Japanese Book News

NUMBER 30
SUMMER 2000

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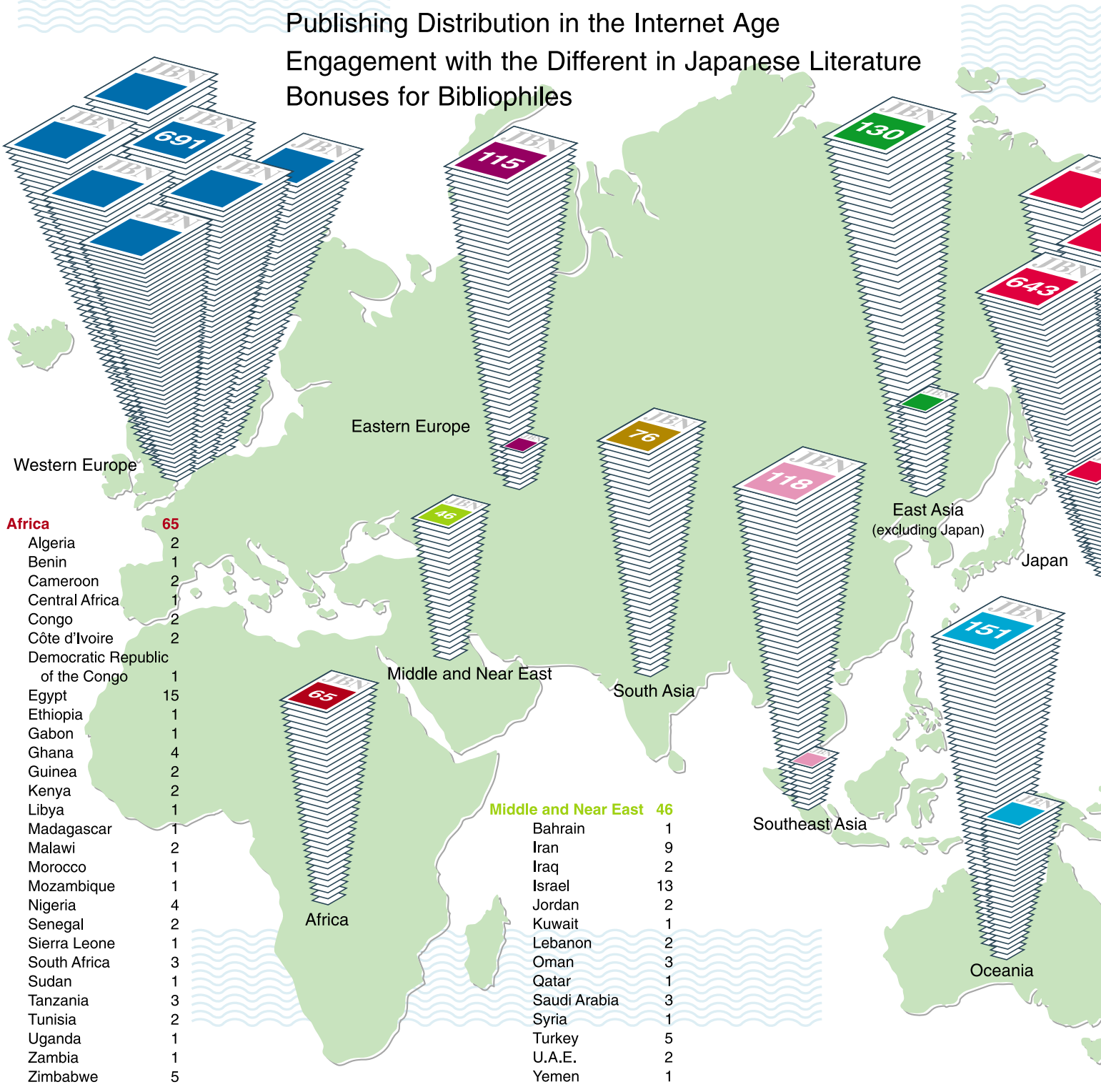
Engagement with the Different in Japanese Literature
Bonuses for Bibliophiles



Africa	65
Algeria	2
Benin	1
Cameroon	2
Central Africa	1
Congo	2
Côte d'Ivoire	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1
Egypt	15
Ethiopia	1
Gabon	1
Ghana	4
Guinea	2
Kenya	2
Libya	1
Madagascar	1
Malawi	2
Morocco	1
Mozambique	1
Nigeria	4
Senegal	2
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Uganda	1
Zambia	1
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Middle and Near East	46
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Iraq	2
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Lebanon	2
Oman	3
Qatar	1
Saudi Arabia	3
Syria	1
Turkey	5
U.A.E.	2
Yemen	1

Japanese Book News Is Distributed Worldwide

The Japan Foundation

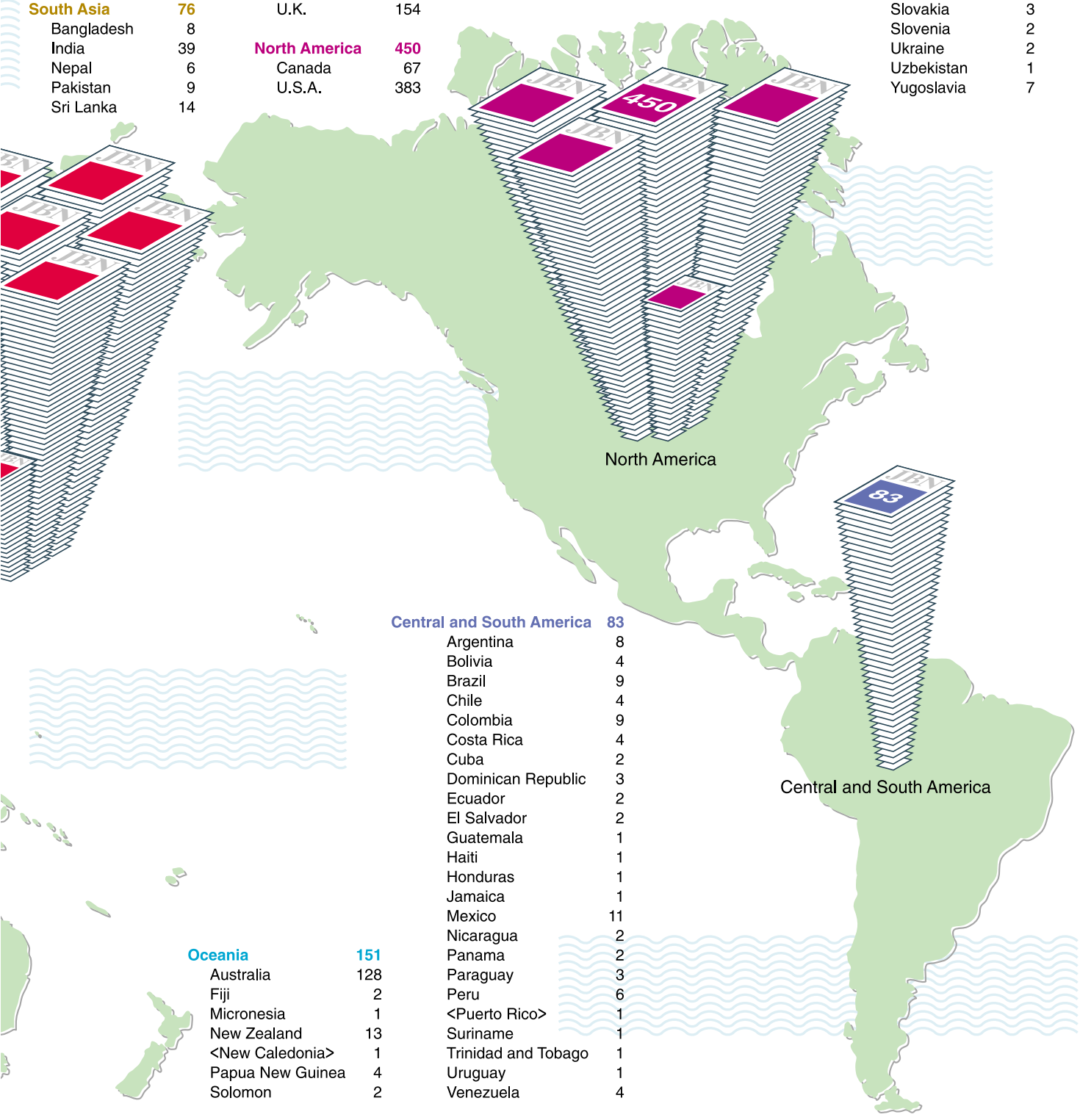
Japan	**643**
East Asia	**130**
(excluding Japan)	
China	82
Korea	39
Mongolia	4
<Taiwan>	5
Southeast Asia	**118**
Brunei	1
Cambodia	2
Indonesia	53
Laos	2
Malaysia	13
Myanmar	2
Philippines	16
Singapore	10
Thailand	4
Viet Nam	15
South Asia	**76**
Bangladesh	8
India	39
Nepal	6
Pakistan	9
Sri Lanka	14

Western Europe	**691**
Austria	10
Belgium	17
Cyprus	1
Denmark	13
Finland	11
France	81
Germany	192
Greece	6
Iceland	1
Ireland	4
Italy	81
Liechtenstein	1
Luxembourg	1
Monaco	1
Norway	11
Portugal	5
Spain	27
Sweden	20
Switzerland	22
Netherlands	32
U.K.	154
North America	**450**
Canada	67
U.S.A.	383

Eastern Europe	**115**
Albania	1
Armenia	1
Azerbaidjan	1
Belarus	2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2
Bulgaria	7
Croatia	4
Czecho	4
Estoniya	2
Georgia	1
Hungary	27
Kazakhstan	4
Latvia	1
Lithuania	2
Macedonia	2
Moldova	1
Poland	11
Rumania	6
Russia	21
Slovakia	3
Slovenia	2
Ukraine	2
Uzbekistan	1
Yugoslavia	7

Notes: Data drawn from the *Japanese Book News* mailing list as of March 2000.

Countries are identified by the common English names used by the Japan Foundation. Entities other than countries enclosed in parentheses are identified by names given in the *Sekai no kuni ichiranhyō* [Countries of the World] published by the nonprofit foundation Sekai-no-Ugoki-sha.



Central and South America	**83**
Argentina	8
Bolivia	4
Brazil	9
Chile	4
Colombia	9
Costa Rica	4
Cuba	2
Dominican Republic	3
Ecuador	2
El Salvador	2
Guatemala	1
Haiti	1
Honduras	1
Jamaica	1
Mexico	11
Nicaragua	2
Panama	2
Paraguay	3
Peru	6
<Puerto Rico>	1
Suriname	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Uruguay	1
Venezuela	4

Oceania	**151**
Australia	128
Fiji	2
Micronesia	1
New Zealand	13
<New Caledonia>	1
Papua New Guinea	4
Solomon	2

Total	**2,568**

A List of Essays in the *Japanese Book News*, Nos. 1–30

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.

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 and agencies listed on page 23.

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Contents

From the Editor

We are pleased to present the thirtieth issue of *Japanese Book News*. To mark this occasion and the final year of the twentieth century, we start a series of essays looking back over the twentieth century. Authored by the members of the JBN editorial board, the series starts with an essay by Ueda Yasuo, professor of journalism at Sophia University, on the "the media century." Ueda sketches the development of the media in modern Japanese history and its particular role and features in Japanese society today.

While in terms of numbers the industry is overwhelmingly centered on Tokyo, there are also many—popularly known as "local publishers"—based in cities all around the country. These publishers are noted for a sense of mission that enables them to overcome the inconveniences and disadvantages of distance from the centers of information, cultural activity, and distribution. Mihara Hiroyoshi, director of the successful Fukuoka-based publisher Ashi Shobō in Kyushu, discusses some of the problems of publishing today, touching on the work of his own company and the 1999 "School of Books" symposium.

This issue's Japanese Books Abroad column introduces the topic of reading and publishing in Malaysia, noting the role recently being played by Japan-affiliated bookstores there.

To mark this thirtieth issue, we have added extra pages and expanded the From the Publishing Scene feature to include three articles. President of Shuppan News Kiyota Yoshiaki sketches the changes in publishing and distribution that are occuring with the growth of Internet access and advanced information technology. Koyama Tetsurō believes that the "gender reversal" tendency seen in Japanese fiction writing in recent years will lead to the development on themes of encounter and embrace of the self and the other in Japanese literature in the coming century. Expert on publishing culture and reviewer Ikari Haruo comments on the pleasures books sometimes unexpectedly bring in the form of *fukugami* (pages with an oddly cut corner; "god of good fortune") and various special inserts—which Ikari considers present-day *fukugami*—included with complimentary copies.

For In Their Own Words, young Akutagawa-prize-winning novelist Hirano Keiichirō reflects on the significance of translation, referring to a work by Walter Benjamin, proponent of translation as a creative craft.

Japanese Book News address:
http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/media/publish/4_04right.html

Japan's Media Century

Ueda Yasuo

Realizing that within only a few months the twentieth century comes to an end, one is prompted to reflect on the images these hundred years might leave on the collective memory. Commentators have given us a panoply of characterizations. One is "century of war": considering the impact of the two world wars and the subsequent regional conflicts, not all of which have been quelled, this is certainly apt. Another is "century of the masses": indeed, it was during this time that the masses wrested political power from the privileged classes and popular sovereignty spread around the globe. What facet of the epoch seems most compelling depends on one's viewpoint.

While the twentieth century is indeed all these, to me it is primarily the "century of the media." Print journalism, radio, television, and now the Internet—all the media advanced rapidly, exerting enormous impact on people's perceptions and demonstrating even the power to change political and socioeconomic reality. The now familiar term "mass media" is the product of developments in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Hamano Yasuki described these developments for Japanese readers, illuminating his account with numerous anecdotes, in *Media no seiki* [The Media Century] (Iwanami Shoten, 1991). It was through the explosive development of the media in the United States in those early decades that the terms "mass media" and "mass communication" first gained currency.

While the title of Hamano's book succinctly sums up the age, the process by which "media" became part of common parlance is explained in another book, by Satō Takumi: *Gendai media shi* [The History of Contemporary Media] (Iwanami Shoten, 1998). In the first chapter titled "Communication Studies as Media History," Satō presents his "all-out war" paradigm characterizing information, the media, and mass communication, and says,

> The means of transmitting the signs that confer meaning on events and turn experience into knowledge is generally called medium (pl. media). The term "medium" in this sense, traced in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as having first appeared in the American trade magazine *Advertising and Marketing*, in 1923, came into widespread use after World War I. With the advent of a full-fledged consumer society, "medium" became a household word in the form of "mass media," a term encompassing forms of mass communication supported by commercial advertising, namely, newspapers, magazines, radio, and so on.

"Media" was thus popularized in the twentieth century, but Satō points out that in Japan the mass media are often referred to as *masu komi.* This phrase is an abbreviated form of "mass communication," and Satō defines mass communication as "the generic term for the acts and apparatuses for communicating large amounts of information to the general populace by mass-produced means." In his account of how "mass communication" came into vogue as a new term, Satō notes that:

> The newly coined term "mass comunication," which gained currency following the Rockefeller Communications Seminar featuring speakers like Harold Dwight Lasswell and Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, held in September 1939, spread rapidly even as the front lines of war were spreading to different parts of the globe.

"Mass communication," which after World War II entered the Japanese language as *masu komi,* had already come into widespread use in the United States in the 1930s, and as with "mass media" it was a product of twentieth-century culture. At the outset, the "media century" focused on newspapers, magazines, and other print media. In Japan, the modern print media began with the founding in 1867 of the magazine *Seiyō zasshi* [The Western Magazine] and in 1870, of the type-set newspaper *Yokohama Mainichi shimbun* (though billed as a "daily," it actually came out only three times a week).

Mass Media as a Force in Society

By the early twentieth century, Japanese newspapers were beginning to take on a distinctive character. The story of Japanese newspapers is chronicled by Tōyō University professor Hirose Hidehiko in *Masu komyunikēshon ron II: Taishū bunka to masu media* [Mass Communication Studies II: Popular Culture and Mass Media] (The Society for the Promotion of the University of the Air, 1985). In their early days divided into high-brow "quality" *ōshimbun* and low-brow, gossipy *koshimbun*, newspapers evolved early in the twentieth century to form a middle-brow type—*chūshimbun*—which Hirose describes as essentially modern "popular newspapers" for readers across a broad spectrum of society.

The establishment of this new kind of newspaper for general readers was confirmed in 1924 when the circulation of two leading dailies, *Ōsaka Asahi shimbun* and *Ōsaka Mainichi shimbun*, surpassed one million. Moving away from the former sharply-contrasting categories of high- and low-brow newspapers and outselling the Tokyo-based high-brow papers that focused on political opinion, these two newspapers pioneered the modern popular daily mold that is now well established. Following their lead, all the newspapers shifted their emphasis from editorials to news and entertainment, and began reporting on a wide variety of topics to satisfy a diverse readership.

