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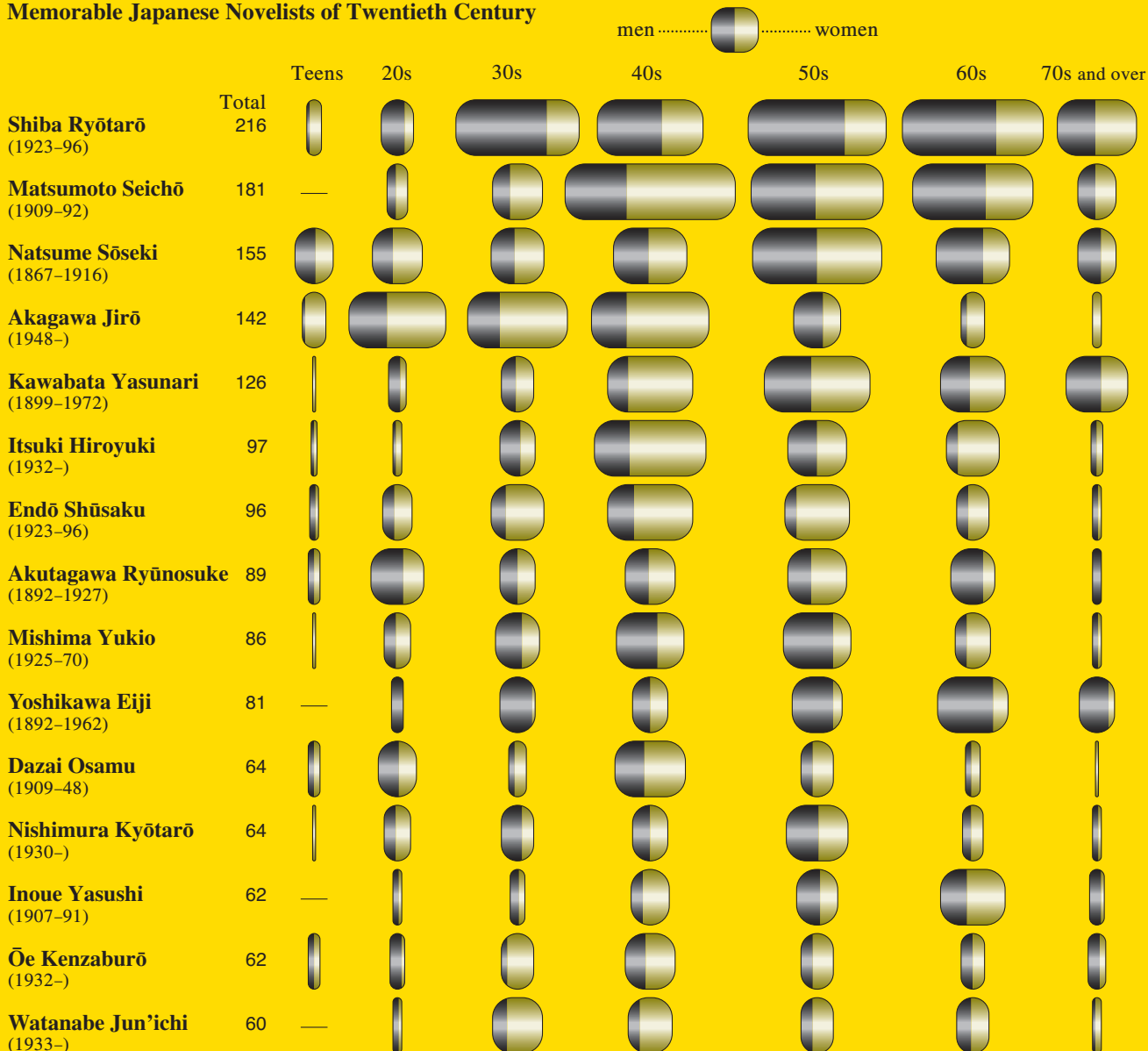
# Japanese Book News

Resurfacing Individualism in Japan Today

Japanese Literature in the World Book Community

Overseas Publishers and Japanese Books Abroad

## Memorable Japanese Novelists of Twentieth Century



Note: Data for this diagram is taken from *Dokusho yoron chōsa 2000 nemban* [Public Opinion Polls on Reading, Year 2000] (Mainichi Shimbun, Tōkyō Honsha, Kōkokukyoku) summarizing the results of the 53rd survey on reading conducted by the Mainichi Shimbunsha in 1999 from a nationwide random sample. Valid responses were received from 3,311 persons. This diagram lists the top fifteen names given by respondents when asked to write in freely the names of at most five Japanese writers of the twentieth century.



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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## From the Editor

Contrary to the general image, the subject of the individual versus the establishment, public versus private, and the status of the individual has long concerned scholars, thinkers, policy makers, and critics in Japan. For the fourth in our twentieth-century retrospective series, *Japanese Book News* editorial board member and senior editor of Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha Kashima Shingo writes about new expectations of the individual in Japan today. A government commission on Japan's goals in the twenty-first century published last year notably called for active encouragement of "self-determination" and "individual responsibility" among citizens. Fostering individualism has been advocated for a long time in Japan, by such prominent intellectuals as Fukuzawa Yukichi in the nineteenth century and Maruyama Masao in the postwar period. Kashima probes the question of why, despite this tradition, Japanese have yet to break free from the pressures of conformism.

The Japanese Books Abroad feature is expanded in this issue to include two articles reporting on the Japan Foundation Publishers Group Tour Program held in November 2000. On behalf of the participants, we asked publisher and leader of the visiting group Morgan Entrekin of Grove/Atlantic Inc., and, on behalf of the sponsor, we asked director of the Receiving Division at the Japan Foundation, Andō Kazuo, to comment and reflect on the results of the program.

Under From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō discusses *The Changeling*, Ōe Kenzaburō's new novel inspired by his friendship with the late film director Itami Jūzō. In what will unfortunately be his last contribution to this column, Ikari Haruo follows his characteristic fascination with the unconventional in introducing a sampling of unusual photograph collections.

In Their Own Words presents novelist Tsuji Hitonari's impressions of translation of his works and working with the translator who produced the prize-winning French edition of his *Hakubutsu (Le Bouddha Blanc)*.

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# Resurfacing Individualism in Japan Today

Kashima Shingo

The first official encouragement of “individual self-reliance” is the final report of the Prime Minister’s Commission on Japan’s Goals in the 21st Century, compiled under the administration of the late prime minister Obuchi Keizō. Entitled *Nihon no furontia wa Nihon no naka ni aru* [The Frontier Within] (Kōdansha, 2000), this report is noteworthy for its recognition of the need for change. There have been government moves in the last few years to give active support to such notions as “self-determination” and “individual responsibility” (as in, for example, the so-called Higuchi Report, whose formal title is *Keizai Senryaku Kaigi hōkoku* [Report of the Council on Economic Strategy]; Nikkan Kōgyō Shimbunsha, 1999). *The Frontier Within* expounds on the ideas behind those recent initiatives and declares the twenty-first century to be the “century of the individual.” The fast pace of globalization presents serious challenges to the long-maintained “convoy system,” by which the government has sought to protect industries through a web of administrative regulations and guidance. The report proposes what is a momentous about-face: entrusting the revitalization of society and the economy to individual initiative and ambition. This new attitude calls to mind Alexis de Tocqueville’s advice that government’s foremost task is to encourage people to behave in such a way that government is not needed at all.

*The Frontier Within* reminds us that calls for the autonomy of the individual go back more than a century. In the early years of the Meiji era (1868–1912) Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) urged his countrymen to embrace the “autonomy and self-respect” of individuals. Other important voices included those of Maruyama Masao (1914–1996: see *Japanese Book News*, No. 17, pp. 1–2) and the post-World War II pro-democracy liberalists, who advocated “subjective freedom.” Yet fifty years later, and a century after Fukuzawa, a deep commitment to the individual as envisioned by these liberalist forerunners, has still not taken firm root. Although Japan took on the form of a free country after 1945, the concept of freedom did not become a significant part of the Japanese mindset.

