

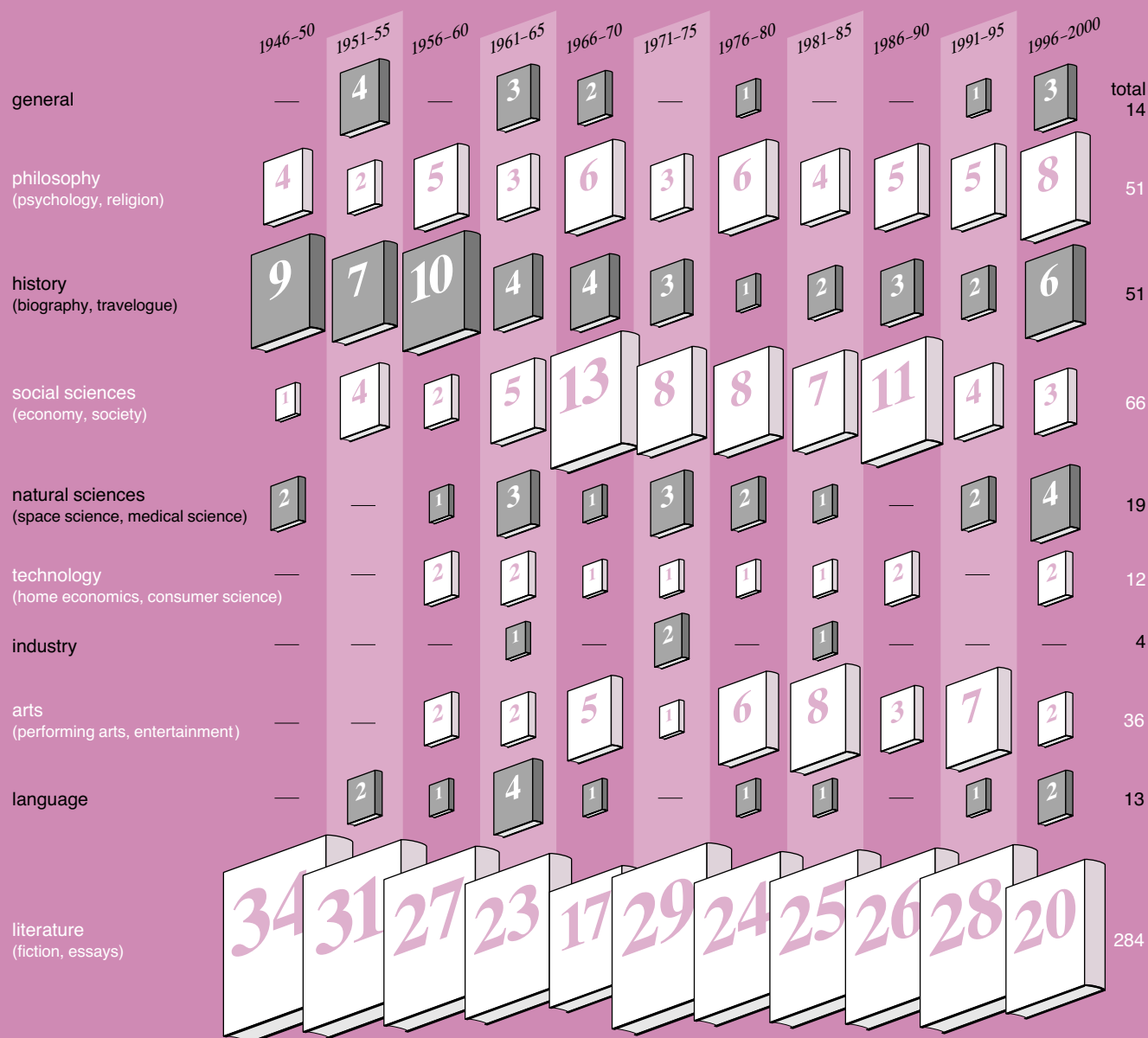


NUMBER 31
FALL 2000

Japanese Book News

Urbanization and Appreciations of the City
Transmitting the Culture of Words
Books in Egypt Today

Number of Best-sellers by Category, 1946–2000



Note: Annual top ten best-sellers in five-year divisions drawing on data from Shuppan News Co. Genres in parentheses are those predominant in each category. Categorization is based on data provided by the website of the National Institute of Informatics: <http://webcat.nacsis.ac.jp>



The Japan Foundation

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

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Bibliographic and Production Services
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Center for Intercultural Communication

Design

Michiyoshi Design Laboratory, Inc.

Printed in Japan

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ISSN 0918-9580

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From the Editor

The second installment in our series looking back over the twentieth century written by *Japanese Book News* editorial board members is by Kawamoto Saburō, who takes up the urbanization of Japanese society, one of the most momentous changes that occurred in the twentieth century. He introduces some of the highlights of a ferment of studies of the city that appeared over the years. Notable in these works is the shift from negative to positive images of the city.

The year 2000 was designated National Year of Reading for Children, and in May the International Library of Children's Literature opened in Tokyo's Ueno Park. We asked Matsui Tadashi, who was instrumental in the realization of the ILCL and who has been involved with the editing and publishing of children's books at Fukuinkan Shoten publishing company throughout his career, to write on the theme of reading for children. Matsui believes that the auditory experience of being read to as a child plays a crucial role in the rearing of children. It is decisive in boosting children's reading skills and encouraging them to read for pleasure and as a pastime, and to grow up into adults who enjoy and benefit from reading.

Japanese Books Abroad, featuring Egypt this time, reports on the Cairo International Book Fair, the situation of Japanese books in Egypt, and the revival of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in the spring of 2001.

Under the From the Publishing Scene column, Koyama Tetsurō notes the conspicuous number of works of fiction in the past ten years or so that have to do with sleep and insomnia. Suggesting that this phenomenon may have to do with the intense pace and mobility of Japanese society today, he takes up in particular Murakami Haruki's recent *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* [All God's Children Are Dancing].

Ikari Haruo shares his astonishment at the inspiring insights of two young boys: A thirteen-year-old haiku poet whose work is highly praised by successful poet Tawara Machi and a remarkable nine-year-old who already knows that "Probably the only thing in which human beings are really equal is death." We are grateful for the advice of Sato Hiroaki of New York for his help in translating the haiku.

The author of In Their Own Words is Ekuni Kaori, a writer as well as translator, who shares her ideas about words in the process of translation.

Japanese Book News address:

http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/media/publish/4_04right.html

Urbanization and Appreciations of the City

Kawamoto Saburō

One of the biggest changes that took place in Japanese society in the twentieth century was urbanization. In the space of that one hundred years, a predominantly agrarian society was dramatically transformed into one centered on city life. Tokyo in particular, which today accounts for one tenth the population of the nation, developed rapidly as the pivot of the country's urban culture from the time of the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964. So overwhelming has been its growth and flowering that grave concerns are regularly expressed about the Tokyo "monopoly" in government, financial, business, information, and cultural affairs.

There was a time when cities and the people who lived there were seen in a negative light. In contrast to what was considered to be the healthy, hardworking life of rural communities, the cities were dismissed as "capitals of pleasure" obsessed with consumption, where the pure-hearted youth of the countryside were sure to be led astray. As long as agriculture is a nation's primary industry, cities are bound to be viewed critically in any debate on their relation to the country. In the era when rural communities were poor, urban culture was generally cast as gaudy, excessive, and superficial, and city dwellers felt too indebted to the farmers through whose backbreaking labor in the fields their food was produced to actively celebrate urban culture.

The critical view of cities prevailed for a long time in modern Japan and was still strong in the early 1960s. Even a book that was highly regarded in those days, *Kindai Nihon no seishin kōzō* [The Psychological Structure of Modern Japan] (Iwanami Shoten, 1961), by political scientist Kamishima Jirō, described the cities as places of extravagance and conspicuous consumption and dismissed their citizens as irresponsible, rootless transients divest of all trace of the sound and settled life. The cities were filled with the politically apathetic and uninvolved, the book warned, and could be hotbeds of fascism.

The discourse on cities continued in this negative vein, even as the cities themselves, particularly Tokyo after the Olympics, were rapidly advancing into a new age. Today they have attained a sophisticated culture and an independent identity that cannot be discussed merely in terms of the contrast with rural society. Detractors might still cite the "desolation" and "arid impersonality" but cities could no longer be described in terms of such qualities alone.

Tokyo gradually began to spawn new and diverse subcultures, and as time went on, the populace of the cities once dismissed as the "insignificant masses" turned out to be urban citizens who preferred and relished city life in all its variety. Imperceptibly, the word for "city" in Japanese shifted from *tokai*, a term expressing the opposite of *nōson* (the rural village) to the increasingly preferred *toshi* (metropolis), freeing the city's associations from comparison with the country and allowing it an identity all its own.

In 1976, the young Murakami Ryū, born in 1952, published his novel *Kagiri naku tōmei ni chikai burū*

(Kōdansha; trans., *Almost Transparent Blue*, Kodansha International). This story, which portrayed the lives of young people living in the city, won the Akutagawa Prize and became a million seller. In that year, the proportion of the Japanese population born after the war rose to over 50 percent, and the country began moving steadily into a new era.

In the course of the changes that took place in the 1960s and 1970s, views of the city (especially Tokyo) underwent a major transformation from negative to positive. People were now ready to see the cities not as arid, inhuman wastes but as rich and satisfying places for living.

In Praise of the Urban "Fringe"

As the new image of the city became established, the people who lived there ceased to be seen negatively as rootless, faceless members of mass society and now acquired the positive image of free, self-reliant individuals. The newly affirmative image of the city had begun to capture the imaginations of the literary world from the early 1970s. A pioneering work of this trend was literary critic Okuno Takeo's *Bungaku ni okeru genfūkei* [Primal Landscapes in Literature] (Shūeisha, 1972). Born before the war in Tokyo and a bona-fide native, Okuno saw the city as his *kokyō*, using the word for hometown usually reserved for one's country roots. Describing the vacant lots and cul-de-sacs where he had played as a child, he defined these places as the primal landscapes of an urban childhood. Citing writings such as Kita Morio's *Nire-ke no hitobito* (Shinchōsha, 1964; trans., *The House of Nire*, Kodansha International), which is set in Tokyo, he recreated images of the "good, old days" in the city where such traditional atmosphere had been preserved.

Tokyo is by no means an unliveable "wasteland," declared Okuno; it has spaces for living that are meaningful and memorable, for children and adults alike. At a time when the negative discourse on the city was the fashion, Okuno's view of Tokyo was fresh and thought-provoking; it had a profound impact not only on writers, but on architects and historians as well.

Before Okuno, it had been common when portraying the positive attributes of a city like Tokyo to focus on newness, rationality, and convenience: new buildings, well-organized and efficient street systems, an up-to-date lifestyle. Now Okuno was calling attention to the attractions of vacant lots and hidden alleyways—forgotten, out-of-the-way places in the city away from its centers and main thoroughfares. This was a truly fresh perspective; what might be called a theory of the "urban fringe."

Nowadays it has become virtually de rigueur when describing the charms of Tokyo to cite the narrow alleys and byways of the old parts of the city, and much attention has been focused on Shitamachi, the old, former commoner's quarter where the old townscape still remains, as examples of the most liveable parts of the city.

Viewed in terms of the ideals of progress and development, narrow alleys and sidestreets are generally looked askance as outmoded relics of bygone times; such districts were prime targets for redevelopment and urban renewal projects. Today, however, earlier models of “progress-oriented” urban planning projects have been fundamentally modified. The importance of spaces that might at first glance seem inefficient use of space, old fashioned, and “peripheral” are now winning due recognition in the context of the city.

Okuno’s *Bungaku ni okeru genfūkei* played a major role in bringing about this sea change in discourse on the city. Another literary critic, Isoda Kōichi, was also responsible for a book that played an important role in the shift of this discourse: *Shisō to shite no Tōkyō* [Tokyo as an Idea] (Kokubunsha, 1978). This book places the city of Tokyo in the context of Japan’s modern history and traces its path therein. At a time when literary criticism usually dealt with specific authors like Natsume Sōseki or Mori Ōgai, Isoda took Tokyo as his theme and portrayed it as a virtually living organism.

Isoda revealed that if one scrutinizes Tokyo carefully, the city once thought to be characterless and lack much of a history in fact has a very specific and rich story to tell. Especially fresh was his portrayal of its disparate types of urban space that coexisted within the city, exemplified by the old plebeian Shitamachi “low city” and the elite, wealthy “high city” of Yamanote. Another major work by Isoda is his critical study of *Nagai Kafū* (Kōdansha, 1976). Born in Tokyo during the Meiji era (1868–1912), this novelist who is best known by his penname, Kafū, loved the city. Fond of walking its streets from the days of his youth, Kafū’s collection of essays entitled *Hiyori geta* presented analysis and observations from his walks that far antedate the urban studies and critiques of today. Through Kafū’s essays, Isoda introduces readers to the distinctive charms of various quarters of Tokyo. Formerly known mainly as one of the great names of Meiji-era literature, Kafū was reintroduced by Isoda as a “novelist of the city,” setting in motion an unprecedented Kafū boom that resulted in the publication of numerous critical and other titles.