This trend led to the emergence today of newspapers with massive circulations unheard of even in Western countries. *Yomiuri shimbun*'s readership is over 10 million, and that of the *Asahi shimbun* is close on its heels with 8 million. Despite some differences in tone—the *Yomiuri* slightly conservative, the *Asahi* tending to be more progressive—in format both are leading popular or mass-circulation dailies. Their content is neither overly

sophisticated and high-brow nor excessively low-brow and common but oriented to a point between the two extremes designed to satisfy the tastes of as broad a spectrum of readers as possible.

These papers increased their circulation remarkably during wartime. While war spurred newspaper sales in Japan just as in the West, the relationship between war and the press became particularly close for Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. Kitano Eizō makes the following points in this regard in his *Media no hitobito* [Media People] (Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2000):

> The twentieth century opened the curtain on both war and the media as far as Japan was concerned. The century's first major war, the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) was fought under the scrutiny of the entire world. In addition to mobilizing machine guns and other new weapons and tactics, this conflict featured the newly invented media of wireless communications, used both in actual land and sea clashes and in the media "battle" for news coverage of the war. . . .
>
> Newspapers regarded this war as an extraordinary business opportunity. Decades earlier, Kishida Ginkō had reported on the progress of the Taiwan Expedition of 1874 when Japan took over Taiwan, and Fukuchi Ōchi had brought readers vivid accounts of the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877. Japan's newspapers knew full well the value of having their own news sources directly in the battlefield, and an unprecedented number of special correspondents were sent to cover the Russo-Japanese War.

Kitano adds, "Particularly the two Osaka papers, the *Mainichi* and the *Asahi,* began to expand their operations and consolidated a managerial structure that subsequently led to their national domination of the industry." In the early Shōwa era (1926–1989), as war grew imminent, newspapers came under increasing pressure. They were forced to consolidate, limited to one newspaper per prefecture, and press control organizations were organized, bringing newspapers under tighter government supervision. Press resistance to government and military authority, says Kitano, was virtually eliminated.

While Japanese newspapers during World War II were thus forced to support Japan's war effort, they also asserted their distinctive character as the organizers, producers, and sponsors of numerous public events. These activities are chronicled in *Kindai Nihon no media ibento* [Media Events of Modern Japan] (Tsuganesawa Toshihiro, et al., Dōbunkan, 1996; see *Japanese Book News*, No. 17, p. 15), which is based on a joint study by the Masu Media Jigyōshi Kenkyū Kai (Society for the Study of Mass Media History). The authors comment on their research as follows:

> These joint studies in the development of Japan's modern print journalism have impressed upon us how the newspaper companies, while continuing their role in news reporting and journalism, played a significant role in Japanese society by whole or joint sponsorship of major public events. From the Meiji era (1868–1912) up to the present day, myriad events—from sports tournaments of every kind to expositions, exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and other artistic, cultural and scientific events, as well as social welfare projects, research support activities and so on—have been carried out under the auspices of mass media organizations working either independently or in cooperation with other sectors, and in a form unique to Japan.

Kindai Nihon no media ibento discusses such programs conducted by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) and by the newspaper companies. Events sponsored by newspaper companies included fitness festivals, fireworks displays and other summer events, fairs and expositions, musical competitions, and the predecessor to today's all-Japan high-school baseball tournaments held in spring and summer. Newspapers increased their circulation considerably by organizing and holding such "media events," a form of newspaper promotion that the book highlights as peculiar to Japan.

Government-Media Interdependence

Another feature of Japanese newspapers is the role of press clubs, dealt with in Katsura Keiichi's *Gendai no shimbun* [Contemporary Newspapers] (Iwanami Shoten, 1990).

> In the overall news gathering and reporting process, one of the most pronounced features of the Japanese newspaper industry is the press clubs.
>
> The press clubs are comprised of journalists assigned to gather news from sources in national government agencies, local public entities, large corporations, and organizations in other fields. They are formed autonomously among journalists themselves, ostensibly as a way of promoting collegial networking. In reality, however, they function as "front-line strongholds" for maintaining direct contact with key news sources, and they thus fulfill an important role in news reporting activities. Precisely for this reason, the press clubs are the target of criticism.

The press clubs have a reputation for being closed and exclusive, creating a monopoly on news by club members. As Katsura writes, press club journalists may cease to see objectively the information-evaluation criteria of the sources they deal with daily. Under pressure to process enormous amounts of information in limited time, moreover, their capacity to critically evaluate the data they receive could deteriorate, leading to so-called press release journalism, mere reiteration by journalists of the information their sources provided them.

Foreign journalists, who do not have such a club system, are vocal critics of Japan's press clubs on these grounds, and Japanese journalists in media other than newspapers share the same concern. One such critic is freelance magazine writer Iwase Tatsuya, who makes the following comments in the preface to his book *Shimbun ga omoshirokunai riyū* [Why Newspapers Are Boring] (Kōdansha, 1997; see *Japanese Book News*, No. 25, p. 8)

> Press clubs are trade associations formed by newspaper companies, news agencies, television stations, and other members of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association. They have established a virtual

Continued on p. 5

Publishing Aspirations Outside the Center

Mihara Hiroyoshi

In Japan much of business and industry is concentrated in Tokyo, and publishing is no exception. Almost all of the 4,500 or more publishing companies are based there, and about twenty so-called major publishers are said to account for nearly forty percent of total national sales of books. There are, nevertheless, some long-established publishers based outside of Tokyo. There was a time when "Tsugaru Shobō of the east and Ashi Shobō of the west" enjoyed the stature of leaders among them, perhaps because they in particular projected an identifiable mission and spirit. Non-mainstream publishing houses have long worked to establish their niche partly on the strength of their "kokorozashi" or aspiration, dream, or sheer determination to produce books of a certain stamp and style. It was never easy, but current developments in technology and the market have made it even harder today.

Tsugaru Shobō, based in Aomori, at the northern tip of Honshu, was founded in 1964. When its owner, Takahashi Shōichi, died last year, I could not help feeling a deep sense of loss to think that the publishing house's thirty-four-year history might come to an end. Much was my joy to hear later that one of Takahashi's colleagues had decided to keep the press going.

Novelist Osabe Hideo, whose career began at Tsugaru Shobō, wrote in support of the continuation of Tsugaru Shobō that, "Publishing boils down to 'having a dream'. The publishing world has entered a period of unprecedented and dramatic change. Leading bookstores in different parts of the country have had to close down, and the future of publishing houses, even the famous ones, is uncertain. This makes the hurdles all the higher for small, non-Tokyo based publishers in their endeavors to remain faithful to the ideals and aspirations for which they were founded."

Both Takahashi Shōichi and the founder of Ashi Shobō, Hisamoto Santa, who died six years ago, had always sworn that the companies they founded would close with their deaths—they knew the difficulty of keeping a business running on sheer commitment. But colleagues relate how both of them, as they saw their days numbered, could not help expressing their hope that someone would share their dream and carry on after they were gone.

When it comes to sustaining the guiding spirit of an enterprise, it matters little whether a publisher is located in Tokyo or elsewhere, or whether it is small or large. In Tokyo-centric Japan, publishers located elsewhere come under the rubric of *chihō shuppansha*, or local or country publishers as opposed to Tokyo metropolitan publishers. Country publishers suffer under many handicaps, large and small. Some disadvantages are the result of the concentration of authors in Tokyo and the Tokyo-centered book distribution system, the source of various inconveniences, high production costs, and other problems. These difficulties, however, stem not so much from their location as their size.

Ashi Shobō, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year, is a small company of less than ten employees based in Fukuoka, a city in the northern part of the island of Kyushu. We put out less than fifty titles annually but have published a total of about 2,000 titles in such fields as thought and criticism, history and biography, culture and folklore, documentary and nonfiction, society, literature, fine arts, books of paintings and photo collections, nature, animals and plants, food, health and medicine, sports and entertainment, and mountain climbing and outdoor sports. Our list also includes children's and picture books, books on local history and culture, educational works, and university and junior college textbooks.

The list is as diverse as that of a typical Tokyo publishing house, with the only noticeable difference being the inclusion of the "local history and culture" category. Based as we are in Fukuoka, we naturally put out many books closely related to the history and ethos of Fukuoka prefecture and the Kyushu area. That, however, is only happenstance; it is not our main objective or aspiration.

A good example of the kind of book Ashi Shobō truly aspires to publish is Watanabe Kyōji's *Yukishi yo no omokage: Nihon kindai sobyō I* [Remembrances of Bygone Times: Portraits of Modern Japan, I], a voluminous work published in the autumn of 1998. Based on a series first published in the weekly magazine *Shūkan ekonomisuto* (Mainichi Shimbunsha), the manuscript was expanded to more than twice the original.

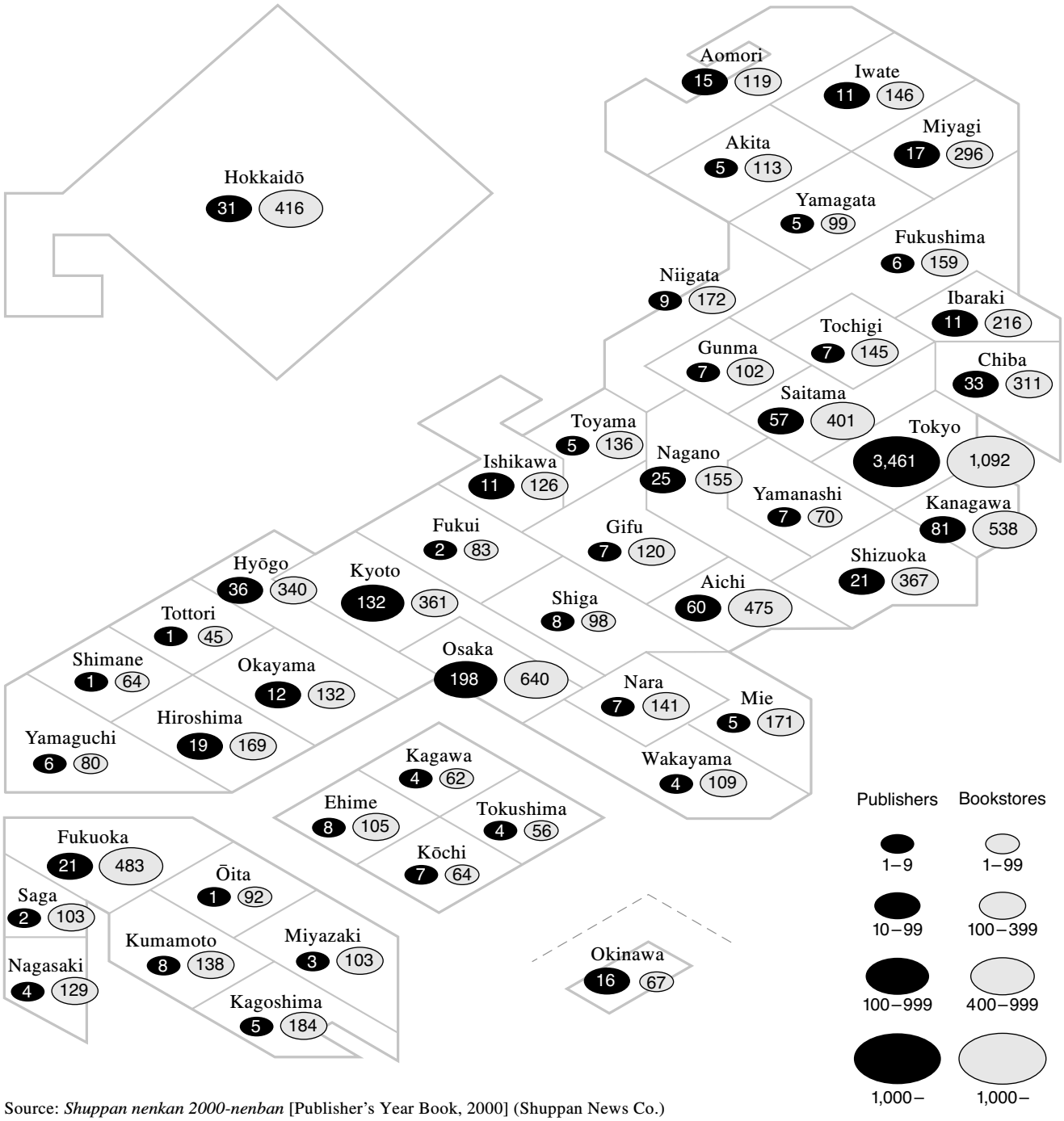
The text is based on records of visitors to Japan from various walks of life—diplomats, scholars, commissioned officers, sailors, educators, painters, and women—who came to this country at the far eastern edge of Asia during the latter half of the nineteenth century, that is, during the period from the final stage of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867) to the early years of the Meiji era (1868–1912). Among the records the book draws on are manuscripts not previously translated into Japanese. These visitors from overseas recorded what they saw—scenery and lifestyles Japanese themselves thought hardly remarkable—with enthusiasm, detail, and fresh perspective. Their words give new reality to a world that actually existed in Japan until only a few decades ago.

The book brought back to life an era and its culture—seen by newcomers as a kind of "paradise"—that was once very real. For many, the accounts came as a shock. Readers wrote in to tell how they were literally moved to tears and reviewers have given it high praise, calling it "a book every Japanese should read." It has been reprinted several times. In 1999 a local newspaper in the city of Kumamoto, where the author lives, presented the book its Publishing Culture Prize. The book also received the Tottori Prefectural Government Award for Meritorious Service to Local Publishing Culture, and in 2000 it won the Watsuji Tetsurō Cultural Prize, a prestigious prize sponsored by the city of Himeji, Hyōgo prefecture.

In the autumn of 1999, I attended the fifth and final "School of Books" symposium held in Daisen (Tottori prefecture). This event was the finale to a unique series of symposiums organized at the initiative of a consortium of bookstores in the Tottori city of Yonago. It is certainly ironical that such a substantial, long-term project was undertaken not in Tokyo but in the undeniably remote Yonago, on the edge of the Sea of Japan. The symposium sessions dealt with current issues relating to books. The discussions, participated in by book agents, bookstore owners and sales personnel, as well as editors and library staff, revealed the critical situation in the Japanese publishing world today.

One session featured presentations showing the dire situation for specialized books and "hard" or "serious" books in such humanities genres as philosophy and thought. The president of the highly respected Iwanami Shoten cited the example of a longtime stalwart on its list, the multivolume anthology of philosophical essays, *Kōza tetsugaku,* sales of which have been dropping sharply every ten years. A senior editor of another major publisher, Heibonsha, reported that sales of its "Tōyō bunko"

Distribution of Publishers and Bookstores in Japan



Source: *Shuppan nenkan 2000-nenban* [Publisher's Year Book, 2000] (Shuppan News Co.)

and other series long considered indispensable works for the study of Japanese history, are sluggish. The president of Miraisha, a publisher of established reputation in the humanities, recounted the efforts of his staff to cut down on costs in order to deal with slow sales.

Roughly 300 new titles come out every day in Japan, and bookstores cannot possibly keep up with this pace. With young people reading less and spending more of their money on music CDs and video games, business is rough for retailers everywhere. Bookstores tend to display only books that sell well. Those books that do not sell, no matter how much recognition they may gain, quickly disappear from the shelves. The pecuniary profits-first mentality that has gripped postwar Japanese society, though held at bay for a long time, is now infiltrating the publishing world.

Obvious as it may seem, books are not books just because they acquire the shape of books. As far as publishers, distributors, and bookstores are concerned they are commodities like any other. Only when they are read do they really become books. Nevertheless, in order for books to reach readers and fulfill their potential, they cannot avoid going through the apparatus of the commercial economy. Some compromise with economic expediency is necessary.

Still, if economic principles come to blatantly rule the world of books, small and medium-sized booksellers and publishers will die out. The development of large stores, malls, and convenience stores has been sapping the vigor of traditional-style shopping districts in cities throughout Japan, forcing many shops to close. The same fate may befall small and medium-sized bookshops and publishers whose survival is threatened as large bookstore chains open stores in remote areas and convenience-store-type bookstores appear, both taking advantage of large capital resources.

If what matters most is to "sell many copies and sell them quickly," specialized books and serious books will inevitably disappear from bookstores. Many people express concern about this trend, but their voices can be heard only faintly against the din of the rushing torrent of the economy.

Is my portrayal of the future of books too pessimistic? I make it a rule to return to my starting point whenever I face a dilemma. What is the starting point of books? The basic idea about a book is that it is a vehicle by which a writer can convey his or her thoughts, emotions, message, or information to other unknown others. This may be partly possible without books, using new media such as the Internet. However, no matter how advanced media mechanisms may become, as long as there are people who want to write and people who want to read, books will survive. I have been convinced of this by the continuing enthusiasm with which *Yukishi yo no omokage* has been received. Our work as publishers is continually inspired by the conviction that readers who appreciate fine and inspiring books will never turn their backs. (*Mihara Hiroyoshi is director of Ashi Shobō.*)

Continued from p. 2

> monopoly on information from government agencies and other sources. There is no basis in law for such a monopoly; it is simply the result of the "interdependence" that has been maintained between the press and public agencies since the early days of journalism.
>
> It is quite natural that Western journalists are incredulous at the strong mutual dependence between government and the press.