One of the first introductions to Western thought for the general reader was Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Gakumon no susume* (1872–76, *An Encouragement of Learning*). In part three of this classic, “Independent People Make an Independent Nation,” Fukuzawa defines independence as the capacity to govern one’s self without depending excessively on others. He declares that the government, rather than seeking to control the people and assume responsibility for all the affairs of its citizens, should let the people live in freedom and share with them both hardship and prosperity. This book was a best-seller in its time. Many decades later, in an essay published in 1946 entitled “Theory and Psychology of Ultra-Nationalism,” Maruyama Masao argued convincingly that under the emperor-centered system that prevailed until 1946, the law of the land, deriving as it did from the absolute value of the “national polity,” determined the internal moral and aesthetic values of the individual. He pointed out how, under such a system, the private was considered naturally treach-

erous, carrying undesirable connotations considered to be the equivalent of evil. According to Maruyama, democracy could not function in Japan until the subjective freedom of the individual was firmly established. Despite these and other cogent arguments for freedom of the individual, Japanese have never truly escaped from groupism and strong conformist pressures from their communities, national, corporate, academic, social, or any other. The question is, why didn’t they?

## Fabricated Traditions

Yamazaki Masakazu, scholar of Japanese aesthetics and philosophy and member of the above-mentioned Commission, suggests one approach to an answer. In his *Nihon bunka to kojinsugi* [*Individualism and the Japanese*; Japan Echo, Inc., 1994] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1990), he writes that the core traditions in Japanese culture are pervasively urban in character. They reflect the spirit of commerce and industry and exhibit the unmistakable signs of individualism. Citing numerous examples from history, Yamazaki proposes that the decline of individualism throughout the twentieth century represented an “unnatural” diversion from the long-term course of Japanese tradition. One reason, he argues, was the peculiar circumstances of Japan’s industrialization. Put briefly, Japan could look to the West for models and simply imitate them. Since a very large amount of the creative work of modernization could be accomplished by relying on these models, it made sense to selectively employ agrarian or warrior values (solidarity in hard work, loyalty to the master, etc.) from the traditions of the past and create a society patterned on the basic organization of the household (*ie*).

No one ever doubted the appropriateness of the drive to catch up with and surpass the West into which the nation poured all its energy after 1868. The government had in fact staked the country’s very survival as an independent nation on a policy aimed at increasing the national wealth and strengthening its arms (*fukoku kyōhei*), and this policy guided it throughout the period extending from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 to the end of World War II. Even after the war, people’s energies were channeled into achieving rapid economic growth in order to narrow the gap with the industrialized countries of the West. However, building a militarily strong and wealthy country and sustaining rapid economic growth not only became all-consuming priorities for the nation, they also became ends in themselves. In this long process, we cannot fail to notice the mechanisms by which the values of citizens were merged with state objectives: the emperor-centered “national polity” before the war and the “Japanese-style system” for mobilizing the nation’s entire resources for economic growth after 1945. These mechanisms were not a reassertion of past traditions; they were what we might call upstart “fabricated traditions.” The centralized power structure that sought to control the whole process of modernization and the group-oriented organization of society led to the monopolization of the public domain by the government. These circumstances undeniably narrowed

the scope in which individuals could speak out on public matters, and their exercise of freedom was by default limited to the narrow sphere of private life.

Numerous attempts by liberal-minded thinkers to protest the state's domination of the modernization process are recorded throughout the pages of modern intellectual history. Novelist Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) called Japan's westernization a "superficial, skin-deep enlightenment" not driven by endogenous factors (in "Watakushi no kojinsugi" [My Individualism], a well-known lecture he gave at the Peers' School in 1914). Declaring that his own individualism, which he called egotistical, was not shaped by partisanship but by awareness of right and wrong, he let it be known that he considered a state-dictated morality far inferior to the morality of the individual. At around the same time, Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1930) used his own monthly journal *Seisho no kenkyū* [Biblical Studies] to push for a radical form of freedom framed in terms of Christian values. Any endeavor that does not begin with the individual will never be a great endeavor, he argued, concluding that Japan's greatest problem was that it had adopted Christian civilization without adopting Christianity. (In reality the government propagated the emperor-centered concept of the national polity as a means of resisting Christianity.) Nagai Kafū (1879–1959), another well-loved writer, derided the superficiality of Japan's "civilization and enlightenment" movement. He sought refuge from modern Tokyo, which seemed to embody all the faddish transience of the new movement, in nostalgia for the old Edo (the city's name before the 1868 Restoration) and the alleyways of old parts of the city. Karaki Junzō's widely read *Muyōmono no keifu* [Genealogy of the Useless] (Chikuma Shobō, 1954) portrays a cross-section of Japanese society, and suggests the reasons that gifted and intelligent individuals like Kafū might deliberately become useless (deliberately drop-out) members of society.

Another remarkable figure in the lineage of liberal thought was journalist and politician Ishibashi Tanzan (1884–1973; prime minister 1956–57). At a time when nationalism was evolving into ultranationalism during the Taishō and prewar Shōwa eras, he resisted the tide, arguing that Japan should give up its colonies. Even as the global economy was breaking up into regional blocs, he urged Japan to go the way of free market capitalism. Ishibashi's ideas about freedom, or liberty, were conceived from a thoroughgoing utilitarianist point of view. In his world view, utilitarianism was the true basis of virtue. Merchants do not attempt to enrich themselves to the point of impoverishing their customers. They know that they profit by the prosperity of others. Mutual trust and the ability to avoid discord depended on a clear utilitarianist understanding (*Ishibashi Tanzan chosakushū 1: Riberarisuto no keishō* [Collected Works of Ishibashi Tanzan, vol. 1, Warning Cry of a Liberalist]; Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995; see JBN, No. 15, p. 9). Regarding the resistance movement of socialists and social democrats of the time, Ishibashi wrote that amid disharmony between society and the individual, individualism was asserted in the cloak of Marxism. Ishibashi and Karaki both had the insight to recognize how the peculiar social climate of Japan in effect compelled the liberalist to become either a "useless" individual or an antiestablishment socialist. Ishibashi also clearly perceived that the group-centered attitudes of Japanese were not national

traits deeply rooted in the culture; they were the product of education.

### Tide Turned by Bubble's Collapse

If, after the end of World War II, Japanese had only taken to heart the words of these early thinkers, who argued so earnestly for the need to foster individualism and liberalism—upon which the institutions and technologies of the West were founded—the nation might have taken quite a different path. Instead, after a brief postwar upsurge of democratic fervor, big government returned. Once again the "Japanese-style system" asserted itself, leaving the central government largely as it had been before the war, and it mobilized the nation's resources but this time for rapid economic growth. Once again Japanese people experienced government intervention in every corner of their affairs and a dense network of government regulations. This system remained in place not only through the postwar reconstruction period but throughout the period of rapid economic growth.

For ordinary citizens, the standard of living rose visibly, and that helped to bring individual values and lifestyles in line with the objectives of the group (state, corporation). Without conscious reflection, people were convinced by their new-found affluence that economic growth had to be the first priority. It is no accident that the 1970s and 1980s spawned numerous theories on culture and the structure of Japanese society. The superiority of the Japanese system that had made the economic-growth miracle possible, it was argued, could be explained by certain basic attributes, namely the tendency of Japanese to refrain from self-assertion and to go along with decisions of the group, characteristics that were identified as "national traits" and part of "cultural tradition." Other analyses focused on what they assessed as the strong points of the "*ie* society," the system based on the traditional household (*ie*) unit, contending that it offered efficient, logical principles of social organization. Studies like *Bunmei to shite no ie shakai* [The *Ie* Society as a Pattern of Civilization], by Murakami Yasusuke, Kumon Shunpei, and Satō Seizaburō (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1979) and Murakami Yasusuke's *Hankoten no seiji keizaigaku* [Anti-classical Political Economy] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1992; see JBN, No. 3, p. 12), proposing alternative developmental models, are typical works expressing the confidence so many people felt during the era when Japan's economic growth was at its peak.