Urban Context in Literature

Another key study of the city was Maeda Ai’s *Toshi kūkan no naka no bungaku* [Literature in the Context of Urban Space] (Chikuma Shobō, 1982). Taking up noted works of modern Japanese literature (Mori Ōgai’s *Maihime* [The Dancing Girl], Natsume Sōseki’s *Mon* [Gate], and Kawabata Yasunari’s *Asakusa kurenaidan* [The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa]), it discusses the portrayals of the city (e.g., Berlin and Tokyo) in which they are set. At a time when the usual literary critiques were concerned mainly with the meaning of the protagonist’s life and other character-related themes, this study, like Isoda’s *Shisō to shite no Tōkyō*, was something quite new. The title of Maeda’s work carried this message: the city is not just something expressed in literature. Literature is shaped by the context of urban space.

Another important book that explores the attractions of the city of Tokyo using literary works as a point of departure was Unno Hiroshi’s *Modan toshi Tōkyō* [Tokyo, the Modern City] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1983). Most of the works

cited in this work are products of the 1920s: Kawabata Yasunari’s *Asakusa kurenaidan*, Ryūtanji Yū’s *Hōrō jidai* [The Drifter’s Era], Hayashi Fumiko’s *Hōrōki* [Journal of a Vagabond], Edogawa Ranpo’s *D-zaka no satsujin jiken* [The D Hill Murder Case], and Tokunaga Sunao’s *Taiyō no nai machi* [Streets Without Sun], among them.

This book made a place for itself in the history of Japanese literary criticism because it employed international periodization—the 1920s—rather than sticking to the traditional Japanese eras—Taishō (1912–1926) and Shōwa (1926–1989)—that customarily defined Japanese literary history. Unno not only examined the history of Japanese literature and that of Tokyo in vertical, chronological perspective, he also looked at that history horizontally, unveiling thereby the profound relationship between the modern culture of the West and Japan’s urban culture. What readers thought was the musty, dusty old Taishō and early Shōwa eras emerged in more understandable form as influenced by the swinging, new “modern” culture of the “twenties.” It then became clear that the prototypes of today’s Tokyo culture were created in the 1920s.

Another perspective introduced by Unno’s book that was novel at the time is that, rather than adopting the macroscopically political or economic view in discussing the city, the author looks at the details of daily life—women’s fashions and styles of make-up, what people ate and the conveyances they rode. This approach left an indelible imprint on subsequent discussions of the Japanese city.

In addition to these seminal works are many others, including Kawazoe Noboru’s *Tōkyō no genfūkei: Toshi to den’en to no kōryū* [Tokyo’s Primal Landscapes: The Interplay of City and Countryside] (NHK Books, 1979), Ogi Shinzō’s *Tōkei jidai: Edo to Tōkyō no aida de* [The Tōkei Years: Between Edo and Tokyo] (NHK Books, 1980), Matsuyama Iwao’s *Ranpo to Tōkyō* [Edogawa Rampo and Tokyo] (PARCO Shuppankyoku, 1984), and Edward Seidensticker’s *Tōkyō Shitamachi Yamanote 1867–1923* (Low City, High City: Tokyo 1867–1923, TBS Britannica, 1986; Japanese trans. of *Low City, High City*, 1983). All books written in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they illustrate how views of Tokyo moved dramatically from negative to positive during that time. Then in 1989, the monthly magazine *Tōkyōjin* (Toshi Shuppan), which features stories on the history, culture, popular ethos, architecture, literature, and landscape of the city, was inaugurated. Tokyo has been a city of rapid and dramatic change since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Decades ago, Mori Ōgai (1862–1922) called it a city “under construction,” and indeed, no matter when and where you go even today, you find something being built or torn down. As exemplified by its devastation in the 1923 earthquake and subsequent resurgence, and again its reduction to ashes in the air raids of World War II and postwar reconstruction, it is the scene of constant destruction and rebuilding.

In recent years, Tokyo has been transformed from an industrial city to a center of tertiary industry. With the role of working women growing even more important as that transition takes place, many of the changes involve women and their needs. As ever, Tokyo continues to be a dynamic, ever-changing metropolis that critics will never tire of attempting to decipher and explain. (*Kawamoto Saburō is a literary and film critic.*)

Transmitting the Culture of Words

Matsui Tadashi

Through the ages, humankind developed and refined language, invented writing, and accumulated a wealth of books. Today, with rapid advancements in the visual arts and the electronic media in the late twentieth century, we are in the throes of launching a new civilization in which books, the visual arts, and the electronic technology can all flourish and coexist in harmony.

What supports and sustains all three of these media, after all, is words. Just as human beings cannot survive without air and water, without words, human beings cannot live together, yet today not only is our air and our water being polluted, language, too, is threatened with decay. As we stand on the threshold of a new millennium, we need to throw all our resources into the revival of the lifeblood and energies of languages, whatever they be. Japanese in particular need to work harder to transmit to their children the richness, beauty, as well as the vitality and pleasures of the language that sustains and supports their ethnic identity. This depends on education and reading.

When we think that the locus where the richness of language is passed down to the next generation is basically the home and family, it seems to me that we must do all we can to prevent the weakening of the bonds between parents and children and the breakdown of family and community life. In that endeavor, the sharing of reading experiences between parents and children in the home can make an incalculable difference. Indeed, it is the disappearance of communication in the family and the disruption of regular family-centered life that leads to many of the phenomena that trouble our societies today—the collapse of control and discipline in school classrooms and the outbreak of acts of violence that are mysteriously silent—unaccompanied even by violent words. What results when conditions are at their worst, when all words are lost and are not thought to be of any use at all, is tantamount to war.

All the words that link past, present, and future, are contained in books. The future depends on reading to delve into the limitless resources of words within those books to enrich our own knowledge and wisdom. The year 2000 was designated National Year of Reading for Children by a resolution in the national Diet passed unanimously in both houses. Reflecting the concerns aroused by the recent increase in child-related crimes and social ills, the late prime minister Obuchi Keizō's keynote speech at the time surely marked the first time in the history of this country that issues relating to reading among children have been discussed in the national legislature. The public attention given to this issue and the events that have been planned to mark this year are important because one of the keys to the future of the earth and humankind is the reading power and reading experience of our children.

International Library of Children's Literature

The landmark event of this year was the opening on May 5 of the International Library of Children's Literature in Ueno, Tokyo. The location of a long-established zoo, several museums and other cultural facilities, as well as one of Tokyo's largest public parks, Ueno is a mecca of culture-centered family recreation. When completed in 2002, the new Library will house copies of all children's books published in Japan, be equipped with lending, reference, and reading services for survey and research materials of all kinds relating to the culture of children, children's books, and reading among children. As a national center of international exchange, it will offer services for researchers, educators, and children themselves.

The passage of the Diet resolution mentioned above in August 1999 paved the way for the creation of the National Year of Reading for Children Executive Committee, made up of representatives from the Diet, the ministries, and the private sector, to propose and carry out specific projects. In the private sector, the Council for Promotion of National Year of Reading for Children was set up initially to pursue the following activities:

1. To promote coordination of and cooperation in events and programs relating to National Year of Reading for Children in conjunction with the work of the Executive Committee.
2. To promote the development of the International Library of Children's Literature as a facility fully equipped to be a true "gift to the children of the twenty-first century."
3. To further promote activities by people in various fields that help children come into contact with books and broadly promote reading as well as conduct activities needed to improve and enhance libraries and other environments for the promotion of reading.
4. To make National Year of Reading for Children the occasion for surveys and research on legislation for the promotion of reading among children for the long-term and comprehensive enhancement of the reading environment.
5. To appeal for the renewed improvement and enhancement of elementary, junior and senior high schools as well as the need for certified librarians at all schools, even those with small enrollments.

Tasks for National Reading Year

The year 2000 may be National Year of Reading for Children, but it can only be the beginning; unless a plan is created for specific programs that will build cumulative results over a period of five to ten years, our efforts will end only as one-time events. In that sense, I suggest that our first task be to stress reading aloud to preschool children in the home and the establishment and spread of picturebook experiences in preschool education and daycare. I believe that this practice can be a potent tool; it can even help to halt the noticeable trend toward the break-up of

homes and families. The fact that survey results show that children who have had the experience of being read aloud to read more than those who do not clearly indicates its positive effects. Reading aloud from picture books and stories seems to make a decisive difference in reading ability and good reading habits as well as in the broader abilities to share with others and listen to what others have to say.

Small children learn to love words through the auditory pleasure of hearing adults read and talk to them. The original form of language is verbal—spoken words—and words brought forth on the breath of the speaker carry life, feeling, and power. Being with a parent and experiencing the common pleasure of the spoken word makes a child feel loved. Love is being with others, exchanging words, and sharing joy. I might even venture to say that the stamp of a true “grown-up” is the ability to give children this kind of joy.

Nurtured on this kind of sharing, a child will eventually learn to read alone, to freely and independently enter the world of words offered by books, and when moved by the magic of those words, to experience the true joy of reading and thereby be awakened to even deeper experiences of contemplation and love. When we consider reading, perhaps the most important thing is love of words. A child’s first experience with words is through the talk and the stories heard from parents and other adults and the picturebooks read to him or her while still small. Considering the importance of that early experience, it is my belief that the primary task of National Year of Reading for Children should be to promote the practice of reading books to children in the home.

Likewise important is reading aloud to children in libraries, as well as in kindergartens, daycare centers, hospitals, and other facilities where children are in group care. In addition to the one-on-one reading experiences children receive at their parent’s knees, the opportunity to listen to the voices of teachers and other adults reading stories as they listen with friends and classmates affords a wide variety of reading experiences that can only be gained in a group setting. The experience of sharing such joy with friends and peers provides a firm footing from which they can proceed when they enter the first grade of school.

Understanding Literacy and Nurturing Reading

Another issue that needs to be more thoroughly studied is the relationship between literacy and reading. Although Japan is one of the countries with the highest literacy rates in the world and most adults have quite advanced writing skills, recent survey figures place the book reading rate among adults at 42 percent. Given reading skills, one might expect that people would be avid book readers, so how does it happen that nearly half of adults don’t read books? We can assume that they read newspapers, magazines, and documents needed in their daily lives; but they don’t read books.

This phenomenon is not just a result of the attraction of other media; it is believed to be the result of insufficient experience of the pleasures of hearing language spoken and stories told in early childhood and in elementary school. I already noted the importance of reading out loud

to preschool children. The ability to read is an extremely precious skill. Simply deciphering letters and being able to understand the meaning of the words written on the page is not enough to draw the reader deeply into the world of words nor impart the true power and joy of reading. In order to read and understand books and the world of words that differ for each and every book one reads, one must possess reading skills that allow him or her to probe deeply and freely into the diverse worlds of words, and to feel the power and the magic hidden in the language of the author’s language. Children who love words and have the ability to enter freely into the world of words they *hear* likewise have no difficulty when they acquire the skills of reading and can use those skills freely to relish the world of words they *see*. In short, reading power is not cultivated only by learning to read from an early age.

A balance, therefore, is important between the teaching of reading and the experience of being read aloud to. The finishing process of being read aloud to comes, in fact, as a child is starting to learn to read in school. Only through the pleasures of reading aloud do children begin to truly experience the joys that books can bring, awakening their interest in reading themselves. To achieve this awakening, it is crucial that teachers in the lower grades of elementary school read to their students at least once every day. Keeping up that practice will surely make even more effective the routine of a daily ten-minute reading session. If at all possible, it is desirable that teachers read to elementary students for a short time each day all the way from first through sixth grades. If National Year of Reading for Children can serve to encourage such practices as those described above, the future of Japanese language will be brighter.

Qualified librarians are urgently needed to staff individual school libraries and build them into facilities that can meaningfully address children’s book-related needs. A good library is a place that offers refuge to a child’s soul and solace in the face of outside pressures and stresses. A school library is also a place where children and books and adults come together. For children, happiness is an adult who will listen to what they have to say.

The same can be true for the children’s corner of a public library. One of the indispensable conditions for fostering healthy growth in children is a place in the community where they can come and go freely, where there are books and there are people who will talk to children and listen to their questions and quandaries. Happiness for children and the place where they are best reared is where we can hear each other’s voices. (*Matsui Tadashi is senior corporate advisor at Fukuinkan Shoten publishing company and deputy representative of the Board of the National Year of Reading for Children.*)

Books in Egypt Today: Reversal and Rebirth

Takahashi Masakazu

Along with Lebanon, Egypt is the publishing mecca of the Arab world. Traveling around the countries where Arabic is spoken, one soon observes the massive amount of books these two countries market throughout the region. Their output is similarly predominant in other media, particularly music, film, and television.

