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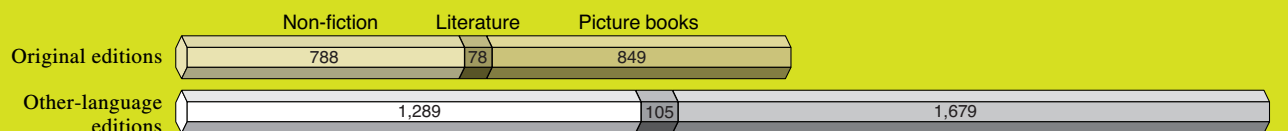
# Japanese Book News

Adventure and Travel Books Since the 1960s

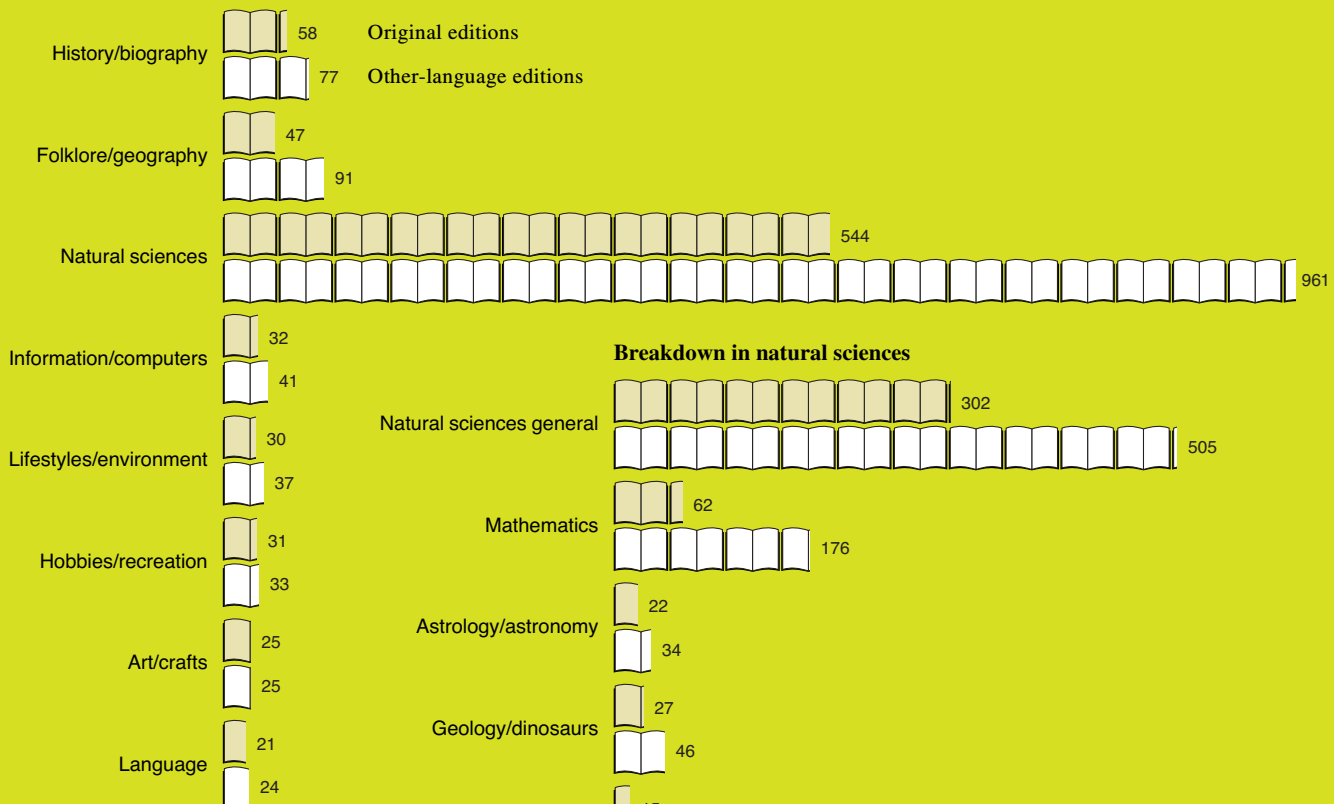
Conscripted to Caregiving: Japanese Women Today

Books for Cultural Exchange and International Cooperation

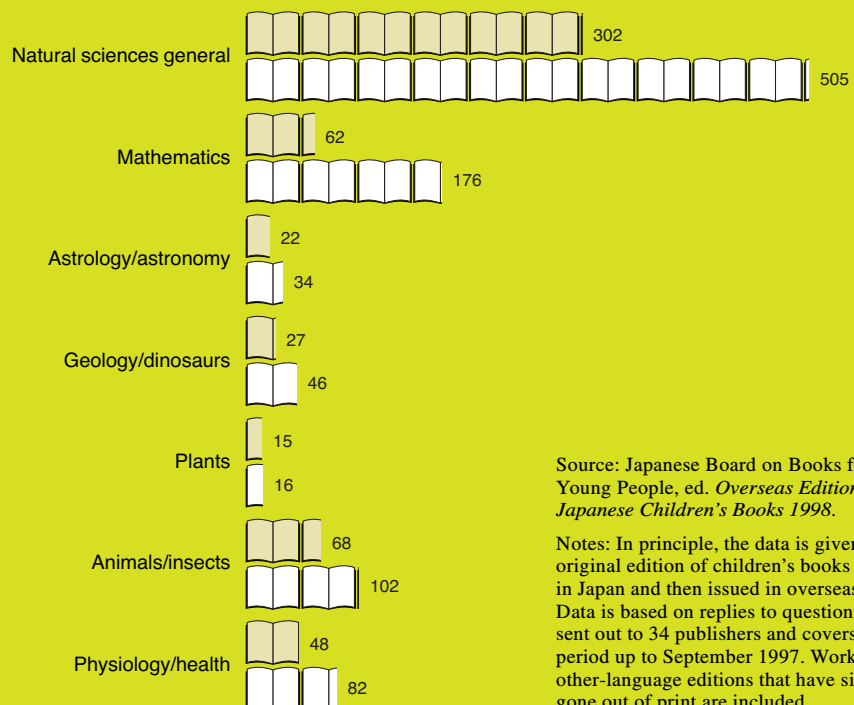
## Japanese Children's Books Translated and Published in Other Languages



### Non-fiction breakdown



### Breakdown in natural sciences



Source: Japanese Board on Books for Young People, ed. *Overseas Editions of Japanese Children's Books 1998*.

Notes: In principle, the data is given for the original edition of children's books published in Japan and then issued in overseas editions. Data is based on replies to questionnaires sent out to 34 publishers and covers the period up to September 1997. Works in other-language editions that have since gone out of print are included.



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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Publishers mentioned in the data given in the New Titles section are located in Tokyo unless otherwise noted. Further information about the titles may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 21.

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## Contents

### Adventure and Travel Books Since the 1960s

*Konishi Kō* ..... 1

### Conscripted to Caregiving: Japanese Women Today

*Kadono Haruko* ..... 3

### Japanese Books Abroad

Books for Cultural Exchange and International Cooperation

*Kartini Nurdin* ..... 6

### From the Publishing Scene

A Best-seller Poetry Collection and Its Readers

*Koyama Tetsurō* ..... 7

Harry Potter Hits Japan

*Ikari Haruo* ..... 7

New Titles ..... 8

Events and Trends ..... 20

### In Their Own Words

The Sound of Meaning

*Kadono Eiko* ..... 22

## From the Editor

Many young college students today make use of their university holidays to take off on backpacking journeys to developing countries in Asia or Africa, often inspired by books written by the pioneers of the "footloose generation" of the 1970s. The resulting genre of adventure and travel books has appealed broadly to young readers and old. What is the fascination of travel that transcends generations? Travel writer Konishi Kō, with extensive experience in Asia and Africa, introduces the history of the travel genre and insights on its growth.

From April 2000, Japan will introduce its nursing care insurance system. Although the new system was intended to support caregiving particularly to senior citizens without family members to provide care, its implementation has created many new problems, such as a screening system that may rank older people in need of support into the "independent" (i.e., self-sufficient) category, and disparities in the quality of services available from one municipality to another. We asked Kadono Haruko, critic and non-fiction writer who has written several books on care of the elderly, to comment on the issues of the caregiving insurance system and care of the elderly in Japan as a whole.

Japanese Books Abroad reports on translation and publishing activities in the non-profit sector in Indonesia, which is struggling to energize its publishing industry despite the crippling impact of the Asian financial crisis.

In From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō introduces a recently published best-selling poetry anthology that proved wrong the notion that nobody reads poetry; the volume's startling success, he comments, is evidence that many people are earnestly seeking answers to their questions on the meaning of life. Expert on best-selling books Ikari Haruo describes the behind-the-scenes story of how the first title in the global best-seller *Harry Potter* series finally came out in late 1999.

Finally, in In Their Own Words, Kadono Eiko, prolific author of children's books including the widely loved chronicle of a girl's growing up, *Majo no takkyūbin* [The Witch's Delivery Service], shares her thoughts on the importance of rhythm in producing a successful translation.

*Japanese Book News* address:

[http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/media/publish/4\\_04right.html](http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/media/publish/4_04right.html)

# Adventure and Travel Books Since the 1960s

Konishi Kō

Books in the travel/adventure genre in Japan before and soon after World War II tended to be expedition journals by scholars and scientists or travelogues by journalists, but a new style emerged in the early 1960s. Leading examples were *Dokutoru Mambō kōkaiki* [tr. as *Doctor Mambo at Sea*, 1987] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1960) by novelist Kita Morio (known for his prize-winning *The House of Nire*), recounting the author's six-month experience as a doctor on a Fisheries Agency survey boat, and *Nan-demo mite yarō* [I'll See It All] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1961) by novelist and critic Oda Makoto, recording his observations traveling in the United States. Both books became big best-sellers at a time when overseas travel was restricted, so readers welcomed books that gave them entertaining vicarious access to the authors' experiences. Tales of adventure to remote places were also popular, as was the series by journalist Honda Katsuichi, who lived among the Inuits in arctic Canada. Honda's accounts, first serialized in the evening editions of the *Asahi Shimbun* in 1963, were later published in book form as *Kanada Esukimō* [Canadian Eskimos] (Suzusawa Shoten, 1972). The appeal of these travelogues was not only their wealth of fascinating stories but also the image of other countries offered from the level of the ordinary traveler as opposed to that of the scholar, journalist, or bureaucrat.

In 1964, travel overseas became much freer, although there were still some restrictions, especially on how much foreign currency could be taken abroad. The 1960s were a decade of turmoil, with the outbreak of the Vietnam War in 1960, the onset of the Cultural Revolution in China in 1965, and the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Attention centered on eyewitness accounts by war correspondents. Among outstanding titles were *Minami Betonamu sensō jūgunki* [A War Correspondent's Report from South Vietnam] (Iwanami Shoten, 1965) by Okamura Akihiko and *Saigon no ichiban nagai hi* [Saigon's Longest Day] (Bungei Shunjū, 1986) by Kondō Kōichi. Also widely read were reports from the battlefield, such as those by photographer Ishikawa Bun'yō and novelist and journalist Kaikō Takeshi.

The generation of the late 1960s was disenchanted with the world view of their parents who had experienced World War II. Haunted by pessimism and disillusionment, young people turned their attention inward, looking at themselves more deeply, and the throbbing beats of rock 'n' roll gained popularity. The 1970s was an era when established values came tumbling down, and new, more diverse values emerged to take their place.

Reflecting the trends of the new era, countless adventure/travel books published in the 1970s dealt with the quest for self-discovery. Dropping out of school or society to wander the world became the thing to do. With the advent of rapid economic growth and the rise in the value of the yen, it became easier to travel abroad, especially in Asian countries, which are close and where

travel is relatively inexpensive. Journalists sent to Vietnam wrote about brief flings of living in Hong Kong or working in part-time jobs of dubious reputation in Bangkok on their way back from assignments to cover the war.

Not only journalists, but ordinary people found it easier to travel abroad independently, even for extended stays, while searching for themselves and their identity as Japanese. It was also a time when university climbing and exploration clubs were in their heyday, an atmosphere that produced world-famous explorer and mountaineer Uemura Naomi. Writers in this tradition today include Sekino Yoshiharu, known for his Great Journey series, as well as Nishiki Masaaki and Funado Yōichi, both university expedition club members in their youth and widely read authors of adventure fiction.

## Footloose Generation Travel Writers

Among photographer-writers who captured the sensibilities of this "footloose generation" was Fujiwara Shin'ya, born in 1944. After dropping out of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, he spent 1969 and most of the 1970s wandering about Asia and the Middle East. Images of his roving in India and Bangladesh were published with accompanying text in the leading photographic magazine of the time, *Asahi Graph*. In 1972, the series was republished as his first book, *Indo hōrō* [Travels in India] (Asahi Shimbunsha). Fujiwara is often associated with India, and this association originates with that work. He uses the Chinese characters for "Indo" (India), which is usually written with *katakana* script, in order to emphasize the Oriental image of the country. He later traveled in Tibet, Morocco, Kenya, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere and produced a number of books, including *Chibetto hōrō* [Travels in Tibet] (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1977) and *Shōyō yūki* [Traveling Afoot] (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1978). Fujiwara's journeys, although described using the Japanese word *hōrō*—roving or wandering without a plan—were typically visits to important sacred and religious sites, making them more like pilgrimages, and the counterculture generation responded enthusiastically to his experiences and reflections. The combination of photographs and text was an effective medium for creating a mystique in which fact mingles with fiction and intimacy with his spiritual journey.

Keeping pace with the irresponsible, non-committal tenor of the 1980s, when people laughed off all notions of quest for truth as outmoded idealism, Fujiwara refocused his camera on the new trends, presenting his comment on the contemporary realities of Japan and its people in *Zen Tōyō kaidō* [The Great East Asian Highway] (Shūeisha, 1981; awarded the Mainichi Art Prize), *Tōkyō hyōryū* [Wanderings in Tokyo] (Jōhō Sentā Shuppankyoku, 1983), and *Chichi no umi* [Sea of Mother's Milk] (Jōhō Sentā Shuppankyoku, 1984). These

books raised the author to the status of virtual cult figure of the footloose generation.