The speculative bubble economy and its collapse turned the tide. Like the overextended ambitions of the militarist expansionism of the Pacific War years, the excesses of the economic bubble were a natural consequence of Japanese conformism. One incident after another starkly revealed that groupism and conformism had fostered a widespread culture of irresponsibility and decaying morality.

Under the pressures of both the post-bubble recession and accelerating globalization, Japanese finally awoke to the critical need for reform in the 1990s. Ishida Takeshi's *Shakai kagaku saikō* [A Reconsideration of the Social Sciences] (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995; JBN, No. 13, p. 8) is a harsh indictment of the postwar social sciences for their failure to ask serious, fundamental questions about where the country and the economy were going. Public economics scholar Noguchi Yukio's *Sen-kyūhyaku-yonjū-nen taisei: Saraba "senji keizai"* [The 1940 System: Farewell to the "Wartime Economy"]

(Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha, 1995, JBN, No. 12, p. 11) made a strong case demonstrating that the so-called Japanese-style system is no more than a “fabricated tradition,” whose origins lie in the wartime system set up for all-out mobilization and that the existing system is not necessarily a natural consequence of Japanese history and culture. Representing a similar historical perspective, the book “*Nihon Kabushiki Kaisha no Shōwashi* [The Shōwa History of “Japan Inc.”] (Sōgensha, 1995; JBN, No. 13, p. 12), presents the “discovery” in private documents and through interviews that the origins of the “Japan Inc.” unified front that spearheaded the country’s postwar development can be traced directly to the economic control policies formulated for the puppet state of Manchukuo (1932–45) in Manchuria. Ozawa Ichirō, the first politician in recent years to take up the issue of freedom, produced a million-copy best-seller in *Nihon kaizō keikaku* (Kōdansha, 1993, JBN, No. 6, p. 12; translated as *Blueprint for a New Japan: the Rethinking of a Nation*, Kodansha International, 1994) with his proposal of policies for the realization of five freedoms (from the capital of Tokyo, from the corporation, from overwork, from ageism and sexism, and from government-imposed regulations).

The report *The Frontier Within*, mentioned in opening, clearly builds upon the intellectual currents briefly described above. Today, as the new century opens, the irrepressible currents of the Japanese yearning for freedom that flowed largely out of sight through the twentieth century are beginning at last to show themselves in full view. (*Kashima Shingo is Senior Editor, Tōyō Keizai Shimpōsha.*)

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Citations from works mentioned in this essay are translated from the author’s original text. Published translations of the works available in English are as follows:

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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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*In November 2000, the Japan Foundation sponsored a two-week Publishers Group Tour Program for representatives of publishers from Europe and North America. The tour was part of the Foundation's programs to promote the publication of Japanese books overseas. The eight participants visited a printing company, book distribution firm, publishing house, and bookstore; met with writers, editors, translators; heard a lecture by literary critic Numano Mitsuyoshi on contemporary Japanese literature; toured historic sights in Kyoto and other areas, and made contact with individual authors active in Japan today.*

*The Japan Foundation Publishers Group Tour Program was made possible through the cooperation of the following organizations: Japan P.E.N. Club, Japan Book Publishers Association, Publishers Association for Cultural Exchange, Japan, Shuppan News Co., Inc., Japan Foreign-Rights Centre, and the Association for 100 Japanese Books.*

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## Japanese Literature in the World Book Community

Morgan Entrekin

Last November, as a participant in the Japan Foundation Publishers Group Tour Program, I had my first opportunity to travel to Japan and to meet there with publishers, editors, agents, booksellers, and of course, authors. Personally, the visit was fascinating, and professionally, very fruitful. As the president of Grove/Atlantic, an independent publisher with a tradition of publishing international literature, I welcome the many new contacts made during those two weeks in Japan, and I returned to the United States with a long list of new Japanese authors to consider for publication. Even more important, I gained a better understanding of that country's history, culture, and literature, affording me a new and firmer basis on which to evaluate works by its writers. The visit has not only stimulated my curiosity about Japanese literature but made me into a more informed and appreciative reader of books by Japanese authors.

Grove Press (which merged with Atlantic Monthly Press in 1993 to form Grove/Atlantic) has been publishing Japanese literature for over forty years. Especially successful titles in this area include Donald Keene's *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century* and *Modern Japanese Literature from 1868 to the Present Day*, which were originally published in the 1950s and have been continuously in print since.

In the 1960s Grove began publishing works by Ōe Kenzaburō, in high-quality translations by John Nathan. During my tenure as an editor with Atlantic Monthly Press in 1988 I commissioned *New Japanese Voices*, which featured stories by Murakami Haruki, Shimada Masahiko, and Yoshimoto Banana, among other writers. The 1992 publication by Grove Press of Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen*, translated by Megan Backus, was successful beyond all expectations, and the press has subsequently published four more of Yoshimoto's books.

Grove/Atlantic has a strong commitment to publishing literature in translation. Of about sixty new titles a year, eight to ten are translated works, which is a very high percentage, particularly for a mid-sized, self-supporting independent publishing house. Almost all of our translated

works are financially supported by the press; the rare exceptions are occasional translations that are funded by a cultural organization or institution. In the last two years, Grove has published books by writers from Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, China, and Japan.

Publishing works in translation has always been difficult in the United States. Grove's own experience goes back fifty years to its inception as a publishing house. When Barney Rossett, the founder of Grove, first took on work by writers like Neruda, Borges, Bulgakov, Duras, Genet, Ionesco, and Brecht, he was aware of the challenge he faced in achieving even moderate sales at that time, but he was convinced of the importance of publishing these works. Today these authors form the core of an illustrious and very profitable backlist catalog. In the present day, when so many publishing houses are owned by large media conglomerates, it is difficult for proprietors to make the investment needed to put out translated works of high quality that are likely to take years to contribute to the bottom line of the business—if they ever do.

A number of factors may contribute to the hurdles facing translated works. One very basic problem is that American publishers are not generally multilingual and therefore are not able to read the work in its original language. If Americans do speak another language, it tends to be French or Spanish. Rarely have I encountered an editor fluent in a non-European language. One significant way cultural institutions and governmental organizations could stimulate interest in Japanese literature and encourage a wider readership would be to assist publishers and authors in supplying sample English translations of the books for the international marketplace. As in most businesses, English has become the lingua franca of international publishing. Sample English translations would help sell the work not only in English-speaking countries but throughout the world.

The United States has a strongly provincial, self-centered aspect in its worldview. Bounded on the sides by oceans and having only Mexico and Canada as contiguous neighbors, the United States has historically been isolationist and uninterested in foreign affairs or foreign cultures, despite its large immigrant population from numerous other lands. The virtually global hegemony of American popular culture—films, television, and pop music—over the last half century has only reinforced this provincialism. Curiously, it may be the influence of

American culture around the world that begins to make the road easier for some translations in our market. Increasingly, a younger generation of writers brought up on American movies and MTV are using those references in their work, thus making their work more accessible to American readers.

In the meantime, translated works compete in a crowded marketplace with American, British, Canadian and Australian books. Publishers have to be extremely aggressive to get translated works into the bookstores. Many booksellers already feel severely pressured by the demands on their shelf space and budgets just by American titles; why, they wonder, should they risk taking on foreign books. The major newspapers and magazines, furthermore, do not generally give the level of attention to translated works as publishers believe they should. Here, too, the literary editors are constantly frustrated by the lack of space to cover even worthy American titles, so translated works inevitably get short shrift.

Of course, some translated works succeed very well, and, over time it is possible to build a market for an audience for foreign writers. One of the key areas where this is possible is in universities, through academic marketing. Building the audience takes time, however, and the publisher must be patient while establishing an author. Certain circumstances can be immensely helpful, such as Ōe Kenzaburō's Nobel Prize for Literature. Since then, Grove has succeeded in achieving much broader distribution of Ōe's books and having them adopted for classes in universities.