Cairo Book Fair and Japanese Literature

Held annually in Egypt's capital is perhaps the largest-scale publishing-related event in the world, the Cairo International Book Fair, which has a history of more than thirty years. It attracts a multitude of publishers from all the Arab countries, who gather to purchase books or buy and sell publishing rights, as well as several million visitors. The venue is always overflowing with books in Arabic, of course, but because the fair also offers an opportunity to buy foreign publications considerably more cheaply than the usual market prices, the sight of visitors buying up quantities of non-Arab titles as well is common. The fair is also the occasion for a wide variety of cultural events: lectures and symposiums featuring well-known authors and other prominent figures, poetry readings, and so on. A special television program broadcast during the fair reports daily on its events.

The book fair in Cairo this past January 2000 featured a notable Japan-related event: a colloquium on Japanese literature led by Ahmad Fathi of the Department of Japanese Language and Literature at Cairo University. Ahmad had completed translations, directly from Japanese to Arabic, of four works—Yasuoka Shōtarō's *Kaihen no kōkei* [A View by the Sea] and *Shukudai* [Homework] and Tsushima Yūko's *Hikari no ryōbun* [In the Realm of Light] and *Benkei monogatari* [Tales of Benkei] and the event was planned to commemorate their simultaneous publication.

The vast majority of translations of Japanese literary works into Arabic thus far have been done from English and French and their number is still very small. As these works represent the first case of translation directly from Japanese to Arabic, their publication received attention not only in Egypt but in local Japanese media as well. The appearance of these four stories may seem but a flicker in the overall effort to introduce Japanese literature in the Arabic language, and yet it can be considered a valuable step forward in the field of Japanese studies that will long be remembered.

Decline in Book Reading

The importance and ongoing success of the book fairs notwithstanding, Egypt, like Japan, is observing a drift away from book reading. Critics and educators have recently noted the decline in university students' overall academic performance. While the market is awash in publications of all kinds, sales of books (especially fiction) is by no means favorable. Publishers and commentators cite

various reasons for the phenomenon, including the pressures of study for university entrance examinations, changes in the social structure, and the diversification of leisure and recreation activities, but they all agree that the basic reason is the recent decrease in the number of active readers.

The government has worked out some policies and programs to combat the trend. In accordance with a proposal made by Suzanne Mubarak, wife of the president of Egypt, the Ministry of Culture launched a reading promotion campaign pivoting on the "Reading for All Festival." This program, now in its eleventh year, seeks to counter the drift away from the printed word by extending government subsidies to the publication of good books and to lower their market price in order to make them widely available to general readers. Books supported under this program, sold for the standard price of 1 to 3 Egyptian pounds (approx. 30 to 90 yen), are very popular. While initially the program was conducted during the period to coincide with students' summer holiday, such successes have led to its extension throughout the year. Parallel projects to improve existing public libraries and build new ones have also been launched that can be expected to further combat the drift away from the book-reading culture.

Revival of the Ancient Library of Alexandria

In the spring of 2001, an epochal event in the history of books will take place in Egypt's great port city of Alexandria, where important archaeological discoveries have been unearthed one after another in recent years. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, known as the largest collection of books in the ancient world and the greatest center of learning of Hellenistic civilization, is to be reborn as a modern library after 1600 years. Equipped to house a maximum of 8,000,000 volumes, and with a total floor space of 86,000 square meters, an international conference hall, and an institute for collaborative research, it will be one of the world's largest institutions of scholarship. Its outer walls engraved with words in languages from all over the world, the library is poised once more to play a central role as a temple of international learning. How Egypt, concerned about the diminishing stature of the printed word, will take advantage of this megaproject and make it work to combat that trend, will bear watching. Today Egypt is a world information center with the largest population of any country in the Middle East and Africa, so it will be fascinating to observe the role it will play in the future of the region. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina website is at: <http://www.bibalex.gov.eg> (Takahashi Masakazu is a member of the staff of the Japan Foundation.)

The Fiction of Sleep

Koyama Tetsurō

Five years since the Great Hanshin Earthquake shook Kobe and surrounding suburbs, the anthology *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* [All God's Children Are Dancing] (Shinchōsha, 2000) by Murakami Haruki set in the aftermath of the earthquake, is still being discussed in newspaper columns and literary journals.

The protagonist of the final story in the anthology, entitled "Hachimitsu pai" [Honey Pie] is a 36-year-old novelist named Junpei. An old university chum named Sayoko (a divorcée), has a small daughter named Sara who, ever since the Kobe earthquake, has been waking up in the middle of the night and cannot get back to sleep. At Sayoko's request, Junpei gets up in the middle of the night to drive out and help her get Sara back to sleep. Junpei manages to put Sara to sleep by telling her stories he makes up on the spot.

The theme of this piece, which is essentially "sleep," or more accurately "insomnia," is, oddly enough, the theme of quite a number of works of fiction published in the last ten years or so.

The young woman who is the main character of Yoshimoto Banana's *Shirakawa yofune* [Fast Asleep] (1989) nods off rather abruptly into sleep and sleeps heavily. The Akutagawa Prize-winning novel by Matsu-mura Eiko, *Shikō seijo* (*Abatōn*) [Abaton] (1992) is the story of an insomniac wandering about in search of a place to sleep. Both Henmi Yō's Akutagawa Prize-winning *Jidō kishō sōchi* [The Automatic Wake-up Device] (1991) and the following year's winner of the same prize, Fujiwara Tomomi's *Untenshi* [Driver] deal with sleep and insomnia. So do the stories "Nemuru onna" [Sleeping Woman] and "Nemuru hitobito" [The Sleeping] in Ikezawa Natsuki's *Hone wa sango, me wa shinju* [Bones of Coral, Eyes of Pearl] (1995) and Murakami Haruki did a remake of his 1983 story "Mekura yanagi to nemuru onna" [Woman Sleeping Among the Blind Willows] as "Mekura yanagi to, nemuru onna" [Blind Willows and Sleeping Woman] for his 1996 anthology *Rekishinton no yūrei* [Ghosts of Lexington].

What could be the significance of all these stories having to do with sleep and insomnia? Perhaps they are a

reflection of the all-too-fast-paced mobility of Japanese society. The vast majority of Japanese after the war have left the places where they were born. With people forced to move frequently, the traditional communities that sustained secure, settled lives have rapidly fallen into decay. The pace of that mobility has robbed us of the repose of "sleep."

All the authors mentioned here are writers who consciously treat the theme of the fluidity of Japanese society and the problems it engenders. In his 1989 short story "Nemuri" [Sleep], Murakami Haruki described the terror experienced by a woman, who unable to sleep, goes for a drive alone in her car, only to be attacked by a group of men while she is parked in the dark. The title of Yoshimoto's above-mentioned *Shirakawa yofune* comes from an idiom (lit., "night boat floating down a white river") meaning "you are so fast asleep you don't know what's happening," and it appears the author uses the expression for its connotations of movement, of "moving through darkness, like a boat floating down a river at night." Swept along in that movement, the protagonist's friend commits suicide because her job (staying with a person who has difficulty sleeping) prevents her from sleeping. Yoshimoto seems to be saying that beyond the constant movement and the insomnia lurk fear and death.

And yet, at the end of his most recent "Hachimitsu pai," Murakami Haruki depicts the man as the sleepless sentinel, watching staunchly over his friend Sayoko and her daughter, both fast asleep, leaning against each other.

"Junpei thought to himself that now we would write a different kind of novel—the kind of novel in which someone dreams of night receding, and all around him becoming light, and him in that light tightly embracing the people he loves. For now, though, he needed to just stay there and look after these two women."

These words seem to suggest that this writer of "sleep" and "insomnia" has arrived at some kind of turning point. One senses therein the declaration of a writer who has found a place where he can achieve repose amid the frenetic mobility of society. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

The Child Prodigy Phenomenon

Ikari Haruo

I was astounded to hear that the poet was only thirteen. At twelve, Onda Hiromitsu had published stories and haiku in the haiku journal *NHK haidan*. He had started writing haiku at five and begun winning prizes at the age of eight. So impressive is he that the *Haiku nenkan* [Haiku Yearbook] introduces him among adult poets as one of "this year's noteworthy authors."

Young Hiromitsu's first anthology, *Aozora no yubikiri* [Making Promises with the Sky] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2000) is selling well. It contains haiku and other forms of verse as well as stories, but the haiku is remarkably good. Some of them have the charming quality only a child could create:

Aburazemi sora wo itamete tabete iru

Fat cicadas, sizzling the sky, eating it all.

T-shatsu ya taiyō gaburi nomikonda

My T-shirt swallowed up the sun in one gulp.

Katatsumuri aozora uzumaku kara no naka

The snail in its shell where the blue sky swirls.

Fūsen ya sora ni hajimete o-tsukai ni

There goes the balloon off on its first errand into the sky
Te o tataki bunshin no jutsu natsu no yama

Echoes of my hands clapping, and I am everywhere in
the summer hills.

But others are rather too precocious to be believed:

Tsubame no ko kaze ni nodomoto sukashi tsutsu

Baby swallows: their see-through throats in the breeze.

Shunrai ya umi no tenjō kami yurasu

Spring thunder ripples the ceiling of the lake's waters.

Iwashigumo tatebue no oto seishi shite

Fleeting mackerel clouds, and pipes fallen silent.

Ashi-ato o kasaneawasete yama nemuru

Footprints overlap in the slumbering winter mountains.

Even the prolific modern haiku poet Tawara Machi is full of praise. "We may be witnessing something really extraordinary!" she declares.

And if you thought thirteen was something, there is an even more astonishing boy, named Hiki Luna, who is just nine. Though afflicted with both physical and speech disabilities resulting from brain damage and unable to write, he points to a character board that his mother, Chifumi, reads to communicate with him. It is said they can communicate in this fashion at nearly regular conversational speed.

Sometimes reminiscent of the voice of the divine, Luna's words are collected in *Tsutawaru no wa ai shika nai kara* [Because All That Can Be Expressed Is Love] (Natural Spirit, 2000). Originally the book had another title, but when it was in proof, I thought it should have a more marketable title, so I chose one from Luna's own

words. Here are a few excerpts from this amazing volume:

"Only you can help yourself—when it comes right down to essentials."

"God and I are already one."

"I think wars will keep on happening unless the people who wage them make peace in their own hearts."

"People who are completely satisfied with their lives and making the most of their lives are really something."

"Your real path will open up of its own accord."

"Don't you think everyone is really good at fooling themselves."

"If you truly love yourself, you'll be confident and not be bothered by what others say."

"Probably the only thing in which human beings are really equal is death."

"We never learned how to turn knowledge into wisdom, did we?"

"People who are always measuring others will find they cannot move on to the next thing."

How can a nine-year old come up with lines like this? The editor tells me that when he is with Luna he starts to think that he is talking to someone much older than he.

Well, insatiable as I am, I am bound to see if there is an even younger prodigy to be found. (*Ikari Haruo is an essayist.*)

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

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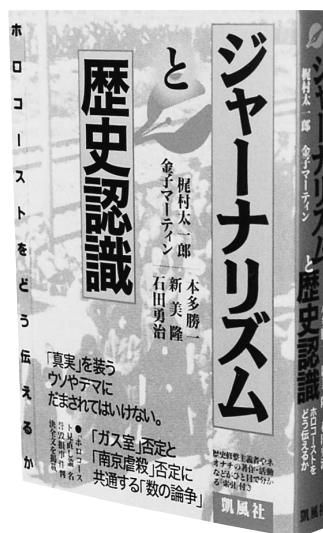
New Titles

MEDIA/JOURNALISM

Jānarizumu to rekishi ninshiki: Horokōsuto o dō tsutaeru ka [Journalism and Historical Understanding: Telling the Story of the Holocaust]. Kajimura Taichirō et al. Gaifūsha, 1999. 188 × 130 mm. 334 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7736-2403-5.

In 1995, the Tokyo-based monthly magazine *Marco Polo* drew fire both in Japan and from overseas after publishing an article claiming that the Nazi gas chambers had not existed. The magazine was eventually forced to cease publication. This book refutes such Holocaust revisionist theories.

The book is comprised of two parts. The first concerns the Holocaust itself and the ways it is seen. The second is concerned with the historical revisionist views aired in journalistic and scholarly circles in recent years.



The twentieth century was one characterized by war and by incidences of mass death and mass slaughter such as seldom seen in the history of humankind. The five coauthors of this book believe that people of our own time are so close to this history that it is difficult for them to stand back and fully grasp its meaning. The book's primary task, therefore, is to strive to objectively and accurately record what has happened.

The book's first two chapters, "The

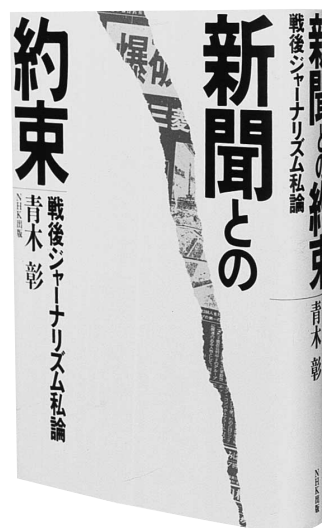
Difference and Distance between Japanese and German Historical Perceptions" and "Requiem to Historical Revisionists," are based on articles published in a magazine in 1996 and 1997. The book also includes the entire text of the court ruling in a 1999 libel case involving Holocaust revisionism.