*Zen Tōyō kaidō* recounts his journey through Asia starting from Istanbul and the Black Sea, passing through the Middle East, India, China, Korea, and ending finally in Japan at the famous Buddhist holy site on Mt. Kōya. Feeling his interest in people gradually fading, Fujiwara sought through his journey to recapture a feel for humanity that would inject new life into his work. At the beginning and end of the book he effectively and symbolically cites the comment of a hooker he met on the journey: “You see, human beings are flesh and blood; they are full of feelings and emotions. . . .” *Tōkyō hyōryū* vividly documents Japanese society using photographic and narrative techniques refined in previous works. *Chichi no umi* predicts the distortions and unintended tragedies that would result from the families with absent and overworked fathers and the mother-dominant society of the postwar decades.

Another overseas wanderer roughly contemporary with Fujiwara was Sawaki Kōtarō, who was also extremely popular among young people of his time. Born in 1947 and a graduate of Yokohama National University, Sawaki spent the mid-1970s traveling and writing documentaries. His journey from Hong Kong to Europe via India and the Silk Road—an experience that led much later to production in 1986 of the best-seller *Shin’ya tokkyū* [Midnight Express]—was a typical backpacker journey of the 1970s. Following in the path of the hippies, he put up at cheap inns and visited towns and villages for no particular purpose, staying a number of days before moving on. He perfected a signature style of solo journey moving from one place to another as the spirit moved him, and allowing his thoughts to wander freely as he gazed at the world passing by his train window. Although he says his writing is modeled after Oda Makoto and reporter-writer Takenaka Tsutomu, he seems to be coolly enjoying his own private world, completely free from obsession with the spiritual pilgrimage of Fujiwara or fervor for a cause of Oda. Sawaki’s style has had a strong impact on subsequent generations.

Another contemporary of Fujiwara is Shiina Makoto [see *Japanese Book News*, No. 21, p. 22], who popularized a more laid-back, spontaneous approach to adventure and exploration. Setting off with what he dubbed his team of “wacky adventurers” to little-known parts of the world, he wrote numerous travelogues presented in an easy-going style but with substantial content. His unique travel accounts, published in such works as *Indo de washi mo kangaeta* [I, Too, Did Some Thinking in India] (Shōgakukan, 1987) and *Shiberia mugen* [Fantasy in Siberia] (Jōhō Sentā Shuppankyoku, 1993), still enjoy a large following.

Overseas travel increased sharply during the overheated “bubble” economy of the latter half of the 1980s. Partly due to the strong yen, people discovered that it was cheaper to go abroad than to vacation at domestic resorts. Since the end of the 1970s, magazines have grown to catalog-like sizes, a trend set by Magazine House, publisher of several popular magazines. They began carrying feature articles on overseas vacation spots and “travel as a lifestyle.” Travel also became the ubiquitous

topic of radio and television programs as well as articles and features in the newspapers and other mass media. Group tours became established as the easy-to-plan way to enjoy a vacation.

The rapid increase in the number of tourists going abroad created a demand for more information about other countries. Kuramae Jin’ichi, upon returning home from his 1980s wanderings in India and Nepal, founded *Ryokōjin*, a magazine to meet the needs of the kind of backpackers he had met during his journey. He also published *Gō gō Indo* [Go, Go, India] (Gaifūsha, 1986), an account of his travels in India completely different from those of the “spiritual quest” generation typified by Fujiwara or artist Yokoo Tadanori. His approach is much lighter, but he displays an assiduous attention to detail that makes experienced backpackers invariably nod in affirmation. The author is a talented illustrator as well, which added to the physical appeal of the book.

### Trends Since the 1990s

The Kuramae style influenced many later adventure books and travelogues, with most travel-journal-cum-guidebook publications being illustrated with photographs and drawings. As travel became more familiar, demand grew in proportion for original travel accounts. Today people’s destinations have expanded from Asia to Africa, Latin America, as well as polar and other remote regions.

One of the more remarkable projects in this genre was the successful television program featuring a trek across the Eurasian continent by the comedy pair Saruganseki. Hitchhiking and working at odd jobs to earn their way, they presented a deliberate antithesis to the usual images of planned and comfortable travel. The book based on their poor man’s-style journey, entitled *Saruganseki nikki* [Diary of Saruganseki] (Nihon Television Network Corporation, 1996), became a record best-seller. It sold widely among young people who virtually never read books. Saruganseki simply took the Sawaki and Kuramae approach one step further, but the media impact of the television program, aided by the comic duo’s talent, reportedly continues to inspire young people who ask travel agents to help them arrange trips on the Saruganseki model.

“Now that overseas travel is common and relevant information is in abundance, adventure and travel books are likely to become more topic-oriented and specialized,” Kuramae says, pinning his hopes on travel experts with a specific theme, such as Maekawa Ken’ichi (Thailand), Shimokawa Yūji (traveling cheaply in Asia), and Guregori Aoyama (Asian tour guide through *manga* comics). A promising young photographer named Kobayashi Kisei has won many fans for *Ajian Japanizu* [Asian Japanese] (Jōhō Sentā Shuppankyoku, 1995), a collection of photographs of Japanese traveling in Asia. *Mono kuu hitobito* [People Who Eat] (Kyōdō Tsūshinsha, 1994; see *Japanese Book News*, No. 9, p. 13), an account of novelist and journalist Henmi Yō’s food-oriented world travels presented as a warning to Japan’s overly well-fed society. This book was also made into a television program.

*Continued on p. 5*

# Conscripted to Caregiving: Japanese Women Today

Kadono Haruko

When a woman marries, she acquires four parents in place of two. I turned sixty-three this year, and have spent twenty-four years caring for both my ex-husband's parents and my own, and am currently caring for the last surviving. I am told that my caregiving years are a relatively short span, and I realize that I am among the more fortunate in being able to devote time to my own work as well.

As a general rule in Japan, responsibility for the care of elderly parents falls upon the women in the family—daughters-in-law, daughters, or wives—and this they undertake while shouldering the bulk of household chores and child-rearing duties. They may also be working part-time (which is often equivalent to a full-time workload without any benefits) or even be blessed with a regular full-time job. On top of all this, they contribute what they can to daily recharging of the vitality of worker-bee husbands whose jobs may at any day be snatched away in the name of corporate “restructuring.”

Although social support services are slowly evolving, the majority of women, whether full- or part-time workers, are forced to give up their jobs, however reluctantly, and become full-time family caregivers simply because the cheapest solution is to mobilize female family members and because many elderly parents still dislike the idea of being cared for by people outside the family circle. Women who are full-time housewives, needless to say, are even more likely to be expected to take on the role of caregiver.

This conscription to caregiving has contributed to the rising divorce rate, increased incidences of abuse of the elderly, burn-out and untimely death of care providers, outright murder, combined murder and suicide, and desertion. The fact that the vast majority of Japanese women, whether driven by their Confucian morality or by social pressure, nevertheless endure this role is due in part to the inadequacy of employment and other opportunities that would allow them any other option; divorced women face a harsh world should they attempt to establish independence.

*Rōshin o suteraremasu ka?* [Could You Abandon Your Aging Parents?] (Shufunotomo Sha, 1994; see *Japanese Book News*, No. 9, p. 14) deals with the circumstances before and after my escape from the institutionalized slavery of being a daughter-in-law. After spending many years traveling back and forth by bullet train between Tokyo and Nara (some 550 kilometers away) to care for my father, who lived in the former, and my mother-in-law, who lived in the latter, I watched them breathe their last only to find that my father-in-law who, at seventy-six years of age, had never had to do anything for himself in his life, was unable to function on his own.

I was forty and a full-time housewife. I moved to Nara with my adolescent son and daughter, spent seven years with him, and when my children graduated from high school and went to Tokyo to work, I graduated from my

marriage. I got a divorce and went to Tokyo too. As I received no “severance pay” for my two decades of service as a housewife, I had to restart my life under very straitened circumstances. But I was exhilarated by the fresh air of freedom and launched with enthusiasm into a new career as a freelance writer.

To my surprise, my ex-father-in-law, responsibility for whom I assumed I had returned to my ex-husband, followed me and came to stay. I trained him, now an old man of eighty-three, to perform household chores and berated him soundly when he made mistakes, hoping, of course, that he would go back to Nara. But within half a year, he had mastered these tasks and in a year, he had achieved a complete turnaround, becoming indispensable to both my office-worker daughter and myself and establishing himself as part of the family. A movie based on this book will be released in April 2000.

## Speaking from First-hand Experience

My father-in-law, who demonstrated that human beings abound in potential right up to the end, passed away four years later, and in his place came my bedridden mother. Swaddled in diapers, she made herself utterly at home, taking completely for granted that I, as her daughter, would care for her. My mother bore and raised five children, but my affection for her was irreparably stunted because she had forced us to endure circumstances of extreme poverty in order to send only her sons to university and graduate school. Despite her special treatment of her sons, their highly educated wives refused to be saddled with the care of their husbands' mother. Brought up to be caring toward others (like so many women), I naturally reached out to my lonely mother.

My daughter had just quit her job as an office worker to go to vocational school to obtain a license in certified nursing care, so I left my mother in her hands while I hurried about applying for the various public welfare services for the elderly. My mother, perhaps from the shock of the betrayal by her sons on whom she had been counting, vented the frustrations arising from her age and illness at me. The incredibly arrogant, intolerant things she used to say were so absurd and funny that I compiled them in a book, *Netakiri babā no mōgoroku* [Mad Ravings of a Bedridden Hag] (Kōdansha, 1999) and *Netakiri babā tachiagaru!!* [The Bedridden Old Hag Takes Her Stand!!] (Kōdansha, 1997). These became the basis for the 1998 NHK television serial “Ten Urara,” which in 1999 was also aired in such countries as the United States, Canada, Taiwan, and Cambodia under the English title “Ulala!”

Gradually I became infuriated by the scarcity of public services for the elderly and the arrogant attitude of the officials in charge of what services were available. As an obedient taxpayer, didn't I have a right to those services? I fought every inch of the way, determined to exploit

every available service for family caregivers. And then, seeking to make a clear demarcation between what could be claimed as a natural human right and what was stepping into the realm of egoism, I placed my mother temporarily in a nursing home and made a three-week journey to investigate welfare-for-the-aged conditions in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.

After I had compiled and published a comparison of caregiving in Japan and Europe as *Rōshin no kaigo de chikara tsukiru mae ni* [Before You Burn Out Caring for Your Aging Parents] (Gakuyō Shobō, 1995), my now-certified caregiver daughter announced that she wanted to use her savings to study at the University of California, Berkeley. I wanted to release my daughter, who was then thirty-nine, from the responsibility of caring for her grandmother, and it also occurred to me that she might be happier studying overseas than getting married in Japan. I think it is not an exaggeration to say that the declining marriage and birth rates are a sign of women's protest. After watching their mothers helplessly mired in the hell of nursing elderly relatives, many young women have concluded that marriage is nothing more than a gratuitous caregiving system. They have witnessed the discrimination against women that persists in society from cradle to grave.

To my surprise, however, less than three weeks after she began studying in an English language program in Berkeley, my daughter found herself being assiduously wooed by a Norwegian-born American forty-six years old and already a two-time divorcee. Like many women at the end of the twentieth century, my daughter, while on the one hand aspiring to a career and independence, at the same time also longed to hold and nurture a child of her own. She had once told me that she could not imagine a life without children, but in Japan, one must almost literally tear oneself in two to achieve both career and independence, and my daughter, who suffers from atopy, was physically not that strong.

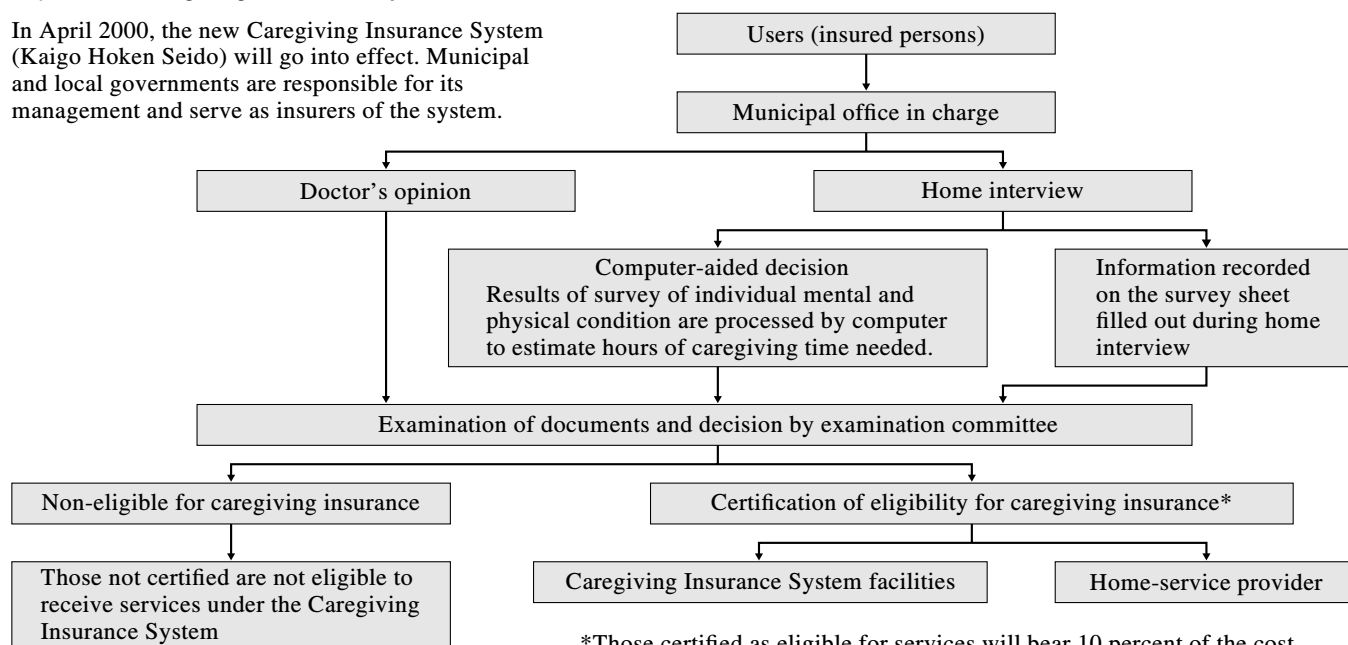
She lived with her partner for one year to see if he was really capable of household work and parenting, and especially to be sure that he was not the type of man who might become violent for any reason. They married, and through the good offices of the woman president of his company, they were able to purchase a student apartment house very cheaply. He acts as caretaker while she is the proprietor. Together the two are raising their child, an angel of one year and two months.