One of the other areas that must be addressed is the quality of the translation itself. Historically, American publishers have not concentrated seriously enough on providing the best possible translation for a book. For the most part this is due to a lack of funds. A career as a translator is not easy, and one way both publishers and sympathetic cultural institutions could help is to find ways to compensate translators better. Yet given the limited market for the end product, it will never be an easy task.

Nonetheless I am optimistic about the future of translation. I believe Americans, and people all over the globe, are becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and more interested in worlds and cultures outside their own. Considering developments in Anglo-American literature over the past ten years, the most interesting and dynamic work has been coming from the peripheries of those cultures—the African-American work of Toni Morrison, the Hispanic-American work of Oscar Hijuelos, work by Native-Americans, Anglo-Indians like Salman Rushdie, and Canadian and Australian authors. As people travel more and make increasing use of the instant information the Internet provides, I believe they will begin to look outside their own culture with new curiosity.

One of the great pleasures and privileges of working in publishing is the opportunity to meet denizens of the book community throughout the world. I hope that the Japan Foundation Publishers Group Tour Program is the first of many such programs that will bring publishers from many countries to Japan. If we wish to have more Japanese books published around the world, we must find ways to help Japanese writers and literature become a more integral part of the international discourse about books. One way to do this is to invite publishers to Japan where they experience the culture, meet the editors and critics, and

learn about the broad range of writers, young and old, producing fascinating and important work.

We have always looked to the arts—music, cinema, painting, dance, architecture—to give us access to and help us understand cultures different from our own. As the world becomes more integrated and cultures cross-pollinate and are brought closer together, it is essential that we make the effort to communicate, to reach out and listen equally to the diverse voices from around the world. Literature gives us a vehicle that no other art form can, allowing us a glimpse into the ways of thinking and living, the nuances of personality and history of a people and culture that is not our own. In the hands of a gifted writer we can be transported, if only temporarily, into another place, and if we are lucky, we come back changed forever. (*Morgan Entrekin is publisher of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.*)

## Overseas Publishers and Japanese Books Abroad

Andō Kazuo

In November 2000, eight representatives of publishers from Europe and North America were invited to Japan for a two-week-long observation and study tour sponsored by the Japan Foundation. The program's purpose was to cultivate networking among publishers in Japan and Europe and the United States. The group met with leading writers, scholars, and literary critics active in Japan, as well as with representatives of major Japanese publishers, and gained a better understanding of Japan's publishing world through exchanges with their counterparts in Tokyo. They also had a first-hand taste of Japanese culture through visits to Kyoto and other places of interest.

Japan has a long tradition of importing books and information from overseas, and all of us grew up surrounded by books translated from other languages. In almost any good-sized bookstore in Japan you will find a wealth of world literature available in Japanese, including the latest translations of U.S. best-selling mysteries, standard American and European titles, and classics of Western children's literature. There are also mystery collections of works that were best-sellers in the United States and have been recently cinematized.

*Grimm's Fairy Tales* was published in 1812 as a collection of stories for children by the German folklorists Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and eventually was translated into seventy languages, attracting a readership nearly as great as that of the Bible. As a child, I read *Aesop's Fables* and the *Tales of Hans Christian Andersen* without ever being conscious that they were translations from other languages. These works spread throughout the world and were widely read because they were stories that offered a moral lesson and treated human values in a form accessible to anyone.

In the early days after the Meiji Restoration (1868) when the modernization drive was in full swing, Japan was eager to introduce culture from other countries, and translations were done mainly by a small number of scholars and writers who did the work of translating as

part of their writing and research. That meant that the number of translations was relatively small. Today, however, if a major Japanese publisher such as Kōdansha thinks that a best-selling work from the United States or Europe promises to be a good commercial investment, it will set up a project team to put it through the translation and publishing process. Some publishers employ Japanese studies specialists in the United States or Europe as part of their editorial staff. The driving force behind this flourishing translation import culture is, certainly, the content and quality of the works themselves, but it also derives from the commercial benefits of marketing translations of books as soon as they are published overseas. In this respect, the systems for translating and publishing books from overseas in Japan are working much more efficiently today than they did even a few decades ago.

The same cannot be said for the flow in the opposite direction. The spread of Japanese literature to other countries has tended to be slow and of limited variety. For example, English-language publishers put out translations of Japanese works that are often exported to distant places, such as South Asia, where bookstores stock English editions of Mishima Yukio, Endō Shūsaku, and Yoshimoto Banana published in London. The works that are further translated into India's official language of Hindi, however, seem to be overwhelmingly titles from classical literature.

In Russia, publishers such as Hyperion, St. Petersburg Center for Oriental Studies, and Scientific-Publishing Co. are putting out translations of classical Japanese literature and works on the history of Japanese literature as well as literary criticism. Russia has some of the world's finest translators of ancient Japanese literature, and high-quality editions of classics like *Genji monogatari* as well as of tanka and haiku are now available in Russian. Some of the translations are financially assisted by the Japan Foundation. Translations of contemporary literary works reflecting Japanese society as it is today, on the other hand, are still far and few between.

According to a study of Japanese works published overseas (*Shuppan jijō chōsa hōkokusho: Shoseki o tōshite no bunka kōryū* [Report on Conditions in Publishing: Cultural Exchange Through Books]) compiled by the Japan Foundation in 1999, extensive translation has been done in the genre of classical literature, but the majority of books translated into other languages are fiction works by Mishima Yukio, Kawabata Yasunari, Abe Kōbō, Endō Shūsaku, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. Since the beginning of the 1990s that list has been slowly growing with the addition of a few more names, including mainly Ōe Kenzaburō, Yoshimoto Banana, Murakami Haruki, and Yamada Eimi.

Japan Foreign Rights Centre managing director Kurita Akiko has pointed out that of the European countries, France is currently showing the greatest interest in Japanese literature but that interest is also growing in Germany, Italy, and other Western countries (*Gaikō forum*, No. 140, April 2000). As of the 1970s, Japanese literature was accessible through the work of only a few authors besides the Tanizaki-Kawabata-Mishima triumvirate, such as Abe Kōbō and Ōe Kenzaburō, but more recently, now that the work of contemporary writers like Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana can be read in translation, the foreign readership for Japanese writing is growing.

The interest of international readers in Japanese literature has tended to move from the classics to contemporary works, and recent trends follow this pattern. Works that portray today's culture and society as well as mass-market popular fiction are gradually becoming more available.

It may not be rapid, but one does encounter signs of the spread of Japanese literature throughout the world. Ten years ago I saw an Abe Kōbō play, the story of a young man whose privacy is invaded by successive visits of relatives he has never met before, staged in Malaysia. About five years ago I enjoyed a performance of one of the famous stories of the quick-witted acolyte Ikkyū, "Oshō-san no mizuame" (The Head Priest's Sweet Syrup), put on by a group of students majoring in Japanese at India's Nehru University. English is widely spoken in India, and English books occupy the most space among Western works in any bookstore. In fact, the recent winner of Britain's Booker Prize became a best-seller in New Delhi. That one would see such a play as the Ikkyū tale performed in India suggests a humanism shared in Japan and India.

Besides the Nobel laureates, Japanese writers have produced many fine works that deal with universal human values and are capable of moving readers in any country. There is a large number of works that ought to be made available in other languages but have not been, for one reason or other. Some have turned out to be too lengthy to be suitable for translation; in other cases a qualified translator could not be found. The Japan Foundation itself is keenly aware of the need to find a way to introduce these works abroad. While it is indeed gratifying that Yoshimoto Banana's *Kitchen* has been published in more than twenty countries and that Murakami Haruki's works have impressed young readers of his generation all around the world, Japan's literary heritage going back to the eleventh-century *Genji monogatari* should be represented by as wide a range of authors as possible.

The main actors in the introduction of Japanese literature overseas are translators and publishers. Interchange in the field of publishing can make a major contribution to a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. To encourage that endeavor, the Japan Foundation is making every effort to support programs for translation and publication assistance.