Shimbun to no yakusoku: Sengo jānarizumu shiron [Pledge to the Newspaper: A Personal View of Postwar Journalism]. Aoki Akira. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 446 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-14-080491-2.

Based on the author's long career as a newspaper journalist, the book offers insights on the Japanese press and views of the world. Born in Tokyo in 1926, Aoki joined the newspaper *Sankei shimbun* upon graduating from the University of Tokyo. Later promoted to city news editor, editorial writer, and other top-level positions, in 1978 he was offered a professorship at University of Tsukuba. Since then, he has been active as a specialist on newspaper journalism and as a critic.

In Aoki's opinion, the root of the malaise of Japanese journalism lies in the biased way readers view the state of newspaper journalism, which is to say mainly in terms of what is written in the major dailies *Asahi shimbun*, *Yomiuri shimbun*, and *Mainichi shimbun*. His resistance to the bias toward the major dailies is evidenced in his rather perverse, sarcastic style of writing.

Aoki records honestly the uneasiness and hesitation he felt as a career



Cover design: Tanimura Akihiko

journalist in taking up an academic position at a national university. In fact, the book as a whole is a kind of testimonial of a journalist who harbored misgivings of his own profession throughout the period from Japan's rapid economic growth to the collapse of the "bubble" economy.

Shimin shakai to media [The Civil Society and the Media]. Hara Toshio, ed. Riberuta Shuppan, 2000.

193 × 131 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-947637-63-3.

Editor Hara Toshio is known for his insider critiques of Japan's mass media industry. This book is the product of discussions held in informal classes at his home with a group of established and up-and-coming specialists in mass-communications research.



Cover design: Dateya

The book has six chapters: "Toward a Civil Society and Principles of News Reporting," "Media for the Sake of Self Government," "A Self-Motivated 'Citizenry' and the Mass Media," "The Adaptation of the Media for the Civil Society," "Civil Society and Media Enterprises," and "The Journalist in the Civil Society." Topics discussed include the media as seen in its role in citizens' initiatives, the potential for journalism conducted in collaboration with citizens, and issues relating to editorial prerogative.

Recognizing the dangers latent when an upsurge of nationalism occurs in a society like Japan's where the civil society has yet to mature, the book considers what the media's role should be in helping to realize the civil society in this country.

Watanabe Tsuneo kaikoroku [The Memoirs of Watanabe Tsuneo]. Itō Takashi, Mikuriya Takashi, and Iio Jun, comp. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2000. 197 × 133 mm. 602 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 4-12-002976-X.

This book was compiled from interviews with Watanabe Tsuneo, editor-in-chief of the nation's most widely circulated newspaper, *Yomiuri shimbun*. Watanabe is also known for the publishing-world coup of successfully pulling the prestigious (but financially troubled) publisher Chūō Kōron Sha into the Yomiuri group. The interviewers are internationally known political scientist Itō Takashi and two others.



Cover design: Hasegawa Tōru

There were two types of political affairs journalists in the days of factional politics that characterized the Liberal Democratic Party's long era of one-party rule. There were the *ban-kisha* who cultivated close ties with a specific faction leader. And then there were *ōmono-kisha* ("big-name" reporters), who, through their involvement in mediations among the heads of different factions, were themselves active players in the game of politics. This was the scene into which Watanabe entered as he began his career as a political affairs journalist. First serving as a *ban-kisha* assigned to faction-boss Kōno Ichirō, he later, having won the trust of Nakasone Yasuhiro (who became prime minister 1982–87), established himself as an *ōmono-kisha*. After rising to the position of editor-in-chief and president of the Yomiuri Shimbun Sha, Watanabe gained further repute for establishing the

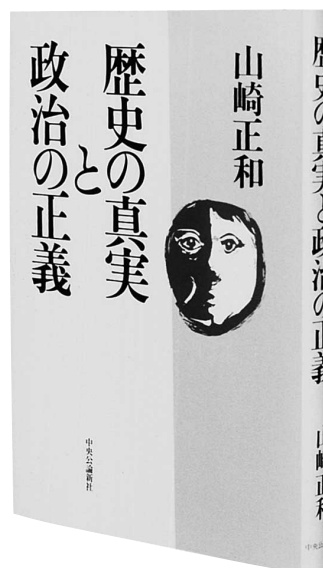
paper's editorial position in clear-cut terms. This was manifested mainly as support for revision of the 1947 Constitution of Japan, a stance that put the *Yomiuri* in conflict with rival newspapers, which opposed revision of the national charter promulgated while Japan was under the Allied Occupation.

Offering behind-the-scenes insights on the fierce power struggles that grip the Japanese political scene, this memoir provides an excellent basis for reevaluating the nature of journalism and politics. The book also includes the text of a diary Watanabe kept when he was a member of a Communist Party cell while a student at the University of Tokyo.

PHILOSOPHY AND IDEAS

Rekishi no shinjitsu to seiji no seigi [Historical Truth and Political Justice]. Yamazaki Masakazu. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2000. 197 × 133 mm. 162 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-12-002960-3. Playwright and critic Yamazaki Masakazu has a long-standing interest in the contemporary potentialities of Japanese culture. Growing out of his past research and writing, this work of historical philosophy attempts to place the contemporary world in historical perspective.

Referring to the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Yamazaki focuses on what he interprets as the *ressentiment* or rancor that haunts history. The *ressentiment* perspective, he believes, is the root of numerous tragedies in



Cover design: Kumagai Hirohito

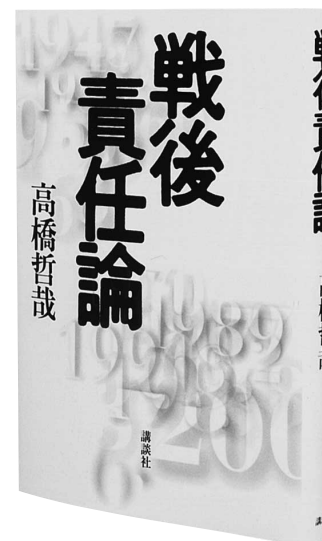
the twentieth century, and he characterizes a number of ideologies and "isms," including Christianity, socialism, and nationalism, as sharing the same fundamental mentality. The only way for humanity to learn from the twentieth-century experience, he argues, is to overcome *ressentiment* and seek instead the conditions under which diverse views and outlooks can coexist.

The book expounds the author's speculation about the possibilities for redefining justice as a formal framework from which all ideological and dogmatic elements are removed.

Sengo sekinin ron [A Study of Postwar Responsibility]. Takahashi Tetsuya. Kōdansha, 1999. 194 × 131 mm. 258 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-06-209361-8.

This exposition on Japan's (and the Japanese people's) responsibility for actions during World War II is the work of a scholar of postwar French thought.

The author (b. 1956) refers to "postwar responsibility" as the duty to pursue the question of war accountability. He thus approaches the issue through a consideration of the postwar responsibility of post-World War II generations.



Cover design: Koma Takahiko

Postwar Japan has been unable to forge relationships of genuine equality with the countries it invaded during the war. In the author's view, the best way to respond to the criticisms of the people of those countries is to apologize for the wartime actions of the Japanese state and clarify how responsibility will be taken for them.

The question of whether such an apology should be made in the name of the Japanese people (*kokumin*) or not is currently the subject of growing debate. In this work, the author maintains that it is possible to explore the wartime and postwar responsibilities of both the Japanese state and the people from a standpoint of the “non-national” individual.

Shikō no ressun [Lessons in Thinking]. Maruya Saiichi. Bungei Shunjū, 1999. 191 × 128 mm. 284 pp. ¥1,238. ISBN 4-16-355610-9. Maruya Saiichi is a novelist and critic known for his striking interpretations, among them his reading of the classic play *Chūshingura* (Forty-seven Masterless Samurai) not as a drama about loyalty but rather as *goryō* belief (that the spirits of the dead influence the living) or a kind of carnival. In this book, he discusses ways of training to improve one’s thinking, exploring the topic in a readily digestible dialogue format in which he responds to hypothetical questions.



Cover design: Wada Makoto

An essential element in good thinking, Maruya notes, is first to pose a good question. When war broke out in 1937, the then twelve-year-old Maruya wondered why Japan had started such a senseless war. He found something of an answer in James George Frazer’s *Psyche’s Task: A Discourse Concerning the Influence of Superstition on the Growth of Institution* (published in Japanese translation in 1939), namely, the idea that the worship of kings is the faith of the “savage.”

Offering numerous effective tips—such as “read the books you’re not supposed to read” and “don’t defer to accepted opinion”—Maruya explains how to develop a talent for fun and creative thinking. This book itself is an example of his ideas in practice.

Tetsugaku no gojūnen [Fifty Years of Philosophy]. Nakamura Yūjirō. Seidosha, 1999. 195 × 133 mm. 382 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-7917-5756-4. This is an autobiographical work by internationally recognized philosopher and authority in the field Nakamura Yūjirō.

Nakamura’s career began with research on René Descartes and Blaise Pascal. His scholarly attention was then excited by the formation of a critique of modern rationalism, a concern that was to form the basis for his subsequent activities. This interest soon began to tie in with the emerging critique of modernity in Europe and of Europe itself. Through his translations and critical works introducing the works of Gaston Bachelard and Michael Foucault, Nakamura sought points of contact between Japanese and European thought in the contemporary age. His more recent work has focused on the milieu that gave rise to the Aum Shinrikyō cult, the issue of fundamental evil inherent in human existence, and explication of the concept of “clinical knowledge” as a new paradigm bridging the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

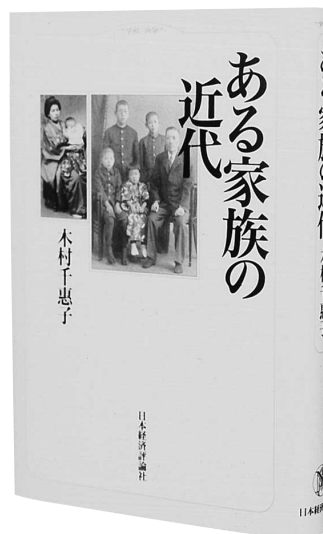
This book may be regarded as Nakamura’s own assessment of the intellectual path he has followed.



HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Aru kazoku no kindai [One Family’s Modern Era]. Kimura Chieko. Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 260 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-8188-1099-1.

The abolition of the samurai class under the Meiji Restoration (1868) was in part an effort to achieve mobility between the ruling and non-ruling classes and thereby hold at bay the threatened invasion of the Western powers. This critical family history portrays the life of the author’s great grandfather, Fukano Kagesumi, a samurai at the time of the Restoration and a witness to the profound social changes that followed. Depicting the circumstances of Fukano’s family after he married and had six children (two sons and four daughters), the book is also an attempt by the author to sort out her psychological roots.



Cover design: Watanabe Michiko

The book is distinguished by its historical scope, spanning the eighty-year period from the Meiji Restoration up to Japan’s 1945 defeat in World War II. While such a family would be expected to fall in the conservative middle class, the theme that runs through the book is the clash between this norm and the realities the family experienced. The account of the experience of Kimura’s father in the Fifteen-year War (1931–45) is a particularly valuable record of the silent perseverance with which ordinary Japanese typically bore the burdens imposed upon them during that era.

Hadaka no taishō ichidaiki: Yamashita Kiyoshi no mita yume [The Life of the “Naked General”: The Dream of Yamashita Kiyoshi]. Ozawa Nobuo. Chikuma Shobō, 2000. 192 × 134 mm. 350 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-480-88508-0. Yamashita Kiyoshi (1922–71) was an itinerant painter also known as “the naked general” and “Japan’s van Gogh.” At one time, after a dramatic film based on him was released, Yamashita became a nationally known character. Even today, almost thirty years after his death, his paintings are widely shown and appreciated in Japan.



Cover design: Minami Shimbō

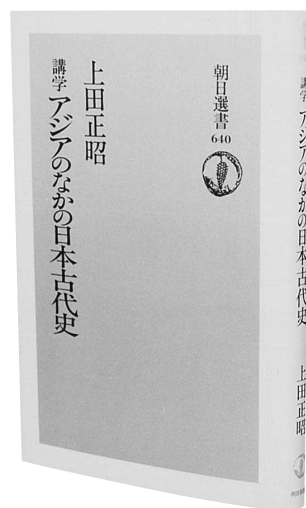
Handicapped by cognitive disabilities from birth, Yamashita got through elementary school despite numerous fights and cases of stealing. He was then moved to a school for children with physical and mental disabilities, where his artistic talents began to bloom. The book recounts his forty-nine-year life in full, focusing on his relations with the many family members, supporters, and others associated with him, and citing the critical appraisals of his work that appeared at the time.