Iwase explains the interdependence of the press and the government in Japan as stemming from a tradition beginning in the Meiji era whereby the government used the press as a means of top-down communication and propaganda. It became customary for the government to prepare explanations of its policies for the newspapers, which then expedited the dissemination of that information throughout the nation. In return for this service, government agencies accommodated the press clubs in various ways, the realities of which are detailed in this book.

The peculiarly Japanese quality of the media can be found in broadcasting as well. Until after World War II NHK radio, for example, was Japan's only broadcast facility and it remained under government jurisdiction. Private commercial broadcasting began after the war, and the first two television stations, NHK and Nippon Television Network Corporation (NTV), were launched in 1953. The establishment of commercial television networks was carried out in a typically Japanese manner. In his book *Yokubō no media* [Media of Desire] (Shōgakukan, 1990), Inose Naoki—also a freelance writer—describes that process. He points out that, whereas the initial broadcasting licenses of NHK and NTV had been granted by a special nongovernmental supervisory commission (Denpa Kanri Iinkai), that body was abolished on July 31, 1952 (the Allied Occupation had ended in April that year). Thereafter, the authority for issuing broadcasting licenses shifted to the Radio Regulatory Bureau within the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, that is, to the government bureaucracy. Then, when seven NHK stations and thirty-six commercial stations were granted provisional licenses in 1957, it was the influence-peddling politician Tanaka Kakuei (prime minister 1972–74) who was minister of posts and telecommunications.

Ever since, Japanese television, the preeminent twentieth-century media, has been under the jurisdiction of a Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications bureau, and the national television network has developed through the issue of a large number of commercial television broadcasting licenses. When local newspapers began to form tie-ups with these government-licensed stations, both the print and broadcast media ceased to be genuinely independent of the government. This state of affairs reflects the less attractive side of Japan's media in the twentieth century. (*Ueda Yasuo is professor of journalism, Sophia University.*)

Publishing Distribution in the Internet Age

Kiyota Yoshiaki

The Japanese publishing industry today is in the throes of an epochal transition. Changing reading patterns, new digital technologies, new distribution networks, and the expansion of Internet marketing are some of the factors that will determine the future of the industry.

Today, the publishing industry in Japan is clearly in a slump. In recent years about 63,000 new book titles have been published annually, with around 1.5 billion copies printed, and an estimated 3,000 periodical titles have been coming out with some 5.1 billion copies printed. Sales grew steadily from 1950 until recently, but for the past several years they have been on the decline, the figures falling consecutively for the last three years.

The figures show that sales of recreational, practical, and business-related publications are doing the best, while serious nonfiction works, such as those designed to inform and educate, are lagging behind. Sales of the latter type of book have sharply fallen off, reflecting the erosion of the tradition of self-cultivation that once sustained Japan's publishing culture. It can be safely said that an increasing number of people have decided that reading books for the purpose of self-improvement is no longer a meaningful pursuit. Even without reading books, they now have the means to obtain various kinds of information from television, magazines, the Internet, networking with colleagues and friends, and other sources. So books are seen mainly as sources of either entertainment or practical knowledge. As long as they offer useful information, readers are satisfied.

The majority of titles being published are actually of the more serious educational kind, but typically these appear in printings of only two or three thousand copies. Many do not look as though they could be commercially profitable. It is surprising, then, that so many new titles keep appearing one after the other. Japan has some 4,500 publishing companies, most of which are small-scale operations typically run by people committed to publishing not solely as a money-making enterprise but as a vocation. Naturally, with a prolonged recession such as Japan has experienced in recent years, it becomes increasingly difficult for such publishers to keep going. It is my guess that most such concerns, with a few exceptions, will disappear in the early twenty-first century.

Major publishers, meanwhile, no longer depend on book publication for their survival. Their businesses are centered around magazines, comic magazines and comic book series in particular. The leading publishing houses today are primarily publishers of magazines and comics.

In the past two years or so, however, the shadow of poor sales and declining profits has reached even the comic genre, forcing publishers to seek yet newer markets. One approach they have taken is to put out *bunko* (A6 size) and *shinsho* (173 × 106 mm) paperbacks by a new simplified, speeded-up production process. These are mass-produced products, though only on a scale of around 20,000 copies for a first edition. Although this strategy has yet to prove commercially successful, publishers continue to experiment with such new formats.

Some have also begun transferring publications in their catalogues to electronic form for sale via the Internet, though this approach, too, carries no assurance of great success. Publishing companies in Japan have produced a total of some 1.4 million titles since 1945. Of that total, around 600,000 are available for consumers to buy. These 600,000 titles represent the intellectual property at the disposal of publishers. How to market these assets is a top business priority for publishers. The raison d'être of publications is established only when they are sold and read, so publishers do everything they can to find effective ways to sell them. Book retailers, of which there are around 25,000 nationwide, account for the largest share of total book and magazine sales at about 75 percent. This distribution system operates under consignment, allowing retailers to return unsold products to the publishers. With the annual return rate currently at over forty percent, publishers' warehouses are packed with unsold copies. Some publishing companies have begun to reconsider this ineffective bookstore-based distribution system. In the last few years, the rapid spread of Internet use has spurred a boom in website-based book marketing, and this approach is creating high hopes throughout the industry. While it is hard to predict how large the market generated through the new distribution routes will grow, given their present business difficulties publishers are experimenting with such measures on a trial-and-error basis.

How is the publishing industry using the Internet? After three consecutive years of declining annual sales, the year 2000 offers no clear outlook on the future. The year 1999 was one of "anything-goes" trial and error. Significant changes took place as far as methods of production, distribution, and sales were concerned, and for authors and readers.

At the production stage, publishers are using the Internet to facilitate the writing, editing, and proofreading of manuscripts. The number of websites selling digital content in addition to regular printed publications has also increased. (Some 1,500 publishing companies in Japan have established websites.)

At the distribution stage, a notable development is the establishment of "e-Shopping!Books," a joint enterprise involving the major book distributor Tōhan, convenience store chain Seven-Eleven Japan, Softbank, and Yahoo. Using this system, customers can order books and magazines through the Internet and pick them up at their nearest Seven-Eleven store. When it began, the service represented a ground-breaking innovation among book distribution agencies.

Another leading distributor, Nippan, followed suit with the establishment of "Hon'ya Town," an Internet-based service linked to information on books held in stock by major booksellers. The mid-size distributors Ōsakaya and Kurita Shuppan Hambai have set up similar services. In this way, distribution agencies are beginning to play a significant role in selling books and providing information directly to book buyers.

In November 1999, a company called Book Service

used Kurita Shuppan Hambai's data base to establish its own Internet website offering books for sale by order. With monthly sales currently at around ¥100 million, the company is enjoying phenomenal growth.

Bookstores are introducing similar services. While Kinokuniya's "BookWeb" has been operating for a number of years, in 1999 Maruzen and other bookstore chains stepped up their efforts to sell online. Leading bookseller Bunkyōdō set up its "J Book" service in cooperation with NEC and a parcel delivery company, while Sanseidō introduced an ordering system that allows buyers to pick their books up at convenience stores located within stations of the East Japan Railway. As of April 2000, the Sanseidō system included seventy-six stores in seventy-three stations.

Also on the increase are Internet-based operations selling publications electronically, in so-called digital-content form. It is no longer unusual for publishing companies—including Kōdansha, Shōgakukan, Kōbunsha, and Diamond Sha—to market certain publications in digital form via their websites. "Booking," a joint-capital enterprise involving Nippan and about thirty publishing companies, maintains a digital store of mainly out-of-print or out-of-stock publications of which customers can order printed copies—or even a single copy—on demand. While the format in which the service provides copies is rather plain, it represents what appears to be a viable new form of publishing enterprise. In February 2000, the service began operating in collaboration with printing giant Dai Nippon Printing.

Similarly, Tōhan and Toppan Printing have launched an on-demand printing service joint enterprise called Digital Publishing Service. Dai Nippon Printing's *Hon-to-Kompyūta* editorial department is also publishing books on demand through its service "HONCO on demand"; and Kinokuniya, in cooperation with publishers, operates a unique on-demand publishing service called "Denshabon."

In all of these cases, digitalized publications are ordered via the Internet and sold in simple printed form. Although the end product is not itself digital, common to all these services is the fact that they are based on digitalization.

The Denshi Shoseki Konsōshiamu (Electronic Books Consortium) consists of 155 companies, including about eighty publishers, as well as home appliance manufacturers, telecommunications companies, printing companies, and software companies. In March 1999, the consortium began preparations for an experiment in on-demand publishing of electronic books (e-books), which it implemented from November that year until the end of January 2000. In the experiment, publications in digital form were transmitted via communications satellite to special computerized sales terminals placed in bookstores, convenience stores, and university students' associations, where buyers could then purchase them and read them on portable, high-definition, liquid-crystal e-book display units. With some 5,000 digital publications for sale, the experiment was aimed at determining what kinds of books are read, whether or not such new styles of reading will catch on, and so on. The consortium is currently working to develop the system into a full-fledged business enterprise based on the results of the trial.

A similar service due to start in June this year is "Denshi Bunko Paburi," a joint enterprise involving eight publishers which put out *bunko* pocketbooks, including Kōdansha and Shinchōsha, that will convert mainly out-of-print *bunko* books to digital form for sale over the Internet. This represents yet another innovative approach whereby a number of publishers collaborate in setting up a joint online bookstore.

It was also recently announced that an online bookstore called "Book One" will be launched this July. This will be a joint enterprise led by the TRC Library Service Inc., which has already branched out into Internet-based sales, with capital input from seven companies, including Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, Fujitsū, and Dentsū. (The company will have a total capital value, including capital reserve, of ¥2 billion.) The new company expects to attain sales of around ¥20 billion—or roughly sixty percent of total sales in the online book market—in three years.

These developments constitute a distinct boom in Internet-based sales of publications in both printed and digital form. This trend will remain a major factor in any proper consideration of the publishing industry in the twenty-first century. Although Internet sales do not represent a very large share of total sales of published material, it seems certain that distribution in the publishing industry will be increasingly Internet-based as time goes on. Systems allowing customers to order books over the Internet and collect them at their local bookstore or convenience store are expected to become common. Readers will be able to browse catalogues and get the books they want without having to visit bookstores at all. We can envisage the coexistence of actual bookstores with those located in cyberspace. Viewed from this perspective, the nature of the publishing industry can be expected to change quite significantly from now on.

It may also soon be possible for authors to sell their works as digital content directly to consumers. In such cases, the conventional printed book format will be superfluous, altering the fundamental concept of publishing. As publications lose their physical presence, the conventional publishing distribution system will undergo radical change.

Changes can also be expected at the editorial and planning level, as editors and publishers are pressured to decide at the outset whether to produce a work in printed book form, as a CD-ROM, as Internet content, or otherwise, or in some combination of these. With 600,000 existing titles, there is ample potential for converting these into digital form, transferring them to CD-ROM disks, and selling them via the Internet. In the digital world, almost anything is possible.

A case in point is the publication a few years ago of a collection of dictionaries and encyclopedias put out by various publishers on a single CD-ROM disk. Such innovations are impossible in the world of conventional print publishing. Depending on the content, digitalization thus makes it possible even to reconstitute publications as completely new products. This new digital world enabled Shinchōsha, for example, to release a collection of 100 of

its out-of-print *bunko* pocketbooks on CD-ROM.

In short, as digitalization spreads even further, the conventional form of printed publications may also change dramatically. The development of new technologies and software applications promise still more changes not only for publications themselves and the means of their distribution, but for authors and readers. For the moment, however, the precise nature of these changes remains extremely difficult to predict. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director, Shuppan News Company.*)

Engagement with the Different in Japanese Literature

Koyama Tetsurō

The recipients of the millennium's first awards of the prestigious biannual Akutagawa Prize, gateway to prominence for new writers, were Gengetsu for "Kage no sumika" [Dwelling in the Shadows] and Fujino Chiya for "Natsu no yakusoku" [Summer's Promise]. Well-known cross-dresser Fujino, in particular, drew attention because of his attire when he appeared at the awards ceremony.

Fujino is the first cross-dresser to win the Akutagawa Prize, or as far as I know, any other literary prize in Japan. Looking back over the last ten or so years in the literary world, however, we can see that a phenomenon has been taking place that might be described as "gender reversal."

One of the characters in "Moonlight Shadow," a short story included in Yoshimoto Banana's popular and widely translated book *Kitchen* (Benesse Corporation, 1988), is a senior high school boy who puts on his girlfriend's school uniform in order to assuage his grief over her death. A character in the title story, too, is a man who underwent cosmetic surgery after his wife died and dresses and lives as a woman.

Traditionally the Japanese language has distinct vocabulary for men and women, but today many novels are appearing in which female characters use male language. In Arai Man's Akutagawa Prize-winning work, *Tazunebito no jikan* [Missing Persons Hour] (Bungei Shunjū, 1988), Tsukiko has called herself "boku," one of the first-person pronouns used by men, since kindergarten. The protagonist of Matsumura Eiko's first published work, *Boku wa Kaguya-hime* [I Am Princess Kaguya] (Benesse Corporation, 1991) is a high school girl who refers to herself as "boku." Matsumura is an upcoming writer who later won the Akutagawa Prize for *Shikō seijo (Abatōn)* [Supreme Holy Place (Abaton)] (Benesse Corporation, 1992).

The female protagonist of *TUGUMI* (Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1989), for which Yoshimoto Banana won the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize, speaks in the male vernacular. A male writer, Hashimoto Osamu, translated the classic essay, *Makura no sōshi* [The Pillow Book], written by a court lady of the Heian period (794–1185), into the contemporary vernacular of young women—what Hashimoto calls "momojiri-go," drawing considerable media attention. This work, *Momojiri-go yaku "Makura no Sōshi*" [The Pillow Book in Momojiri Translation] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1987) has been quite successful.

Authors can readily be seen crossing the male-female language lines even in their titles. Yamada Eimi, female Naoki Prize winner, uses *boku* in the title of her collection of short stories, *Boku wa bito* [I'm Beat] (Kadokawa Shoten, 1988). Winner of the first Mishima Yukio Prize Takahashi Gen'ichirō uses the feminine inflection "kashira" in the title of a collection of essays entitled *Bungaku ga konna ni wakatte ii kashira* [Is It All Right to Understand Literature This Well?] (Benesse Corporation, 1989).

There are plentiful examples of fiction whose main character is the opposite sex from the author, in most cases by female writers. In her first published work, "Netsuai" [Passionate Love] (in *Nabe no naka* [In the Pot], Bungei Shunjū, 1987), Akutagawa Prize winner Murata Kiyoko presents a story of two boys gunning their motorcycles down a superhighway at dawn. Most of the main characters of Sagisawa Megumu, who won the Izumi Kyōka Prize for her *Kakeru shōnen* [Boy Running] (Bungei Shunjū, 1992), are male. Awarded the Naoki Prize for her *Mākusu no yama* [MARKS's Mountain] (Hayakawa Shobō, 1993), Takamura Kaoru is becoming well known for her stories of the world of male detectives.

What can we observe from these cases of gender reversal seen in literature over the last ten years or so? In their endeavors to understand themselves, authors seem to have turned to characters who are the exact opposite or totally different from themselves. Almost all the novels mentioned here are winners of literary prizes and/or best-sellers. Readers obviously have no trouble with such reversals of gender perspective. The recent popularity of fiction written from that outlook illustrates a tendency among Japanese to engage with the different in the effort to better understand themselves.

Japanese have often been criticized for shutting themselves up within a closed, narrow world, absorbing themselves in a mystique and aesthetic all their own. That tendency has been the source of images that picture Japan as exotic and fascinating at best, and at worst, closed and inscrutable. The landscape and lifestyles that were the source of Japan's distinctive aesthetic have been steadily disappearing, however, since the start of the nation's postwar economic growth. The suicides of Mishima Yukio in 1970 and Kawabata Yasunari in 1972, both prominent writers who were champions of the Japanese sense of beauty, symbolized the vanishing Japanese aesthetic.

Rapid economic growth took off in Japan in the mid-1960s and incomes continued to rise until the oil crisis of 1973. Only then did people begin to question the myth that the nation's economic growth would continue for-

ever. Within two decades the Persian Gulf War of 1991 shattered that myth for good. The oil crisis and the Gulf War finally persuaded Japanese of the importance of taking other countries into consideration when deciding their own nation's course. In the meantime, the cultural ethos and identity that had once clearly distinguished Japanese from other societies had seriously eroded. The literature we are seeing today displaying features of gender reversal may be seen as the product of writers' efforts to reestablish themselves by facing outward toward the "other"—not inward as before.