The first challenge to overcome in translation publishing projects is naturally the language. If translation from Japanese into other languages is to increase, more programs have to be set up so that scholars and translators in other countries can improve their translation skills. Translation involves the difficult task of transcending boundaries of different languages and ways of thinking; to be faithful to the text, the translator needs to have an accurate understanding of Japan's society and the cultural ethos depicted in the work.

One story illustrates this point. About twenty years ago, an Indonesian translation of Kawabata Yasunari's *Snow Country* was being done, based on the English translation, but serious difficulties emerged in the process. The word *oshi-ire* (closet for storing bedding) was translated in the English version as "small room," and for the Indonesian translation "small room" was rendered as "kamar kecil." The problem is that *kamar kecil* in Indonesian means "toilet," which is obviously far removed from the original text. This is the kind of mistake that can happen without

*Continued on p. 21*

## Itami Jūzō and Ōe Kenzaburō's New Novel, *Torikaeko*

Koyama Tetsurō

Ōe Kenzaburō's latest novel, *Torikaeko chenjiringu* [*Torikaeko: The Changeling*] went into its third printing and sold more than 85,000 copies within a month of publication in December 2000. The novel takes its theme from the death of well-known film director and actor Itami Jūzō, who committed suicide by jumping from a condominium rooftop in December 1997. Itami was known for his memorable roles in movies made both in Japan and overseas, including *55 Days at Peking* (1963) and *The Family Game* (1984), and for the many hit films he directed, such as *The Funeral* (1984) and *A Taxing Woman* (1987). New York critics had nothing but praise for his *Dandelion*, which opened in the United States in 1986. Ōe was very close to Itami Jūzō. They were classmates at Matsuyama Higashi High School in Ehime prefecture, on the island of Shikoku, and Ōe married Itami's sister.

In the story, Ōe is represented by the character Kogito and his wife by Chikashi; Itami Jūzō is Gorō. As the novel begins, it is reported that Gorō has committed suicide to clear his name after tabloid weeklies trumpeted an alleged affair with a certain woman, but Kogito is not convinced.

In order to uncover the real reason for his death, Kogito listens over and over to a cassette tape he had previously received from Gorō. The novel traces Kogito's recollections of the days when they met as teenagers and moments from their respective careers in writing and the film industry. In the course of this story, it is revealed that the two had been the target of gangster attacks. The real-life Itami Jūzō was attacked by gangsters not long after the opening of his film *The Anti-Extortion Woman* (1992). In Ōe's novel as well, Gorō is attacked after making a movie criticizing gangster organizations and receives a deep wound across his face. Kogito has experienced assaults on three occasions after writing novels on sensitive political issues.

Despite these attacks, Kogito does not seek protection from the police or any other source. He is sure that Gorō was not the kind of person who would be so psychologically injured by an encounter with gangsters that he would commit suicide. So what was it in Gorō's life that led to his death?

In the story, Chikashi recalls one night when her brother and Kogito returned from an outing. Fellow students at high school in the city of Matsuyama, they had disappeared for two days and then appeared before Chikashi, looking thoroughly shaken. From that day onward, her brother was never the same. It turns out that they had been taunted by a group of youths from an ultranationalist organization. She realizes that the humiliation of that experience had left a deep scar on her brother's psyche.

This novel shows how the series of incidents of xenophobic behavior by young people in local cities and towns that occurred some decades ago and the activities of gangster groups in Tokyo and other major cities in Japan today are linked by the same ultranationalist attitudes. The adherents of this chauvinism are forceful, expressing their position by abusing more progressively minded people, physically and verbally. Ōe seems to be saying that those who have so suffered are the ones who have the capacity to change the world.

The title of the novel is drawn from the Maurice Sendak picturebook, *Outside Over There*. In this story, a girl named Ida is taking care of a beautiful little baby, her little sister. While she is preoccupied with playing on a horn, goblins appear and steal the infant away, leaving a baby made of ice in return. Ida is so angry that she flies off into the sky to retrieve the baby. Chikashi knows, likewise, that the brother who returned completely changed from that terrible incident is not really her brother, but a "changeling" such as that left by the goblins in the Sendak story.

The story ends with a scene in which a young woman who became pregnant by Gorō decides to bear his child. This action echoes Ida's determination to go out and bring back her real baby sister, but against the dark, weighty theme that preoccupies the novel, it also introduces an unmistakable element of hope. The fictional technique Ōe has long pursued, of unfolding the truth through the successive revelation of facts that seem slightly incongruous with one another, succeeds impressively in this work, which will no doubt be included among his greatest achievements. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

## Photograph Collections off the Beaten Track

Ikari Haruo

A handful of unusual photo collections are enjoying a quiet boom in the Japanese book world these days. One is *Koya no shōzō* [Portraits of Sheds] (Media Factory, 2000). One photographer traveled up and down the Japanese archipelago, aiming his lens exclusively at *koya*. I do not know what the formal definition of a "koya" is, but judging from the photographs, one might conclude that it is basically any small structure not meant for human habitation: a lookout shed sitting in the middle of a vast seashore (a simple enclosure with a roof for those who wait for the fishing boats to return with the catch); a lonely storehouse built some distance from a house for stashing household items; a waterwheel house, etc., etc. The subjects of his photographs are virtually all big,

mostly rectangular boxes with doors, usually patched together from boards, sheets of tin, and other cheap materials that happened to be at hand, and sitting in remote, isolated settings. They radiate a memorable presence and a lonely pathos.

Another collection has the English title *Tokyo Nobody* (Little More, 2000). It consists of photographs of the streets of Tokyo, but no people, no animals, no cars—not a single moving thing is to be seen in any of them. You see only the streets of the city. Anyone who has seen this book has to wonder how a person could take pictures like this. None of them are taken at night; they are all daytime scenes. You would think it impossible to capture any

*Continued on p. 21*

## New Titles

### MEDIA

***Ai mōdo jiken* [The i-Mode Affair]. Matsunaga Mari.** Kadokawa Shoten, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-04-883633-1.

This is a memoir of the woman who developed the world's first Internet access services for mobile telephones. Over 20 million subscribers have signed up for "i-Mode" services since February 1999 when they were launched under the name coined by the author.



Cover design: Kadokawa Shoten

Matsunaga is a formidable and unforgettable personality. At forty-two, she had made a name for herself as editor in a respected publishing house, winning both the trust of her colleagues and a high position. Then she decided to change careers, and moved into a totally unfamiliar world. After her success with the i-Mode mega-hit, she moved on to yet another challenge.

The account of her move to a former public corporation where the old bureaucratic ways of thinking were deeply entrenched is particularly absorbing. She managed to convert the employees there to the mode of operating she had acquired working in venture-spirited enterprises with success. The i-Mode was developed by Matsunaga together with other like-minded original thinkers energized by the spirit of challenge. Their success was the result of good teamwork, able leadership, flexible and honest marketing, a good sense

for finding a name that would sell, and unique approaches and concepts. The book demonstrates that the secret to the successful development of a new product like i-Mode boils down not just to having the technology but to the people who handle it.

***Dejitaru jidai no shuppan media* [Publishing Media in the Digital Age]. Yuasa Toshihiko.** Pot Pub. Co., Ltd., 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 199 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-939015-27-0.

This book shows how digital technology has changed the publishing media and forecasts the prospects for its future. Circumstances in publishing have changed dramatically, not just in Japan but in the entire world—the rapid spread of publishing on-demand, electronic journals, and book selling via the Internet; the emergence of media conglomerates, digitalized libraries, and so on. These developments all are closely related to advances in computer technology and in the information-oriented "digital society" they have wrought.