Roughly a contemporary of Yamashita, the author is a scholar of literature with a gift of empathy for people who have been excluded from mainstream society. His own experiences of hardship during and after World War II add further weight and depth to this biography.

Kōgaku Ajia no naka no Nihon kodaishi [Lectures on the Ancient History of Japan in Asia]. Ueda Masaaki. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 188 × 126 mm. 310 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-02-259740-2.

While recounting his fifty-year career as a scholar of ancient Japanese history, the author expounds how he now views history. The book is based on lectures he gave at the Asahi Culture Center in Osaka.

The author’s experience in World War II awakened his interest in Japan’s emperor system, prompting him to take up the study of the Japanese archipelago going back to ancient times. His career as a historian began with research on the Jinshin Disturbance, a power struggle within the imperial family that took place in 672. It was an event not mentioned in school textbooks in prewar Japan, however, nor explored to any degree by scholars. Having spent his twenties and thirties as a high school teacher, the author also suggests that the life of cloistered study in a university is not necessarily the only path viable for a person seriously interested in research. The author is committed to accumulating a body of empirical research upon which to base his critique of society, but he also appreciates the value of intuitive insight, the gift for which poet and folklorist Origuchi Shinobu, whose lectures he remembers fondly as a student, was known.

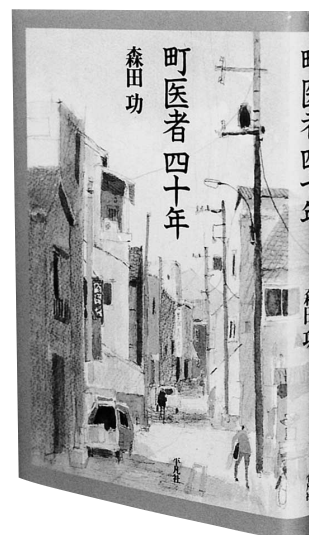


Cover design: Tada Susumu

Machi isha yonjūnen [General Practitioner for Forty Years]. Morita Isao. Heibonsha, 2000. 193 × 130 mm. 244 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-582-51320-4. This volume is a collection of essays written by a general practitioner not long before he died in 1998 at the age of seventy-two.

After accumulating some experience in pathological anatomy at a university hospital, in 1961 Morita opened a private practice in a Tokyo suburb. Although the clinic was only equipped very simply, Morita won the confidence of the community for both the reliability of his treatment and for his good character. Many families in the community had been in Morita’s care for four generations.

Morita wrote the essays in his free time between consultations as a way of improving his patients’ basic medical knowledge. The pieces were so well received that from 1970 they were serialized as a regular column in a magazine. Among those who consulted Morita as their regular physician was novelist Tsumura Setsuko and her husband. Tsumura’s preface to the book mourns his death and applauds him for writing “with humor and in a style evoking both the joys and sorrows of life, of the human troubles that large hospital doctors rarely notice, of the causes of sickness that no tests can reveal, and of his relationships with the diverse people who came to see him at his modest clinic.” Despite his own delicate health—he had been in Hiroshima during the atomic bombing—Morita was always willing to visit his patients when he was needed and make house calls even after hours.

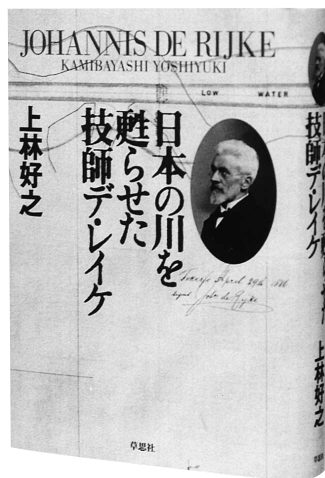


Cover design: Anno Mitsumasa

From the several essay collections Morita published during his career, a portrait emerges of a remarkable family doctor who earned the deepest affection of many people.

***Nihon no kawa o yomigaerasete gishi de-Reike* [Johannis de Rijke: The Engineer Who Rejuvenated Japan's Rivers].** Kamibayashi Yoshiyuki. Sōshisha, 1999. 193 × 134 mm. 350 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-7942-0928-2.

Johannis de Rijke (1842–1913) was one of the Dutch engineers whom the Japanese government invited to Japan early in the Meiji era (1868–1912) to tame the country's major waterways and coastlines. Although he came from an artisan background and his engineering profession was not one of high status, de Rijke spent close to thirty years in Japan as a foreign specialist who played a central role in the improvement of a number of key waterways.



Cover design: Ashizawa Taii

At twenty-eight as a construction ministry engineer, author Kamibayashi was involved in a project to improve the channel of the Yodogawa, a river that runs through Kyoto and Osaka. In the process, he learned about the modern restoration of the river that had been begun by de Rijke. Captivated by de Rijke's brilliant application of mathematics and physics to his designs, by the results thus achieved, and by the man himself, Kamibayashi resolved to make the details of de Rijke's life better known.

The year 2000 is the 400th anniversary of the establishment of friendly relations between Japan and the Netherlands. A compelling work

backed by a wealth of primary source materials—including Ministry of Construction data and letters by de Rijke to his close friend G. A. Escher (artist M. C. Escher's father)—this book is a reminder of the debt Japan owes to the Netherlands for its contribution in ushering in Japan's modern era.

***Shanghai shinema to Ginza karai raisu monogatari: Haran banjō Yanagida Kahei* [Shanghai Cinema and Ginza Curry: The Exciting Eighty-year Life of Yanagida Kahei].** Yamaguchi Takeshi. Shūeisha, 2000. 193 × 134 mm. 239 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-08-781160-3.

Today the curry restaurant Newcastle in Ginza preserves an old-fashioned style rarely seen elsewhere in this ritziest of Tokyo's urban centers. The establishment's specialty is the only item on the menu: a homemade-style curry called "karai raisu" ("spicy" rice). This biography of the Newcastle's proprietor, Yanagida Kahei, was compiled from interviews with Yanagida by a specialist in the history of film.



Cover design: Gotō Yōko

The story traces the ups and downs of Yanagida's adventurous eighty-year life. Born in 1917 to a poor family in Tokyo's old Shitamachi quarter, Yanagida worked at various trades, serving as a general hand at an ironworks and later as an apprentice at a pharmaceuticals wholesaler. Fascinated by the cinema, which was just then beginning to grow popular, he became a projectionist, securing a job that was a fine combination of employment and entertainment. Before long, however, Japan plunged

into war and Yanagida was sent to fight in China, an experience that still torments him. After his discharge from the army, he worked as a projectionist at a Japanese propaganda film company in Shanghai, and subsequently became manager of a cinema in Nanjing. After Japan's defeat and repatriation, he made a living on the black market and later as proprietor of a coffee shop in Tokyo.

***Tabi o shita hito: Hoshino Michio no sei to shi* [One Man's Journey: The Life and Death of Hoshino Michio].** Ikezawa Natsuki. Switch Publishing, 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 390 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-916017-91-9. Photographer Hoshino Michio was attacked and killed by a grizzly bear on Kamchatka Peninsula on August 8, 1996. This book brings together various writings and transcripts of speeches and dialogues by this author on Hoshino and his life.

At twenty-two, Hoshino made up his mind to live in Alaska, and began studying photography as the means of achieving that goal. By the age of twenty-six, he was in Alaska, where he spent the next eighteen years exploring remote wilderness areas and taking superb photographs of the scenery and wildlife he found there. To the author, Hoshino was a rare person in that he demonstrated what true happiness was by the example of his own life. In the "Somewhat Too-personal Commentary" he wrote for Hoshino's book *Tabi o suru ki* [Traveling Trees], the author says, "Hoshino lived a better life and enjoyed more happiness than anyone I know of," and suggests that "we are not qualified to mourn his death."



Cover design: Yamashita Risa

Dare no sei de kaikaku o ushinau no ka [Who Is Responsible for Depriving Us of Reform?]. Eda Kenji. Shinchōsha, 1999. 196 × 135 mm. 298 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-10-433801-X. Eda Kenji worked in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry for almost twenty years and served as secretary for parliamentary affairs to former prime minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō. He wrote this book after resigning from all his posts at the time of the general resignation of the Hashimoto Cabinet in 1998.

After a perfunctory advance from University of Tokyo's Faculty of Law to a career in the national bureaucracy, Eda's life was radically altered when he met Hashimoto. This book is the product of his four-year involvement in Hashimoto's program of administrative reform as an intermediary between the political and bureaucratic arms of the government. He records what the Hashimoto administration did and did not achieve in the reform program—which focused on the reorganization of ministries and agencies—and attempts to identify the significance of these results for Japan's future.



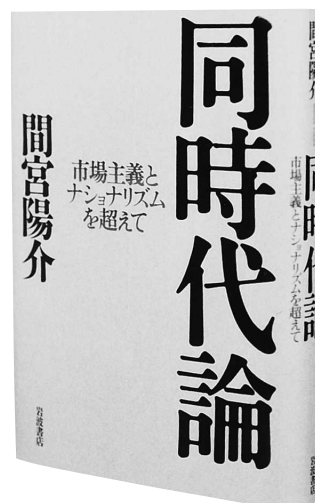
Cover design: Shinchōsha

In Eda's view, the Hashimoto program represented a golden opportunity for the first sweeping program of national reform since the Meiji Restoration (1868). In the end, however, true reform proved extremely difficult to achieve. Among the obstacles he identifies as preventing it are the lack of an effective "control tower" from which to consider Japan

as a whole in long-term perspective, and the increasingly salary-worker mentality of bureaucrats, among others, who think only of preserving their own turf and vested interests. He concludes with a passionate re-appraisal of Japan's current status and a vision for its future.

Dōjidai ron: Shijōshugi to nashonarizumu o koete [Studies of the Nineties: Beyond the Market System and Nationalism]. Mamiya Yōsuke. Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 193 × 131 mm. 316 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-00-024112-5.

This author (b. 1948) is an economist who has spent much of his career explicating the nature of liberal and capitalist economics. Based on this wealth of experience, this volume is a collection of critical essays on political and economic phenomena in contemporary Japan.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

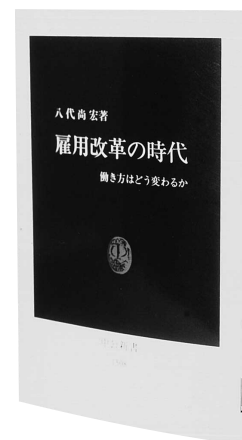
The three main themes of the book are nationalism, the market economy, and public space. The author regards contemporary Japan as suffering from being a kind of closed space and attempts to identify the preconditions for surmounting that predicament.

His position, though defying simple summary, is distinguished by his assertion that the closed nature of contemporary Japan is a result of the narrow, insular nature of its "space" for public debate. Arguing that the supposed dichotomy between libertarianism and communitarianism is no more than a symbolic representation without any basis in reality, he reveals the blind spots of the social theories that hold sway in the United States today.

Koyō kaikaku no jidai: Hatarakikata wa dō kawaru ka [The Age of Employment Reform: How the Way We Work Is Changing]. Yashiro Naohiro. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 1999. 173 × 109 mm. 224 pp. ¥760. ISBN 4-12-101508-8.

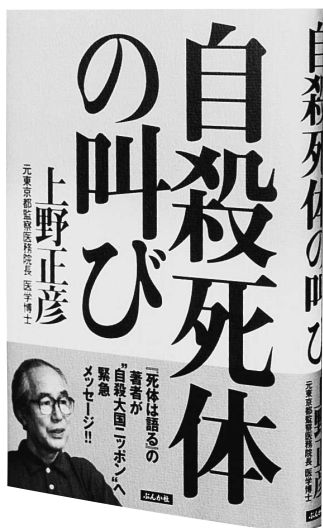
In the post-"bubble" economic stagnation of the 1990s, Japan's labor market is in dire straits. In the 1980s, the Japanese economy recorded levels of employment and price stability as well as economic growth far surpassing those of the West, but today it confronts the prospect of a long-term business slump and widespread employment insecurity.

An overview of all areas of the economy shows that the tide of structural reform is sweeping not only the manufacturing sector, which is always subject to the pressures of international competition, but also finance and distribution. By comparison, the pace of liberalization of the labor market is slow.



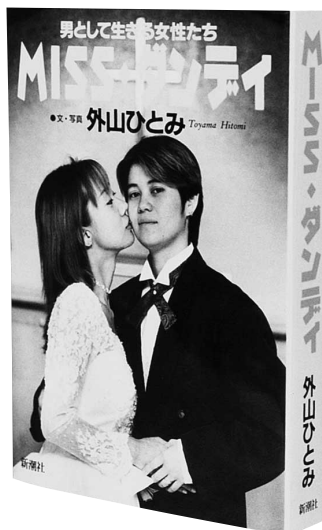
The author regards this dysfunction of the labor market as one of the main causes of Japan's economic stagnation. With the aim of delineating fundamental reforms needed to redress the situation, he offers a critical and concrete analysis of the current state of Japan's labor administration. His treatment covers the full range of issues facing labor programs, including employment for women and people middle-aged and older, employment through temporary job agencies, part-time work, and job referral. He proposes a program of employment reform necessary for ensuring that workers can enjoy diverse workstyle options based on individual job skills.