After my daughter married, my writing took a new turn. For a year and a half, I had been writing a series, "Waga baba kaigo nissshi" [Nursing the Old Hag: A Diary] in the economic daily *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*. It dealt primarily with the day-to-day problems of caring for my mother, but comments on my daughter's marriage, the birth of her child, and the charms of her little angel, and then on my son's angels began to dominate the column as I looked at my grandchildren in the context of an internationalized world. I compiled the series, including a report on barrier-free living in California and on Japanese-American nursing homes, into a book of the same title (Kairyūsha, 1998), followed by a sequel, *Kitte mo kirenai waga baba kaigo* [Caring for the Old Hag: Can't Quit Even If I Want To] (Kairyūsha, 1999), which was dramatized for the stage by the Gekidan Hōyū theater company and has been touring Japan since its opening at Haiyūza theater in January 1999.

I am currently writing a book tentatively titled *Rōgo wa manshon* [Is Life after Retirement an Apartment?] (Iwanami Shoten), about barrier-free dwellings and the community. I believe my books have been comparatively successful because they have carved out a new niche, transforming the ordinarily depressing, gloomy topic of caring for the elderly into the new genre of "caregiver entertainment" starring the "bedridden old hag." Another factor in their appeal may be my emphasis on the basic human rights of the caregiver, which has received little attention compared with the moral obligation to care for

## Japanese Caregiving Insurance System: How It Works

In April 2000, the new Caregiving Insurance System (Kaigo Hoken Seido) will go into effect. Municipal and local governments are responsible for its management and serve as insurers of the system.



the elderly in this ostensibly Confucian culture. My position has won solid support from many women as well as some men.

### The New Caregiving Insurance System

As long as the women of Japan, including myself, continue to care for family members without remuneration, the government and administration will continue to shirk its responsibility to establish solid welfare services. Social welfare objectives for the year 2000 in the Gold Plan and the New Gold Plan were laid out by the national government, and local governments have drawn up implementation programs in accordance with those objectives. Without exception, all these programs tout the “socialization of care-giving.” This concept, however, does not signify a burden sharing, such as can be found in Scandinavia, where professionals are paid to take care of the physical needs of the elderly while the family provides spiritual and emotional support. Rather, it seems to amount to little more than a bit of benevolent charity on the part of the government to partially alleviate the burden on the family. Even more discouraging, although such plans have been made, there is no money to execute them. The government continues to pour billions of yen into shoring up failed banks, funding U.S. military bases on Japanese soil, and developing the Self-Defense Forces, supposedly to cope with possible emergencies in “surrounding regions,” and squandering taxes on useless public works, so naturally there are no funds left over to invest in people’s well-being.

The national government and many local governments have pointed out that realization of these ambitious plans is impossible, and consequently, nursing care insurance is being introduced, which essentially means “if you want any services, you have to pay for them.” What leaves me speechless with amazement and disgust is that we were given the exact same spiel when the new consumer tax was introduced several years ago. I heard it stated then that the funds generated through the introduction of the 3-percent consumption tax were to be used for social welfare programs; yet despite the fact that the consumer tax was raised from 3 to 5 percent, all of the proceeds have been squandered as described earlier as well as on construction of impressive architectural edifices (e.g., community halls and museums) with no operating budgets to perform the functions for which they were built.

Even in April 2000, when the new nursing care insurance system is inaugurated, once again the “socialization of care-giving,” which will mean that people like my

mother surviving on a meager pension must pay for insurance, is premised on the blatant assumption that the family will produce the main caregivers. My mother, for example, uses a home helper nine hours a week, but because she is able, with that assistance, to function normally, she will be categorized as “independent” under the new insurance screening system. Who is going to care for such elderly people with less serious disabilities who must not only pay insurance but will no longer be able to obtain the support of a local government-sponsored home helper if they are registered as “independent”? Who is going to make it possible for my mother to be independent and support her lifestyle? The assumption is, of course, that I, as her daughter, will naturally pay the insurance and take care of her. I, however, am overwhelmed with work and in a practical sense able to do very little. The natural consequence then is that my mother will be neglected, and as her anxiety and isolation increase, her condition will once again deteriorate. Even if their applications to receive care are approved, the majority of lower-income elderly people will be unable to afford the average annual fee of 60,000–70,000 yen and will be forced to forfeit their right to receive benefits of the insurance. As I see it, this system can only result in a massive increase in the number of literally bedridden senior citizens.

Propaganda touting the new insurance proclaims that by paying for it, the recipient is given the right to use it, and therefore it will be easier for those in need to request help. But you cannot call it a right if the person must first be screened to see if they are eligible to exercise that “right.” In fact, the basic human right of each individual to demand care is already enshrined in the constitution regardless of whether the individual pays the insurance fees or not.

The only message that comes across loud and clear is the government’s eagerness to sneak in a third form of tax on Japanese citizens in the name of nursing care insurance. Meanwhile, it evades the questions those citizens want answered. How much tax or insurance must we pay to receive what type of service? When will we be allowed to live, grow old, fall ill, and die with dignity as human beings? For how long must women sacrifice their own lives and aspirations in order to care for others? When will women be able to enjoy bearing and raising children and still live their own lives? Is it possible for us to resurrect, in the near future, the family in which man and woman, parent and child are united by genuine bonds of love? (*Kadono Haruko is a non-fiction writer.*)

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*Continued from p. 2*

Also noteworthy are travel works by women as well as authors middle-aged or older. Among the many outstanding women adventure/travel writers are Takano Takako, who reached the North Pole on a dog sled and published her story in *Teppen kara mita masshiroi chikyū* [The Pure White Earth I Saw from Its Very Top] (The Japan Times, 1993) and Kishimoto Yōko, chronicler of travel in Asia in such works as *Binetsu no shima Taiwan* [Taiwan, Island with a Slight Fever] (Gaifūsha, 1989).

This niche in the travel book genre is bound to flourish.

Today, when information just about any part of the world is at your fingertips via the Internet and a traveler at the South Pole can call home by cell phone, the realities of travel are far less harsh. Anyone with the money and the time can literally go wherever he or she pleases. Still, as the needs of travelers become increasingly specialized, there continues to be ample scope for development in the travelogue genre. (*Konishi Kō is a travel writer and lecturer at Ryūkyoku University.*)



## Books for Cultural Exchange and International Cooperation

Kartini Nurdin

Books play a vital role in education and the dissemination of information. And yet the publishing of books and other printed material "has never received the attention that it deserves from development specialists, government authorities, or research institutes" (Philip G. Altbach, *Pencrbitan Dan Pembangunan* [Books and Development], Yayasan Obor Indonesia). The traditional assumption is that the publishing industry will naturally emerge to meet the needs of a modernizing society. The link between book publishing and modernization has been used by many researchers and analysts as an indicator of the level of advancement of a society.

Indonesia has lagged far behind other Asian countries in the book publishing industry. For example, Malaysia and Singapore both publish a larger number of titles every year than does Indonesia. The impact of the Asian monetary crisis on the publishing industry in Indonesia was especially severe. More than 50 percent of publishing houses temporarily stopped publishing due to the tripling of the cost of materials.

It was in response to this difficult situation that Program Pustaka was launched by Yayasan Adikarya IKAPI (Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia, Indonesian Publishers Association) in September 1998. With the support of the Ford Foundation, the program is designed to assist the publication of scholarly books written in Indonesian and other languages. In the case of books by overseas authors, it will help to defray the cost of translation. The program had a budget of U.S.\$400,000 for 1998, to be used to publish a total of 150 titles. Recently extended to July 2000, a supplementary grant of U.S.\$300,000 was provided for publication of an additional 80 titles. Eighty percent of book production costs can be covered for books that meet the requirements of the program.

Major publisher Yayasan Obor Indonesia took the initiative to tackle the difficulties of the monetary crisis by organizing an international workshop held in Bali in March 1998. Entitled "International Workshop on the Strategy and Role of Publishers in Situation," it was attended by seventy-five participants, including domestic and foreign book publishers and a number of domestic and foreign donor institutions. Domestic publishers are mostly members of IKAPI, while those from overseas included affiliates of Obor, the International Book Institute Inc. of Pakistan, and others from Thailand, Morocco, Vietnam, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and representatives of APNET (African Publishing Network).

Discussion revolved around opportunities and needs for subsidies for book publication and what publishers could do to cope with their difficulties. After the workshop, the Ford Foundation invited a number of experts to discuss ways and means to continue the publication of scholarly books and the need for subsidies. Program Pustaka was born from that meeting.

Yayasan Obor Indonesia (YOI) is a non-profit organization engaging in cultural activities and initiating new approaches to cultural exchange. Its initial activities, inspired by a UNESCO report in 1973 that described Indonesia as suffering from "book starvation," included translation and publication in Bahasa Indonesia of books necessary to provide wider horizons of thinking, disseminate democratic ideals, and broaden knowledge of Indonesia's history, culture, and future. YOI translated and published books like *Only One World*, by Barbara Ward and René Dubois, *Human Environment and National Development*, by Otto Soemarwoto, *Peddlers and Princes*, by Clifford Geertz, and *Islam di Indonesia*, a collection of essays on Islam in Indonesia by Taufik Abdullah. In addition, it also published books on national leadership, nation-building, and citizen participation in political life by scholars of Indonesia and other countries with a view to encouraging domestic debate and intercultural exchange.

YOI cooperates and collaborates with other organizations that have similar interests and use books as a vehicle for promotion, communication, and cultural exchange. Its strategy is to pursue contacts with organizations both domestic and overseas that have book publication programs and engage in cultural cooperation and technology transfer. YOI also works with organizations in Japan, such as the International Society for Educational Information, Inc., Tokyo, which has provided support for four titles on Japan published in cooperation with Gadjah Mada University Press, Yogyakarta: *Japanese Youth in a Changing Society*, by Hisao Naka (1977); *Japanese History*, by Taro Sakamoto (1971); *Women's Status*, by Masu Okamura (1973), and *Japan and Its World*, by Marius Jansen (1980). The Japan Foundation also assisted YOI with the publication of *Pemberontakan Indonesia pada masa Pendudukan Jepang* [Reader on the War Years], a book edited by Nagazumi Akira and published in 1988. The Toyota Foundation has also assisted with the publication under its "Know Our Neighbors" program.

Aside from Japanese comics, which have flooded the market for children's books, translated books about Japan or written by Japanese writers are still quite rare in Indonesia. Even YOI, which is responsible for a fifth of all translated books from Japanese, put out only eleven titles.

Melina Mercouri's reminder, voiced long ago in *The Washington Post* (24 October 1982), that "the more you know of another country's historical and cultural life, the less you will be willing to destroy or distort it," continues to inspire efforts to strengthen cooperation and better understanding between peoples. Books may be the best means to creating and widening cooperation and collaboration.

Relations between Japan and Indonesia are quite good, but translation and publication of books about Japan or written by Japanese writers should be promoted for better mutual understanding in the coming twenty-first century. (Kartini Nurdin is general manager, Yayasan Obor Indonesia.)



## A Best-seller Poetry Collection and Its Readers

Koyama Tetsurō

Poet Ibaragi Noriko's first collection of poems to be published in seven years, *Yorikakarazu* [I Won't Be Dependent] has become a best-seller, an extraordinary hit for a normally inconspicuous genre. Published in early October 1999 with the first printing of 5,000 copies, it went on to sell out numerous additional printings. At this writing, it was in its ninth printing, for a total of 145,000 copies, and the demand continues.

The enthusiastic reception given the book was partly the result of high praise in the national daily *Asahi Shimbun*'s front-page column "Tensei jingo" (Vox Populi, Vox Dei) immediately after it first came out. Even so, its popularity has startled the publishing world, since anthologies of contemporary poems are usually limited to original printings of 1,000 or 2,000 copies.

Among Japan's leading women poets, Ibaragi, born in 1926, is now seventy-three. Since she was young, she has articulated in plain language the resolution of women to live with hope. As in the title poem from *Yorikakarazu*, her new anthology expresses this same message:

*Mohaya deki ai no shisō ni wa yorikakari taku nai*  
*Mohaya deki ai no shūkyō ni wa yorikakari taku nai*  
*Mohaya deki ai no gakumon ni wa yorikakari taku nai*  
*Mohaya ikanaru ken'i ni mo yorikakari taku wa nai*  
*Nagaku ikite shinsoko mananda no wa soregurai*  
*Jibun no jimoku*  
*Jibun no ni-hon no ashi nomi de tatteite*  
*Nani futsugō no koto ya aru*

I don't want to depend on ready-made ideas any more.  
 I don't want to depend on ready-made religion any more.  
 I don't want to depend on ready-made learning any more.  
 I don't want to depend on any sort of authority.  
 That is about all I really have learned in my long life.  
 Seeing with my eyes, listening with my own ears,

Standing on my own two feet,  
 What could be wrong with this?

It is clear and easy to understand, and she has further polished not only the vitality of her stalwart attitude toward life but the eloquence of the language with which she expresses it.

Much of Japanese poetry is difficult to understand, putting it out of reach of the general reader. Poetry collections, however, should not be meant for only a few to enjoy. Ibaragi's recent success is significant in that it demonstrates that if a poet uses language that is true to herself, she will be enthusiastically received. The success of *Yorikakarazu* no doubt astounds other poets as much as publishers.

*Yorikakarazu*'s other coup is that it has found a new following among the middle-aged and elderly. According to its publisher, Chikuma Shobō, the bulk of readers are women in their sixties and seventies, who send in letters saying how much the poems have been their "salvation" or given them strength.

Over the last several years, a number of books by American writer and poet May Sarton have been translated into Japanese. Among them is *Journal of a Solitude*, translated as *Hitori-i no nikki* (published by Misuzu Shobō, 1991) and now in its tenth printing, with 19,000 copies in print. The Japanese translation of American critic and poet Malcolm Cowley's *The View from 80*, under the title *Yasoji kara nagamereba*, published by Sōshisha in the summer of 1999, has also been favorably received, and is now in its eighth printing, selling 36,000 copies.

The recent boom is evidence of a readership in search of the meaning of life by people who are entering, or are well into the final stages of their lives. (Koyama Tetsurō is editor, *Cultural News Section, Kyodo News*.)

## Harry Potter Hits Japan

Ikari Haruo

In Great Britain in the summer of 1999, the release of the third volume of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series was scheduled to coincide with the hour children are let out of school. There had been quite a flap about the number of children who had skipped school to go buy the second volume when it was released.

In December 1999, three years behind other parts of the world, the first volume, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, came out in Japanese translation (titled *Harīi Pottā to kenja no ishi*, translated by Matsuoka Yūko) from the small publisher Seizansha. Considering that the series was a million-seller in the United States and that Warner Brothers has acquired the film rights with Steven Spielberg likely to be director, one may wonder why an unknown publisher got its copyright in Japan while many larger publishing houses would have been vying for it.