Cover design: Sawabe Kin

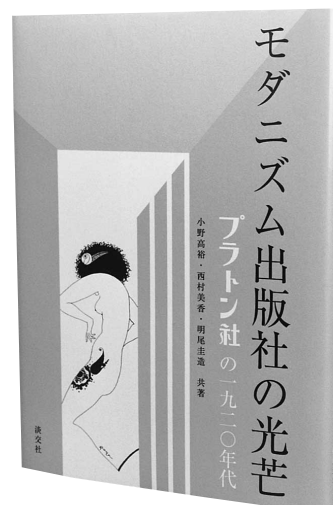
Analyzing the merits as well as the drawbacks of electronic publication, the author concludes that print and electronic publishing will coexist for some time, as the publishing media pursue the advantages of both printed books and electronic publishing. From a vantage point inside the publishing industry, the author has been an eyewitness to these changes and has published his observations on this subject before. Adopting a sort of intensive-study style, this book consists of five densely-packed lectures surveying the current situation of publishing, distribution, and book selling, as well as of university libraries and other aspects of the book world in Japan.

***Modanizumu shuppansha no kōbō: Puratonsha no sen-kyūhyaku-nijū nen dai* [Splendid Days of Modern Publishing: Puratonsha and the 1920s]. Ono Takahiro, Nishimura Mika, and Akeo Keizō.** Tankōsha, 2000. 216 × 152 mm. 283 pp. ¥3,500. ISBN 4-473-01754-0.

Puratonsha was an Osaka publishing house known for outstanding publications that appeared over a brief six years during the 1920s. Founded by Nakayama Taiyōdō, a successful manufacturer of cosmetics of the time, Puratonsha inaugurated a deluxe-format magazine called *Josei* [Woman], followed by the entertainment magazines *Kuraku* [Joys and Sorrows] and *Engeki eiga* [Theater and Cinema].

Puratonsha tapped the talents of some of the most distinguished writers of the day for its journals—Kōda Rohan, Nagai Kafū, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, as well as big-name illustrators like Takeshita Yumeji and Itō Shinsui. Its staff of editors included the illustrious Naoki Sanjūgo (the prestigious Naoki Prize was established in his honor after his death) and Osanai Kaoru. Its designs were exquisite. When the art nouveau and art déco movements were introduced to Japan in the 1920s, Puratonsha eagerly adopted them.

Then Tokyo-based Kōdansha started selling low-priced popular magazines, and the cheap "one-yen book" (*enbon*) made its appearance. Puratonsha could not compete and closed down in 1928. The present book, written by scholars based in the Kansai region (around Osaka) and published by a Kyoto-based press, demonstrates through an exhaustive perusal of materials how important



Cover design: Nishimura Mika

Puratonsha's influence was in the modernist movement of 1920s Japan.

## JOURNALISM

**Watanabe Tsuneo media to kenryoku** [Watanabe Tsuneo: Power and the Media]. Uozumi Akira. Kōdansha, 2000. 194 × 130 mm. 406 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-06-209819-9.

Watanabe Tsuneo, president of Japan's largest national daily newspaper company, the Yomiuri Shimbunsha, and the head of the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, is a "king" not only in the mass media but in Japan's political world as well. This book is a laboriously detailed study of the life of this remarkable, Machiavelian personality, going back to his boyhood and tracing his subsequent pursuit of power.

As a student at the University of Tokyo, Watanabe lost out in a power struggle in a communist party cell and ever since has harbored a bitter enmity toward communists. According to this book, his experience in the party, however, resulted in a lifelong fascination with the mysterious powers of politics, with which a limited few can theoretically manipulate the masses at will. The book gives a detailed account from the inside of the political and business worlds—the plots, treachery, and purges, as well as the power struggles within the Yomiuri newspaper company itself. It goes far to explain how Watanabe could expand his influence even while his name was linked to various scandals.

The author has done an exhaustive study of the behind-the-scenes history of this "dictator" as reflected in some

of his famous lines: "With 10 million copies I can control the prime minister"; "Talented people just get in the way. Only those who faithfully follow my orders will be considered able employees." Not only an intriguing biography, this book offers thoughtful insights about the true spirit of the media.

## IDEAS AND PHILOSOPHY

**Naiha suru chi: Shintai, kotoba, kenryoku o aminaosu** [The Knowledge Barrier Implosion: Body, Language, and Power]. Kurihara Akira, Komori Yōichi, Satō Manabu, and Yoshimi Shun'ya. Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (University of Tokyo Press), 2000. 188 × 129 mm. 318 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-13-003316-6.



Cover design: Suzuki Akira & Sasaki Yumi

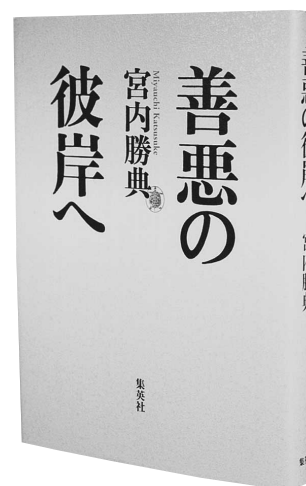
This volume is a separately published prelude to the six-volume series, "Ekkyō suru chi" [Transcending the Boundaries of Knowledge] published by the University of Tokyo Press. It consists of essays by, and a dialogue among, the four scholars who planned and edited the series (political sociologist, scholar of modern Japanese literature, specialist in education, and media sociologist). The essays introduce the contributors' approaches to the subject from the viewpoint of their specialty, discussing, respectively, the political ramifications of Minamata disease, the issues and political perspectives of modern Japanese literature and literary scholarship, how "physical articulation" in school education creates history and culture, and the media in the interwar period.

By "transcending the boundaries of knowledge" the authors refer not only

to boundaries of academic disciplines but also of cultures, art, states, social classes, race, gender, generation, as well as the border between the mental and physical. Crossing such borders represents tearing down the established frameworks of knowledge from within, as reflected in the book's title. This book vividly depicts how the four contributors met that challenge, the struggles they experienced, and the changes in their thinking that resulted.

**Zen'aku no higan e** [Discerning Right from Wrong]. Miyauchi Katsusuke. Shūeisha. 2000. 195 × 134 mm. 310 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-08-774476-0.

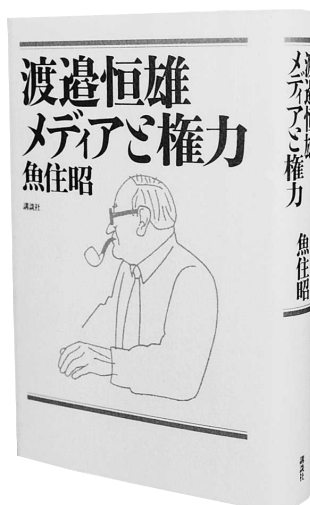
The new religious cult Aum Shinrikyō, which grew rapidly in the 1980s, was headed by Asahara Shōkō, who preached a doctrine combining Buddhism, Hinduism, yoga, and other religious teachings and practices. His espousal of isolation from and hostility to society sparked widespread controversy. In 1995 the cult launched an attack, placing deadly sarin gas in Tokyo's subway system, indiscriminately killing and injuring many and terrifying the entire country.



Cover design: Tanaka Akihiko

Author Miyauchi spent his youth in California amid the 1960s flowering of the counterculture and numerous neo-religious movements. He is a writer with an intense interest in Buddhism and the spiritual world who has himself pursued ascetic training in India and Tibet.

The book undertakes a fundamental examination of that dreadful product of Japanese society, Aum Shinrikyō, including a thorough study of the cult's Tantra Vajirayana ("Diamond Vehicle") dogma, and compares it with Jonestown and the



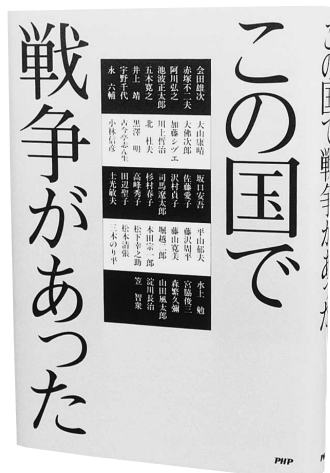
Cover design: Kusaka Jun'ichi

People's Temple cult in the United States. In the author's view, the collapse of the traditional community is an important factor explaining why many young people are attracted to the cult and the spiritual sense of belonging it extends to them. Miyauchi's work is a powerful study of contemporary society.