Jisatsu shitai no sakebi [The Cries of Suicide Corpses]. Ueno Masahiko. Bunkasha, 2000. 194 × 130 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-8211-0694-9. One of the effects of the protracted economic slump in Japan has been a rapid increase in the country's suicide rate. According to data issued by the National Police Agency last year, the number of suicides in 1998 was the highest ever at 32,863, a marked increase over the 24,391 of the previous year and more than three times the number of traffic accident fatalities.



Cover design: Agawa Ryūhei and Hirose Jun

In his thirty-four-year career as a police coroner, the author performed autopsies in numerous cases of unnatural death, including suicides. In this book, he describes various suicide cases he has encountered. Relating instances in which his work in apparent suicide cases exposed them as murders, he remarks that "a police coroner must be constantly focused and alert, because sometimes even a corpse can tell surprising things." He insists, furthermore, that there is no such thing as an easy death like falling asleep, and describes from the coroner's vantage point how all those who take their own lives are bound to suffer, whatever their chosen method. This reflects his hope in writing the book that it will help to deter people driven to the brink of suicide from taking the final step over the edge.



Cover design: Mimura Jun

Misu dandi: Otoko toshite ikiru josei-tachi [Miss Dandy: Women Who Live as Men]. Toyama Hitomi. Shinchōsha, 1999. 188 × 127 mm. 223 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-10-433101-5. In 1998, a hospital in Saitama Prefecture became the first in the Japanese medical profession to approve sex-change operations as an acceptable form of treatment for patients deemed to be suffering from a condition known as *sei dōitsusei shōgai*, or "sex identity disorder." Although the news aroused considerable public debate and established the term in the popular vocabulary, proper understanding of the condition and the people who experience it is still a long way off.

With this photographic documentary, the author, a professional photographer, attempts to represent and explore as faithfully as possible the lives and thought of women she has met who choose to live as men. With twenty-five subjects ranging in age from ten to seventy, it is impossible to neatly summarize their diverse situations and experiences. Common to them all, however, is an ardent desire to be recognized and understood by the people close to them and by society at large. One of the subjects, although uncomfortable with the term "sex identity disorder," memorably welcomes the fact that official approval of sex-change surgery seems to be paving the way to broader recognition.

Tōkyō kieta machikado [Tokyo's Vanishing Street Scenes]. Katō Mineo. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1999. 263 × 194 mm. 238 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-309-90366-5.

This is a collection of photographs of the twenty-three wards of Tokyo taken over the past thirty years.

The author (b. 1929) began his love affair with Tokyo in his twenties, when he became an avid reader of works about the city written by journalist Akiyama Yasuzaburō. Since then he has devoured information about the metropolis, scouring maps and photographic albums, reading literary works by Higuchi Ichiyō (1872–96), Nagai Kafū (1879–1959), and other writers whose works were set in Tokyo, and exploring the city's numerous suburbs and neighborhoods. This background research ultimately led him to capture Tokyo on film, taking each town or district as a separate photographic subject. The most difficult aspect of the task, he says, was expressing not just the outward forms of each local area as a photographic subject, but rather its distinctive character, including its history, customs, lifestyle, politics, and natural features, as well as his own personal responses to what he saw.

In one sense, the book is decidedly plain: the photographs are all black-and-white and are devoid of captions and explanations except for the date and the location of each shot. At a deeper level, however, the collection is an evocative reminder, particularly for people who know the capital well, of scenes and locales many of which have already disappeared from the Tokyo cityscape. It is also an eye-opening record of how radically the city has changed over the last thirty years.



Cover design: Shibukawa Ikuyoshi

Banpaku to sutorippu: Shirarezaru nijusseiki bunkashi [Expositions and Strip Shows: A Little-known Facet of Twentieth-century Cultural History]. Aramata Hiroshi. Shūeisha, 2000. 173 × 106 mm. 238 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-08-720011-6.

Few people would not be baffled by this title. What possible connection could there be between strip shows and such a serious, national event as a world exposition? The answer is in this unique book, which reveals how these two cultural phenomena each spurred the other's development in the first half of the twentieth century. The author is a writer known for his encyclopedic knowledge of all ages and countries as well as for his studies in fields ranging from natural history to fantasy literature.

According to the author, expositions and strip tease initially became associated at the first World Exposition held in Paris in 1855, which featured the then-risqué cancan dance. This was followed by the immense popularity of Egyptian belly-dancing at the Paris World Exposition of 1889, and the 1900 Paris World Exposition "serpentine dance," in which backlighting was used to illuminate the outline of the body of a dancing woman wearing a thin drape. These and other cases established sexy dancing as one of the main attractions of international expositions.

While helping to usher in the age of materialism, the early international expos expressed visions of the future in the "streamlined" forms that came to dominate design in the first half of

the twentieth century. This book reveals that the paragon of the streamlined form to which these events ultimately pointed was the naked human body.

Hyakkaten no bunkashi: Nihon no shōhi kakumei [A Cultural History of Department Stores: Japan's Consumer Revolution]. Yamamoto Take-toshi and Nishizawa Tamotsu, eds. Sekai Shisō Sha, 1999. 216 × 154 mm. 342 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 4-7907-0783-0. Consumer society emerged in the early years of the twentieth century, and had spread to every facet of people's lives by the 1970s. Calling this modernization of economic consumption a "consumer revolution" that shook Japanese society to its foundations, this book explores the role of department stores as key protagonists in that process. The book is the culmination of eight years of research by an eleven-member study group led by a sociologist and collectively representing a broad range of disciplines, including media history, social history, history of economic thought, history of design, and history of architecture.



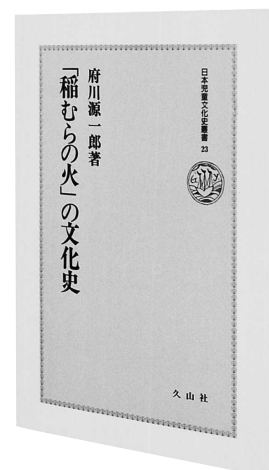
Cover design: Inoue Fumio

From its roots in long-respected kimono fabric establishments, Japan's department store industry took off when railway companies began opening department stores at terminal and other major train stations. Through well-devised strategies of advertising, marketing, cultural activity, and information management, as well as product development that anticipated the rapidly developing consumer lifestyle, these stores shrewdly took advantage of, and in many cases

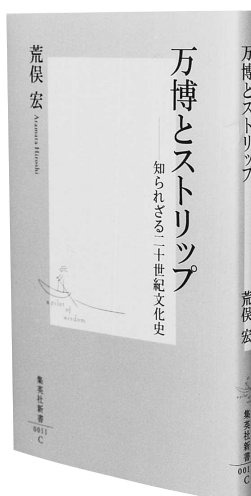
actually created, popular trends and fashions. So successful were they that they came to be known as "the treasure houses of lifestyle culture" and "the permanent expositions of good home economics."

Complete with an appendix that includes a useful bibliography and a chronology of relevant events, this is a detailed study from various perspectives of a process that changed the way Japanese people live.

"Inamura no hi" no bunkashi [A Cultural History of the "Haystack Fire" Story]. Fukawa Gen'ichirō. Kyūzansha, 1999. 210 × 149 mm. 116 pp. ¥1,553. ISBN 4-906563-83-X. The story "Inamura no hi" [The Haystack Fire] featured in a textbook for elementary-school *kokugo* (Japanese language and literature) classes in the prewar period. After a great earthquake, the story goes, village headman Gohei is the first in his village to notice the approaching tsunami. By quickly setting fire to the stack of unthreshed rice he has just harvested, he alerts fellow villagers to move to high ground, thereby saving many lives. This parable of human virtue, depicting the willingness to forego self-interest for the sake of a greater good, is thought to have made a deep impression on many Japanese children of the day.



This book takes the "haystack" tale as the starting point for an inquiry into modern language education and children's literature in Japan and the cultural issues surrounding their development. The tale is based on an actual event that had previously been fictionalized by Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), the prolific writer of the Meiji era (1868–1912) who ultimately



Cover design: Hara Ken'ya

became a naturalized citizen. Hearn's story was later adapted for use as a teaching aid. The author examines how the contrasting styles of the different versions reflect the respective historical circumstances in which they were written, how the story came to be included in a *kokugo* primer, and the impact it thereby had on prewar Japan. Drawing on various sources, this book explains why the story was chosen for this role while retracing the evolution of *kokugo* education.

SCIENCE/MEDICINE

Sawayaka enerugi fūsha nyūmon [A Guide to the Clean Energy of Windmills]. Ushiyama Izumi. Sanseidō, 1997. 193 × 133 mm. 290 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-385-35811-7.

The generation of electric power using such clean energy sources as sunlight and wind offers effective ways of halting the dangerous process of global warming. In Japan, the "Sunshine Project," a scheme for developing new energy forms that was launched by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 1978, includes a plan to develop a system for large-scale wind-power generation. According to an announcement made in 1998, a wind-power generation system with an annual output capacity of 300,000 kilowatts is scheduled to be operational by 2010. This accounts, however, for only about 0.3 percent of Japan's total power demand. While the advancement of wind-power generation is taking off on a worldwide scale, Japan's efforts in this field are lagging behind.

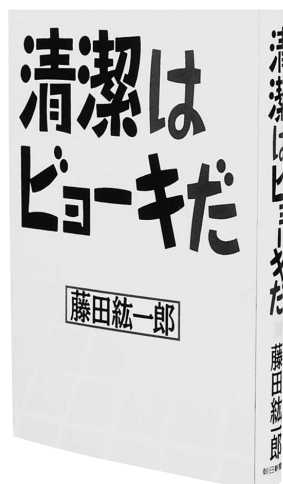


Cover design: Ōki Hiroshi

This book is aimed at educating people about wind power and its potential applications. It begins by describing what wind is and the role it plays in human lifestyles and cultures. It then provides a lucid, accessible overview of the history of windmills, their various mechanisms, types and features, the current state of wind-power generation throughout the world, and the future prospects of wind-power development.

A wealth of relevant information is provided at the back of the book, in the bibliography, the details of wind-mill-related networks among private companies and research organizations, and in a map showing the locations of wind-power generation facilities in Japan.

Seiketsu wa byōki da [Cleanliness Is a Sickness]. Fujita Kōichirō. Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999. 193 × 133 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-02-257279-5. The number of cases of allergic medical conditions, such as atopic dermatitis, bronchial asthma, and nasal allergies, began increasing in Japan about thirty years ago. This author, a Tokyo Medical and Dental University professor and specialist in parasitology and immunology, points out that it also coincides with when people began spending most of their time in super-hygienic living environments.



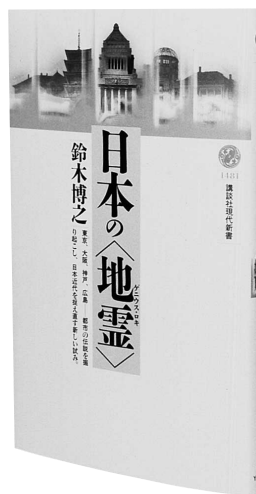
Cover design: Tamura Yoshiya

Recent research on intestinal worms, pollen allergies, and related conditions vividly shows how people who have removed the most extraneous substances from their immediate living environment are susceptible to new diseases. The excessive insistence on cleanliness

among Japanese in recent decades has begun to eliminate even the symbiotic bacteria that the human body needs to stay alive. According to the author, the spread of the popular misconception that a totally germ-free and odorless environment is good has led to the depletion of people's immunological strength and therefore to the increase in the incidence of allergic diseases. The author warns that such unnatural fastidiousness invites nature's revenge and notes that, in addition to the physiological effect of lowering people's resistance to infectious diseases, over-cleanliness could also lead to an ideology of social "cleansing."

ARCHITECTURE

Nihon no geniusu roki [Japan's Genius Loci]. Suzuki Hiroyuki. Kōdansha, 1999. 173 × 106 mm. 232 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-06-149481-3. The Japanese word *chirei*, meaning the spirit or feel of a place, expresses a concept originally based on traditional Chinese cosmology. This author, however, prefers to use the Latin *genius loci* for his purpose in this book, which is the interpretation of cities as places each with a distinctive atmosphere. His task is different from conventional critiques of the townscape and is not exactly a study of architectural design. Instead, the author's approach is to "read" or interpret each urban space in its specific context, considering not its political, institutional or town-planning history, but rather the place itself as a self-contained entity.



