama Toshiko is a former public elementary school teacher who launched a movement in 1994 for "Kenji school" workshops throughout Japan—named after poet Miyazawa Kenji—to consider parent-child problems and help young people find direction in life. Ueda Noriyuki is known for his concern with issues in contemporary society from the perspective of "healing" while also doing research in the medical anthropology of Sri Lankan religions.



Cover design: Watanabe Kazuo

In these dialogues, Toriyama and Ueda focus their interest on how deeply parents can hurt their children. Children can be hurt, they emphasize, when the parents, out of fear of the eye of society, look at their children the way society does. They agree that a common problem among parents today is that they may be incapable of listening to their children's wishes simply to be accepted *as they are*. This, they declare, is the crux of the problems plaguing contemporary Japan. These dialogues can be seen as the first step toward identifying problems and beginning the process of healing.

Events and Trends

Faces in the Spotlight

An exhibition focusing on “faces” attracted crowds of visitors daily to the National Science Museum in Ueno, Tokyo recently. The popularity of the “face” exhibition, held from July 31 to October 17, seems to reflect a growing area of interest among Japanese.

The boom in attention to faces can be seen in the publishing industry as well, with several related books appearing in quick succession. Among the most prominent is *Kaogaku e no shōtai* [An Invitation to Study of the Face] (Iwanami Shoten, 1998) by Harashima Hiroshi, professor of information and communication engineering at the University of Tokyo and a leading member of the Japan Academy of Facial Studies. In this book, he introduces a range of approaches to the science of faces and facial expressions, drawing on fields such as psychology and anthropology. His computer-generated images of facial types, including the “average face” and the “face of the future,” are particularly intriguing.

Other recent titles include Leslie Zebrowitz's *Reading Faces* (Japanese translation: Taishūkan Shoten, 1999); *Kao o kagaku suru 1* [Looking at Faces Scientifically (I)] (Newton Press, 1999), edited by Baba Hisao and Kanazawa Eisaku; Hanihara Kazurō's *Nihonjin no kao* [Faces of the Japanese] (Kōdansha, 1999); and Kasuga Takehiko's *Ganmenkō* [A Study of Faces] (Kinkuniya Shoten, 1998). In a slightly different vein there is *Otoko no ganmen* [Men's Faces] (Bungei Shunjū, 1999), a collection of photographs of some 150 male office workers in Tokyo by Araki Nobuyoshi, one of Japan's foremost photographic artists. Accompanying each photograph is a survey-style profile of the subject, listing such details as his hobbies, aspirations, and personal creed or motto. “A man's face,” writes Araki, “tells a tale.”

Etō, Tsuji, Miura Pass Away

The Japanese literary world was stunned last summer by the news that Etō Jun (real name Egashira Atsuo), leading literary critic of the postwar era, had committed suicide at his home in Kamakura on July 21. He was 66. It is believed the primary motive for the suicide was Etō's anguish over the loss of his wife Keiko, who had succumbed to cancer the previous November. Etō left a suicide note in which he wrote about his wife's death and his own failing health. Etō made his debut as a literary critic with *Natsume Sōseki* (1956)—a probing portrait of Meiji-era Japan's preeminent writer, Natsume Sōseki—and solidified his reputation a few years later with *Kobayashi Hideo* (1961). Etō was outspoken in his criticism of postwar Japanese society, advocating, through works such as *Umi wa yomigaeru* [The Sea Recovers] (1976) and *Meiji no gunzō* [Great Figures of the Meiji Era] (1976), a return to Meiji-era values. He was also known, along with Ishihara Shintarō (writer, former Diet member, currently governor of Tokyo) and others for his staunchly conservative stance on a wide range of issues. His most important works include *Sōseki to sono jidai* [Natsume Sōseki and His Times] and *Seijuku to sōshitsu* [Maturity and Loss] (1967).

Etō published an article about his wife's battle against illness in the May issue of the monthly general-interest magazine *Bungei shunjū*. Entitled “Tsuma to watashi” [My Wife and I], the article was later published by Bungei Shunjū in book form under the same title and widely read.