Probably it was Seizansha's sheer energy and determination to acquire the translation rights. The president of Seizansha is Matsuoka Yūko, a dynamic woman well known as a simultaneous interpreter. She had just taken over management of the company upon the death of her

husband. Having read the Harry Potter series and recognized the books' potential, she became determined to publish the series as her first project as the company's new president. She wrote a letter to and then telephoned author J. K. Rowling. The two women seem to have established a particular rapport, not only because of their shared ambition to publish the Japanese edition but because both are committed to succeeding on their own strength—Rowling is a single mother while Matsuoka had recently lost her husband. In any case, Matsuoka obtained the translation rights, against what must have been formidable competition.

About one month before the translation was published, Matsuoka suddenly called and said she wanted to see me. At first all I could see was an extremely well-dressed, attractive woman. Then she placed on the table copies of the various overseas versions of the Harry Potter series and explained they were international best-sellers. She said that she had the Japanese rights to the books and that her company was going to publish the translations. She then asked me if I thought the book would really sell (perhaps

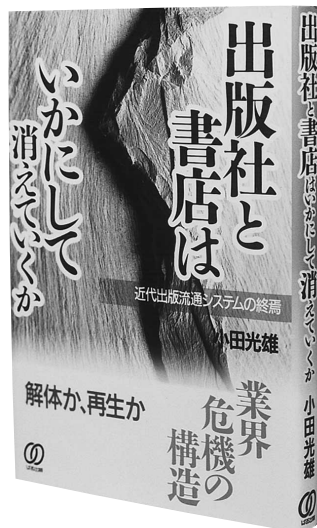
*Continued on p. 8*

## New Titles

### MEDIA

***Shuppansha to shoten wa ikani shite kiete iku ka: Kindai shuppan ryūtsū shisutemu no shūen*** [How Publishers and Bookstores Disappear: The Demise of the Modern Publishing Distribution System]. Oda Mitsuo. Paru Shuppan, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 237 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-89386-733-4. Mere stopgap measures cannot remedy the business slump from which Japan's publishing industry is currently suffering. What is needed, this book argues, is to first get a complete, all-round view of the industry's current predicament. Only then can we gradually identify the conditions for positive change.

After working in roadside retailing and land utilization, Oda Mitsuo is



Cover design: Hayashi Yoshie

now manager of a publishing business and an active commentator on publishing culture. Oda points out that publishing is going the way of the fast-food, family-restaurant, and convenience-store industries in becoming primarily suburban-oriented. But as retail floor space expands, the volume of unsold books rises. Oda attributes this to a total miscommunication between publishers and book retailers and attempts to identify a strategy for generating a more dynamic market.

### RELIGION

***Nihon no kamigami*** [Gods of Japan]. Tanigawa Ken'ichi. Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 173 × 105 mm. 226 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430618-3.

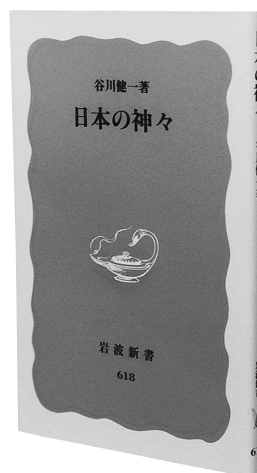
The inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago of antiquity revered the "awesome beings" they believed dwelled in all natural phenomena as *kami* (gods). All aspects of nature—trees, mountains, wind—whose powers humans could never hope to match, were the target of reverence. According to Tanigawa, however,

when Japan's first official histories, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, were compiled early in the eighth century, the gods and spirits of ancient belief were "reorganized" in accordance with the political order of the contemporary state, some being incorporated into the mythology of the imperial line while others were ousted from official religion altogether.

This book sketches the lifestyle of ancient Japanese by retracing the history of their gods, a history long in the making and a key factor behind the compilation of the nation's first written chronicles. The author believes that such research can help guide contemporary Japanese out of the present confusion they suffer over their identity. Among the folk gods excluded from official Shrine Shintō and State Shintō, and among the local deities of the Amami and Okinawan islands, where the influence of Buddhism was minimal, he seeks clues for Japanese deities revered prior to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.

***Shin'yaku Seisho wa naze Girishago de kakareta ka*** [Why the New Testament Was Written in Greek]. Katō Takashi. Taishūkan Shoten, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 311 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-469-21236-9.

It does not require a particularly keen interest in the Bible to be intrigued by the question posed in the title of this book. Given that Jesus Christ probably spoke only Aramaic and could not read or write, why was the New Testament, the record of his life and teachings, originally written in Greek? While primarily an extended answer to that riddle, the book also serves as an excellent introductory guide to the Bible, the history of its compilation, and how to read it.



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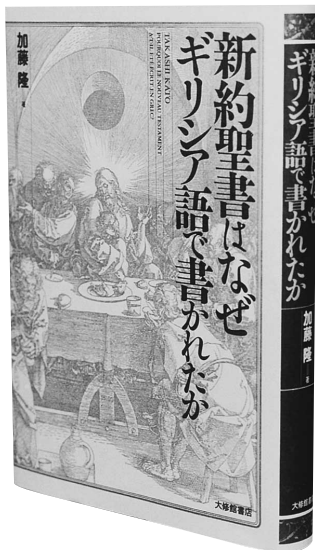
because I am known for my columns, essays, and books on how to publish successful books and the qualifications of a best-seller).

On seeing her publication proposal, I was so astonished I felt my hair stand on end. It suddenly became very clear what she was doing, and all the bells and whistles went off in my head. It was a brilliant plan. I was sure it would be a best-seller in Japan, too. I felt confident of the book's success because it met so many of the conditions of a best-seller. It dealt with a theme that was close to readers' hearts and was optimistic and hopeful in tone. And how

could a book that was a world best-seller not sell in Japan?

"How many copies do you think it will sell?" she asked, beaming. In Japan, if a book sells a million copies it is considered a miracle. Nonchalantly I assured her, "Three million, at least." She couldn't have been more pleased.

The Japanese version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* sold briskly as soon as it went on sale toward the end of 1999, and is climbing fast on the best-seller list. Many deplore the fact that young people don't read books much any more. But that's ridiculous. It is not that they don't read but that there have been so few good books for them to turn to. (*Ikari Haruo is an essayist.*)



Cover design: Nakamura Tomokazu

In the absence of an original record in Aramaic, the written teachings of Jesus have never been passed on except in translated form. Of the some 5,000 transcriptions of the New Testament in ancient Greek, furthermore, it is extremely difficult to determine which of them might be closest to the original.

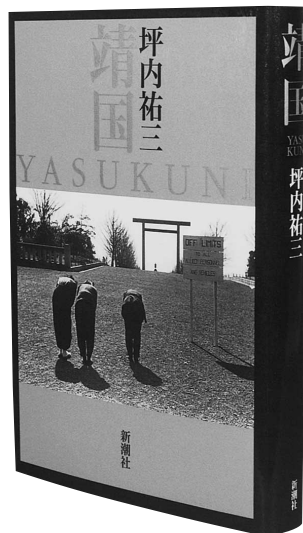
While elucidating the methods scholars apply in grappling with this problem, author Katō stresses the importance of reading the Bible in its current version, and sees the tendency among Japanese to dismiss Christianity purely on the grounds of its foreignness as unreasonable and leaving them that much the poorer in terms of spiritual growth.

**Yasukuni [Yasukuni Shrine]. Tsubouchi Yūzō.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 197 × 133 mm. 294 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-10-428101-8.

Due to its close association with State Shintō, or the Shintō ideas and rituals that the Japanese government actively fostered from the Meiji Restoration (1868) until the end of World War II, Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo's Kudan district has often been regarded as a symbol of the glorification of the soldiers who died in domestic and foreign wars.

This book may be described as a historical account of Yasukuni Shrine for the post-postwar era. That is, by ignoring the exaggerated connotations attached to it by both right- and left-wing groups, and basing his argument on written and other materials acquired on his own initiative, Tsubouchi attempts to subvert and supersede

established perceptions of the shrine. Though usually discussed in ideological terms, here the shrine is revealed in its more festive aspect, as manifest in its circuses, horseracing, and wrestling events dedicated to the gods, as well as in the *genius loci* of the Kudan neighborhood. Working from the shrine's former role as a stylish, ultramodern center for celebration and festivity, the author presents a picture that overturns prevailing views and images.

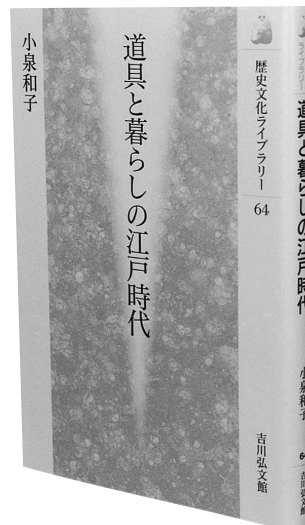


Cover design: Shinchōsha

## HISTORY

**Dōgu to kurashi no Edo jidai [The Edo Period as Seen Through Tools and Daily Life]. Koizumi Kazuko.** Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1999. 188 × 128 mm. 212 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-642-05464-2.

Historian Naitō Konan (1866–1934) once commented that, in order to understand contemporary Japan, it was sufficient to know Japanese history from the time of the Ōnin War (1467–77), a disturbance that ushered in a century of civil strife. Since Naitō's day, however, rapid economic growth has transformed Japan even more radically than the Ōnin War did. It is difficult for contemporary Japanese to grasp the full implications of that transformation, because they are in its very midst. As the first step toward such understanding, there remains the task of identifying the continuities and discontinuities of Japanese culture since the Edo period (1603–1868).

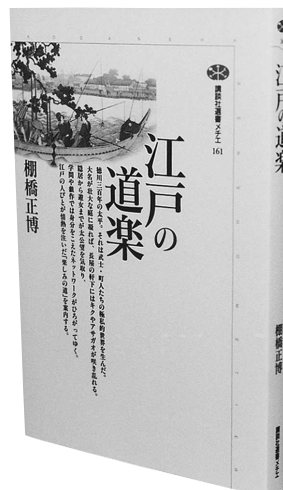


Cover design: Yamazaki Noboru

Focusing on implements of daily life, this book examines how a common lifestyle beyond class distinctions emerged in Edo Japan amid the development of manufacturing and the maturation of urban culture. In the author's view, this change of lifestyle parallels that which occurred during Japan's period of rapid economic growth in the late twentieth century. The book is thus the product of a perspective that, rather than thrall to the manifestations of change, seeks out the underlying elements that have endured change.

**Edo no dōraku [Edo Pastimes]. Tanahashi Masahiro.** Kōdansha, 1999. 188 × 128 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-258161-2.

Japanese society in the Edo period (1603–1868) distinguished *shumibito* (people of taste) from *dōrakumono* (pursuers of pleasure). Whereas the former sought unrestricted enjoyment within the scope permitted by the society of their time, the latter indulged



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

in pleasures of their own choosing and often outside the bounds of social acceptability.

This book examines the *modus vivendi* of Edo-period pleasure-seekers and attempts to delineate an accurate picture of the type. The four most popular diversions of the day were gardening, angling, learning, and literature. These pastimes fostered a sense of individual playfulness and freedom beyond the influence of rulers and other authorities. The essential value of their dilettantism lay precisely in the recklessness of devotion to fundamentally worthless diversions. One of the distinctive features of late-Edo culture, the author notes, was that this fervor for fulfilling purely personal urges produced many achievements that rivaled those of professional artists.

***Ianfu to senjō no sei* ["Comfort Women" and Warzone Sex]. Hata Ikuhiko.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 191 × 130 mm. 444 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-600565-4.

This volume is a scholarly account of the historical circumstances surrounding the provision of "comfort women" to Japanese soldiers during World War II, an issue that scandalized the Japanese public following heavy press coverage in 1991. Transcending ideological and political stances and based as far as possible on objective fact, the book is intended as a balanced, encyclopedic guide to the "comfort women" issue.

The author, a professor of history at Nihon University who has also studied at Harvard, has published numerous works on Japan's wartime and postwar history. In the present

book, he begins with a review of Japan's pre-1945 system of licensed prostitution and, using a wealth of statistical and pictorial material, constructs a level-headed account of how and how many women overseas were engaged as "comfort women"; whether or not forced "recruiting" took place; and what the women's living conditions were like. He also makes a comparative study of the realities of "warzone sex" in the wartime experience of other countries in Asia and the West.

With an index, extensive bibliography, and annotated questionnaire survey report, this book ranks as essential reading in the continuing discourse on "comfort women."

## BIOGRAPHY

***Kinoshita Keisuke den: Nihon jū o nakaseta eiga kantoku* [A Biography of Kinoshita Keisuke: The Film Director Who Made Japan Cry]. Mikuni Ryūza.** Tembōsha, 1999. 194 × 134 mm. 230 pp. ¥1,905. ISBN 4-88546-017-4.



Cover design: Gumisawa Seijirō

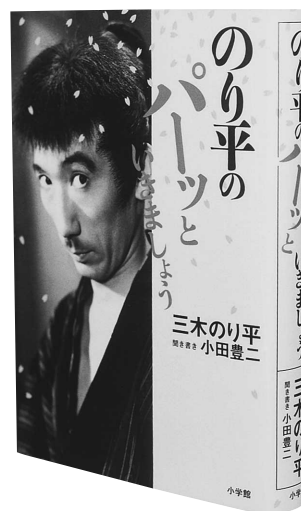
In the golden era of Japanese cinema, director Kinoshita Keisuke produced several hit movies for fees said to be among the highest in Japan. But while fellow Japanese cinema great Kurosawa Akira won worldwide acclaim with numerous international awards, the sun of Kinoshita's fame set along with that of the Japanese film industry as a whole.

In this biography, author Mikuni notes that, whereas Kurosawa depicted the robust beauty of the strong

male, Kinoshita depicted the gentle beauty of the sensitive male, a thematic tradition that may be traced back to playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724). In Mikuni's view, Kinoshita's films, which he regards as replete with the pathos of honest, ordinary people, are due for reappraisal today as Japanese society calms itself after the excesses of the "bubble" economy years. He also explains the need for Japanese audiences to understand and evaluate Japanese films properly, without being swayed by the results of film festival awards and competitions in other countries.