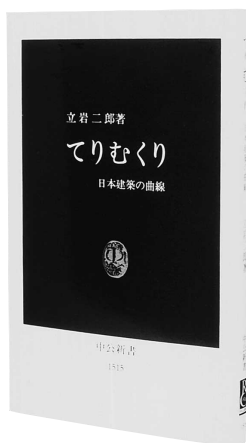
Cover design: Sugiura Kōhei and Satō Atsushi

As a symbolic example, the central tower of Japan's Diet building has a roof shaped like a stepped pyramid when viewed from the front. In designing the building, Yoshitake Tōri may have used as his model the Mausoleum, the famous tomb in Halicarnassus, Asia Minor, of the ancient Carian King Mausolus, from which the English word "mausoleum" is derived. Similarly, a poem by Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) in *Angu shōden* [A Brief Tale of Ignorant Souls] describes the Diet Building appearing "like a mausoleum," with *moozoree* printed in katakana over the kanji compound *reibyō* (mausoleum).

***Terimukuri: Nihon kenchiku no kyokusen* [Terimukuri: Curves in Japanese Roof Architecture].**

Tateiwa Jirō. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2000. 173 × 109 mm. 220 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-12-101515-0.

Terimukuri is the term for the distinctively Japanese lines of roofs in traditional architecture. *Teri* are curves that slope gently like the base of Mount Fuji, and *mukuri* is the bulge that rises up at the peak. The harmonious blending of these two types of curves is the *terimukuri* style of roof seen on many Japanese shrines and temples, as well as on *mikoshi* (portable shrines) and hearses.



Terimukuri curves first appeared in Japanese architecture at the end of the ninth century as *kara hafu* (Chinese-style gables). The author of this book regards them as the blending of the *teri* form of tile roofing typical of continental Buddhist architecture and the *mukuri* lines of the straw-thatched roofs indigenous to Japan, and traces the broader effects of such mixing to social phenomena and other facets of Japanese culture. Among

other original ideas presented in the book is the author's reappraisal, from the perspective of *terimukuri* design, of the Tōshōgū shrine in Nikkō, which German architect Bruno Taut (1880–1938) once described as "kitch."

ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

***Jōmon no oto* [Jōmon Sounds].**

Tsuchitori Toshiyuki. Seidosha, 1999. 195 × 133 mm. 322 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-7917-5777-7.

The "Jōmon period" is a broad term referring to Japan's Neolithic era, which began some seven to eight thousand years B.C. and continued for several millennia. One characteristic of the period was the use of distinctive cord-marked (*jōmon*) pottery.

This author is a musician and percussionist who started out as an avant-garde jazz drummer and has produced theater music for numerous stage productions, including those of Peter Brook's International Theatre Research Centre. A chance encounter with examples of ancient Japanese pottery prompted him to begin a thorough study of the sounds that can be produced with them.

The *yūkō-tsuba-tsuki-doki* (deep pots with rim perforations) is a style of pottery excavated from an archaeological site dating back to the Middle Jōmon period (ca. 3000 B.C.). Archeologists are divided over the question of what the vessels were used for, some arguing they were for making saké and others maintaining they were used as drums. Following his intuition as a musician, this author is



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

certain it was a drum, and became resolved to disprove the saké-vessel theory. After replicating the ancient pot based on painstaking research, he stretched a drumskin over it and skillfully demonstrated the sound of the "resurrected" Jōmon drum.

In addition to being a compelling account of his reconstruction project, this book is also a solid work of scholarship, contributing to the body of world folk music research and offering valuable insights on the sounds of antiquity.

***Rakugo no wajutsu* [The Storytelling Arts of Rakugo].** Nomura Masaaki.

Heibonsha, 2000. 194 × 130 mm. 318 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-582-84202-X.



Cover design: Nakagaki Nobuo and Yoshino Ai

This is the third and final work in the "linguistics of *rakugo*" series by this author.

Rakugo, Japan's traditional art of comic monologue, has been developed and refined through the ages by numerous master practitioners. In this book, the author performs a linguistic analysis of the rhetoric behind the *rakugo* art of making people laugh. With a wealth of quotes from written records and audiotaped performances by famous storytellers, the book provides a comprehensive map of the various rhetorical forms in the *rakugo* linguistic topography, including metaphor, puns, timing, repetition for emphasis, unexpected twists, and the structure of the *ochi*, or punch line, as well as explaining why storytellers begin with *makura* (preliminary remarks). There is also a discussion on the respective rhetorical fortes of a number of well-known *rakugo* masters.

This book can be enjoyed either as a collection of scholarly essays or as the author's personal homage to the art he loves and practices himself as an amateur.

Teshigoto no Nihon [Japan, Land of Handcrafts]. Yanagi Muneyoshi. Shōgakusan, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 266 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-09-251043-8. Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889–1961) was a founding figure of the early-twentieth-century Japanese folkcraft movement that first drew attention to and reappraised the wholesome and natural beauty of folk implements used in Japanese daily life.



Cover design: Tajima Tsukasa

Appearing now as one of a series of reprinted classics, this book was written by Yanagi during World War II and originally published in 1946. It takes the form of a report—in a sense even a travelogue—of the twenty years Yanagi spent roaming the length and breadth of Japan investigating and examining countless works of handicraft and household implements. These products of various local folkcraft traditions included works of pottery, dyeing, weaving, metal work, lacquerware, and crafts using wood, bamboo, leather, and paper.

No matter how small or obscure their workshops, the individual artisans who plied these trades produced objects of unquestionable skill by carrying on the folkcraft techniques of their ancestors. Displaying a beauty that increases with their frequent use in daily life, these objects testify to the richness of that handcraft tradition.

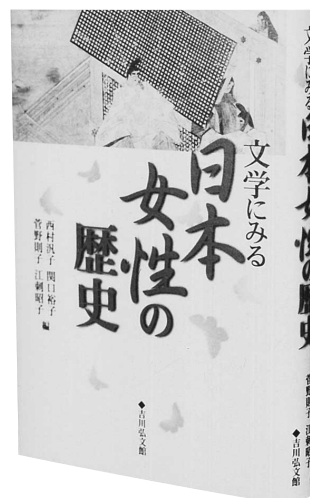
Although many of these crafts had already become things of the past

when Yanagi wrote his manuscript during the war, many traditional items do survive to this day. The volume also has a handy index of tools and implements that were once an ordinary part of daily life.

LITERATURE

Bungaku ni miru Nihon josei no rekishi [A History of Japanese Women Through Literature]. Nishimura Hiroko et al., eds. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 242 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-642-07763-4. This collection of essays considers images of women in fifty-five works of Japanese literature—including novels, diaries, histories, and criticism—from the ancient chronicle *Kojiki* to Miyamoto Yuriko's autobiographical novel *Nobuko* (1924–26). This collective approach by twenty-seven researchers, including two men, achieved what would doubtless have been beyond the capacity of one individual scholar, as its extensive treatment of women in literature spans the ancient, medieval, premodern, and modern periods. In its bibliography alone, the book provides a useful overview of more than a thousand years in the history of women in Japan. In the diversity of the portraits of women discussed, however, the book defies any attempt at neat schematization.

While it is only recently that Japanese historians have begun to address the concept of gender squarely, this volume reflects the progress in women's studies that this fuller perspective has made possible.



Cover design: Yonamine Sano

Ren'ai no kigen: Meiji no ai o yomitoku [The Origin of Love: Interpreting "Ai" in the Meiji Era]. Saeki Junko. Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-532-16327-7.

Up to and including the Edo period (1603–1867), feelings of attraction and affection between the sexes were expressed in Japanese by words such as *iro* (eros), *koi* (infatuation), and *jō* (feeling). In the Meiji era (1868–1912), writers consciously eschewed these terms in favor of the new expressions *ai* and *ren'ai*. In this author's view, an examination of Meiji-era novels in terms of the broad theme of love reveals a shift in the development of the collective Japanese psychology of love. Emphasis shifted from love as *irokoi*—implying extramarital, extraordinary, sensual, and promiscuous relationships—to love as *ren'ai*—meaning relationships that are marital, ordinary, emphasizing spiritual and emotional ties, and monogamous.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

Pointing to such examples as the theme of marital love in Tokutomi Roka's *Hototogisu* [Little Cuckoo] and that of platonic love in Itō Sachio's *Nogiku no haka* [Grave amid Asters], the author maintains that young Meiji-era Japanese exalted platonic love above all other forms; that they had a strong yearning for romantic love free of social constraints; and that this led, in the latter half of the Meiji era, to a boom in love between husband and wife, a phenomenon until then not generally considered central to a good marriage. But as the discord between *iro* (eros or carnal love) and *ai* (romantic love) intensified in the context of

Japan's superficial modernization, novelists such as Tamura Toshiko depicted disillusionment with love, while Natsume Sōseki probed the isolation of couples who marry for love. Other writers whose works are discussed include Higuchi Ichiyō, Izumi Kyōka and Ozaki Kōyō.

Through an examination of a diverse selection of thirty-four Meiji literary works, this study throws considerable light on the transformation of Japanese attitudes toward marriage and the locus of love.

FICTION

***Kami no bakudan* [Paper Bombs]. Dekune Tatsurō.** Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 193 × 133 mm. 370 pp. ¥2,095. ISBN 4-16-318920-3.

This novel is about a used-books dealer and an old-books enthusiast who stumble upon a wartime secret while investigating a mysterious list of names that turns up in the store. The “paper bombs” of the title are the propaganda leaflets dropped from airplanes by both Japanese and U.S. forces during the Pacific War to discourage the enemy from fighting. Built around the motif of these leaflets and the underground Imperial Headquarters constructed in Matsu-shiro, Nagano prefecture, during the war, the novel reads like a contemporary version of an old popular genre of historical adventure storytelling.

The story features a convincing cast of organizations and characters, all portrayed with the author's unique brand of humor. They include a mysterious organization that buys up the

rights to works by unknown authors; a mammoth construction company desperately hiding the fact that, under orders from the military, it contracted to build a huge underground bunker during the war; and that company's own subcontractors. The plot is interspersed with engaging anecdotes about old books and their collectors, and the fact that the author himself operates a secondhand bookstore gives the bookish detectives at the center of the story an extra air of reality.

***Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* [All God's Children Are Dancing]. Murakami Haruki.** Shinchōsha, 2000. 192 × 130 mm. 204 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-353411-7.

This is a collection of six short stories, one newly written and five previously published in the series “Jishin no ato de” [After the Earthquake] in the literary monthly *Shinchō*.

The stories are “UFO ga Kushiro ni oriru” [UFO Descends upon Kushiro]; “Airon no aru fūkei” [Scene of an Iron]; “Kami no kodomo tachi wa mina odoru” [All God's Children Are Dancing]; “Tairando” [Thailand]; “Kaeru-kun, Tōkyō o sukku” [Frog Saves Tokyo]; and, appearing for the first time, “Hachimitsu pai” [Honey Pie].

Although every story in the book carries undertones about the Kobe Earthquake of 1995, the subject of the quake itself is not dealt with directly. Rather, the disaster remains in the background as the stories focus on the sense of spiritual vacuum and gloom experienced by characters living humdrum lives far from quake site and connected to it only indirectly through the media. But while the overall tone

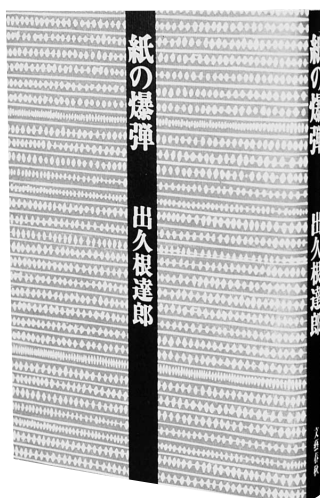
is dark and many of the characters bear a deep sense of loss or emptiness, at other levels the stories are also about gaining a renewed sense of hope out of inner desolation. The final story, “Hachimitsu pai,” ends with the main character, a novelist, resolving to write “the kind of novel in which someone dreams of night receding, and all around him becoming light, and him in that light tightly embracing the people he loves.”

***Sāchienjin shisutemukurasshu* [Search Engine, System Crash]. Miyazawa Akio.** Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 193 × 127 mm. 158 pp. ¥1,143. ISBN 4-16-319030-9.

The title of this novel refers to the tendency among people searching the Internet to be lured into so many interesting-looking sites that they forget what they were originally looking for. The main character is a middle-aged proprietor of an editorial production company. In connection with a murder committed by a classmate from his university days, he goes in search of a place named Abnormal Red, and ends up wandering around a town where reality and fantasy are indistinguishable.

“Somewhere there has to be the true voice of the ‘place’ called ‘now’ in this town. So I walk. I just walk. A dubious-looking street. A street a block, two blocks further on from the main road.” As in this passage from the book's postscript, the story suggests the labyrinthine incomprehensibility of contemporary society.