Novelist Tsuji Kunio died of a heart attack on July 29 at the age of 73. Tsuji began writing novels and criticism in the early 1960s upon returning to Japan after studying in France. He is known for his distinctive historical novels depicting the inner lives of people in search of a more meaningful way of life. Among his principal works are *Kairō ni te* [In the Corridor] (1963), *Azuchi ōkan ki* [The Signore: Shogun of the Warring States] (1968), *Amakusa no gaka* [Song of Solomon in Amakusa] (1971), *Haikyōsha Yurianusu* [Julian the Apostate] (1972) and *Haru no*

taikan [Spring Coronation] (1977). His *Saigyō kaden* [The Legend of Saigyō] (see *Japanese Book News*, No. 14, p. 18), which he spent ten years writing while struggling with rheumatoid arthritis and other illnesses, appeared in 1995 and won the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize.

Christian novelist Miura Ayako passed away on October 12. She was 77. From her 1964 literary debut with *Hyōten* [Freezing Point], Miura wrote more than 250 novels, stories and essays, notably the novels *Shiokari tōge* [Shiokari Pass] (1968) and *Tsumiki no hako* [Box of Building Blocks] (1972). Informed by her deep spiritual faith, all of Miura's works deal with the themes of God and love. Testimony to the strong following Miura's works enjoy among Japanese readers, a questionnaire survey published last spring ranked *Shiokari tōge* and *Hyōten* ninth and tenth, respectively, in the category “most memorable book I have read” (see *Japanese Book News*, No. 27, p. 21). In her final years, Miura was forced to curtail her writing activities as she battled cancer and Parkinson's disease.

Top Foreign Magazines Launch Japanese Editions

Haute couture fashion magazine *Vogue Nippon* was launched on July 28 amid a barrage of TV commercials and other promotional activities announcing the Japanese edition of the world-leading fashion magazine. While pursuing the ideals of “elegance” and “substance,” the new magazine will retain the original *Vogue*'s emphasis on high-quality visual content.

Founded in the United States in 1892, *Vogue* now has twelve overseas editions. The company publishing this latest addition to the *Vogue* empire is Nikkei Conde Nast, a joint enterprise between Nikkei BP and *Vogue* publisher Conde Nast Publications. Nikkei BP also puts out the Japanese edition of *National Geographic* in a joint venture with the National Geographic Society.

Meanwhile, leading Japanese publishing house Shinchōsha has inaugurated *Gramophone Japan*, the Japanese edition of music magazine *The Gramophone*, through a tie-up

with British publisher Gramophone Publication Limited. The magazine represents Shinchōsha's first tie-up with a foreign publishing company and first periodical in the field of music. Focusing on reviews of classical music CDs but covering such areas as screen and ethnic music as well, *Gramophone Japan* portrays itself as a "classical-oriented general music magazine." The first issue of the Japanese edition was published on November 24. Original articles make up around 25 percent of the content, the remaining 75 percent being translations from the English edition. *The Gramophone* was founded in 1923 and is now published in more than 100 countries.

Noma Prize

The tenth Noma Prize for Literature in Translation (sponsored by Kōdansha) has been awarded to German translator Otto Putz for his translations of Natsume Sōseki's *Wagahai wa neko de aru* [Ich der Kater; I Am a Cat] and Ōe Kenzaburō's *Me mushiri ko uchi* [Reisst die Knospen ab...; Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids]. Both translations have been published by German publishers.

Born in 1954, Putz spent two years from 1982 studying at the graduate school of Hokkaidō University. Since 1995 he has been a part-time lecturer in the Japanese studies department at Tübingen University. He has also translated Enchi Fumiko's *Onnazaka* [Die Wartjahre; The Waiting Years] and Endō Shūsaku's *Fukai kawa* [Wiedergeburt am Ganges; Deep River], among other works.

"Used-Recent-New" Bookstores

Secondhand bookstores in Japan have conventionally confined their trade mainly to buying up used technical texts, rare books, and so on and reselling them at a premium.

Recently, however, a new breed of secondhand bookstore is spreading rapidly that specializes in selling recently published secondhand books, including bestsellers, paperbacks, and comic books, at discount prices.