## HISTORY

**Kono kuni de sensō ga atta** [There Was a War in This Country]. PHP Kenkyūsho, ed. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2000. 195 × 133 mm. 268 pp. ¥1,550. ISBN 4-569-61242-3.

What does the Pacific War mean to Japanese? This book seeks the answer to that question in a collection of personal accounts of the war by thirty-eight individuals in a range of occupations including novelist, athlete, industrialist, movie actor, and scholar.



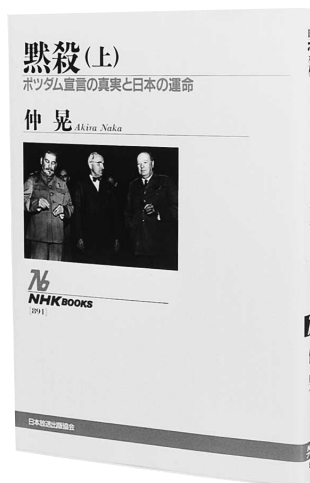
Cover design: Kawakami Shigeo

Among these accounts are film director Kurosawa Akira's (1910–98) recollection of his movie *Ichiban utsukushiku* (1944; *Most Beautifully*), the story of a young women's volunteer corps; painter Hirayama Ikuo talking about his exposure to the atomic bomb when he was mobilized as a middle school student to work in Hiroshima; writer Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96) on what he heard while gathering material for his novel *Saka no ue no kumo* [The Cloud at the Top of the Slope] (1969–72); actress Takamine Hideko (1924–) on seeing *Gone with the Wind* and the Disney animation *Fantasia* at a private preview of foreign films confiscated in the South Pacific. Also included are episodes recounted by other well-known individuals such as writers

Uno Chiyo (1897–1996) and Inoue Yasushi (1907–91), actor Ryū Chishū (1904–93), actress Sugimura Haruko (1909–97), and industrialists Honda Sōichirō (1906–91) and Matsushita Kōnosuke (1894–1989).

All the stories introduced in the book have been previously published elsewhere, but the combination of experiences of such a diverse group of people who were all in different places and situations at the time brings the war era vividly to life.

**Mokusatsu: Potsudamu sengen no shinjitsu to Nihon no unmei** ["Ignore": The Truth About the Potsdam Declaration and Japan's Fate]. 2 vols. Naka Akira. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2000. 182 × 128 mm. each. 324 pp.; 336 pp. ¥1,200. each. ISBN 4-14-001891-7; 4-14-001892-5.



Cover design: Kurata Akinori

At the end of the Pacific War, when the Allied Powers called for Japan's unconditional surrender through the Potsdam Declaration, then prime minister Suzuki Kantarō was reported as stating in a press conference that Japan would "ignore" the ultimatum. The word Suzuki reportedly used was "mokusatsu" (letting something pass in silence; making no comment). A Japanese semi-government news agency translated the Japanese word *mokusatsu* into English as "ignore" and based on that translation, the media in the United States and Europe reported that Japan had "rejected" the ultimatum. The common belief is that this perception led to the atomic bombings and the Soviet Union's declaration of war against Japan, bringing the war to an end with appalling violence. Author Naka Akira, a Kyodo News Service reporter born in 1926, challenges this

widely believed causal sequence, making full use of the investigative skills he developed over his many years as a journalist.

Unlike some books that challenge established historical views, there is nothing sensationalist about this book. Did the prime minister really use the word *mokusatsu* in the first place? If he did, what was the exact context? Is it true that the Suzuki remark was taken as Japan's formal reply and thus led to the tragic way the war ended? The author tackles these and related questions through solid analysis, digging into various kinds of documentation, including original documents in the United States and recent historical studies. He looks again at the lost options that could have ended the war much earlier while also reexamining the situation of the key figures involved in ending the war, such as Secretary of State James Byrnes, who held out for a literal interpretation of Japan's "unconditional surrender," and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, who proposed a more realistic approach.

**Shinsō Sugihara biza** [The Truth about the Sugihara Visas]. Watanabe Katsumasa. Taishō Shuppan, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 486 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-8117-0309-X.

By now the name of diplomat Sugihara Chiune (1906–86) is widely known. In July 1940, ten months after the outbreak of World War II, Sugihara, Japanese deputy consul in Lithuania, issued a large number of transit visas to desperate Jewish refugees who were trying to flee from Nazi-occupied Poland. With considerable anguish, he decided to disobey the instructions of the Japanese government and issue the visas anyway, and thanks to his humanitarian decision, the refugees were able to move on to safe haven in other countries via Japan. It is estimated that his action saved some 6,000 Jewish lives.

Sugihara remained silent about what he had done in Lithuania even after the war. When it later became known, he received great praise, but at the same time a malicious rumor spread that he had issued the visas to make money. In defense of Sugihara's honor, the author visited a Jewish representative (later the Israeli minister of religious affairs) who had directly negotiated with Sugihara for visas, and confirmed that the rumor was groundless.



Cover design: Yōrō Masaya

Based on Sugihara's unpublished notes and with the cooperation of family members and others concerned, this book delves deeply into the truth about the "life-saving visas."

**Shōwa no isho: Minami no senjō kara** [Testaments of Shōwa: From Battlefields of the South Pacific]. Henmi Jun. Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 193 × 134 mm. 286 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-16-356300-8.

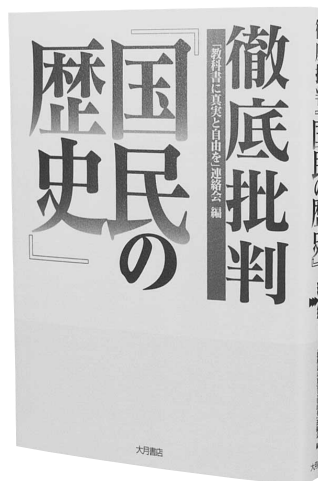
This book is a sequel to *Shōwa no isho*, a collection of letters from Japanese servicemen written just before their deaths in action during the Pacific War. These letters, the last ones the men ever sent, were gathered from sources across the country by author/editor Henmi and published in 1987. Henmi is a writer and poet who focuses exclusively on the Shōwa era (1926–89).

The letters contained in the present volume were written by eighty-two servicemen killed in faraway battlefields south of Japan, including Pearl Harbor, New Guinea, Australia, the Philippines, Guam, Taiwan, and

numerous small South Sea islands. Some of the men were among the first to be killed in the war, namely during the Pearl Harbor attack on December 8, 1941, while others were sentenced to death and executed as war criminals after the war. The place and time of their deaths varied widely, and their ages ranged between nineteen and sixty-two. The author supplies explanatory comments for each of the letters, written as husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers.

The ashes of those killed overseas during the war were rarely returned to Japan and many bereaved families were not told how and where their loved ones died. The book creates a vivid picture of the realities of the Pacific War seen through the eyes of the Japanese soldiers who died and their families.

**Tettei hihan "Kokumin no rekishi"** [Thorough Critique of the *Kokumin no Rekishi* (The Nation's History)]. "Kyōkasho ni Shinjitsu to Jiyū o" Renrakukai [Liaison Office of "Freedom and Truth for School Textbooks"]. Ōtsuki Shoten, 2000. 189 × 130 mm. 308 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-272-52061-X.



Cover design: Takasuka Masaru

Starting in the mid-1990s, voices protesting Ministry of Education-approved junior and senior high school history textbooks arose again, this time charging that Japan's own post-World War II historiography is too self-critical. The textbook debate has fired domestic controversy and created a stir in neighboring countries as well.