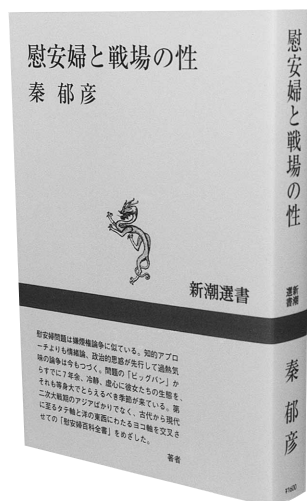
***Norihei no pātto ikimashō* [Norihei Cuts Loose]. Miki Norihei and Oda Toyoji.** Shōgakusan, 1999. 193 × 133 mm. 430 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-09-387260-0.

Compiled from interviews held over a three-year period, this book presents the life and views of comedian Miki Norihei, who died in 1999.



Cover design: Ōta Kazuhiko

Born in 1924 as the illegitimate child of a Keio University professor and a high-class restaurant proprietress, Miki originally wanted to be a painter. He found his way into acting after trying various other occupations, including boxing, black market sales, and gambling. After he discovered his talent for comedy, he rose to stardom in a series of comic films revolving around Japanese company life, often appearing as host to a company dinner party who rouses the guests with his trademark cry of "Pātto ikimashō!" ("Let's cut loose!"). Miki himself, however, called such films "thoroughly trashy."



Cover design: Shinchōsha

The book focuses instead on Miki's real life, with anecdotes from his childhood, his film and stage careers, and his intervals of debauchery. It is also Miki's first and only public commentary on the entertainment profession, a subject about which he was normally hesitant to discuss. The true professional in the art of making people laugh, he says, is the one who constantly maintains a ready store of infallible gag material. The key to ad-libbing, however, is not to blurt out the joke the instant it springs to mind, but rather to wait for just the right moment.

Through a wealth of similar comments and stories, this book conveys the passion Miki felt for his art both as an actor and as a producer of comic entertainment.

**Tsubasa no haeta yubi: Hyōden Yasukawa Kazuko [Fingers on Wings: The Life of Yasukawa Kazuko].** Aoyagi Izumiko. Hakusuisha, 1999. 193 × 133 mm. 321 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-560-03741-8. Brought up in France, pianist Yasukawa Kazuko (1922–1996) returned to Japan at the outset of World War II. She remained based in Japan for the rest of her life, marrying, performing, and teaching music. Written by one of Yasukawa's former students, this biography draws on various materials, including magazine articles and the recollections of those who knew her, while also reviewing Japan's Western classical music scene from her day to the present. Through Yasukawa's personal story, it provides a view of the development of Japanese piano music itself, mentioning

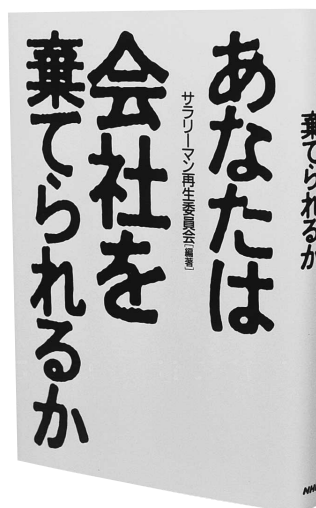
such prominent musicians as Nakamura Hiroko, Uchida Mitsuko, and Iguchi Motonari, one of the founders of Japanese piano education.

The course of Yasukawa's career was far from smooth. In Japan, where the "German school" of classical music prevailed, she was regarded as a heretic of the "French school," and she later fought a painful battle against rheumatism. The author's sensitive treatment of such aspects of Yasukawa's life makes this work much more than the biography of a gifted pianist.

## SOCIETY

**Anata wa kaisha o suterareru ka? [Can You Abandon Your Company?].** Sarariman Saisei Iinkai. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1999. 194 × 134 mm. 285 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-14-080429-7.

This self-help book calls on white-collar workers facing the widespread employment "restructuring" of Japanese companies today to revise their attitudes toward life and work.



Cover design: Kawabata Hiroaki

The Sarariman Saisei Iinkai ("Salaryman" Revitalization Committee), which compiled this book, is a group of five former white-collar workers born in the 1930s and now working as teachers and researchers after careers in such fields as corporate public relations and business consulting. The Committee began as a study group aimed at identifying the causes of the ills and corruption of the corporate world and promoting measures to prevent their recurrence.

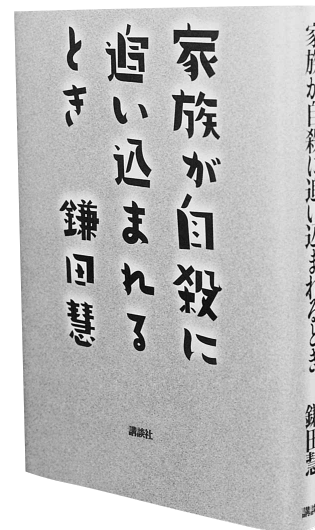
Their studies led them to conclude that the problems of failed or failing companies must be addressed through interaction between society, corporate culture, management, and employees, and that office personnel who are unable to discuss problems frankly with management end up only confounding a company's problems.

The book is thus aimed at encouraging Japan's white-collar employees to take a bolder role in tackling their companies' troubles. It urges them to reform their companies by raising issues and analyzing the current conditions of their corporate milieu without fear of retrenchment and to cultivate the courage to forsake their companies at any time if necessary.

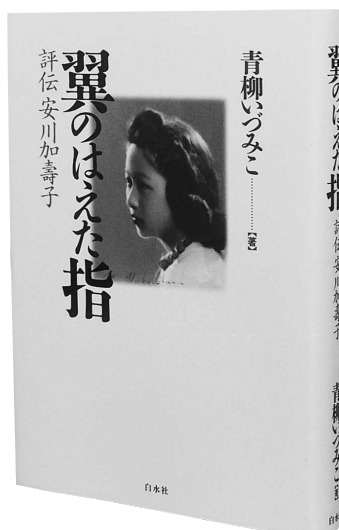
**Kazoku ga jisatsu ni oikomareru toki [When a Family Member Is Driven to Suicide].** Kamata Satoshi. Kōdansha, 1999. 193 × 130 mm. 343 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-06-209702-8.

Japan's suicide rate has risen to over 30,000 per year, with a particularly sharp increase among management-level company employees. This book is a collection of reports on the personal hardship, anger, depression, and despair behind suicides of middle-aged professionals at the peak of their careers. The author is a documentary and nonfiction writer known for his thorough research and commentaries on social issues in postwar Japan.

A number of suicides have been given wide coverage by the media. A Hiroshima high school principal killed himself while embroiled in a controversy over use of the then-unofficial national flag and anthem in schools. An Environment Agency



Cover design: Hirano Kōga



Cover design: Ogata Shūichi



bureau chief involved in relief for Minamata disease victims committed suicide after realizing he could no longer maintain the dispassionate, bureaucratic attitude demanded of his position; and three company presidents who had had close business ties in the automobile industry simultaneously took their own lives in a hotel.

In addition to examining these high-profile suicides, the author also considers lesser-known cases caused by such factors as the long-neglected problem of *ijime* (bullying) and regards them as symptoms of the weakening of social institutions in present-day Japan. His exploration of the tragic consequences of this social decline leads him to pose the fundamental question of what constitutes a “society.”

***Shasō no keiei jinruigaku* [The Anthropology of Company Funerals]. Nakamaki Hirochika, ed. Tōhō Shuppan, 1999. 215 × 151 mm. 294 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-88591-598-8.** When a founding president or executive of a Japanese company dies, it is customary for the company to hold a second funeral following the private family service. This book considers the meaning of the practice of “company funerals” (*shasō*), an aspect of corporate life unknown in other countries, and its relationship to the business activities of the typical company.

Normally held on work days, company funerals are considered part of corporate activity. For example, after the death of Matsushita Kōnosuke, founder of the Matsushita electric group, more than 600 employees were appointed to manage the com-

pany funeral, which was attended by some 20,000 mourners. In most cases, organizing company funerals is the responsibility of general affairs divisions, and some companies go so far as to engage professional staff from exclusive hotels to ensure proper decorum for VIPs attending the services.

Also highlighted is the close resemblance between company funerals and funeral customs in traditional rural society. The rural village was a community of families collaborating in production and livelihood, and this cooperation commonly extended to the conducting of funerals as well. Practices typical of the village funeral, such as sending people to help, exchanging gifts between mourners and the family of the deceased, and other such reciprocal obligations for the maintenance of social relations, are seen to be identical to those of the modern company funeral.

This book probes these underlying implications of company funerals by examining a variety of actual examples.

***Uso no jiko bunseki: Kyokan no jidai o ikiru* [A Self-Analysis of Lying: Surviving an Age of Falsehood]. Orihashi Tetsuhiko and Sugita Masaki. Nihon Hyōronsha, 1999. 188 × 127 mm. 240 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-535-56140-0.**

Coauthored by social psychologist Orihashi and scholar of German philosophy Sugita, this study of lying is written not as an abstract, impersonal analysis but from the personal experience of the authors. Their thesis proceeds from the position that lying

must be analyzed not in terms of right and wrong but as part of a “sense of falsehood” (*kyokan*) that people increasingly feel about social reality.

Orihashi explains this “sense of falsehood” as “a feeling that things hitherto taken for granted as real are false—that is, they are lies—and a reluctance, therefore, to allow oneself to become implicated.” Sugita describes it as “a profound suspicion that both society and the world in general are a sham.” In Orihashi’s view, the negative aspects of this “sense of falsehood” have recently become prevalent among young people, who as a consequence lose the ability to communicate with the social world around them and come to judge everything solely in terms of their own pleasure or displeasure. He points to the need for such people to find ways to overcome the perception that everything is a sham and regain a sense of reality in their lives.

***Yonin wa naze shinda no ka: Intānetto de tsuiseki suru “Dokuiri Karē Jiken”* [Why the Four People Died: An Internet-based Investigation into the Wakayama Curry-Poisoning Case]. Miyoshi Maki. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 178 × 116 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,143. ISBN 4-16-355430-0.** In July 1998, four people died after eating poisoned curry at an outdoor festival in Wakayama Prefecture. At the time, a third-year student of a Tokyo junior high school, Miyoshi made the incident the subject of her summer-vacation school assignment, pursuing her own investigation of the case in parallel with the police inquiry. Her research led her to con-



Cover design: Morimoto Yoshinari



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Cover design: Ōkubo Akiko



clude that the deaths could be attributed to a cause other than the poisoning itself. Her study was published in the magazine *Bungei shunjū*, and is included in this book.

The author's assertion is that the four deaths may be regarded as a "medical accident." Although the curry was eventually found to have been laced with arsenic, the public health center involved in the case originally misdiagnosed the victims as suffering from organic food poisoning, and the police later mistakenly announced that the poison used was potassium cyanide. These misunderstandings delayed administration of the proper emergency treatment for arsenic poisoning, which is to induce vomiting and irrigate the stomach. From the outset, the author considered it odd that the conditions for organic food poisoning could occur in curry, which is bacteria-resistant. Following up on her doubts, she developed a counterargument to the food-poisoning theory by consulting medical texts and the Internet websites of food companies and public health centers.

Miyoshi's study drew considerable public attention and won the Bungei Shunjū Readers Award.

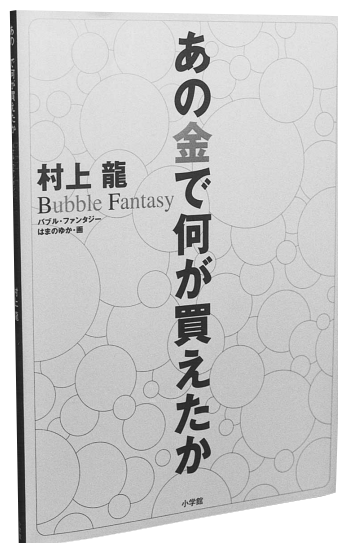
## POLITICS/ECONOMY

**Ano kane de nani ga kaeta ka: Bubble Fantasy [What That Money Could Have Bought].** Murakami Ryū. Illustrated by Hamano Yuka. Shōgakusan, 1999. 256 × 182 mm. 103 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-09-379392-1. While media reports of corporate debts and financial institutions' bad loans amounting to hundreds of billions, even trillions, of yen have become more frequent in recent years, few people have an accurate grasp of the magnitude those figures represent. In this unique book, Murakami Ryū provides an engaging assortment of estimates of what that lost money could have bought if used in other ways. True to his own conviction that the most important thing is the acquisition of information, Murakami presents the book in a highly accessible, convincing picture-book format.

The inspiration for the book came from a March 1998 newspaper article.

Immediately below an article reporting that Yamaichi Securities Co., Ltd. had a hidden debt of some 230 billion yen was the headline: BMW May Buy Rolls Royce for 75 Billion Yen. If the Rolls Royce company could be purchased lock, stock and barrel for 75 billion, Murakami mused, what did the Yamaichi figure of 230 billion translate to in real terms? By converting various such price tags into other forms using normal standards, he effects a kind of inversion of value that provides a whole new slant on the world.

Interestingly enough, some foreign journalists dispatched to Japan are said to have returned home reassured by the playfulness of this book that Japanese still had a sense of humor.

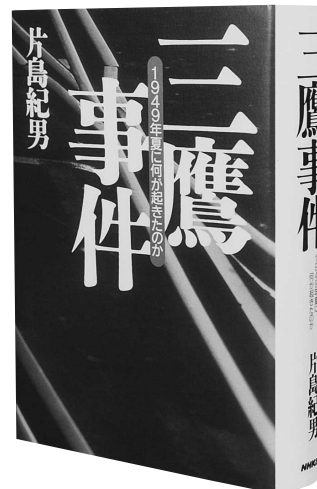


Cover design: Totoki Kanoko

**Mitaka Jiken: 1949-nen natsu ni nani ga okita no ka? [The Mitaka Incident: What Happened in the Summer of 1949?].** Katashima Norio. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1999. 194 × 132 mm. 518 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-14-080440-8.

In the politically turbulent years immediately after World War II, a series of mysterious, fatal incidents occurred involving the Japanese National Railways (now the Japan Railways group). Three incidents, known as the Shimoyama, Mitaka, and Matsukawa incidents, from the outset have been suspected of being part of an anti-communist plot aimed at shaping U.S.-Japan relations during the Allied Occupation era.