This first novel by an established playwright and theater producer was shortlisted for the prestigious Akutagawa Prize.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi



Cover design: Shinchōsha



Cover design: Ishizaki Kentarō

Events and Trends

Literary Prizes

The winners of the 123rd Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes were announced on July 14. This time, both prizes were presented to two works. The Akutagawa Prize went to Machida Kō for *Kiregire* [Fragments], originally published in the May issue of *Bungakukai*, and Matsuura Hisaki for *Hanakutashi* [Decaying Flower], which came out in the May issue of *Gunzō*. Kaneshiro Kazuki's *Go* [Go!] (Kōdansha) and Funado Yoichi's *Niji no tani no go-gatsu* [May in the Valley of Rainbows] (Shūeisha) were chosen for the Naoki Prize.

Machida Kō is a former punk rock musician who performed under the name Machida Machizō. His 1996 story *Kussun daikoku* [The Deity of Wealth] published by Bungei Shunjū was highly praised. The work that took the Akutagawa Prize this time depicts the fall of a high-living playboy. After his mother dies, the man decides to try painting to make a living, but has no paints. He visits a friend to borrow money, and also gets a ham from him. Then he finds himself in the painting he is working on. The world that unfolds is hard to define as either dream or reality.

Matsuura is a professor at the University of Tokyo specializing in French literature. His prize-winning work begins when a man who owns a design business near bankruptcy visits a man occupying an apartment house slated for the wrecking ball. The downpour outside doesn't let up, and mushrooms begin to grow in the man's room. Matsumura portrays what seems to be a rotting world from which the man cannot escape.

Naoki Prize-winner Kaneshiro Kazuki is a resident Korean of Japan. *Go* is a story of the small adventure and a fleeting romance of the resident Korean hero. Friends and his father, a former professional boxer and Marxist, who had transferred his citizenship from North to South Korea, get involved in an incident.

Funado Yoichi is the dean of ad-

venture fiction in Japan. The prize-winning work is an adventure story depicting the beautiful landscape as well as the poverty and corruption that envelopes Cebu island in the Philippines. It is told in the first person by the protagonist, a young man of Japanese and Filipino parentage whom the people call "Janpino." Taught cock-fighting by his father, the young man grows up fighting proudly against corruption together with other high-minded friends.

Also noteworthy this year was the addition of four popular writers to the selection committees of the two prizes. Murakami Ryū, known for *Almost Transparent Blue* (Kodansha International, 1977) and *Coin Locker Babies* (Kodansha International, 1996) joined the Akutagawa Prize committee, while adventure fiction writer Kitakata Kenzō, romance writer Hayashi Mariko, and historical novelist Miyagitani Masamitsu were appointed to the Naoki Prize committee.

On May 16th, the recipients of the 13th Mishima Prize and the 13th Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize were also announced. Chosen for the Mishima Prize was Hoshino Tomoyuki's *Mezameyo to ningyo wa utau* [The Mermaid Sings "Arise, Awake"] (April issue of *Shinchō*). The Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize went to Iwai Shimako's collection of short stories *Bokkee, Kyōtee* [Terrifying] (Kadokawa Shoten). The title story of this anthology last year became the first short story to win the Japan Horror Fiction Grand Prize.

National Library of Children's Literature Opens

On May 5, the International Library of Children's Literature (ILCL), Japan's first national library specializing in children's books, was partially opened in Ueno Park, Tokyo. This first-phase opening of the Library, where child readers can enjoy approximately 3,000 titles in Japanese and other languages available in the reading room, represents about one-third of the total project. The 15,000 Japanese titles and 15,000 titles in other languages as well as a rich research and reference collection currently totals 40,000 volumes.

When the library is fully opened in 2002, it will have one underground and four above-ground floors with a total of 6,600 square meters floor space and a capacity of over 170,000 volumes. Planned as a government project commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the library is housed in the former Imperial Library of Japan built in 1906.

The Japanese government is also finalizing plans to establish an International Foundation for Children's Culture in 2001. The foundation's programs will include gathering of children's books from overseas for distribution to libraries in Japan and translation of Japanese picture books for publication and distribution overseas. The foundation's main aim will be to promote international exchange between children in Japan and other countries in Asia.

Children's Literature Hits

Children's books and picture books are conspicuous among the recent successful books in Japan. Apparently the secret of their success is that they catch the fancy of not only children but adults as well.

The talk of the translation and publishing world in Japan is J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, since the translation into Japanese of the first volume, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, came out in December 1999. The first volume has secured a Japanese readership in all walks of life.

Iwanami Shoten brought out *Orijinaru ban: Hoshi no ōjisama* [Original Edition: The Little Prince], to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Restoring the colors of the illustrations to the tones of the 1943 English edition, it is selling well, showing the deep-rooted popularity of this children's classic.

Another children's title that made a mark in the market was the Japanese edition of *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, by Leo F. Buscaglia, published by Dōwaya in 1999, which contemplates the meaning of life and death through the span of life of a maple leaf. Widely read by middle-aged businessmen, it gained considerable attention in the media. A CD version of the book is also selling well.

Publishing hits have emerged not only among translations of books from overseas, but children's books originally in Japanese. One is Kikuta Mariko's *Itsudemo aeru* [We Can Meet Anytime] (Gakushū Kenkyūsha), a story that talks about death from the viewpoint of a dog named Shiro who has lost his master. It was awarded a special prize at the 1999 Bologna Children's Book Fair. In early 2000, its popularity got another boost when it appeared in a television commercial for a cosmetic product starring a popular actress. *Kimi no tame ni dekiru koto* [What I Can Do For You], by the same author, is also selling well.

Some picture books first published a long time ago have received a new lease on life. Sano Yōko's *Hyakumankai ikita neko* (translated by Judith Carol Huffman, it was published in English by the University of Hawaii Press in 1998 as *The Cat That Lived a Million Times*), which came out way back in 1977, tells the story of a tomcat of many lives who finally grasps the meaning of losing a loved one when he encounters a mate he loves more than he does himself. The book suddenly became the center of attention when it was featured as having special memories for the man and woman starring in a television drama aired in 2000.

Another long-selling picture book whose fortunes have begun to flourish again is *Gurumpa no yōchien* (Fukuinkan Shoten, 1966), illustrated by Horiuchi Seiichi with text by Nishiuchi Minami (trans., *Grumpa's Kindergarten*, Evans Brothers, U.K., 1969). Sales were prompted by its mention in a popular TV drama

series. Everywhere he goes, Grumpa the elephant gets into trouble because he is always making things that are gigantic in size; in the end, however, he makes everybody happy by making a great big kindergarten.

Present (Chūō Hōki Shuppan), illustrated by Sawada Toshiki, is the first attempt in the picture book genre by Ototake Hirotada, whose *Gotai fumanzoku* (Kōdansha, 1998; trans., *No One's Perfect*, Kodansha International) has been a big best seller. Showing how a boy with physical disabilities gets along with his classmates, it is based on the experiences of the author, who has won widespread support for his strong will to live cheerfully and vigorously despite severe disabilities.

Memorable Books 2000

Released on April 23rd, St. Jordi's Day (International Book Day) were the results of this year's survey on "The Most Memorable Book I Have Read" compiled from 33,138 responses. The top ten titles were as follows:

1. Ototake Hirotada, *No One's Perfect*
2. Asada Jirō, *Poppoya* [The Railway Worker]
3. Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon*
4. Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*
5. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*
6. Miura Ayako, *Shiokari tōge* [Shiokari Pass]
7. Murakami Haruki, *Norwegian Wood*

8. Itsuki Hiroyuki, *Taiga no itteki* [Little Drops in the Great River]
9. Robert James Waller, *The Bridges of Madison County*
10. Natsume Sōseki, *Kokoro*

The Diet Library on CD-ROM

Of the documents in the collection of the National Diet Library, some 50,000 volumes, or 38,000 titles, in the social sciences are now available on CD-ROM. With the wide use of acid paper to prevent ink from blotting in the first half of the Shōwa era (1926–89), documents printed in those days are extremely difficult to preserve. Documents fifty or more years old are in increasingly poor condition.

The social science documents that have been reproduced in digital form are those published during the period 1926–49. Publisher Maruzen and the Fuji Photo Film microfilmed each of the pages of the documents as a joint project, which took them about one year, starting in May 1999. The CD-ROM version is based on the microfilms.

The reproduced documents include monographs in the social sciences as well as publications issued by the national government, national policy organizations, political parties, and corporations. One-fourth of the documents are those that had not been accessible to the general public since the war, including internal documents and the books whose sales were prohibited. The CD-ROM versions will be sold in sets to university libraries and other institutional buyers.

Association for 100 Japanese Books

The non-profit Association for 100 Japanese Books (chairman, Ōoka Makoto, poet) has been facilitating translation and publication of Japanese books in other languages since its founding in 1992. Private corporations and individuals are invited to become members of the association to support its activities. The association raises funds from members as well as non-member firms and individuals to support the translation and publication of individual titles in literature, non-fiction, the social sciences, and the arts. Applicants for support may be publishers of any country that have made a prior commitment with a qualified translator for work completed or in progress on a specific manuscript.

Further information and application forms may be obtained by contacting Toya Minae (Ms.), Executive Director, Association for 100 Japanese Books, 2-27-18-804 Naka-ochiai, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 161-0032, or by fax 03-5996-0460.



Language as System

Ekuni Kaori

One of the jobs I enjoy is translating. Usually I translate picturebooks, but now and then I do relatively short works of fiction. My most recent translation was *A Cat's Life* by American writer Dee Ready.

What I like about translation is that it tests my skills in my own language, Japanese. When you undertake to render a story from another language into Japanese, what matters most is the Japanese. Translation is often thought to mean confronting the other language, but actually it is far more a grappling with the recipient language, in my case Japanese. At least so I believe.

Often a major problem for the translator is reading and interpretation of the original text, but it is my feeling that this should be the job of the author, not the translator. The text should clearly show the reader what the author wants to show and make the reader feel what is to be felt and understood.

In writing, you should not make excuses, and I accept this in my own work. No author should have to explain: "Actually this is what I wanted to say, what I wanted to get across." Now and then you will find a book with a preface or an epilogue in which an author attempts to do that sort of thing, but I find it quite unacceptable. For a book, what is written in its pages is everything; it cannot be more or less.

Therefore, when I translate something by another author into Japanese or when my writings are translated into other languages, I do not trouble myself with anything but the words. This policy gives me peace of mind.

My reason for taking this approach is that, after all, I write fiction because I like words. Of course, you need more than love of words just to produce good fiction. You have no choice but to devote yourself seriously to the task of constructing a plot and utilizing various techniques to develop the narrative.

My works are sustained almost completely by words alone. This quality, while perhaps their sole strength, I recognize can also be a weakness as well. Some writers take some theme or event and use words to express it; but that is not my way. What excites me is the moment that words come together to generate a story.



I often think that the reason people look and think differently from one country to the next is not so much attributable to differences in climate and eating habits; it comes mainly from their different language systems. People use language to express what they feel and think, so it stands to reason that what they feel and think are shaped by the language they speak. Isn't that a little frightening?

Indeed, languages as systems are both intimidating and fascinating.

I once lived in the state of Delaware, United States, for one year. My English ability is adequate to enjoy a movie, but I found that it was not enough to grasp television news broadcasts. When I would go out to buy the marzipan chocolate that is one of my favorite treats, I had many frustrating experiences from being unable to pronounce "marzipan" understandably.

Nevertheless, even when speaking my faltering English, I discovered that I had what you might call an English personality. There I was, displaying a character and attitude that was different from when I speak Japanese. I was quite impressed and fascinated to discover that there was this other side of me.

If I were to be able to speak French, perhaps I would discover that I had a French personality as well; if Chinese then a Chinese personality, if Russian, a Russian personality. This is what happens because language is a system.

The personality that is writing the manuscript for this particular article is my Japanese personality, but I would very much like to see what would result if my English personality wrote an English novel. Or what my French personality (though I have not encountered it yet) would produce in French.

In that sense, a language and its world are perhaps one and the same thing.

Ekuni Kaori was born in 1964 in Tokyo. After graduation from Mejiro Gakuen Women's Junior College, she worked briefly for a publishing company and in 1987 spent one year studying at the University of Delaware. She is author of *Momoko* [Momoko], *Kusanojō no hanashi* [The Story of Kusanojō], *Tsumetai yoru ni* [One Chilly Night], and *Kirakira hikaru* [Shining Bright] (cinematized in 1992). In 1989 her novel *409 Radokurifu* [409 Radcliff] was awarded the Femina Prize and in June that year she published a collection of short children's stories. In 1999 she published a joint work with Tsuji Hitonari, a two-volume love story entitled *Reisei to jōnetsu no aida* [Between Composure and Passion], in which she wrote from the woman's perspective and Tsuji wrote from the man's perspective. Other works include *Rakka suru yūgata* [Evening Comes Falling] (cinematized in 1998), *Boku no kotori-chan* [My Little Bird], and *Kamisama no bōto* [God's Boat]. She is also recipient of other prizes, including the Tsubota Jōji Literature Prize, Murasaki Shikibu Literature Prize, and the Robō-no-Ishi Literature Prize.