The Akutagawa Prize was awarded to Korean residents of Japan three times only within the last ten years—Lee Yangji in 1989, Yu Miri in 1997, and Gengetsu in 2000. Before Lee the only Korean resident to receive the prize since the founding of the prize in 1935 was Yi Hoeseong, to whom it was awarded in 1972. Surely this record reflects a new willingness to accept and appreciate perspectives in Japanese literature that look outward and express impulses that diverge from the introspective, centripetally oriented norm.

Japanese seem to have entered an era when they can no longer see themselves clearly from the confines of their own world. With the advent of the twenty-first century, Japanese literature is sure to become even more open and more fully embrace and engage elements of the different. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

Bonuses for Bibliophiles

Ikari Haruo

There was a time when you would sometimes come across a page in a book with an odd fold at the corner. Instead of cutting a neat right angle, the page sported an "ear," resulting from an extra wrinkle in the paper when the pages were trimmed. Nowadays people might conclude the book was defective and want to exchange it for a new copy, but in the Japanese publishing world we have a soft spot for such things; we prize them as auspicious, good luck-bearing *fukugami*. *Fukugami* is written with the character "fuku" (good fortune) and "kami" (paper), a homonym of which is "kami" meaning "god." Printing technology today is so advanced that such oddities are rare, making the chances that a book will yield such a token of good fortune slim. Finding a *fukugami* can be as extraordinary as winning a lottery.

While you may never see a book with a *fukugami*, a more common sight are the small "extras" or bonus items authors may place in the complimentary copies of their newly published books they send out to close friends. A copy of the latest work by a writer of my acquaintance included a folded sheet of B4 paper covered on both sides with poems. The special insert, of which a limited fifty copies had been made, featured verses to be seen only by those who receive the copy; they would not be published in book form later. Another work that came to me was accompanied by a letter printed using a word processor and festooned with a spray of pressed dandelions. Unfortunately about half the petals had already fallen off.

One book came with a personal note written with a brush. When people go to the trouble to write notes with a brush, you usually expect them to be accomplished in calligraphy, but not this author. His hand was hopelessly bad and he had even included an awkward drawing. I couldn't help thinking even an elementary school student could have done better. The content of the note, however, was heart-warming: "I hope you will read this book if you are well and feel in the mood." That sort of laid-back approach is a big relief, after the insistent messages I receive from so many writers, who send their book with an epistle urging me to read it and render them some comment (meaning praise). The unexemplary calligraphy was also accompanied by a kind of talisman made of origami paper, also rather crude, but with a whimsy that struck my fancy.

Another book I received had, as a special supplement, a hand-drawn map of the hot spring spas in the area of the Tōhoku region where the author resides. The map showed the location of his house, with a dotted line from the nearest railway station to the bus stop, and tracing the mountain path from the stop where one would get off the bus and walk for about twenty minutes to the man's house. There was even a memo showing a good place to rest and enjoy the view, and a personal note: "If you are ever in the neighborhood, be sure to drop by." Receiving a personalized invitation like that, you don't feel like waiting until you happened to be in the vicinity; you'd like to take off at once to visit.

The author of a book about secondhand bookstores in Tokyo kindly supplemented my copy with one of 100 limited-edition prints of a hand-drawn map of the Kanda area of Tokyo. His original version charting one of the three great bookstore districts in the world showed recently opened secondhand bookstores as well as long-established ones, but the best feature was his brief jottings, like, "The first floor is manga, second floor literature, fine arts, history, and hobbies. At the storefront there are books you can take home for free!"

The vast majority of writers and publishers send their complimentary copies without including any sort of personal message. But I have a hunch that those who send bonus items may be increasing. As the chances of coming across an auspicious *fukugami* recede, surely the sometimes-bleak horizon of the book reviewer's scene will be enlivened by more personal extra touches like these. (*Ikari Haruo is an essayist.*)

Toward a Book-reading Society in Malaysia

Takiguchi Ken

In 1985, the Malaysian government established a "national book policy" under which it aims to transform Malaysia into a reading-oriented society with a 100 percent literacy rate (currently 93 percent, the highest in the developing world). National efforts to promote reading culture include an international book fair held in Kuala Lumpur every summer during the country's officially designated "Reading Month."

Statistics show that Malaysians read an average of two books per year. If this figure seems somewhat low, it is also revealing of the bifurcation of the population when it comes to reading between a vast majority of people who barely read at all and a minority of apparently voracious readers.

Why do Malaysians read so few books even though their level of literacy is so high? We may suggest two likely reasons. The first is that few books are being published in Malay, the country's official language. Malaysia is a multiethnic nation of Malays (around 60 percent), Chinese (30 percent), and Indians (10 percent). Although Malay is the official language, the lingua franca of the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups is generally Chinese and Tamil, respectively. Part of the legacy of the country's long history under British colonial rule, English is also widely used. Most Malaysians speak two languages—that of their ethnic group and English—and many Malaysians are proficient in three or more languages. Although it has been pointed out in recent years that English-language proficiency, particularly among young Malaysians, is declining due to educational policies stressing the use of Malay, for the foreseeable future, at least, English is expected to remain the main lingua franca among the different ethnic groups. The broad currency of English in Malaysia is significant in terms of reading and publishing, because it means that publications produced in Western countries—not only books but magazines as well—can be imported and consumed just as they are.

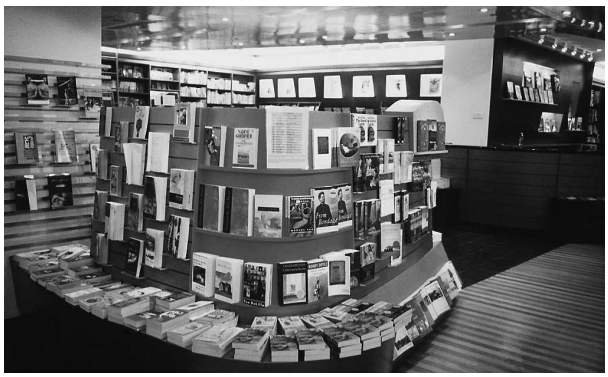
On the other hand, not all Malaysians can read and understand English books with ease. For a large portion of the population, full comprehension requires that they be translated into Malay. For that reason, the government's bureau of language and books, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, spearheaded efforts to publish Malay translations of foreign, including Japanese, literary works. Despite these efforts, English-language books remain the most readily available in the average Malaysian bookstore. Of the 5,816 titles published in Malaysia in 1998, many were in English and around half were education-related or children's books. Books written in Malay for general readers are extremely limited in both quantity and quality.

The other likely reason that Malaysians read so little is the difficulty of obtaining books. Although there are estimated to be around 600 bookstores in the country, most of them are concentrated in urban centers. Furthermore, many shops that sell books are actually stationery or general merchandise stores rather than bookstores in the usual sense. Throughout most of the country, even those people who do seek reading matter face difficulty in obtaining books they want.

Given these conditions, Japan-affiliated bookstores have been establishing an increasingly significant presence, at least in Kuala Lumpur. Kinokuniya has opened three stores in Kuala Lumpur (as well as one in Penang), and Maruzen, one. These stores have all been built in locations that attract many shoppers, such as in large shopping malls and the local subsidiaries of Japanese department stores. About half the shelf stock of these stores is Japanese books and the other half English books.

While the overwhelming majority of their customers are Japanese employees of Japanese companies operating in Malaysia, their magazine sections attract a surprising number of ethnic Chinese and other Malaysians. In Malaysia, where hit charts often include Japanese popular music and Japan-made game software is widely sold (in the original undubbed versions), Japanese magazines also seem to be popular as sources of up-to-date information. In many cases, the desire to understand such magazines prompts Malaysians to study the Japanese language.

According to Kinokuniya's Malaysian subsidiary, the ratio of sales of Japanese-language to English-language books stands at about 9 to 11. The slightly higher sales of English-language books illustrates the fact that these Japanese-affiliated book retailers are not targeting their business to the extremely limited market of expatriate Japanese. Kinokuniya's recently opened Kuala Lumpur City Centre store, for example, is billed as the first of a new breed of bookstore in Malaysia. In addition to offering a more extensive range of Western books than the locally managed book outlets do, this store incorporates new styles of display and store design now seen in bookstores in Europe and the United States. In these and other ways, innovative strategies of Japan-affiliated bookstores are providing new models for book retailing in Malaysia. Despite the increasing ease in recent years of book purchase via the Internet, actually visiting a bookstore to browse the shelves and flip through the pages of books remains one of the important pleasures for book lovers. We hope that Malaysia's transformation into a "book-reading society" goes hand in hand with a growing sense of the pleasures of choosing what to read. (*Takiguchi Ken is a member of the Japan Foundation staff.*)



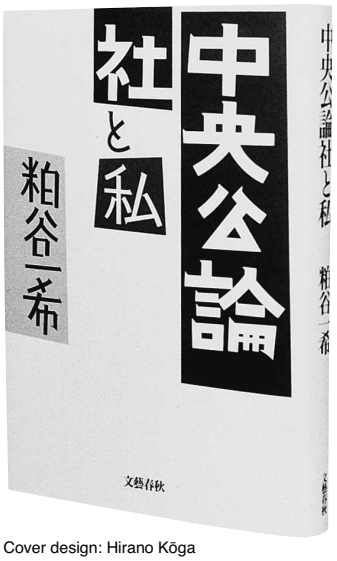
Inside Kinokuniya's Kuala Lumpur City Centre store.
Courtesy of Kinokuniya Bookstore

New Titles

MEDIA

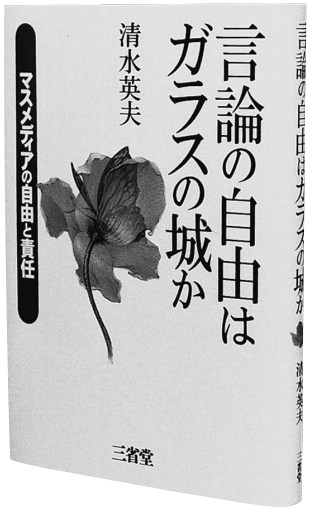
***Chūō Kōron Sha to watashi* [Chūō Kōron Sha and Myself]. Kasuya Kazuki.** Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 193×133 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-16-355830-6.
Looking back on his long years as a journal editor at the highly respected publishing house Chūō Kōron Sha, the author of this memoir presents his views on issues of public debate and journalism in Japan.

Founded in the late nineteenth century, Chūō Kōron Sha, where Kasuya began working soon after graduating from university in 1955, embodied a long publishing tradition that paralleled the modern and contemporary history of Japan itself. It was known for its active involvement in maintaining political balance in Japan by recognizing and presenting a broad spectrum of views and positions in its publications. The author, whose career unfolded amid the swings between extreme rightism and leftism during the postwar era, says he made a kind of conservative liberalism his standard as he groped for ways to establish the conditions for preserving freedom of speech. He describes one particular incident—the fatal stabbing of a company president's wife by a right-winger—to illustrate the vivid realities of the endeavor to preserve such an ideal. Whether or not freedom of speech truly exists in Japan is a question the author takes as a criterion for his own self-evaluation. (In 1999, Chūō Kōron Sha became part of the corporate group of the major national daily Yomiuri Shimbunsha and was renamed Chūō Kōron Shinsha.)



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

***Genron no jiyū wa garasu no shiro ka: Masumedia no jiyū to sekinin* [Is Freedom of Speech a Glass Castle?: The Mass Media's Freedom and Responsibility]. Shimizu Hideo.** Sanseidō, 1999. 193×132 mm. 194 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-385-32117-5.
This is a collection of critical essays examining trends in the mass media in recent years. The author is a scholar of law with a long-standing interest in the relationship between freedom of speech and fundamental human rights, and in the tendency toward legal constraints on that freedom.



Cover design: Sanseidō

The book is organized into six sections covering, respectively, media freedom and responsibility in contemporary society; freedom and regulation of broadcasting; broadcasting and human rights; mass media and youth; regulation of freedom of expression and the constitution; and the legal and ethical issues in mass communications. The author's chief concern relates to the intervention of government authority in television news coverage. He describes a recent incident in which broadcaster TV Asahi reported on dioxin pollution and subsequently came under pressure from conservative political forces worried about losing votes among farmers adversely affected by the reports.

HISTORY

***Kazoku tachi no kindai* [The New Aristocracy in Japan's Modern Period]. Asami Masao.** NTT Shuppan, 1999. 194×131 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7571-4009-6.
Written for general readership, this book considers the significance of the peerage system that characterized Japan's ruling class between the Meiji Restoration (1868) and World War II.

Cover design: Nakasone Takayoshi

The term *kazoku* (peerage) was coined early in the Meiji period (1868–1912) to designate an aristocratic elite created in an effort to consolidate and stabilize the ruling class under the new institutions of modern government. The *kazoku* was comprised of families that had held positions of power and authority under the former regime, such as the former aristocracy and daimyō families, and families of certain people who, though not necessarily of elite lineage, served prominently in the Meiji Restoration or in the Meiji government. According to the author, the criteria used to determine membership of the new nobility were far from clear, and this vagueness testifies to the Meiji government's own inadequate understanding of the *kazoku* system's raison d'être. He asserts that the subsequent development of Japan's modern history has shown that the *kazoku* institution was an enormous failure.

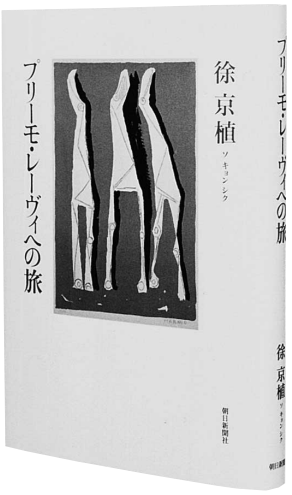
***Kokumin no rekishi* [The Nation's History]. Nishio Kanji, et. al.** Fusōsha, 1999. 216×152 mm. 774 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-594-02781-4.
This study of history was compiled by the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai (Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks), a group of intellectuals, including some famous scholars, that has attracted considerable media attention in recent years.

The book's basic assertion is that histories written in Japan in the post-World War II era, particularly those by left-wing intellectuals, present Japan in a self-denying, self-critical manner and so prevent Japanese readers from drawing a sense of positive meaning from their nation's past. It would be better, the authors maintain, for historians to identify and actively depict more of the self-affirming aspects of Japanese history. The position advanced by the authors, which they call "the liberal historical view," for a time became the focus of much public debate.

This book provides useful clues for gaining a fuller understanding of distortions in historical perspective that Japan has grappled with throughout the postwar era.

Cover design: Shimizu Yoshihiro

***Purīmo Rēvi e no tabi* [A Journey to Primo Levi]. Suh Kyung Sik.** Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 193×131 mm. 246 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-02-257410-0.
Italian novelist Primo Levi, one of the few Jews who survived the inhuman conditions of Auschwitz, committed suicide in 1987 at the home he had lived in since birth. Troubled by the question why Levi should take his own life, the author

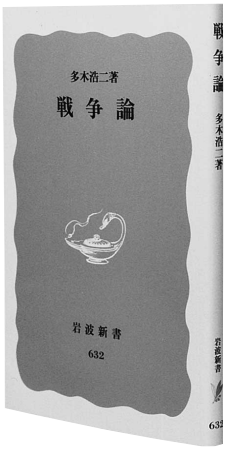


Cover design: Tada Susumu

retraces the novelist's footsteps based on his study of Levi's writing and related sources.

A second-generation Korean resident of Japan, the author first became interested in Levi in 1980 when his two older brothers, who had gone to South Korea to study, were arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. Reading Levi's works at the time those events were going on, the author writes that they seemed like a running documentary of the ordeal his own family was suffering. Suh drew courage from the fact that Levi remained life-affirming despite his Holocaust experience. This same Levi ultimately took his own life, "leaving us behind," however. This book is an unusual study, endeavoring to make sense of Primo Levi's suicide.

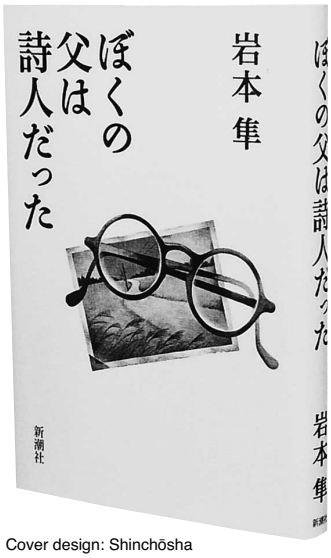
***Sensōron* [A Study of War]. Taki Kōji.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 173×105 mm. 202 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430632-9.
This study of war is authored by a critic whose interpretations and analysis of various issues facing contemporary Japan are based mainly on his concern with semiotics (language).



Can war be a valid subject for critique? The author views war as part of the inevitable process through which any nation-state seeking to ensure its own survival passes; indeed, he regards the nation-state as essentially a mechanism of war. A nation-state asserts its identity by positing other nation-states as potential enemies, and its citizens as soldiers shoulder the burden of its defense. The author argues that, in order to criticize war, one must first reject the nation-state itself, and that any critique of war without negation of the nation-state is the product of ignorance and fallacious thinking.