This book provides a detailed account of the Mitaka Incident. On July 15, 1949, an unmanned train sped



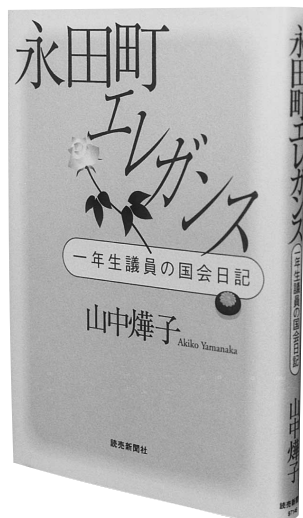
Cover design: Kawabata Hiroaki

into Mitaka station on Tokyo's Chūō Line, derailed, and overturned, killing six people and injuring twenty others. Ten suspects, all members of the communist-dominated National Railroad Workers' Union (NRWU), were arrested and indicted. Of the defendants, nine, all of whom were members of the Japan Communist Party, were found innocent. The tenth, Takeuchi Keisuke, not a JCP member, was convicted as the sole offender and sentenced to death, though he died in prison of a brain tumor before the sentence could be carried out.

In analyzing the background to the incident, the author highlights the fact that the government had sacked thousands of NRWU members in the preceding months. In that context, he explores the U.S. Occupation authorities' shift in policy focus from democratization to economic rehabilitation and anti-communism, and the mass dismissal of NRWU members.

**Nagatachō eregansu: Ichinensei gūn no kokkai nikki [Nagatachō Elegance: Diary of a Freshman Diet Member].** Yamanaka Akiko. Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1997. 195 × 133 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-643-97146-0. Yamanaka Akiko was elected to the House of Representatives for the first time in October 1996 as a Shinshintō (New Frontier Party) member in a proportional-representation seat. Formerly a university professor, she ran for election at the urging of then-party leader Ozawa Ichirō and other Shinshintō members. This volume is a collection of essays on her experiences during her first year in the Diet.

Yamanaka has a striking writing style honed by her ties with numerous



Cover design: Shigehara Takashi

overseas politicians and scholars. In this book, she restates various doubts she has harbored about life in the national assembly, such as why Diet-member badges for women are slightly different from those for men; why the documents prepared by bureaucrats as replies to parliamentary interpellations are so badly written; and why the Diet is so ritualistic and rigid in its procedures and protocol. Her own credo emphasizes a “warm-hearted human approach” and a conviction that the twenty-first century should be an “age of balance,” principles she puts into practice in confronting an array of issues and public affairs.

## CULTURE

***Ai no kūkan* [Space for Love]. Inoue Shōichi.** Kadokawa Shoten, 1999. 190 × 127 mm. 424 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-04-703307-3.

This is the latest work of a scholar of Japanese cultural history who has published a series of ambitious works focusing on the architectural design of social environments.

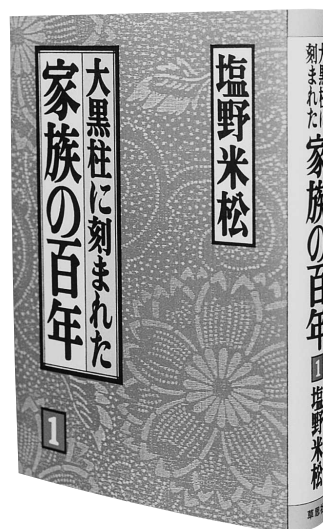
Author Inoue reveals a number of intriguing phenomena as he draws on various sources to retrace the modern and contemporary history of manners and customs. On the topic of sexual behavior outside the home, for instance, he notes that, whereas it was once common for people to engage in sexual conduct out of doors—the plaza in front of the Imperial Palace was a symbol and mecca for such trysts—sex outside the home has gradually moved indoors and normal-



ized through the spread of such establishments as “love hotels” and “city hotels.” The author ponders the significance of this change. While prudently avoiding any attempt at clear-cut explanation, he raises a host of related questions on such topics as social change in postwar Japan, the momentous historical importance of the period of dramatic economic growth, and the relationship between culture and sex.

***Daikoku-bashira ni kizamareta kazoku no hyakunen* [A Century of Changing Family Life]. Shiono Yonematsu.** Sōshisha, 1999. 194 × 134 mm. 382 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-7942-0902-9. Of the tremendous changes in lifestyle that have taken place in Japan since World War II, changes in rural communities have been particularly radical. This can be attributed to two key factors: the land reform implemented soon after the war, and the rapid economic growth achieved from the late 1950s onward.

This book was compiled from interviews with ten people (including



Cover design: Tamura Yoshiya

four married couples) born before the war and living in some of the most remote rural areas of the Tōhoku region in northeastern Honshū. They relate in detail how the lifestyle and thinking of rural people have altered due to various postwar social phenomena, including the breakdown of the traditional extended family, changes in the practice of primogeniture, the rise of the nuclear family, and the abandonment of farming. Without exception their accounts reverberate with the simple virtues of the Japanese common folk of old—sincerity, diligence, consideration for others, obedience, perseverance—though many of today’s readers may regard this as little more than nostalgic yearning for a bygone age.

***Shimpan: Ie no kami* [Gods of the Ie; New Edition]. Tsurumi Shunsuke.** Photography by Adachi Hiroshi. Tankōsha, 1999. 188 × 127 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-473-01683-8. This author is a philosopher who, since returning to Japan after studying in the United States, has focused himself on cultivating the potential for scholarship and art inherent in everyday life.



This book presents a redefinition of the concept of the *ie*, or “household.” People are born into an *ie*, with its parent-child, sibling, husband-wife, in-law, and other relations, and though they may rebel against the constraints of that environment as they grow up, they achieve only minimal freedom from it. While the household unit is thus in one sense oppressive, in reality it is very difficult for people to disown their *ie*. This is the conclusion the author

bases on observation of bitter *ie*-related realities.

Anthropologists and sociologists have long maintained that the concept of the *ie* is particular to Japanese culture, but the author demonstrates that it can be universally understood and applied through a more flexible conceptual framework, opening the way for a broader understanding of the *ie* as “a symbol of human warmth.” In this way, referring to a wealth of actual cases, he examines new forms of the *ie* free from kinship or territorial relations.

This is a new edition of the 1972 original with excellent photographs by Adachi Hiroshi.

## ART

**Saigo no ukiyoe-shi: Kawanabe Kyōsai to hankotsu no bigaku** [The Last Ukiyoe Artist: Kawanabe Kyōsai and the Aesthetics of Defiance]. Oikawa Shigeru. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1999. 182 × 128 mm. 214 pp. ¥970. ISBN 4-14-001848-8.

In this biography, a scholar of comparative culture sheds new light on the life and work of Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831–89), a Kano-school *ukiyo-e* artist active during Japan’s transition from the early modern to the modern era.

Originally hired by the Edo-period government (1603–1867), Kyōsai suddenly became an ardent admirer of Western ideas and culture with the advent of the Meiji era (1868–1912) when he was released from government service. Not long afterward, however, he underwent a reactionary change and became a fervent nation-

alist. Kyōsai’s extreme changes in ideology thereafter caused the artistic establishment to be constantly wary of him.

In the author’s view, Kyōsai sought to survive the chaos of the times by making his own existence an instance of chaos. Meanwhile, Kyōsai’s work has gained an established reputation among French scholars of *ukiyo-e*. Although Kyōsai also produced paintings, including stylized portraits of beautiful women and depictions of ghosts, this author is particularly fond of Kyōsai’s caricatures, through which the artist laughed both at the world and at himself. In this and other respects, the author points out, Kyōsai’s aesthetic domain overlaps with that of French illustrator and cartoonist Georges Bigot, who lived in Japan for several years toward the end of Kyōsai’s life.

**San’yūtei Enchō no Meiji** [San’yūtei Enchō and the Meiji Period]. Yano Seiichi. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 173 × 108 mm. 197 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-16-660053-2.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

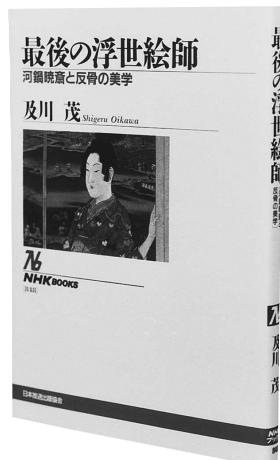
A legendary figure in the Japanese entertainment world, *rakugo* (comic monologue) storyteller San’yūtei Enchō (1839–1900) compiled and perfected the repertory of the Edo *rakugo* tradition and laid the foundations for the rise of modern *rakugo*.

In addition to the acclaim he enjoyed as a storyteller of the classical *rakugo* tradition, Enchō created original tales, including such masterful works as “Shinkei Kasanegafuchi” [The Murder of an Acupuncturist], “Kaidan botan dōrō” [The Woman Ghost Otsuyu], and “Shiobara Tasuke ichidai ki” [The Life of Tasuke, a Peasant]. At the height of his nation-

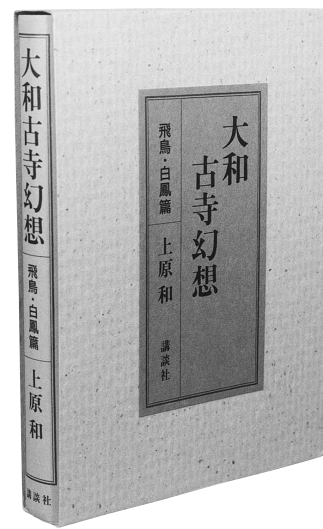
wide fame, Enchō underwent a spiritual awakening through Zen. He composed a “post-enlightenment” verse that may be paraphrased as “Having already had my tongue removed by Lord Enma, ruler of Hell, hereafter I shall speak falsehoods as I please”; and was given the Buddhist name Muzetsu (Tongueless One) by his Zen master.

While anecdotal accounts of Enchō idealize him as extremely refined and noble-minded, one wonders at the accuracy of such an image. Written by a specialist in the performing arts, this compact biography takes a fresh look at Enchō’s life and times. The author carefully constructs a portrait of Enchō as a consummate entertainer who, despite professional feuds and deep personal sorrow, applied his extraordinary political clout and keen sense of the times to rise to the pinnacle of his profession during the turbulent transformation of the capital of Japan from Edo into modern Tokyo.

**Yamato koji gensō: Asuka Hakuhō hen** [Ancient Temples of Yamato Illusions: The Asuka (592–645) and Hakuhō (645–710) Periods]. Uehara Kazu. Kōdansha, 1999. 193 × 136 mm. 386 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 4-06-209508-4. Yamato is the ancient name for Nara, one of Japan’s early capitals, where numerous temples were built following the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. Based on a combination of historical research and personal reminiscences, this book may be described as a collection of travelogues extolling the beauty of ancient Buddhist statuary. The author is an art historian who has been



Cover design: Kurata Akinori



Cover design: Yamazaki Noboru

fascinated by these wooden sculptures and the Yamato landscape since childhood. The “illusions” he refers to in the title are not mere fantasies, but hallucinatory experiences in which he perceived the true nature of things as if before his very eyes.

While correcting various misconceptions—such as that a particular Buddhist statue conventionally thought to represent the bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokitesvara) actually depicts Miroku (Maitreya)—the author portrays the ancient world, usually discussed in highly specialized Japanese, Chinese and Korean scholarship, in more familiar and personal terms. “When on pilgrimages to old temples,” he tells us, “I always kneel on the floor before each temple’s main Buddhist image, and from that position of worship look up at the face of the statue. Then, at some point, the statue will gaze down at me, and its lips will open and speak to me.”

Visitors to Nara’s temples will find this a thought-provoking book.

## LANGUAGE

*Nijū gengo kokka Nihon* [Japan: The Two-layered Language State].

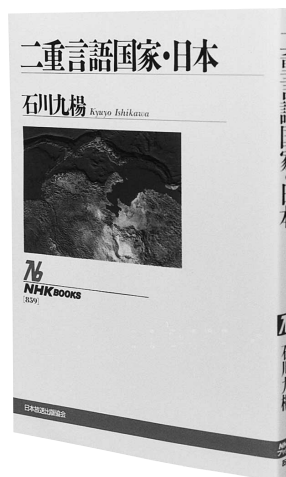
Ishikawa Kyūyō. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1999. 182×128 mm. 244 pp. ¥970. ISBN 4-14-001859-3.

This author describes Japanese as a “two-layered” language in the sense that it is a hybrid formed by the imposition of a foreign script—Chinese ideographs (*kanji*)—onto the indigenous Yamato language which had no orthography. The intriguing ideas and observations here offer a new thesis on the Japanese language.

For instance, the author attributes the abundance of onomatopoeic words in Japanese to the fact that the natural development of the Yamato language was arrested by the introduction of *kanji*. The Japanese word *warau*, for example, has a wide range of connotations, including “smile,” “laugh,” and “ridicule,” which are specified by the application of different *kanji*. Similarly, in use of the verb *aruku*, “to walk,” onomatopoeic adverbs such as *noso-noso* (sluggishly) or *suta-suta* (briskly) are needed to indicate a specific gait.

The author stresses the importance of writing by hand. In calling for the removal of restrictions on *kanji* usage, and encouraging more widespread use of characters, he offers a penetrating critique of the issues involved in the government’s postwar reforms of orthography. He highlights the effects of foreign-origin and other words written in the *katakana* syllabic script. He points out, for instance, that a *kanji* rendering of “bubble economy” (泡沫経済) in place of the *katakana-kanji* compound normally used (バブル経済) evokes more vividly the failures of the finance ministry bureaucrats and financial institutions responsible for the phenomenon. He is critical of the tendency to use *katakana* to indicate Western terms and to contract foreign loan words into four-syllable *katakana* terms, such as *wa-a-pu-ro* (word processor), *pa-so-ko-n* (personal computer), and *se-ku-ha-ra* (sexual harassment).

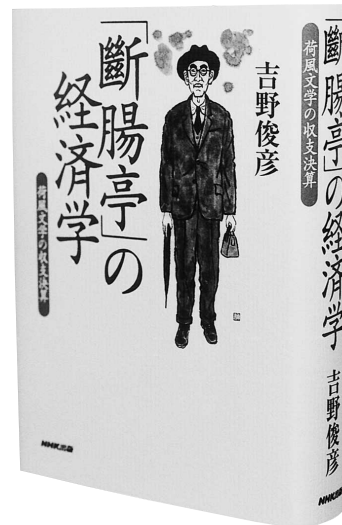
The book is thus a critique of culture that exposes major flaws in today’s *katakana*-riddled language.