The new-style establishments are called *shin-koshoten* ("used-and-recent-new bookstores") to distin-

guish them from conventional secondhand bookstores (*koshoten*). In the context of the Japanese publishing industry, where new- and used-book distribution routes are kept strictly separate under the resale price maintenance system, the new stores have thus formed a niche that cleverly fills the gap between the "recent-new" and "old-used" book markets.

Books sold at these stores are priced from around 20 percent to 50 percent of the fixed prices of new books. In some stores all books are reduced to ¥100 once they have been on the shelves for a certain period of time. Some books are sold almost simultaneously at these stores as new books in regular bookstores.

Another attraction of the new breed of stores is that, unlike the image of the musty, dimly lit rooms normally associated with secondhand bookstores, the shop floors are bright and clean. The books are even spruced up with a buffing machine so they look almost new when sold.

The prospect of being able to get topical books at low prices is making used-new-recent bookstores an increasingly popular option for consumers. Business at many of the stores is almost as brisk as at stores selling new books, and often even more so. In fact, used-recent bookstores are posing an increasing threat to new-book retailers as more and more consumers make used-recent bookstores their first stop when shopping for books.

Chain stores in the used-recent book market are doing particularly well. The Book-Off chain, the largest in the industry, has opened more than 4,000 outlets, including franchises as well as directly managed stores. Though so far concentrating mainly on suburban outlets, Book-Off is preparing to shift the focus of its expansion to inner-city bookstores. Mandarake, a chain specializing in used, recently published comic books, is also expanding its network of outlets. The four leading companies in the used-recent book market—Book-Off, Mandarake, For-You and Teitsū—are all planning to offer their stock for public subscription.

Mathematics Books Selling Well

Books on mathematics have recently become popular among Japanese readers. Leading the boom was the August 1998 publication of Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der Zahlen-teufel* in Japanese translation as *Kazu no akuma* [The Numbers Demon] (Shōbunsha). Centering around a "numbers demon" who teaches math to children, the book is enjoying considerable success among adult readers as well as children.

Attracting attention more recently is Amir D. Aczel's *Fermat's Last Theorem: Unlocking the Secret of an Ancient Mathematical Problem*, published in May 1999 as *Tensai sūgakusha-tachi ga idonda saidai no nanmon* (Hayakawa Shobō). While in essence an account of the developments leading up to the solving of Fermat's last theorem—a long-standing mathematical puzzle—the book traces the history of the field of mathematics from its beginnings in ancient Babylonia. The key to the book's popularity lies in its minimal use of mathematical formulas and its depiction of the epic intellectual struggles of mathematicians as an evolving human drama.

Another hot-selling math-related publication is *The Joy of π* by David Blatner, published in Japanese as *π no shimpi* (Artist House, 1999). A review of the history of calculations using *pi* (the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter), this book includes a number of interesting *pi*-related incidents and stories from various parts of the world. The appeal of the book's design, including the handling of mathematical formulas, has made it popular among young art-oriented readers as well.

Among recent math-related books written originally in Japanese, *Sūgaku wa sekai o kaimei dekiru ka?* [Can Mathematics Explain the World?] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1999) is selling well and Nishimura Kazuo et al., eds., *Bunsū ga dekinai daigakusei* [University Students Can't Do Fractions] (Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1999), which warns of the declining math skills of Japanese students, has aroused considerable public debate.

Translation and Myself

Ōoka Makoto

In January 1991, I was invited to a week-long international conference on “Translation East and West: A Cross Cultural Approach,” held at the University of Hawai‘i, and was asked to give the opening commemorative lecture at the plenary session on the first day. Asked to address the topic “Creativity of Translation: A Japanese Case,” I began by recounting the facts of how translation constitutes the core of culture in the essential sense; it played a crucial role in the process by which this small country at the Far Eastern edge of Asia emerged as a state from around the sixth century and by the eighth century had developed sophisticated social institutions, and gradually began to produce poets and prose writers of outstanding talent and evolve into a modern, civilized nation. Introducing numerous examples, I showed how nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan could, without exaggeration, have been called the foremost country in the world as far as translation was concerned. I concluded my lecture with the following words: “All communication is ultimately translation.”