BIOGRAPHY

***Boku no chichi wa shijin datta* [My Father Was a Poet]. Iwamoto Jun.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 196×132 mm. 250 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-10-413202-0.
This is a biographical portrait of poet Iwamoto Shūzō (1908-79) written by his third son. Iwamoto lived through the most troubled times of Japan's twentieth century. Besides being poor for most of his life, during and immediately after World War II he endured extreme hardships, including postwar detention in a Soviet labor camp. Later, he and his family of six lived in a single six-tatami-mat (roughly 3 square-meter) room, yet he was as dedicated a poet then as he was in the more comfortable circumstances of his final years. Unable to make a living from poetry, he worked as a



Cover design: Shinchōsha

public servant, and though he was conscientious in his work, his chief interest was always poetry.

While the portrayal of his father is made through the eyes of a son, the author complements the description with samples of Iwamoto's best poetry from different stages of his life. The sketch is multifaceted—Iwamoto as a father arriving home drunk after carousing with fellow poets, as a devoted artist hosting poetry gatherings in the family's tiny room, and as a man of frequent love affairs—and despite his personal proximity to his subject, the author manages throughout to maintain just the right authorial distance.

***Shini tamou haha* [Mothers' Death]. Dekune Tatsurō.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 191×130 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-415102-5.
Originally serialized in the literary magazine *Shōsetsu shinchō*, the essays in this collection center around two women: the author's mother and mother-in-law.

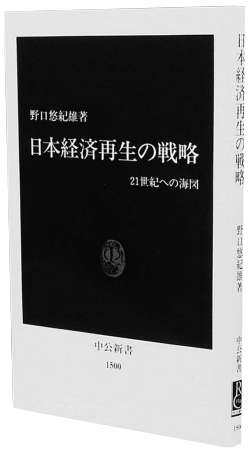
An antiquarian bookstore proprietor who writes fiction in his spare time, Dekune spent much of his earlier life in poverty. From the time of his childhood, even finding a place to live was a major problem for his family. One house they lived in was on a mountain where there was no well, and water had to be carried by bucket-yoke up from a well at the foot of the mountain. His mother performed this task, making two trips daily, morning and evening, and a third trip every day the bath was filled, yet never once complaining.

The author's mother died after a brief battle with illness, and his mother-in-law followed her some time after. Written in a light, casual style, the essays describe the relationship between the two very different, yet equally remarkable, women up to their deaths. The author's social circle includes a number of other interesting characters, including the amusing stamp-trader Kiriboshi and a dog named Bikki. Though notorious for biting virtually anyone, Bikki is docile when meeting the author's mother-in-law for the first time, no doubt recognizing at once the true head of the household.

Cover design: Shinchōsha

POLITICS/ECONOMY

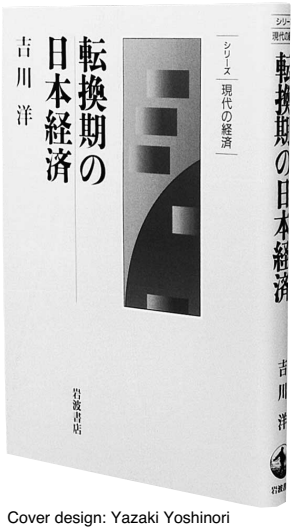
***Nihon keizai saisei no senryaku: Nijū-isseiki e no kaizu* [A Strategy for Reinvigorating the Japanese Economy: Charting a Course for the Twenty-first Century]. Noguchi Yukio.** Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999. 173×109 mm. 202 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-101500-2.



An economist examines Japan's prolonged business slump and considers the prerequisites for resuscitating its economy. In a previous work titled *1940 nen taisei* [The 1940 System], the author asserted that the fundamental structures of Japanese society today were created around 1940. The breakdown and stagnation of many of the institutions established at that time, he believes, are part of its transition from the old structure to a new one. Continuing this line of argument, in the present book he proposes that, instead of quick-fix economic measures, which are doomed to failure, it is necessary to address the problem with a long-term strategy once the "direction of the structural change" has been ascertained. Rejecting the simplistic view that economic boom times are good and recession is bad, he stresses the need to devise a flexible approach to the current predicament based on a broader historical perspective.

***Tenkanki no Nihon keizai* [The Japanese Economy in Transition]. Yoshikawa Hiroshi.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 193×132 mm. 246 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 4-00-026264-5.
Japan's economy, bloated by the bubble of an overheated monetary situation in the latter half of the 1980s, plunged into the "ten-year recession" in the1990s. This book examines the causes of this "longest and worst postwar recession" and offers a diagnosis based on empirical data, recommending prescriptions for economic recovery.

The author, a macroeconomist, attributes the 1990s recession essentially to inadequate demand. Discarding the theories of recession analysis that place blame on the "supply side," "low potential growth rate," and "asset deflation," he reconstructs the Keynesian theory of the demand side, and argues that it is crucial to create demand. Though there may be latent demand arising from improvement of urban environments, transport, and medical-care systems, in order for that demand to manifest itself, effective public policies are needed in the areas of taxation, urban planning, regulation, and enhancement of social capital. To this end, he recommends, the government should collect reliable information about technology and advance projects for improvement of needed infrastructure.



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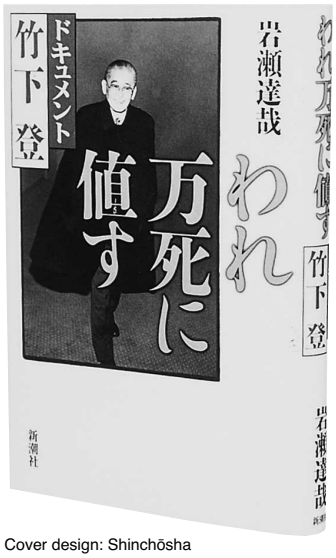


Cover design: Shinchōsha

***Ware banshi ni atai su: Dokyumento Takeshita Noboru* [My Sins Are Unpardonable: An Account of Takeshita Noboru]. Iwase Tatsuya.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 196×133 mm. 234 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-10-432501-5.
Following the death of former prime minister Tanaka Kakuei in 1993, former prime minister Takeshita Noboru took over the role of Japan's chief political king-maker. Written by a journalist, this is a gritty biography of Takeshita that retraces his rise to political prominence.

Born to a long-established family in Shimane prefecture, Takeshita got his start in politics as a member of the prefectural assembly. Neither a bureaucrat-turned-politician nor a second-generation politician with a guaranteed support base inherited from family, and not possessing the kind of charisma upon which some politicians have leaped into prominence, Takeshita ascended to the "throne" of Japanese politics through what the author calls his "heartlessness and indefatigability."

The book painstakingly describes the "deep, dark karma" of Takeshita, who once remarked that he would stifle his true feelings and endure any humiliation in order to achieve his goals. (Takeshita died on June 19, 2000. He was 76.)

***Yudaya imbōsetsu no shōtai* [The Truth about "Jewish Conspiracy" Theories]. Matsuura Hiroshi.** Chikuma Shobō, 1999. 173×106 mm. 230 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-480-05823-0.
In Japan, even the most ordinary bookstore often has a special section for books on anti-Semitism. Matsuura Hiroshi, a university lecturer with a special interest in modern and contemporary European society, traces the reasons for this special interest among Japanese readers.

Divided into nine parts, the book's focus ranges widely. The author considers why anti-Semitic perceptions should be a particular concern in Japan, where the population includes very few Jews. In an effort to unlock this riddle, he draws on his own impressions and personal experience to identify Japanese images and perceptions likely to be related to anti-Jewish sentiment. Through content analysis of manga artist Kobayashi Yoshinori's *Gōmanizumu sengen* [A Declaration of Straight Talk] and philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's *Fūdo* [Climate], the author attempts to show that the discriminatory character of Japanese society promotes the creation of groundless perceptions couched in vague, obscure forms.

Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

SOCIETY

***Kiite kudasai: Han genshiryoku hatsuden no messēji* [Please Listen: A Message in Protest of Nuclear Power Generation]. Sakata Shizuko.** Edited and privately published by Sakata Yūko, et al., 1999. 263×185 mm. 128 pp.
This is an account of the life and work of Sakata Shizuko (1923–98), who was active in the antinuclear power movement in Nagano prefecture.

Born in Tokyo, Sakata's family moved a number of times as her father, a naval architect, was transferred from one post to another. She entered the department of Japanese literature of Tokyo Women's Christian University, but illness forced her to leave before graduating. Returning to Nagano, she married and helped run her husband's family business, a pharmacy. From around 1976 she began to take notice of the serious concerns about nuclear power voiced by her daughter, then living with her family in Europe. From the following year until 1989, she published *Kiite kudasai* [Please Listen], a private newsletter opposing the construction of nuclear power plants.

The present book includes all thirty-five issues of *Kiite kudasai*; a series of essays by Sakata titled "Why I Continue to Oppose Nuclear Power Generation in Nagano"; an essay by her daughter Masako (one of the book's editors); and essays of remembrance by her associates. While describing the life of one individual, the book also offers insights into the process by which a small, provincial community was galvanized to action on an issue of global importance.

***Parasaito shinguru no jidai* [The Era of the "Parasite Single"]. Yamada Masahiro.** Chikuma Shobō, 1999. 173×106 mm. 204 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-480-05818-4.
Studies show that Japan currently has some 10 million unmarried university graduates who live with their parents and depend on them to meet their basic living needs, even after graduation. This author (b. 1957), a sociologist specializing in the family, has

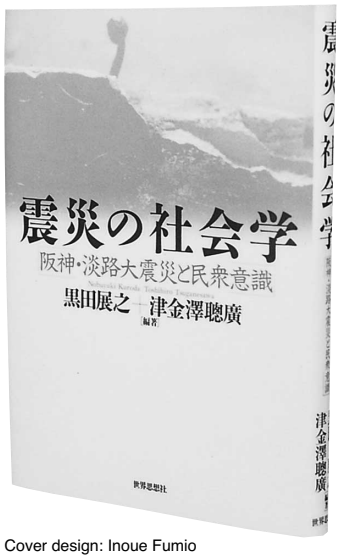
been monitoring the increase of such "parasite singles," as he calls them, and in this book he analyzes the background and characteristics of the phenomenon.

Recent sociological research shows that alternatives to the family unit as a lifestyle choice must be recognized not only as a matter of human rights but in view of actual realities. The author points out, however, that conditions that prevent people from accepting such extra-familial social units are widespread in Japan today, and argues that new perspectives are needed on the claims sociologists have made so far on this issue. His concern here is with how to create conditions whereby people caught between dependence upon their parents on the one hand and their urge to establish autonomy from their parents on the other can address their troubles through discussion and mutual support.

Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

***Shinsai no shakaigaku: Hanshin-Awaji daishinsai to minshū ishiki* [The Sociology of Earthquake Disasters: The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and Popular Perceptions]. Kuroda Nobuyuki and Tsuganesawa Toshihiro.** Sekai Shisō Sha, 1999. 216×153 mm. 228 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 4-7907-0784-9.
This book is a compilation of research on the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake that hit Kobe and surrounding areas on January 17, 1995, written by two academics from Kwansei Gakuin University, located in Kobe, who experienced the quake themselves.

The book consists of eight essays. "Major Earthquakes and Crisis Management" discusses the government's crisis control at the time of the earthquake in comparison with that after the Tokyo earthquake of 1923. While much media attention has been given to the many volunteers, especially young people, who came from all over the country to help victims of the 1995 earthquake, the essay "Vigilante Groups and Volunteers" takes up the topic of volunteers and recalls the neighborhood vigilante groups that arose in 1923 and massacred several thousand ethnic Koreans in the wake of the quake that hit Tokyo that year. Other essays include "The Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Consumer's Cooperative Kobe," an account of developments toward resuscitating the Consumer's Cooperative Kobe, which suffered extensive damage in the quake; and "Rumor and the Media," which examines the social role and responsibility of the mass media in reporting disaster news.



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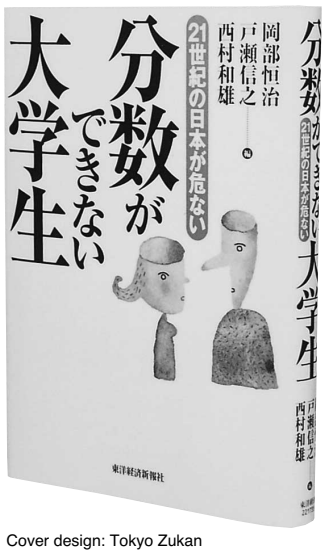
Although universities and research institutes have conducted many studies on the Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, most have been carried out in such fields as architecture, civil engineering, and other "hard sciences." This book thus represents a valuable addition of perspectives from the social sciences and humanities to the overall body of post-quake research.

EDUCATION

***Bunsū ga dekinai daigakusei: Nijū-isseiki no Nihon ga abunai* [University Students Can't Do Fractions: Twenty-first-century Japan in Peril]. Okabe Tsuneharu et al., eds.** Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1999. 194×134 mm. 302 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-492-22173-5.
While the country is poor in natural resources, Japan has developed on the strength of its technology. Partly for that reason and partly because of the image of fierce competition for school and university placement in Japan, it is generally believed that the Japanese on the whole are strong in mathematics.

According to this book, that image is an illusion. In reality, he shows, Japan's schools offer the lowest number of class hours devoted to mathematics of any advanced industrial nation, and many of its universities do not make mathematics a required subject in their entrance examinations. Some 20 percent of students in top private universities, according to a survey report, were unable to solve such elementary mathematical equations as division of fractions. Based on comparison with data from other countries, the book confirms the fact that the math skills of Japanese college students have declined to a shockingly low level, and considers what mathematics and other fundamental education should be like in the future.

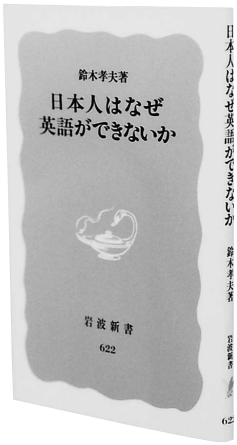
Edited by members of the Nihon Sūgaku Kai (Japan Mathematics Society), the book conveys their strong



Cover design: Tokyo Zukan

commitment to reversing the course of the already dire educational crisis they encounter daily. The book attracted considerable media attention, stirring up a lively public debate. (See *Japanese Book News* No. 28, p. 2).

***Nihonjin wa naze Eigo ga dekinai ka* [Why Japanese Are Poor at English]. Suzuki Takao.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 173×105 mm. 216 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430622-1.
Few of Japan's prime ministers throughout modern history have been proficient enough in English to function in the international political arena without the aid of interpreters. Such being the case for the nation's top representatives, it is hardly surprising that the English language skills of the vast majority of ordinary Japanese remain poor even in the so-called age of internationalization. Despite six years of English study in junior and senior high school and four years at the university level, the degree of English proficiency of even well-educated Japanese is low.

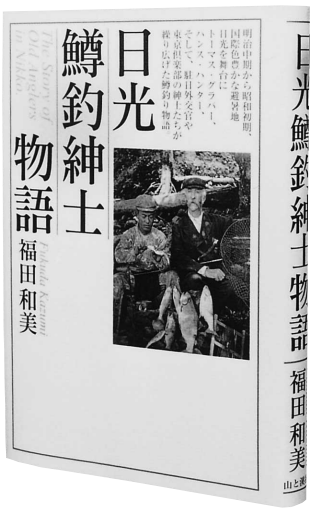


The sociolinguist author of this book stresses the need to reform the anachronistic and ineffectual approaches to English education in Japan so as to cultivate real competence in the language. He argues that achieving that goal requires a fundamental change in assumptions and would entail such measures as making English a non-compulsory component of the school curriculum and using only teaching materials with Japan-related content. What is needed, he maintains, is to replace the conventional approach of "passive English," which is based mainly on understanding the West and putting English into Japanese, with "active English" centered on self-expression and the use of English to describe and explain Japan to non-Japanese.

To those ends, the author presents a convincing array of practical suggestions based on his own experience in language education reform at Keio University.

CULTURE

***Nikkō masuzuri shinshi monogatari* [The Story of the Old Anglers of Nikko]. Fukuda Kazumi.** Yama to Keikoku Sha, 1999. 216×150 mm. 255 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-635-36062-8.
Nikko, a popular summer resort not far from Tokyo, is also known among anglers as a trout-fishing mecca. According to this author, the history of Western-style trout-fishing in Japan can be boiled down to the history of trout-fishing in Nikko.



Cover design: Inoue Natsuki

Developed as one of the essential accomplishments of the traditional English gentleman, fly-fishing was introduced to Japan during the country's tumultuous period of modernization in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. In this book, the author investigates the history of fly-fishing's arrival in Japan through the lives of Englishmen Thomas Glover (1838–1911) and Hans Hunter (1884–1947), who were traders active in Japan around that time.