Cover design: Kurata Akinori

## LITERATURE

“*Danchō-tei*” *no keizaigaku* [The Economics of Nagai Kafū’s “*Danchō-tei*”]. Yoshino Toshihiko. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 1999. 194×134 mm. 533 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 4-14-080448-3. The prominent writer Nagai Kafū (1879–1959) kept a diary for forty years from 1917 until his death. The enormous 3,000-page record, entitled *Danchō-tei nichijō* [Diary of Dyspepsia House], is not only an incisive literary criticism and commentary on



Cover design: Katsuragawa Jun

the creative development of his works. It also includes his critical views on the Japanese military regime’s slide into World War II; an account of the economic and financial circumstances at the time; a record of the author’s daily income and expenses; a chronicle of his post-divorce relations with various women; and even an account of the expenses he thereby incurred. While Kafū intended this scrupulous accounting purely as a means to preserve his own economic and spiritual freedom, in the process he unwittingly produced a detailed record of the changing daily circumstances of the Japanese people as a whole through the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods.

The author is an economist formerly employed by the Bank of Japan, and is known for his studies on writer Mori Ōgai. He regards Kafū’s diary as a prime source of data on Japanese economic history, and constructs from it a concrete picture of the transformation of social and economic life during the years it was written, particularly in the pleasure districts Kafū frequented. The result is a unique work that is both a biography of the great writer and an economic history of his day.

*Edo fūei sampo: Bunjin tachi no chisa na tabi* [Poetic Strolls in Edo: The Small Journeys of Edo Literati]. Akiyama Chūya. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 173×108 mm. 236 pp. ¥720. ISBN 4-16-660058-3.

Throughout the Edo period (1603–1867), the city of Edo remained one of the world’s few true metropolises. It is more accurate, however, to

regard it not as a single, monolithic city but as a conglomerate of several small urban areas. The perceptions and sensibilities of the city's residents varied from district to district, each of which therefore developed its own distinctive atmosphere and flavor. It was in the various districts that the writers of Edo were often inspired to compose poetry to express their feelings through what the author of this book calls the "culture of strolling."



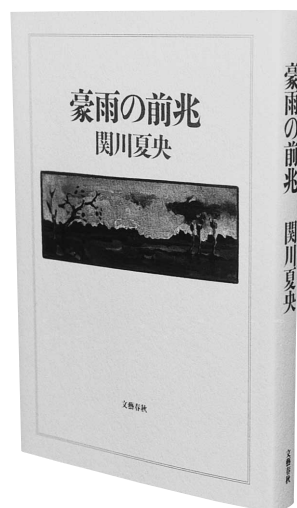
Cover design: Sakata Masanori

This book examines the works of Edo poets who wrote of the city's well-known neighborhoods—Nihombashi, Yoshiwara, Fukagawa, Asakusa, Ueno, and so on—and presents stories and anecdotes about the poems and their authors. Although various genres of verse by numerous poets are represented, *kanshi* (Chinese poetry) predominates. Poetry and prose written in classical Chinese was the principle form of literary expression at the time, and through its grandiloquent, high-toned style the poets of Edo depicted their city in images rather different from reality.

**Gōu no zenchō [Portents of Heavy Rain].** Sekikawa Natsuo. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 191 × 130 mm. 239 pp. ¥1,429. ISBN 4-16-355080-1. This volume is a collection of previously published essays and commentaries in literary criticism. Sekikawa is a fifty-year-old writer who has long expressed his regret that "the only good people are all dead." He offers a self-analysis of this view in the book's postscript, admitting that his aversion to dealing with the living is an aversion to being hurt—that is, a symptom of his defensive and introverted personality.

Not surprisingly, the author treats only writers who are no longer alive. In approach, however, this book differs considerably from conventional literary criticism rooted in literary history. "Even though it is not presented in that form," the author remarks, "everything I have written in recent years has been a memorial to the dead."

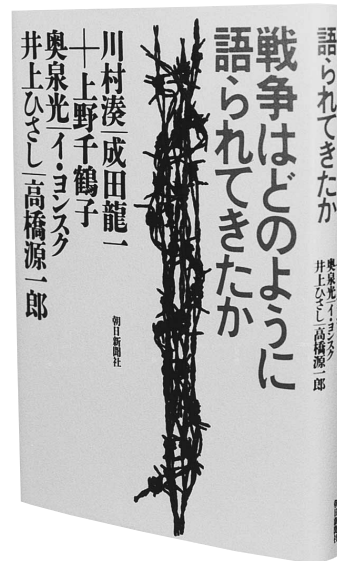
A telling example is the first chapter, titled "Sounds from the Switching Yard." A wide-ranging look at various sleeper trains taken by the author's favorite writers and fictional characters in novels and films, it is also interwoven with his own random thoughts and reminiscences.



Cover design: Kusaka Jun'ichi

**Sensō wa dono yō ni katararete kita ka [How the War Has Been Told].** Kawamura Minato et al. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. 301 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-02-257403-8. More than fifty years after the fact, World War II continues to be a popular theme in thought and literature not only in Japan but worldwide. In Japan, many books have appeared that reappraise the war, particularly in the Far East theater, and offer new perceptions of the conflict.

Wary of this trend and hoping to achieve an objective, accurate understanding and evaluation of World War II, the authors present a series of three-way discussions expanded from a previously published magazine series. The talks were hosted by historian Narita Ryūichi and literary critic Kawamura Minato, and featured, in turn, sociologist Ueno Chizuko, novelists Okuizumi Hikaru, Inoue Hisashi, and Takahashi Gen'ichirō, and soci-

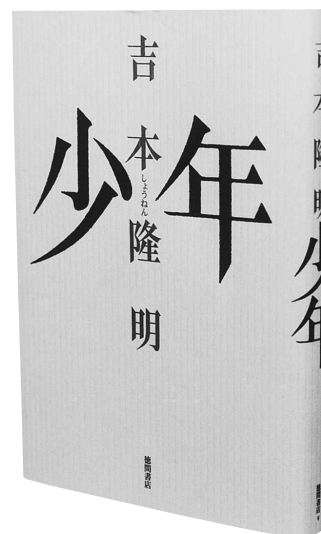


Cover design: Tabuchi Yūichi

olinguist Lee Yeounsuk as their guests. By looking at numerous war-related works of literature and reexamining war memories and the people who recount them, the discussants seek to revamp popular impressions and preconceptions so as to establish a clearer understanding of the war now and for future generations.

The book contains an extensive chronological bibliography of war-related literature.

**Shōnen [Youth].** Yoshimoto Takaaki. Tokuma Shoten, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-19-861010-X. Juvenile crime has become a serious social issue in contemporary Japan. In this book influential thinker Yoshimoto Takaaki adds to his corpus of respected works of literature and criticism by offering his views on the topic of childhood, both his own and that of people growing up in Japanese society today.



Cover design: Ashizawa Taii



The book was compiled from transcripts of discussions between Yoshimoto and an editor. Although dealing with a weighty theme, it is written in a simple style accessible to young readers. While reflecting on his own childhood—occasionally with reference to some of his earliest poetic reminiscences—Yoshimoto analyzes the issue of juvenile involvement in shocking incidents in contemporary society.

Born in an old middle-class district of Tokyo in 1924, Yoshimoto enjoyed a carefree, playful childhood until he entered a private tutoring school (*juku*) in preparation for advancing to secondary school. From recollections of his feelings of shame at thus leaving his friends behind; of his sense of parting with childhood when the short pants of his elementary school days were replaced by the long trousers of his new school uniform; and of his first encounters with literature, his discussion gradually moves to penetrating insights into the social circumstances of children today.

## NONFICTION

***Manira iki: Otoko tachi no katamichi kippu* [Manila-bound: Japanese Men with One-way Tickets to the Philippines].** Hama Natsuko. Ōta Shuppan, 1997. 188 × 128 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-87233-349-7. Hama Natsuko is a nonfiction writer who has published several books mainly about Japan's relations with Southeast Asian countries. Here she



Cover design: Miyagawa Jimusho

documents the lifestyles of six Japanese men connected, whether by accident or design, with the Philippines.

In snapshot-like sketches, she presents an expatriate who operates a one-man business in the Philippine automotive industry and has almost no contact with other Japanese there; a man held in custody on suspicion of pedophilia; a death row inmate; a former stockbroker living a vagabond life in Manila; a man who spent over ¥200 million on nightlife and women from the Philippines; and a person who has spent over thirty years helping settle problems caused by Japanese in the Philippines.

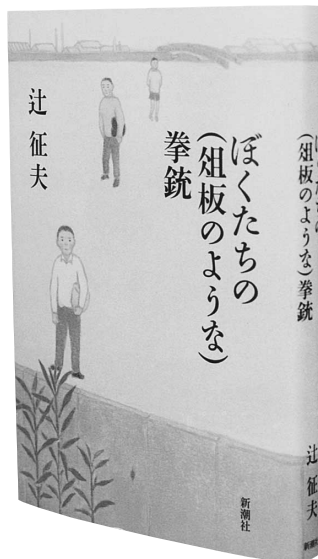
The author succeeds in avoiding the excessive emotionalism that tends to color depictions of Japanese by their compatriots.

## FICTION

***Bokutachi no "manaita" no yōna kenjū* [Our "Chopping Board" Pistols].** Tsuji Yukio. Shinchōsha, 1999. 196 × 133 mm. 206 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-10-432001-3.

This is a heavily autobiographical novel by a writer who, though originally a poet, turned to novel-writing in an effort to explore themes difficult to treat in lyric verse.

The story's setting is that of Tsuji's own childhood: Tokyo's Fukagawa neighborhood soon after World War II. A redlight district sustained by the geisha trade, Fukagawa had a unique character, and it was in that atmosphere that Tsuji—like the novel's



Cover design: Shinchōsha

main character, his fictive double—grew up. While the children who appear in the story are of diverse backgrounds and personalities, together they develop a rudimentary social order. The novel vividly illustrates the mindscape of the children through their colorful exploits, from fighting with kids from a rival school to fashioning clumsy pistols using "paper ammunition." In richly poetic style, Tsuji skillfully conveys the textures of their friendship, adventures, sexual awakening, and sense of oppression at the encroachment of adulthood in the distinctive milieu of their community and their age.

***Chichi* [Father].** Kobayashi Kyōji. Shinchōsha, 1999. 196 × 133 mm. 240 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-370403-9. This work belongs to the tradition of "father and child" literature. Written as a chronicle of the author's "research" on his father through visits to his father's friends and acquaintances, it reads more like nonfiction than a novel. A novelist born in 1957, Kobayashi explains that he wanted to write an accurate account of his father's bizarre death by piecing together the facts.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

The father in the story was born in 1922 in Manchuria, then a Japanese colony, and grew up in Korea. Following a privileged education in elite schools and Tokyo Imperial University, he continued on the fast track to success in a prestigious mainland company. After contracting tuberculosis while still a young man, he lost three-quarters of his lungs and, returning to Japan, confronted the constant prospect of death amid the country's devastation immediately



after World War II. Toward the end of his life he was reduced to scouring pharmacies for cough medicine and drinking it straight from the bottle for the small amounts of ephedrine (an ingredient used in stimulant drugs) it contained. In his son's eyes, it was a slow suicide.

While primarily a son's inquiry into his father's life—his rise and fall, and the ideals he held onto throughout—the book is also a portrait of the war generation as a whole.

**Chūgaeri [Somersault]. 2 vols. Ōe Kenzaburō.** Kōdansha, 1999. 193 × 136 mm. each. 454 pp.; 477 pp. ¥2,200. each. ISBN 4-06-209736-2; 4-06-209737-0.

After receiving the Nobel Prize for literature, Ōe announced that he intended to stop writing novels. Shock at the actions of the leader of the Aum Shinrikyō cult, which released sarin gas in the Tokyo subway system in 1995, reportedly prompted Ōe to break that vow and write this, his latest novel.

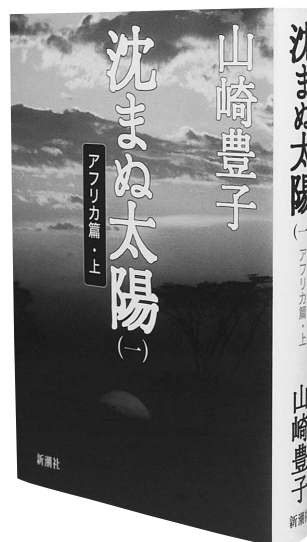


Cover design: Tsukasa Osamu

The story revolves around a religious leader known as "Patron." Ten years ago, this man was the leader of a religious organization he had founded with a partner, but he became a public laughingstock when, in order to thwart the radical plans of some of his disciples, he announced that his own teachings had been bogus all along. This dramatic aboutface is the "somersault" of the book's title. Ten years later, he and his partner attempt to revive the cult. Although his partner is killed, he finds new supporters and together they plan to build a church in the mountains of Shikoku.

The novel includes discussions of the theological questions that lured and captivated young men and women to join Aum Shinrikyō, such as the prospect of the world's end and the meaning of salvation.

**Shizumanu taiyō [Unsetting Sun]. 5 vols. Yamazaki Toyoko.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 197 × 136 mm. each. 302 pp.; 357 pp.; 374 pp.; 379 pp.; 315 pp. ¥1,600; ¥1,700; ¥1,700; ¥1,700; ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-322814-8; 4-10-322815-6; 4-10-322816-4; 4-10-322817-2; 4-10-322818-0.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

This long novel is a drama of contemporary society, but is based on an actual airline company. The time is 1962, not long before the Tokyo Olympic Games, and the central character is the head of the labor union of a leading Japanese airline. Demanding higher wages and improved conditions and benefits, he organizes a strike that grounds a special flight chartered for the prime minister. The management retaliates by transferring him overseas, forcing him to spend ten years away from his family in posts in Karachi, Teheran, and Nairobi. Throughout the narrative, the author spotlights various problems inherent in contemporary Japanese society, such as in the description of the company's declining morale due to such traditional corporate practices as *amakudari* (the placement of former high-ranking bureaucrats—in this novel's case from the transport ministry—in cushy jobs in the private sector), and how this deterioration finally leads to an aviation accident. The protagonist's interaction with the local people at

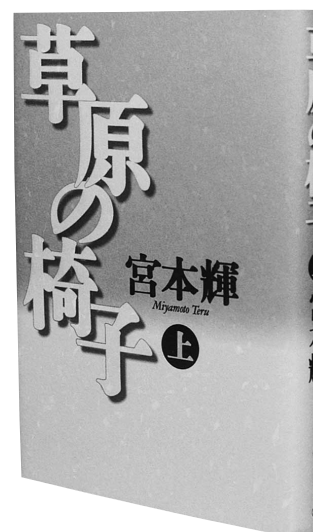
his African post slowly generates a groundswell that restores his drive and leads him back to the struggle against unjust authority.