The words of the great of other countries, whomever they may be, fall on deaf ears if not brought to us via translation. In appreciation of that reality, Japan is clearly among the countries where respect for translators is highest in the publishing industry. In 1986, I participated in the International P.E.N. Club’s meeting in New York and was present at the passing of a resolution supporting a declaration on protection of the rights of translators. Most of the demands presented at that meeting were for recognition of practices that seemed all too obvious, demands for amazingly basic legitimate rights such as rights of authorship for the translator equal to that of the original author. On that score, I believe that Japan can take pride in being an “advanced” nation when it comes to translation.

With regard to how translation relates to my own work, I can speak from my experience over the past twenty years, from the early 1980s, in international poetry writing projects. Our endeavors in this genre, *renshi*, which we call “linked verse,” have made the term fairly well known in Europe as well as the United States.

Insofar as linked verse is a joint creative process participated in by poets from various countries, obviously translation and translators play a decisive and central role. In all the publications in book form of our linked verse produced so far, the names of the translators have been given alongside the names of the poets on the title

page and elsewhere as necessary. Such books have been published from our linked-verse projects undertaken in Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, France, and Hawai‘i.

Our sessions for writing linked verse usually extend over two or three days. The poets and the translators who participate in the sessions hold equal status in the program. The endeavor can only succeed

through close collaboration. The number of people involved in our session held in Zurich, Switzerland, was particularly large. From Japan there were Tanigawa Shuntarō and myself, and as Switzerland is a land where three languages are spoken, there was one poet representing each of the three languages. Naturally each poet required three or more translators to render his/her poems into the other three languages. For example, the poetry produced in Japanese had to be immediately translated into German, French, and Italian, but the translators were not necessarily highly experienced professionals. So, to cope with the linked verse created in three languages in Switzerland there were more than ten translators for the five poets. They sat around a table in a large room, where—and this is as it should be—they helped each other out, asking probing questions about meaning and nuance and offering brilliant and skillful solutions and answers that flew about the room as they worked. All the linked-verse sessions I have participated in so far have proved valuable opportunities for new discoveries related to the creation of linked verse and for development of friendships.

The translation of my own books has offered other very gratifying and productive experiences. My collections of poetry have been translated into English, French, German, Chinese, Spanish, Dutch, Macedonian, and other languages. A number of collections of my essays have come out in English and French. These publications are the result of close collaboration and frequent consultation between myself and the translator in each case. Knowing that someone who understands me very well has translated my work into another language gives me a solid sense of confidence in the translation, giving me an inexpressible pleasure in the knowledge that it can thereby make its way to unknown readers of other languages.

Ōoka Makoto was born in Mishima, Shizuoka prefecture, in 1931. A poet and literary critic, he has served as professor at Meiji University and the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. He was chair of the Japan P.E.N. Club and board member of the Japan Writers’ Association.

Graduating from the faculty of literature of the University of Tokyo in 1953, he made his first mark in Japan’s literary world with *Gendaishi shiron* [A Study of Contemporary Poetry], published in 1955, and his first collection of poems, *Kioku to genzai* [Memory and the Present] in 1956. He is winner of many awards, including the Yomiuri Literary Prize in 1971 for *Ki no Tsurayuki* [Ki no Tsurayuki (tenth-century waka poet)] and in 1980 the Kikuchi Kan Prize for *Ori-ori no uta* (A Poet’s Notebook; Ōoka’s selections of poetry from all eras, with annotations, serialized in the *Asahi shimbun* newspaper, now in more than 5,000 installments; English translation in the Sunday edition of the *Asahi Evening News*). Major collections of his poems include *Haru shōjo ni* [For a Girl in Springtime] (1978), *Kokyō no mizu e no messēji* [Odes to the Waters of My Hometown] (1992), and *Hi no yuigon* [The Last Will of Fire] (1995). English publications of his works include *A String Around Autumn*, *Poems* (1982), and *Beneath the Sleepless Tossing of the Planets* (1996). Among major collections of his critical essays are *Utage to koshin* [The Banquet and the Solitary Mind] (1978), and *Ori-ori no uta*, English translation, *A Poet’s Anthology: The Range of Japanese Poetry* (1994).