From around the middle of the Meiji period (1868–1912), Nikko and the shores of nearby Chūzenji Lake were developed as sites for summer houses owned by prominent businessmen, foreign diplomats, and other influential people. Glover was among those who vacationed in the area. On two occasions, in 1902 and 1904, he imported from the United States, at his own expense, a total of 25,000 river trout eggs, which he hatched and released into the local rivers, thereby launching the Nikko trout-fishing tradition.

The fruit of the author's many years of research, conducted while he worked at Nikko city hall, this book is a unique cultural history steeped in a genuine passion for local fishing tradition.

***Shōwa shōnen zukan* [Shōwa Children Illustrated]. Nejime Shōichi. Illustrated by Minegishi Tōru.** Hakusensha, 1999. 216×135 mm. 127 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-592-73167-0.
The Shōwa era corresponds to the reign of Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito), from 1926 to 1989. Including the upheaval of World War II, Shōwa stands out in Japanese history as an era of unprecedented social change. In this essay collection, the author and the illustrator, both of whom spent their early childhood in the third and fourth Shōwa decades (from the late 1940s to the early 1960s), portray the texture and mood of that time through commentaries on and illustrations of various memorabilia of the day. The essays confirm the radical changes that have taken place in lifestyles over only about four decades. Once-familiar articles of daily life such as mosquito nets, *chabudai* (a low dining table), loincloths (for swimming), baggy

Cover design: Ōmukai Tsutomu and Sakamoto Keiko

bloomers, *gomu-tobi* (a jump-rope game using a stretched elastic cord), and axes for chopping firewood have almost completely disappeared from the average home.

It is a book whose anecdotes and nostalgia are appreciated most by Japanese now in their fifties.

***Yokohama Yūrindō kyūnan nijo no monogatari* [Nine Sons, Two Daughters: The Story of the Yokohama Yūrindō Bookstore]. Matsunobu Yasoo.** Sōshisha, 1999. 193 × 134 mm. 294 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7942-0927-4.

Yūrindō is the name of a chain of book and stationery stores in the Yokohama-Tokyo area. The store was founded in 1909 by Matsunobu Daisuke (1884–1953). Of Matsunobu's eleven children—nine sons and two daughters—seven were involved in the Yūrindō business itself, two operated a related educational enterprise, and only two entered occupations completely unrelated to the business.

Written by one of the two in the last category—a now-retired university professor—this book looks back on the history of Yūrindō and the lives of the family that ran it. The author, Matsunobu's ninth child and eighth son, offers a personal account of both his own childhood circumstances and the history of the family as a whole. The story of his father, a dominant, central presence in the children's lives, conveys the tenacious spirit of an entrepreneur aspiring to make his store "the library of Yokohama" despite numerous setbacks, including the Tokyo earthquake of 1923, the worldwide depression following the 1929 Wall Street crash, and the devastating air-raids on Yokohama during World War II.

Cover design: Ashizawa Taii

JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE

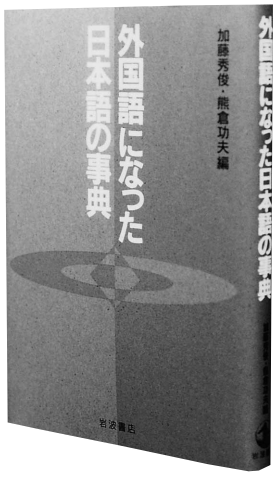
***Bairingaru Japanīzu: Kikoku shijo hyaku-nin no kinō, kyō, ashita* [Bilingual Japanese: The Past, Present and Future of 100 "Returnee" Japanese]. Satō Machiko.** Jimbun Shoin, 1999. 188 × 132 mm. 266 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-409-24060-9.

Japanese who return to Japan after spending part of their childhood abroad invariably face unique challenges as young adults trying to fit back into Japanese society. After migrating to Australia with her sociologist husband and raising three children, the author (b. 1944) was prompted by her personal interest in the problems of such "returnees" to conduct an interview survey of over a hundred Japanese—most of them women—who have lived through the "returnee" experience. Based on the survey, this book is an attempt to tell the interviewees' personal stories as faithfully as possible, including their school and home life abroad, their experiences in the Japanese workplace after returning to Japan, and their views on topics such as marriage. Whereas in conventional Japanese perceptions the returnee woman is thought to be self-assertive, career-oriented, and therefore "hard to handle," the book explodes such superficial stereotypes by recounting each individual's unique experiences and responses.

The author points out that, although returnees have faced various trials in spanning different cultures during their formative years, Japanese society provides little opportunity for them to utilize the unique experience and skills they have thereby acquired. As one practical suggestion, she notes that returnees might make good foreign-language teachers at the elementary, junior high and senior high school level, inasmuch as they have acquired an intuitive understanding of students' needs and perceptions.

***Gaikokugo ni natta Nihongo no jiten* [A Glossary of Japanese Words in Other Languages]. Katō Hidetoshi and Kumakura Isao, eds.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 192 × 132 mm. 260 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-00-002839-1.

Zen, haiku, Kuroshio, shiatsu, tōfu, shōyu, jinrikisha, kōban, karaoke. What these Japanese words have in common is that they have entered the lexicon of other languages. How did such words appear overseas and how were they accepted into other languages? Written by scholars with a special interest in social and comparative culture theory, this book examines fifty such words and their meanings in the foreign languages into which they were introduced.

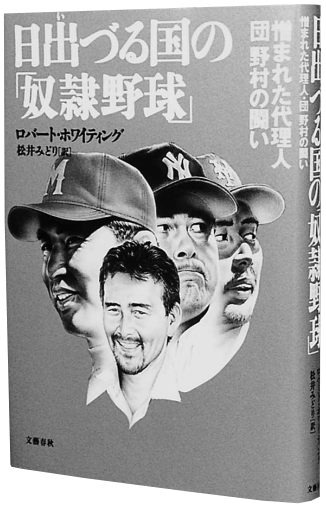


Cover design: Nakano Tatsuhiko

The words were chosen on the basis of how frequently they appear in dictionaries of several major languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and German). Interestingly, the resulting selection is dominated by concrete rather than abstract nouns. This reflects the editors' respect for the utility of concrete phenomena as forms of abstract expression.

***Hi izuru kuni no "dorei yakyū": Nikumareta dairinin, Dan Nomura no tatakai* ["Slave Baseball" in the Land of the Rising Sun: The Struggle of Dan Nomura, Unpopular Sports Agent]. Robert Whiting.** Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 193×133 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-16-355680-X.
A thoughtful work of comparative culture, this book presents a portrait of Dan Nomura, an agent active in the Japanese and American professional baseball leagues. The author, a nonfiction writer, compiled the book primarily from interviews with Nomura over a two-year period, with additional information gathered from talks with his friends and colleagues and other research.

Son of a Jewish-American father and Japanese mother, Nomura is known as the agent of star players including Nomo Hideo, Irabu Hideki, and Yoshii Masato, but in the Japanese baseball world he is generally treated as something of a villain. One of the aims of this book is to explain how he came to acquire such a bad reputation.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

A long-time commentator on Japanese baseball (and author of *Slugging it Out in Japan*; Kodansha International, 1991), Whiting came to realize that it was impossible to critique the baseball scene without taking into account the social context of the sport, and has since turned to comparing Japanese and American culture and society. Noting the detrimental effect that lack of individualism and strong emphasis on adaptability have on Japanese professional baseball, he has long felt that some "hard-core foreign pressure" was needed to change this situation. His contention is that the role Dan Nomura has played has contributed this outside pressure, effecting considerable social change in Japan.

***Nihonjin ni natta shin gaijin* [The New Breed of "Gaijin Japanese"]. Koarashi Kuhachirō.** Kōdansha, 1999. 194×131 mm. 274 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-06-209827-X.
This is a collection of essays on twenty-five foreign nationals living in various parts of Japan. The author, a novelist and poet from Akita prefecture who had never visited any other country until he was in his fifties, interviewed them with a mixture of curiosity and perplexity.

Cover design: Hirano Kōga

His subjects include: an American taxi-driver who guides tourists around Hiroshima's atomic bomb-related sites; a French woman traveling in the Tohoku region; a young Pakistani who works in a computer-related company and propagates the teachings of Islam in his spare time; a Taiwanese woman who operates a night club in Shinjuku's Kabukichō district; and a Vietnamese man studying to enter Kyoto University's graduate school.

The author presents his subjects in casual interviews, asking them about their backgrounds and upbringing, their romantic experiences, their motives for coming to Japan, and their lifestyles while living there. The interviewees expressed level-headed critiques of various aspects of Japanese life, including the undertones of discrimination inherent in the society and the Japanese government's handling of issues such as war reparations or employment conditions and medical support for foreign workers. At each of these pivotal junctures in the conversations, the author searches for words to respond to the criticisms, and the resulting tension carries over to the reader as well.

PERFORMING ARTS

***Niji no wakiyaku* [Rainbows: Kabuki's Supporting Actors]. Seki Yōko.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 197×132 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-410902-9.
In the tradition-bound world of kabuki, leading actors follow a hereditary system whereby, generation after generation, each star performer passes on his illustrious position and stage name to his son. But kabuki also includes many *wakiyaku*—actors who play supporting roles—who enter the profession not by birth but as regular apprentices. This book is a collection of essays portraying eighteen *wakiyaku* actors ranging in experience from veteran to young newcomer.

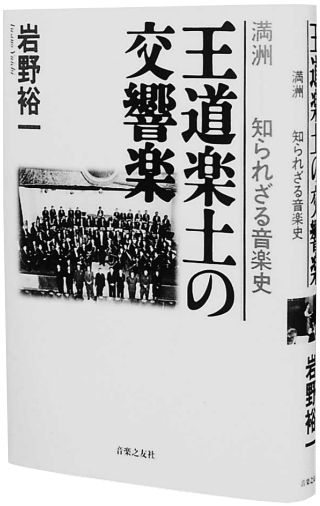
Cover design: Wada Makoto

Expert *wakiyaku* are renowned for their achievements in performing a particular kind of role—Nakamura Sen'ya as nanny, Nakamura Jujirō as apprentice, Arashi Kitsusaburō as shop clerk, and so on. "We *wakiyaku*," comments Bandō Tachibana, a former *onnagata* (male actor who plays female roles), "are the clouds that hold up the shining

stars . . . and occasionally the clouds that deftly conceal them." The title of this collection of writings, evoking the rainbow that appears in the sky in the opposite direction from the sun, was inspired by this metaphor.

Through the stories of those who know kabuki best, the book offers engaging glimpses into various facets of the traditional theater on stage and off, including the difficulties of apprenticeship and the rigorous training regimen and the lifestyle of famous leading actors.

Ōdōrakudo no kōkyōgaku: Manshū shirarezaru ongaku shi **[Symphony Music in the "Land of Peace and Prosperity": The Untold Musical History of Manchuria]. Iwano Yūichi.** Ongakunotomo Sha, 1999. 196×132 mm. 390 pp. ¥2,900. ISBN 4-276-21124-7.



Cover design: Shimokawa Masatoshi

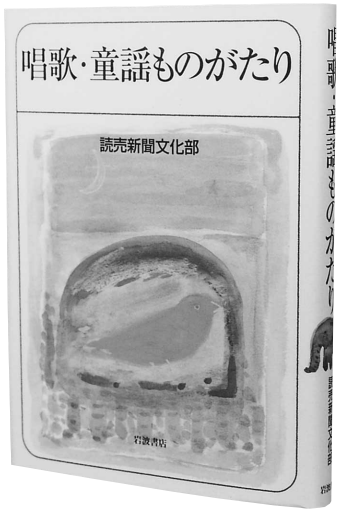
This is a documentary report on the little-known beginnings of Western orchestral music in Japan. Asahina Takashi, Japan's oldest practicing orchestra conductor, has devoted his life to the advancement of orchestral music in this country. While most Japanese musicians of his generation have been reluctant to speak about their activities during World War II, Asahina is an exception. The author, surprised to discover the story of an orchestra that performed in the Japanese-controlled puppet state of Manchukuo during World War II, was prompted to travel to Harbin to learn more about Asahina's accounts of that period.

Between the two world wars, eminent musicians in exile from post-revolutionary Russia came to Harbin, then a major point of contact between East and West, and joined the local symphony orchestra, forming what was at the time the best orchestra of its kind in Asia. In 1925, the performances of this orchestra when it was invited to play in Japan had a tremendous impact on the then-fledgling Japanese orchestral music scene. The country's orchestral music took its first steps under the tutelage of Emmanuel Metter (1878–1941) and other distinguished European musicians who came over from Harbin.

A chronological table of events related to the early history of orchestral music in Japan is provided at the back of the book.

Shōka, dōyō monogatari **[Tales of Children's Songs]. Yomiuri Shimbun Bunka-bu.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 215×152 mm. 298 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-00-023340-8.

The nursery rhymes and other songs we learn as children form part of a spiritual "home" that remains in our hearts throughout our lives. This book looks at a selection of seventy-one of Japan's favorite children's songs, including "Chō-chō" (Butterfly), "Urashima Tarō," and "Zō-san" (Elephant). It discusses places mentioned in or related to the songs, delves into the background of their composition and popularity, and relates numerous anecdotes about them. As the songs are passed down from generation to generation, few people give much thought to the lyricists and composers who wrote them, or even to the lyrics themselves. On closer examination, however, it is clear that all reflect the ethos of the times when they were composed.



Originally serialized as a column in the *Yomiuri shimbun* newspaper, the articles have been collected and published in book form by popular request. The articles were written by a team of eighteen writers, and have been reorganized for this publication under seasonal categories. Complete with an index of opening lines, this record of how the songs appeared and came to enrich the hearts of millions is full of human interest stories.

Sutā tanjō: Hibari, Kinnosuke, Yūjirō, Atsumi Kiyoshi soshite shinfukkōki no seishin **[The Stars Were Born: Misora Hibari, Nakamura Kinnosuke, Ishihara Yūjirō, Atsumi Kiyoshi, and the Spirit of Recovery]. Yoshida Tsukasa.** Kōdansha, 1999. 194×131 mm. 286 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-06-209817-2.

Japan's current prolonged recession can be seen, proposes the author, as a defeat in the country's economic struggle that evokes the experience of military defeat in World War II. To cope with the setbacks it has brought, he calls attention to the "spirit of recovery" that characterized Japan's postwar period of reconstruction. This spirit, he explains, arises from the human stories that unfold when we keep our attention focused on the core of things, their essential reality.

This book focuses on four stars of the postwar entertainment industry that he regards as embodying subconscious elements of the popular Japanese psyche of their day. Singer Misora Hibari, who rose to fame in the immediate postwar recovery period, had a sensuous "woman-child" image that anticipated the look

Cover design: Suzuki Seiichi Design Shitsu

fashionable among today's teenage girls by decades. Nakamura Kinnosuke was born into a family of kabuki actors but defied tradition to become a film actor. Fellow screen star Ishihara Yūjirō, known as a tough guy who loved the sea, symbolized both the destructive and constructive energies of Japan's economic boom period. And Atsumi Kiyoshi, in his numerous films as the character "Tora-san," continued his sentimental journeys to a wholesome, old-time Japan that postwar reconstruction and development were rapidly destroying.

This book seeks out the subconscious and inside history of postwar Japanese society, going beyond the factual record in pursuit of the popular myths, half-fact, half-fantasy, that were generated and passed on in society. It is a compelling work by a self-styled nonfiction writer and insightful interpreter of the history of postwar Japanese popular sentiment.

LITERATURE

Chichi no shōzō: Geijutsu bungaku ni ikita "chichi" tachi no sugao **[Father Portraits: Men of Art and Literature as Their Children Knew Them]. Nonogami Keiichi and Itō Genjirō, eds.** Kamakura Shunjū Sha, 1999. 194×130 mm. 406 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-7740-0131-7.

Kamakura, Japan's elegantly preserved former political capital, has been home to numerous artists, writers and intellectuals since the Meiji era (1868–1912), including Nobel Prize winner Kawabata Yasunari and eminent critic Kobayashi Hideo. This is a collection of essay-portraits of thirty-two such men of letters as described by their sons and daughters. Through a wealth of personal anecdotes, the subjects are seen in their little-known everyday guises—as the accident-prone, short-tempered or play-the-fool fathers only their children could know. The essays were chosen from a serial column in *Kamakura shunjū*, a monthly magazine locally published by Kamakura Shunjū Sha. The book was compiled and published by Kamakura Shunjū Sha founder Itō Genjirō to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the company's founding.

While fascinating at one level for its disclosure of little-known aspects of the private and creative lives of these outstanding minds, the book is also a rich trove of time-tested insights into father-child relationships and family life.

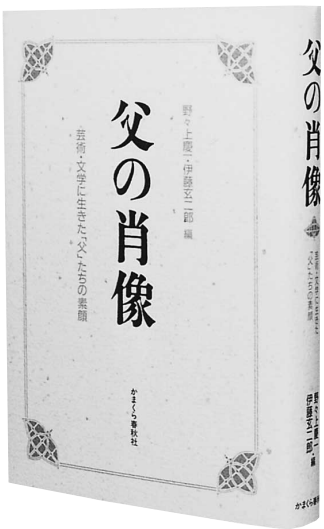
Edo kaiga to bungaku: "Byōsha" to "kotoba" no Edo bunka shi **[Edo-period Painting and Literature: An Edo-Period Cultural History of Portrayal and Language]. Imahashi Riko.** Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (University of Tokyo Press), 1999. 216×152 mm. 360 pp. ¥6,000. ISBN 4-13-080201-1.