As the story unfolds, the author prompts the reader to consider why the main character remains staunchly committed to reforming his company rather than opt for simply resigning.

**Sōgen no isu [Chair on the Steppes]. 2 vols. Miyamoto Teru.** Mainichi Shimbunsha Shuppankyoku, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. each. 321 pp.; 361 pp. ¥1,500. each. ISBN 4-620-10599-6; 4-620-10600-3.

Originally serialized in a newspaper, this novel centers around the friendship between two men as they reach the age of fifty.

Tōma Kentarō, deputy chief of sales for a camera manufacturer, is divorced and living with his daughter. His main concerns include his troubled daughter and a member of his staff who has been left with a disability after an accident. Togashi Jūzō is a self-made proprietor of a camera retail chain whose chief worry is the prolonged business slump. As they approach late middle age, the two wonder about the appropriateness of their respective situations and struggle with a sense of emptiness. At the same time they feel both despair and profound anger at the corruption and disorder of the political and social life around them. Tōma falls deeply in love with a divorced woman and is unexpectedly given charge of a boy who has suffered abuse from his mother. With each seeking a way to start life afresh, the four embark on a journey along the Silk Road.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

## Events and Trends

### Literary Prizes

The winners of the 122nd Akutagawa and Naoki prizes, considered the most prestigious literary awards in Japan, were announced in January 2000. The Akutagawa Prize went to Gengetsu for “Kage no sumika” [Dwelling in the Shadows] (*Bungakukai*, November 1999 issue) and Fujino Chiya for “Natsu no yakusoku” [Promise of Summertime] (*Gunzō*, December 1999 issue). The Naoki Prize was awarded to *Nagasaki burabura bushi* [Ballad for Nagasaki Ramblings] by Nakanishi Rei.

The work by Gengetsu, a second-generation Korean resident of Japan, is set in an Osaka community of ethnic Koreans, depicting characters centering around an old man who lost his right hand in the war. *Natsu no yakusoku* is a story of homosexual couples and their friends. The prize-winning work reflects the author’s experience as a man who is ill at ease with his own sex.

Nakanishi, recipient of the Naoki Prize, is a well-known songwriter who has produced many hit songs. The winning work is a story based on historical fact. Its central character is modeled on a real-life geisha who was active in Nagasaki in the early decades of the twentieth century. The book tells about the geisha’s search for old songs with a local historian she loves, as well as about her devoted, unrequited love. Nakanishi’s earlier book, *Kyōdai* [Brother], was also nominated for the Naoki Prize in 1998. This autobiographical novel, with his elder brother as its central character, was made into a successful TV drama.

Tsuji Hironari’s *Hakubutsu* [White Buddha], translated into French as *Le Bouddha Blanc*, won the Prix Femina Award, one of France’s five major literary prizes, in the division of overseas fiction, becoming the first Japanese recipient of the prize. Founded in 1904, Prix Femina is the second oldest award after the Prix Goncourt, France’s most prestigious literary prize. It is also known for its all-women screening committee. *Haku-*

*butsu* is the story of an old man, modeled on the author’s grandfather, who in his youth was involved in the manufacture of firearms used during the Russo-Japanese War and the second Sino-Japanese War and built a stupa enshrining the ashes of his ancestors. The book was highly acclaimed for its story and imagination by the screening committee. This is Tsuji’s first work to be translated into another language. Plans are underway to publish translations in the United States and Germany, as well. Tsuji is the recipient of the 166th Akutagawa Prize in 1996 for *Kaikyō no hikari* [Strait Light].

### Opinion Surveys

On the occasion of the annual “Reading Week” campaign starting October 27, the *Mainichi* and *Yomiuri* newspapers released their survey findings on reading in Japan. According to the *Mainichi*, Japanese read an average 1.5 books, a decline by 0.3 compared with the previous year. Forty-two percent of those surveyed read one or more books over the last one month, the third lowest figure in the last thirty years. The *Yomiuri* survey indicates that more people are interested in practical-purpose books than in text-centered publications, such as literary works. These findings may indicate that the tendency for people to read less is not likely to stop or reverse itself.

The *Mainichi* also had the respondents name the “most memorable” novelists active in the twentieth century. The top ten chosen were: 1. Shiba Ryōtarō; 2. Matsumoto Seichō; 3. Natsume Sōseki; 4. Akagawa Jirō; 5. Kawabata Yasunari; 6. Itsuki Hiroyuki; 7. Endō Shūsaku; 8. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke; 9. Mishima Yukio; and 10. Yoshikawa Eiji. Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96) is a master of historical fiction whose major works include *Ryōma ga yuku* [The Life of Sakamoto Ryōma], *Saka no ue no kumo* [Clouds on the Hill] and *Saigo no shōgun* (*The Last Shogun: The Life of Tokugawa Yoshinobu*). Matsumoto Seichō (1909–92), a mystery writer concerned with social issues, is author of *Zero no shōten* [Focus on Zero], *Ten to sen* (*Points and Lines*), and *Suna no utsuwa* (*Inspector Imanishi Investigates*). Natsume Sōseki

(1867–1916) is a prominent Meiji-era novelist whose major works include *Botchan* (*Botchan*), *Kokoro* (*Kokoro*), and *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (*I Am a Cat*). Akagawa Jirō (1948– ), a “best-seller writer” in the mystery genre, is author of the Mikeneko Hōmuzu (Calico-Cat Sherlock Holmes) series and Sanshimai tanteidan (Three Sisters Detectives) series. Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) won the 1968 Nobel Prize in literature, among his major works being *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) and *Izu no odoriko* (*The Izu Dancer*).

### Prange Collection

The first group of microfilm materials in the Gordon W. Prange Collection, a collection of newspapers, magazines, books, and other materials published in Japan during the postwar Allied Occupation, was put on the market in October 1999. The collection is made up of Japanese-language materials censored by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) between 1945 and 1949, which Gordon Prange, chief of the History Section of General Douglas MacArthur’s Headquarters, brought to the United States and placed in the keeping of the University of Maryland. It is a huge collection, containing, among others, approximately 13,700 magazine titles, 16,000 newspaper titles, and 82,000 books and pamphlets. In order to generate funds to preserve these materials, it was decided to sell microfilms of the Prange Collection. Microfilming began in 1992 with the assistance of the Japanese Diet Library. Put on sale as the first round is the complete collection of magazines. Some 60 percent of the magazine titles in the collection are local periodicals, through which we can learn the grass-roots views of Japanese liberated from wartime thought control. This may prove a valuable source for research on the history of postwar Japan.

The Japanese sales agent, Bunsei Shoin, has opened a website on the Internet, “Purange Bunko Yūzā Kai” (Gordon W. Prange Users Group <<http://www.prange.gr.jp/>>), which shows the new discoveries about and contents of the materials, as well as provides a forum for exchange of information and opinion.

## Best-sellers General, 1999

1. *Gotai fumanzoku* [Nobody's Perfect], by Ototake Hirota (Kōdansha, ¥1,600). The author, now a university student, was born disabled, without normal arms and legs, and gets around in an electric-powered wheelchair. These essays express the author's positive attitude toward life. "Physical disability is an inconvenience, but not a source of unhappiness," says Ototake, "I don't expect readers to be impressed, but what I say may be useful."
2. *Nihongo renshūchō* [A Handbook for Practicing Japanese], by Ōno Susumu (Iwanami Shoten, ¥660). Teaches correct use of postpositions, basic honorific language, and so forth, with exercises using quotations from novels and newspaper articles inserted throughout for practice. Includes an easy-to-understand explanation of the origins of the Japanese language.
3. *Fainaru Fantaji VIII Arutimania* [Final Fantasy VIII Ultimania], edited by Studio BentStuff (DigiCube, ¥1,500). Complete strategy guide for a video game that has sold more than six million copies worldwide since it went on sale in February 1999. This guide itself has sold over 1.84 million copies.
4. *Hontō wa osoroshii Gurimu dōwa* [Grimm's Fairy Tales in Their Terrifying True Form], vols. 1 and 2, by Kiryū Misao (KK Bestsellers, ¥1,500 each). Reveals the often frightening original versions of stories in *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, in which Snow White kills her real mother and Cinderella manages without relying on magic.
5. *Han'ei no hō* [The Law of Prosperity], by Ōkawa Ryūhō (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan, ¥1,600). Written by the president of a religious organization, this book takes up current topics as examples to discuss his ideas about education, success in life, management crisis control, and the realm of the spiritual.
6. *Sukuea kōshiki Fainaru Fantaji VIII saisoku kōryakubon for beginners* [Square Official Edition for Fastest Mastery of the Final Fantasy VIII: For Beginners], edited by DigiCube (DigiCube, ¥780). Strategy guide for the same video game as best-seller 3. This guide was published simultaneously with the release of the game. It has sold nearly 1.3 million copies.
7. *Shin ningen kakumei* [New Human Revolution], vols. 4, 5, 6, by Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shimbunsha, ¥1,238 each). This series, written by the president of a large lay-Buddhist organization, presents the organization's history and activities in fiction style.
8. *Chiisai koto ni kuyokuyo suru na*, translation of Richard Carlson's *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff* (Sun Mark Shuppan, ¥1,500). This best-seller in the United States has been a great hit in Japan as well.
9. *Kodomo ni ukeru kagaku tejina 77* [Seventy-seven Scientific Tricks That Appeal to Children], by Gotō Michio (Kōdansha, ¥820). Introduces tricks anyone can perform with readily available equipment, applying the scientific principles of osmotic pressure, surface tension, and buoyancy.
10. *Setsuyaku seikatsu no susume* [How to Live Frugally], by Yamazaki Eriko (Asuka Shinsha, ¥1,400). Despite a drastic decline in her income when her husband suffered a traffic accident, the author shows how she paid back enormous debts while leading a comfortable life devoted to health, the environment, and frugality.

(Based on book distributor Tōhan Corporation lists)

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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Tokyo, 100-3191  
Tel: (03) 3292-3753 Fax: (03) 3292-3764

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## The Sound of Meaning

Kadono Eiko

No doubt the late Tatsunokuchi Naotarō, noted translator and my university professor of English, would be aghast to hear that I have dared to become a translator. Since I majored in English in Waseda University I thought it was legitimate to at least dream of translating something. My mastery of English, however, was poor, so I hardly dared to confess this impulse to my professor. What inspired me were the beautifully illustrated color picture books being translated from English in those days by Iwanami Shoten, such as *The Little House* (Virginia Lee Burton) and *Curious George* (H. A. Rey). How nice it would be, I thought, to translate books like that—lovely to look at, short, apparently quite simple . . . As if reading my easy-going mind, my professor remarked one day, “I don’t think you should try to become a translator. No, you should be a writer.” I felt stunned. I don’t even remember how I answered him, because those words, “don’t try to be a translator,” were ringing in my head. His encouragement that I should be a writer only sounded like his way of softening the blow. Well, I thought, so be it, and turned my attention to the thesis I had to write in order to graduate. I completed my thesis without delay and found a job at a publishing company. My work consisted largely of writing out clean manuscript copies of translations done by Japanese translators working overseas. It was an easy job, and the days passed quickly.

It was not until later, when I began to read books for children and write stories of my own that my impulse to translate returned. I had begun to think about the difference between language spoken out loud and read silently. I had just come back from two years (1960–61) living with my husband in São Paulo, Brazil, where I somehow managed to learn enough Portuguese to survive, although I had not spoken a word before landing on Brazilian soil. I had begun by listening. I found that even if I didn’t understand what was said to me at first, if I tried repeating what was said to me and followed the speaker closely, listening and watching carefully, I could eventually figure out what was being said from the person’s tone of voice, gestures, and the rhythm of the words. I still vividly remember the mysterious experience of feeling the meaning gradually seep through. It could be described as learning language through the five senses.

This must be the way children learn language: by listening with all their senses. Even when reading

silently, a reader unravels the meaning while listening to the voice of the writer that reverberates in his or her mind. I began to think that sound holds perhaps greater power than the words themselves. In writing children’s books, I decided, the sound must be very important.

Some time after that, when I had occasion to translate a picture book, I decided to try the same approach. I began by reading the book out loud, over and over. Although I did not understand the meaning clearly at first, with each successive reading, I gained an ever-clearer sense of the personalities of the characters, the tone of their voices, and image of the landscape in the story. Then I would choose words in Japanese to transmit to the reader’s “ear” as closely as possible that feel for the original. When I first started out translating I got out my dictionaries and grammar books and spent a lot of time looking up words and phrases out of fear of making mistakes, but as I was doing that somehow I always had a feeling that the real treasure locked up in the book I was translating might slip out of reach. So I tried translating using my internal resources, relying on meaning that began to take shape in my mind in the process of repeated re-reading of the book. I became convinced that if the words came out sounding smooth and rhythmical, the meaning would certainly get across.

When I found I still couldn’t be sure of the translation, I would draw pictures. I believe that language resonates with a rhythm that is closely akin to images.

One finds that in the inter-lingual world of translation, small things cause the most trouble. Because Japanese is a very peculiar language, relatively few works are translated. In the world of children’s literature, most of the books translated into other languages are picture books and few stories for older children are available. This is unfortunate. Japanese works in this genre should be more readily available to readers overseas. Perhaps if we pay more attention to appealing to all five senses, language will transmit itself more readily by rhythm. In the realm of culture as well, we might do well to begin with interchange of the invisible worlds behind language, rather than by being pre-occupied with the meaning of individual words.



Kadono Eiko was born in 1935 in Tokyo. Her career as a writer of picture books and books for children began with the true story of a twelve-year-old boy she met in Brazil, *Ruijinnyo shōnen: Burajiru o tazunete* [Brazil and My Friend Luizinho] (Poplar Sha, 1970). In 1981 she received the Ōbunsha Prize for Children’s Literature for *Zubon Senchōsan no hanashi* [The Story of Captain Trousers] (Fukuinkan). In 1985 her *Majo no takkyūbin* [The Witch’s Delivery Service] won the Shōgakukan Literature Prize, the Noma Children’s Literature Prize, and the International Honorist’s Prize. An animation-film version of *Majo no takkyūbin* (Kiki’s Delivery Service) and its musical version, produced by Ninagawa Yukio were also hits. Among her other well-received works are the Chiisana Obake (The Little Ghost) series (24 volumes, 1979–). Her translations include *Kuma-san* (Raymond Briggs’s *The Bear*) and *Kagami: Gōsuto Sutōrizu* (co-translation of Susan Cooper’s *Fingers on the Back of the Neck and Other Ghost Stories*).