This is a scholarly study of painting and literature in the Edo period (1603–1867) from the perspective of an art historian. In Oriental art, of which Japanese art is a part, unity of poetry and painting has been the ideal; painting and literature were not conceived as independent genres. Indeed, the concept of literature in its modern sense cannot be applied to literary works of the Edo period, says the author. To artists of that era, not only narrative, poetry, and plays but all the tales, fables and even rumors that were passed down in Japan's oral storytelling tradition were counted equally as "literature." The author scrupulously elucidates how each of the artists discussed tapped into this common store of narrative knowledge and, by drawing out its imaginative potential, nurtured it into artistic form. Through close examination of diverse genres of art works, including nature paintings and even the gardens of the daimyo, she thus provides an interdisciplinary analysis of Edo art that spans literature, history, religion and folklore, and the performing arts.

Ekkyōsha ga yonda kindai Nihon bungaku: Kyōkai o tsukuru mono, kowasu mono **[Border-Makers, Border-Breakers: Modern Japanese Literature as Read by a Border-Crosser]. Tsuruta Kin'ya.** Shin'yōsha, 1999. 194×130 mm. 454 pp. ¥4,600. ISBN 4-7885-0670-X.

This author, a member of the Royal Society of Canada, taught Japanese literature in English for many years at universities in Canada and the United States. His term "border-crosser" denotes both people who travel to foreign countries and those who transcend the intangible borders of the mind.

Whereas the modern age was characterized by the rush to erect boundaries, the contemporary age is geared toward transcending them, as various kinds of barriers—between nations,



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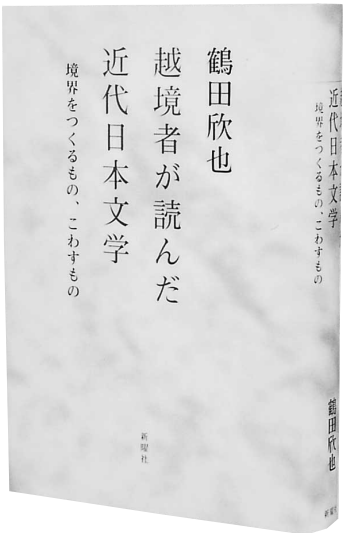

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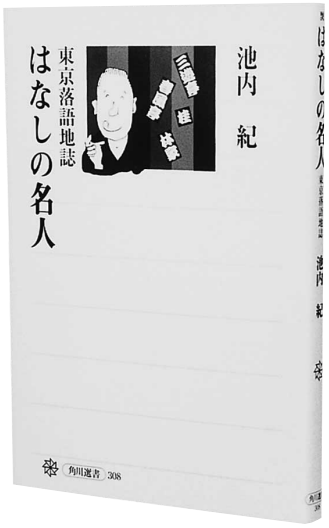
cultural zones, genders, academic disciplines, nature and humanity, and so on—are gradually broken down. In the author's case, living in the different cultural milieu of North America allowed him to step back and analyze his own personal background and through that process to derive a new approach to Japanese literature.

Through the analysis of texts in terms of themes such as *amae* (indulgence-seeking) and motherhood, in this book he elucidates fundamental aspects of the works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Kawabata Yasunari, and other central figures of modern Japanese literature. In the book's opening essay, he makes a thought-provoking study of how Westerners are depicted in Japanese literature. Many such descriptions, he finds, betray either a repudiating or a yearning attitude toward "otherness" that stems from ignorance and a sense of inferiority. The exception in this regard is Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *Sasameyuki* (*The Makioka Sisters*), in which Westerners are depicted as "the equal Other" and are not stereotyped, an achievement which the author finds extraordinary considering the historical context in which the novel was written.

The author's account of his experience returning to Japan after living abroad also makes compelling reading.



***Hanashi no meijin: Tōkyō rakugo chishi* [Master Storytellers: A Topography of Tokyo *Rakugo*]. Ikeuchi Osamu.** Kadokawa Shoten, 1999. 190×126 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-04-703308-1.

In the repertoire of *rakugo* (a traditional form of comic monologue) of the Tokyo area, certain stories are set in specific places. The story "Nozarashi" (The Skull), for instance, takes place along the Ōkawa river (the lower reaches of the Sumidagawa), and "Shinagawa shinjū" (Shinagawa Love Suicide) must be set in the Shinagawa district.

This book is a tribute to fifteen well-known stories said to have been told by master storytellers of the Tokyo *rakugo* tradition, with related information about each story's geographical setting. In compiling the book, the author, a scholar of German literature, explored the various settings by consulting historical texts, strolling through the settings in which they were placed and reconstructing the bygone Edo townscape in his imagination. Following models of textual interpretation acquired in study of European literature, the author approaches the *rakugo* stories as narrative texts. Considering them against the European literary tradition, he imagines that Molière would have admired the story "Fumichigai" (Wrong Letters), and that Chekhov would have laughed at "Kogoto Kōbei" (Kōbei the Grumbler).

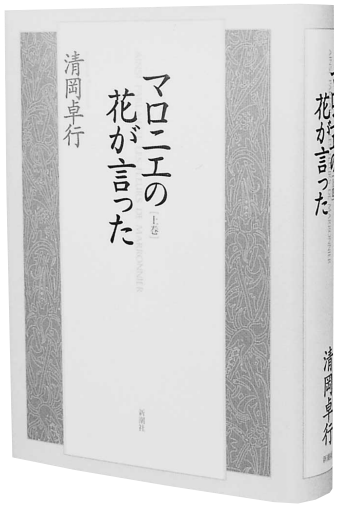
This tour through the world of Tokyo *rakugo* conveys a sense of the atmosphere of old Edo and includes engaging anecdotes about the famous storytellers themselves.

***Maronie no hana ga itta* [What the Horse-chestnut Flowers Said]. 2 vols. Kiyooka Takayuki.** Shinchōsha, 1999. 215×150 mm. each. 602 pp.; 594 pp. ¥3,500 each. ISBN 4-10-343102-4; 4-10-343103-2.

Of the many historical contexts that helped shape art in the twentieth century, that of Paris between the two world wars was perhaps the most fertile. Japanese intellectuals in Paris during that period included painter Oka Shikanosuke, poet Kaneko Mitsuharu, painter Fujita Tsuguharu, poet-novelist Shimazaki Tōson, anarchist Ōsugi Sakae, and philosopher Kuki Shūzō, along with the women who loved them. These expatriates thus became part of an interwar Parisian milieu that included such influential contemporaries as the surrealist poets André Breton and Robert Desnos, and the painters of the École de Paris.

The first volume of this work deals with the friendships Fujita and his wife Yuki developed with Desnos and others in Paris, and the second focuses on the lifestyle and works of Kaneko during his journey to Paris via Shanghai and Java, accompanied by his wife Mori Michiyo. Dealing entirely with real persons and events and based firmly on historical materials, both accounts are excellent examples of critical biography. While the author takes pains to distinguish clearly what is supported by the historical record and what is not, this effort is in no way stilted, an achievement which may be attributed to his long-standing admiration for his subjects, their works, and the Paris of their day.

With this work, the author has opened up new horizons in the genre of biography.



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***Nagai Kafū: Fuyu to no deai* [Nagai Kafū: Encounter with Winter]. Furuya Kenzō.** Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 193×131 mm. 431 pp. ¥3,400. ISBN 4-02-257443-7.

Discourse on writer Nagai Kafū has been on the increase in recent years, with Kafū scholarship evolving distinct subfields specializing in such themes as Kafū's Tokyo, his studies abroad, and his diaries. This book stands out from others for its attempt to reconsider the writer in his entirety, encompassing a broad view of both the man and his works. It even includes a separate chapter on such seldom-discussed aspects as his haiku and interest in *ukiyo-e* prints.

Kafū was one of the few writers of his day who refused to cooperate in

any way with the military authorities during the Pacific War. This was not because he opposed the war on specific ideological grounds, but simply because of his categorical loathing for anyone involved with the military. Kafū remained single for almost his entire life, and the women he became involved with were invariably geisha or licensed prostitutes. It was only when wandering alone the streets of Tokyo's old merchant and entertainment districts that he found a degree of spiritual solace. The author calls Kafū the only "dangerous" writer in modern Japan, not because he enjoyed and wrote about the pleasure quarters, but because he was entirely without skepticism in his aesthetic pursuits.

Describing Kafū as "totally aesthetic, not moral like Sōseki," the author offers a comprehensive account of Kafū as a "servant of beauty" who devoted his life to art.

Cover design: Kanda Norikazu

FICTION

***Ansatsusha* [Assassins]. 2 vols. Nakano Kōji.** Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 193×133 mm. each. 230 pp.; 240 pp. ¥1,700 each. ISBN 4-00-002482-5; 4-00-002483-3.
This is a historical novel based on the League of Blood Incident of 1932, in which two youths assassinated former finance minister Inoue Junnosuke and industrialist Dan Takuma. The assassins were members of a terrorist group—the League of Blood—headed by ultranationalist Inoue

Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

Nisshō, a former intelligence operative for the Japanese military in China who later joined the Nichiren sect of Buddhism.

The novel's main character, Mizunuma Kichigo, is based on Inoue Junnosuke's assassin, Onuma Shō. Inoue Nisshō is represented by a character named Nitchō. Through the eyes of Kichigo, who grew up in a farming village in Ibaraki prefecture, the novel vividly depicts the plight of rural communities of the late 1920s and early 1930s, exploited by the state and absentee landowners and further impoverished by the Great Depression. A group of initially pure-hearted young men organize under Nitchō's leadership with the aim of redressing the situation, but are gradually transformed into terrorists operating under the slogan "one person, one death." As their assassination plan nears its climax, Kichigo visits a Tokyo intellectual named Tada—who serves in the story as his ideological interlocutor—in order to bid him a final farewell. Tada tries to persuade Kichigo of the futility of terrorism by pointing to the case of a man, who, having no clear plans of his own, became a mere assassin during the Russian Revolution.

The author explains that he wrote the novel in an attempt to solve the mystery of how the initially innocent young men involved in the League of Blood Incident came to be ultra-right-wing killers—an ambitious task in which he ably succeeds.

***Okuu* [Crow on the Roof]. Otokawa Yūzaburō.** Kōdansha, 1999. 193×131 mm. 234 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-209490-8.
The five short stories collected in this volume share a common formula. All are set in the Edo period (1603–1867) and revolve around samurai-class men and women in minor provincial clans. The main characters are low- to middle-ranking samurai who get caught up in the power struggles of their clan leaders. The male protagonists have no ambitions for social or political advancement, while the women are beautiful, self-effacing types who sacrifice themselves to serve their homes, fathers, and husbands.

For his penchant for such settings and characters, the author has been likened to the late Fujisawa Shūhei, a novelist who was a master of stories about minor provincial clans of the feudal age. In reaction against contemporary Japanese society, where women have long since discarded traditional notions of noble feminine virtue, and where the ideal of the heroic male—discreet and humble but able to unleash extraordinary strength when necessary—is rapidly losing all basis in reality, both writers seek to depict the kind of beauty appreciated by Japanese of former times.

Written in a polished, mellow style, this work marks the arrival of a distinct subgenre of historical fiction.

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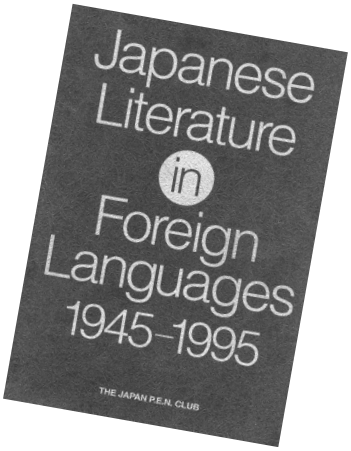

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Events and Trends

Bookselling on the Internet

Online shopping, as represented by American online bookstore "Amazon .com" (http://www.amazon.com) has become a familiar part of daily life. In Japan, as elsewhere, as more households obtain personal computers and Internet access, online book shopping is spreading.

In November 1999 Softbank Corp., Seven-Eleven Japan, and the major book distributor Tōhan teamed up and opened "e-Shopping!Books" (http://www.esbooks.co.jp). Registered members can purchase books at the website and pick them up at a nearby Seven-Eleven convenience store.

Among early-starter websites are the door-to-door delivery company Yamato Transport's "Book Service" (http://www.bookservice.co.jp) and Kinokuniya Bookstore's "BookWeb" (http://bookweb.kinokuniya.co.jp). Last year they were joined by "e-Shopping!Books" and the bookstore Bunkyōdō's "JBOOKS" (http://www .jbook.co.jp), and in January 2000, Asahiya Bookstore's "Asahiya Shoten Net Direct" (http://www.netdirect .co.jp) also opened. There are now more than twenty websites in Japan where books can be purchased.

Major book distributor Nippan launched its website, "Hon'ya Town" (http://www.honya-town.co.jp/index .html) in November 1999. Individuals can access the site, purchase books online, and pick up the merchandise at a local bookstore with access to the website.

The online book shopping business is not reserved only to large corporations. In an increasing number of cases several small and medium-sized publishers have formed partnerships for direct bookselling via the Internet. Hanmoto.com (http://www.hanmoto .com), for example, was inaugurated jointly by Gaifūsha, Seikyūsha, and other publishers in March this year. At this joint website the publishers provide a database listing all their publications with detailed summaries, which they hope will attract customers. Participating publishers now number about fifty. "C book" is a similar website for computer-related books founded by Impress Corporation, Shōeisha Co., Ltd., ASCII Corporation Company, Nikkei Business Publication, Inc. and others. It opened April 1, 2000.

A secondhand book store association, Zenkoku Koshosekishō Kumiai Rengōkai (All-Japan Federation of Antiquarian Booksellers) has also opened a website, "Antiquarian Booksellers of Japan" (http://www .kosho.or.jp). With some 250 dealers participating, about 310,000 books are listed. Old magazines, manga, books in Western languages, and pamphlets are also for sale there. It has been extremely difficult to find out what books are available at what stores, but this website makes it possible to search all the books in the collections of all the participating antiquarian booksellers. The database not only gives a book's title, author, publisher, price, and year of publication, but rates the condition of the book as well.

Suffering from the sagging market over the last few years, publishers have high hopes that Internet-based book marketing will reverse their fortunes. Making that "weapon" more effective depends on the qualitative and quantitative improvement of the information their websites have to offer.

The Diet Library Goes Electronic

It is now possible to search for book titles and other bibliographic information in the vast collection of Japan's National Diet Library, online and free of charge (http://www.ndl.go.jp).

Now available is a database listing all the books the Library has collected since 1948 (1.8 million Japanese titles and 200,000 non-Japanese titles). Works can be searched by title, author, or publisher, or even part of the title. A total of 23,000 items of graphic data are also available, including reproductions of the multivolume Edo-period natural history *Honzō zufu* [Illustrated Records of Herbs] and ukiyo-e prints by Katsushika Hokusai, Andō Hiroshige, and other masters. The Library plans to make available a database of magazine article titles with 3.6 million entries in 2002.

Manga by Cell Phone

Major publishing houses have begun the transmission of manga comics using the "i-mode" information service provided for NTT DoCoMo cellular phones. In January, Shūeisha pioneered the new service linked to its weekly comic magazine, *Young Jump*. This service was dubbed "i-mode Young Jump." The content is renewed every day except Saturdays and Sundays, and the monthly charge is 300 yen. *Young Jump* magazine, the largest of Japan's comic weeklies targeted at men in their twenties and thirties, has a circulation of 1.8 million. In the hope of generating a synergistic demand for the magazine, the "i-mode Young Jump" also previews the next issue as well as providing news of related events and publications.

Another major publisher, Kōdansha's "i-Kodansha" presents, among others, original programs using characters that appear in the publisher's comic magazines, *Shōnen Magazine*, *Morning*, and *Young Magazine*, but the content is mainly text.

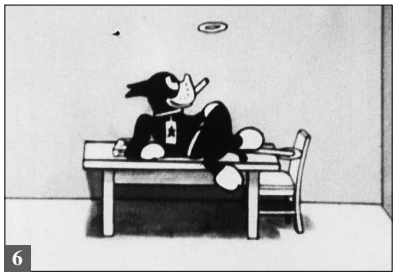
Shōgakukan publishing house opened "i-Shogakukan" on April 1, for the time being transmitting mainly four-panel gag comics already published in book form.

NTT DoCoMo's i-mode service via the Internet using cellular phones started in February 1999. One year later the number of its subscribers had risen to approximately 5 million. The service allows users to access the Internet directly using a cell phone, without bothering to connect the phone to a computer.

Silent Movies on DVD-ROM

In the publishing world, the DVD-ROM (digital versatile disk, read-only memory) is the wave of the future. Last year, a string of multimedia encyclopedias previously produced on CD-ROM went on sale in DVD-ROM versions.

DVD-ROM features high-capacity and high-quality memory, as well as excellent visual and sound replay. Among publications making the most of these DVD-ROM merits is *Nihon musei eiga taizen* (Masterpieces of Japanese Silent Cinema; 1-volume Windows version) released by Tokyo's Urban Connections in May.



Orders should be directed to:
Urban Connections
Tokyo Nissan Shibuya Bldg. 8 Fl
2-16-10 Higashi
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0011
Tel: 81-3-5467-4721
Fax: 81-3-5467-4722
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Photographs courtesy of Matsuda Film Productions

In the era of Japanese silent movies, motion pictures were shown in a theater with a *benshi* (a performer providing the dialogue and explaining what's going on in the film) and musical accompaniment. Silent cinema was the most fashionable genre of the Japanese popular entertainment world prior to the advent of talkies in the 1930s. Most of the silent cinema films and related materials were lost, however, in the Tokyo earthquake of 1923 and the Tokyo air raids of 1945, and the industry showed little interest in preserving such materials.

Collected in the *Nihon musei eiga taizen* are some 12,000 silent cinema-related items, including those from the collection of the late Matsuda Shunsui, who was a *benshi* active during the silent cinema era. The work is aimed at helping viewers fully appreciate the roots of the Japanese cinema. This DVD-ROM edition is bilingual, in Japanese and English.

The edition is made up of three parts: "Theater," "Film Database," and "The Museum of Silent Cinema." The "Theater" part shows highlights of forty-five silent films, each two minutes long, along with the *benshi*'s performance. English subtitles are shown on the screen. Among the films are *Serpent*[1] (1925; starring Bandō Tsumasaburō), *Kurama Tengu and the Age of Terror*[2] (1928; starring Arashi Kanjurō), *I Graduated, But. . .*[3] (1929; directed by Ozu Yasujirō), *The Dancing Girl of Izu*[4] (1933; starring Tanaka Kinuyo), *The Water Magician*[5] (1933; directed by Mizoguchi Kenji), and *Private Norakuro*[6] (1933; animation).

In the "Film Database" part, you can search data relating to works of silent cinema, directors, actors, etc. The "Museum" part offers menus for studying the historical background of silent movies. You can also drop in and see the inside of a movie theater in those days and hear interviews with people in the industry.

The *Nihon musei eiga taizen*, completed after two years in production, is expected to be a valuable source for exploring the roots of Japanese cinema.

Weekly Encyclopedias in Vogue

Sales of magazines and journals for 1999 decreased by 4.2 percent over the previous year, the largest decline since the first statistical survey of this kind conducted in 1950. Doing exceptionally well despite the recession in magazine publishing is a weekly genre adopting an encyclopedia-like form.

Shōgakukan has entered this market, inaugurating in January *Shūkan bijutsukan* ("Museums Weekly"; 50 volumes), which introduces great masters of Western painting and their works, and in February a gardening weekly entitled *Flower Oasis*. Kōdansha, which earlier launched encyclopedic weeklies such as *Nichiroku nijusseiki* ("Journal of the Twentieth Century") and *Shūkan chikyū ryokō* ("Weekly: Traveling the Earth"), also inaugurated *Shūkan sekai no bijutsukan* ("Weekly: Museums in the World"; 100 volumes) in January this year to introduce museums and show masterpieces in their collections. This has brought the two major publishers into direct competition over "world museums" in the encyclopedic weekly arena. Both the *Shūkan bijutsukan* and the *Shūkan sekai no bijutsukan* are selling well.

Over the last several years DeAGOSTINi Japan has launched a series of weeklies in this new genre, and this January it started the weekly publication of *PC Success*, a personal

computer how-to series targeted at beginners and intermediate users, encouraged by the success of the *Shūkan Īji pīshī* ("Weekly: Easy PC") series it ventured in 1998. DeAGOSTINi Japan also founded another weekly, *Bijuaru Nihon no rekishi* ("The Visual History of Japan") in January 2000.

In 1999 a total of sixteen encyclopedic magazines were published by three publishing companies, with about 40 million copies printed. The market has grown to a sales volume totaling some 16 billion yen (value of printed copies some 22 billion yen). As of the end of February, fifteen encyclopedic magazines by four publishing companies were coming out. The scale of the market, since it was joined by major publisher Shōgakukan, is expected to grow even further. Shuppan Kagaku Kenkyūjo, an institute engaged in research on publishing, gives three main reasons for the success of the encyclopedic weeklies: (1) they make it easy to obtain systematic knowledge about a certain educational or practical theme every week; (2) their large-sized photographs and layout make for comfortable reading; and (3) they are lightweight and their price is reasonable. (February 2000 issue of *Shuppan News.*) There is no doubt that their favorable sales are also partly due to enormous investment in TV commercials and other sales promotion gimmicks.

Seitō Journal Wins New Regard

A number of publications related to *Seitō* ("Bluestocking"), Japan's first literary magazine by and for women, have recently been published. Women pioneers in the feminist movement wrote critical essays and novels for the magazine in the 1910s. *Seitō* was inaugurated in 1911 by founding members Hiratsuka Raichō, Yosano Akiko, Nogami Yaeko, and Tamura Toshiko. Hiratsuka's manifesto written for the inaugural issue, *Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta* [In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun] is well known. Itō Noe (1895–1923) became the chief editor of the magazine in 1915, but the following year the journal was discontinued. Itō's works have been brought together in a four-volume publication, entitled *Teihon Itō Noe* [Standard Text of Itō Noe] (Gakugei Shorin, 2000). *Jiyū sore wa watashi jishin: Hyōden Itō Noe* [Freedom, That Is Me: The Life of Itō Noe], a 1979 study by Ide Fumiko, a pioneer specialist on Itō, was published in new format this April.

In December last year, a book appeared entitled *"Seitō" o manabu hito no tame ni* [For Those Who Study *Seitō*] (Sekai Shisōsha), edited by Yoneda Sayoko and Ikeda Emiko. Ten researchers discuss such topics as "self-determination of sex" and "financial independence," which were addressed in the pages of *Seitō* from the point of view of women's history. The book also contains extensive source materials, including references, chronologies, and explanatory notes for individuals. Another book, *"Seitō" o yomu: Bluestocking* [Reading *Seitō*: Bluestocking] (Gakugei Shorin, 1998), edited by the Nihon Bungaku Kyōkai Shin-feminizumu Hihyō no Kai (Study Group for the New Feminist Critique, Japanese Literature Association) sheds fresh light on literary works in *Seitō* as these women's assertion of self.

The year 2001 marks the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of *Seitō*. A documentary movie entitled *Genshi josei wa taiyō de atta* [In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun], about Hiratsuka Raichō, a leading figure of the magazine, is being privately produced on the initiative of an organizer of anniversary events.

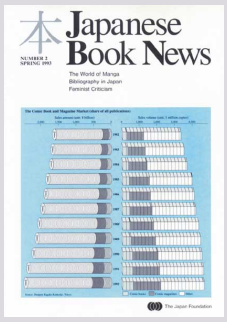
Abe no Seimei Boom

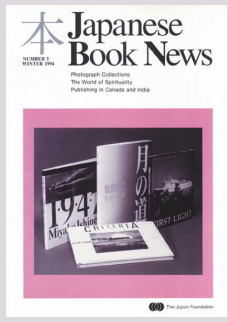
Abe no Seimei (921–1005), an expert in magic and divination active among the aristocracy of the mid-Heian period, is drawing renewed attention. After his death, Seimei became a legendary figure as a genius *onmyōji* (diviner relying on the ancient Chinese theories of yin and yang and the five elements) equipped with a mysterious power, and appeared in various folk tales and literary works. Among the oldest tales in which he appears are *Konjaku monogatari* [Tales of Times Now Past], an early-twelfth century collection of short stories, and another similar collection of stories, compiled in the thirteenth century, *Uji shūi monogatari*. In the Edo period (1603–1867) he emerged as a heroic figure in *kanazōshi* popular literature, and in the *jōruri* and kabuki genres of theater. One well-known story tells how Abe no Seimei killed a frog by throwing a leaf of grass at it, and another how he accurately predicted the abdication of the emperor after observing abnormal movements of the heavenly bodies. A *jōruri* play reenacting the contest for prowess in magic between Abe and his rival *onmyōji* Ashiya Dōman has been performed over and over.

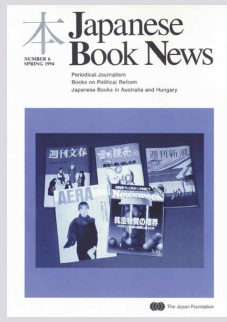
The boom was ignited by novelist Yumemakura Baku's "Onmyōji series" (Bungei Shunjū, 1988–), the principal character of which is Abe no Seimei. Popular manga artist Okano Reiko created a comic version of the series, which spread the Seimei craze mainly among young women. Yumemakura Baku published other novels with Abe no Seimei as protagonist, including *Heisei kōshaku Abe no Seimei den* [Heisei-era Storytelling: The Life of Abe no Seimei] (Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1998) and *Onmyōji namanari hime* [The *Onmyōji* and the Princess] (Asahi Shimbunsha, 2000), a book version of a novel that was serialized in the *Asahi shimbun* newspaper. Other novelists also have published works about Abe no Seimei or other *onmyōji*. For example, the protagonist of the popular mystery writer Kyōgoku Natsuhiko's "Kyōgokudō series" is an *onmyōji* of today.

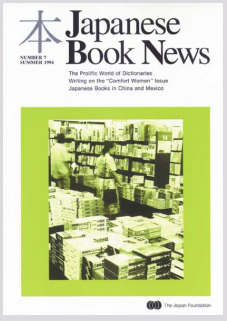
Nonfiction works and guidebooks are also being published, including Fujimaki Kazuyasu's *Abe no Seimei* (Gakken, 1997), Abe-no-Seimei Kenkyūkai (Abe no Seimei Study Group)'s *Onmyōji "Abe no Seimei" chō-gaidobukku* [Super-guidebook to Abe no Seimei, *Onmyōji*] (Futami Shobō, 1999), and Togashi Rintarō's *Onmyōryō* [The Bureau of Yin and Yang] (Tokuma Shoten, 1999). Also, an increasing number of magazine features deal with Abe no Seimei.

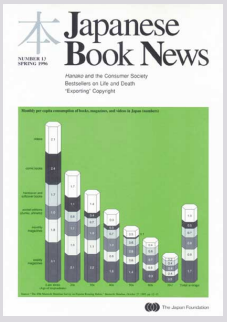
On the Internet a number of websites related to Abe no Seimei have been opened. In places associated with his life such as the Abe no Seimei Shrine in Kyoto, many young women are seen visiting with a Seimei-related book in hand. The number of university students who take up Abe no Seimei or other *onmyōji* diviners in their graduation theses is reportedly increasing.

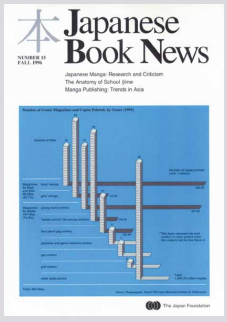


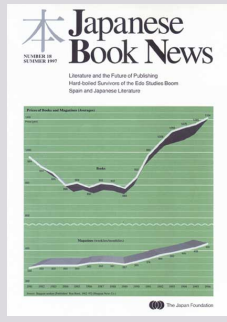


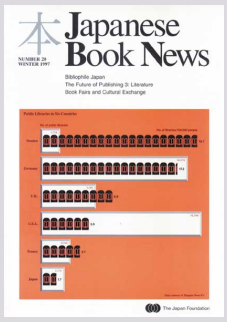


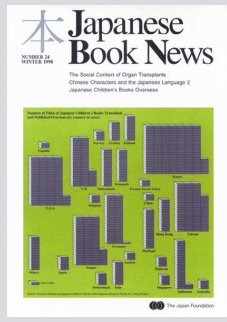


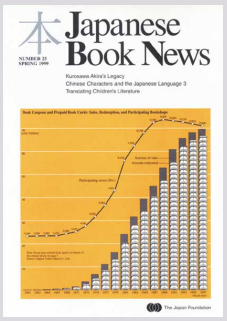


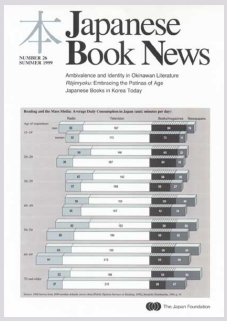


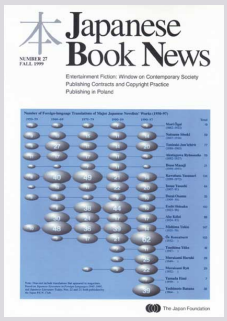


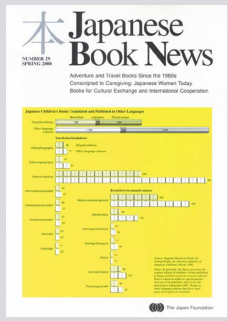












To order back issues, see inside cover.

Translation and "True Language"

Hirano Keiichirō

Globalism is much in vogue these days, and cultural exchange is flourishing more than ever. And where does this leave literature? While culture in such genres as painting and music may course through the world with relative ease, the language arts cannot venture much beyond their native milieu without undergoing the laborious process of translation. No matter how sensitive to the tenor of the times and insightful in its analysis, a writer who would have a work read overseas must accept the unavoidable time lag between the production of the original and the completion of its translation, which can require months, even years. Anything that might become outdated as a passing fashion or trend is therefore rarely a candidate for distribution in translation. For better or worse, authors wishing to reach readers in other languages must measure time in relatively larger spans. They must also accept the necessity of relying on the capacity of another—the translator—to present their work to a readership in another language. This is an even more essential problem than the time lag.

Movements to confirm translation as a literary endeavor and appreciate its artistic integrity, rather than consigning such works to the status of necessary evil, arose more than once in the twentieth century. Walter Benjamin's classic essay, "The Task of the Translator" (original, "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers," 1923), still offers much food for thought on this subject. While there is not space here to introduce his argument in detail, we may note his citation of French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98) regarding "the imperfection of languages." Mallarmé says, "The imperfection of languages consists in their plurality, the supreme one is lacking." (*Theories of Translation*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet, University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 78). The creation of poetry, said Benjamin, made possible verse that could philosophically compensate on a higher level for the deficiencies of imperfect language. Likewise he speculated that the language of a translation could open up the possibility that the translator's mother tongue might approach the supreme or "true language." He addresses the question of the translatability of a work into another language. When a certain work is rendered into another language, can the work intrinsically tolerate translation? The translator should grope for a suprahistorical kinship between the original language in which the work was written and the translator's language into which it is translated. Only after the translator identifies the latent possibilities of supreme language in the work he or she will translate, directing his or her mind to a higher level of language, does he or she render it into the recipient tongue. Thus an attempt is made at expression on a high level of language through the translation. The original language and the language of a translation are two fragments that can be seen as part of a vessel. Supplementing each other, the two pieces hold together to form a larger fragment. The more languages into which the original work is translated the closer in shape to a complete vessel its content will become. The supreme language, what Benjamin calls true language, remains elusive. However, the original text and the many texts the work is translated into together form an increasingly fully formed vessel, and this presages the formation of the "true language," which may, in fact, be eternally impossible to achieve.

The translator, therefore, has an active role to play in exploring the potential for bringing his or her own language closer to "true language" through translation of individual works. Unlike international exchange through the direct method of learning foreign languages, translation takes an "inside road," bringing the language we use every day and in which we think and contemplate out onto the world stage.

Humankind never fulfilled the ancient dream that all peoples would come to speak a common language such as Esperanto, and neither is such a dream likely to come true in the future. It may seem paradoxical that in this era of computer information and data processing, an ancient craft like translation has become ever-more essential and indispensable, but for the utilization of our native tongues in the age of globalization, its significance is far greater than the paradox.

Courtesy of Shinchōsha

Hirano Keiichirō was born in 1975 in Aichi prefecture and grew up in the city of Kitakyūshū, Fukuoka prefecture. Influenced by Mishima Yukio and Mircea Eliade, he began writing fiction during his second year in high school. In 1998, his first published work, a metaphysical novel entitled "Nisshoku" [Solar Eclipse], appeared in the August issue of the literary journal *Shinchō*. Written in a stilted old style of Japanese and dealing with a heresy trial in fifteenth-century France, this work drew widespread attention in the media, which hailed the author's "extraordinary" new talents. In January 1999 Hirano won the 120th Akutagawa Prize for the work, and became the first university student recipient of the prize in the twenty-three years since it was awarded to Murakami Ryū. In March that year Hirano graduated from the Faculty of Law at Kyoto University. Shinchōsha published *Nisshoku* in book form in 1998 and Hirano's subsequent novel, *Ichigetsu monogatari* [Tale of the First Month], in 1999.