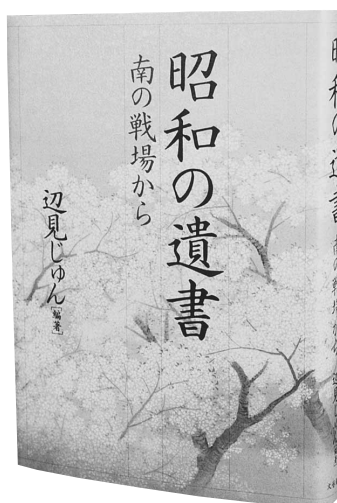
This book is a rebuttal of *Kokumin no rekishi* [The Nation's History] (1999, Fusōsha; See *Japanese Book News*, No. 30, p. 12), written by Nishio Kanji, a central figure in the

movement to restore Japanese pride in the nation's history. Criticizing the Nishio book from the academic viewpoint, the present volume is written by twenty-two scholars in fields ranging from archaeology to contemporary history. Their critiques focus on various aspects of Nishio's book, including historiographical methodology, handling of source materials, and the author's understanding of the times. Part 1 outlines the content of *Kokumin no rekishi* and considers the nature of history education, and part 2 presents critiques of passages in the book that are said to be especially problematic.

## SOCIETY

**Fubyōdō shakai Nihon: Sayonara sō-chūryū** [Japan As Non-egalitarian Society: Farewell to the All-Middle-Class Nation]. Satō Toshiki. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2000. 173 × 109 mm. 208 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-101537-1. The dream of attaining a thoroughly egalitarian and predominantly middle class society captured the Japanese imagination throughout the postwar era, yet, as this book points out, both egalitarianism and the "all-middle-class" society remained illusory.

Based on more than personal impressions or observations, Satō's work represents a sociologist's analysis of the results of "Shakai kaisō to shakai idō zenkoku chōsa," a nationwide survey of social stratification and mobility conducted every ten years. The survey gathers data on the occupations of two generations of people between twenty and sixty-nine, covering their academic background, social status, and so on.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori



Drawing on the survey results, he demonstrates how, since the 1980s, Japanese society has changed from one where “if you work hard, you’ll do all right,” to one where “it makes no difference even if you work hard.”

During the chaotic years after the end of the war, if you could outstrip the competition by superior academic performance, you could move from the bottom to the upper rungs of the social ladder. However, about twenty years ago a hierarchical society began to take shape in which wealth and social status increasingly are being passed down from one generation to the next. A class society has emerged, but without the development of class consciousness, so those of higher status lack all sense of the responsibility that should come with their status. This is the root of the suffocating feeling in Japanese society today, says the author, and he calls for renewed efforts to achieve genuine equality of opportunity.

**Hyōryū kazoku: Kosodate gyakutai no shinsō** [Floating Families: An In-depth Look at Child Abuse]. Shinano Mainichi Shimbunsha, ed. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2000. 193 × 132 mm. 204 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-309-01346-5.



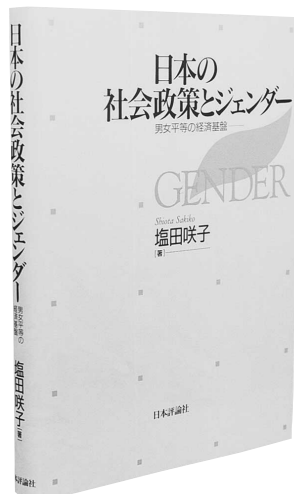
Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

Child abuse being a problem that tends to remain behind closed doors, assessments of the situation in Japan differ from one investigative agency to another. The issue has, however, grown alarmingly urgent. Child support centers throughout the country handled 11,631 cases of suspected child abuse in 1999, more than ten times the number in 1990, when surveys began. According to a survey conducted by the National Police Agency in 1999, between January and October of that year there were

reported 105 cases of child abuse, forty of them resulting in the death of the child. Amid growing public awareness that these figures represent only the tip of an iceberg, Japan’s first law for the prevention of child abuse went into effect in November 1999.

This book, which sketches the outlines of families “floating” because they have lost direction in society, is by a regional newspaper reporter whose interest in the topic was sparked by a case of fatal child neglect that occurred in her local area. The reporter’s subsequent investigations into children with various symptoms of psychological and physical stress and their families form the core of this volume, but it also includes her series of newspaper reports on the fatal child neglect case and readers’ responses to the issue. The report is vivid and empathetic, but it does not pass facile value judgments; the author expresses her hope that “when my children reach adulthood, our society will be one in which people want to have children.”

**Nihon no shakai seisaku to jendā: Danjo byōdō no keizai kiban** [Gender and Social Policy in Japan: The Economic Infrastructure of Gender Equality]. Shiota Sakiko. Nihon Hyōronsha, 2000. 215 × 150 mm. 286 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-535-58265-3. In an effort to deal with a declining birth rate and an aging population, and to build a society in which men and women enjoy equal opportunity, government agencies have recently enacted a series of employment and social security policy revisions aimed at closing the gender gap in the workplace. An important step in that direction was the Basic Law for a Gender Equal Society, which became effective



Cover design: Komai Yūji

in June 1999. In the same year the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was revised and the law on childcare and family care leave enacted. In April 2000, furthermore, a new landmark system of nursing care insurance went into operation.

This volume is a compilation of essays written by Shiota, a specialist on social policy, since the mid-1980s, constituting a survey of the status of men and women (especially women) in employment and social security policy from the end of World War II to the present. Policy on women, she observes, will determine the future of the aging society, and a distinction needs to be made between recognition of the value of domestic labor and preferential treatment for housewives. Policies featuring preferential treatment for housewives have actually prevented women from attaining economic self-reliance and narrowed the options for working and lifestyles for both men and women.

Arguing that the economic empowerment of women is essential in social policies that are based on respect for the individual, the author undertakes a fundamental reassessment of the social significance of gender.

**Teinen hakai** [Breakdown of Age-limit Retirement]. Seike Atsushi. Kōdansha, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-06-210205-6. The long-entrenched practices of life-long employment and seniority-based promotion in corporate organization, which became hallmarks of Japanese society in the postwar era, are coming unraveled. This book explains how the impact of a more mobile workforce has changed the lives of people in business and the nature of corporate organizations.



Cover design: Mimura Jun

To most of today's regular salaried workers, who make up about 80 percent of Japan's total work force, retirement upon reaching a certain age (mainly sixty or sixty-five) appeared to be fixed fact of life. In fact, however, the practice of age-limit retirement has been in place for only about a quarter of a century. As the author, a specialist in labor economics, points out, there is no reason to assume that age-based mandatory retirement is immutable law. Given the reforms of outmoded "Japanese-style" practices and the aging of the country's population, the author argues, the system of uniform mandatory retirement—which takes into account neither the will of the worker nor his/her real capacity to perform—no longer makes sense. What needs to be created in its place, he believes, is a system of "ageless" employment allowing people to continue working as long as they have the desire and the competence to do so.

Written in an easy-to-understand, accessible style, this book is likely to prompt widespread debate in Japan.

**Tōkyō andōwārudo** [Tokyo Underworld: The Fast Times and Hard Life of an American Gangster in Japan]. Robert Whiting. Trans. by Matsui Midori. Kadokawa Shoten, 2000. 194 × 132 mm. 438 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-04-791349-9.

An American author based in Japan, Robert Whiting writes with wit and brio on various topics seen from a comparative perspective on American and Japanese culture. This is the Japanese translation of a book which was ten years in the writing, a documentary-style account dealing with one part of the postwar Japanese underworld. It is built around the life of Nick Zapetti

(1921–92), a former U.S. marine who carved a niche in Tokyo's black market after World War II.

While operating a pizza parlor in the city's Roppongi district, Zapetti established links with the local underworld, eventually earning such sobriquets as "mafia boss of Tokyo" or "King of Roppongi." At the height of its prosperity his restaurant attracted the glitterati of the city, including Crown Prince (now Emperor) Akihito, but it was also frequented by all manner of shady characters, from gangsters and high-class hookers to professional wrestlers, political fixers, intelligence agents, and speculators. In ways that are still not widely known, these denizens of Tokyo's seamier side had a considerable hidden influence on the history of Japan-U.S. relations. Whiting candidly relates the debauchery of a popular pro wrestling hero and the rumors surrounding his shocking death, and the behind-the-scenes action as the U.S. and Japanese governments became embroiled the infamous Lockheed aircraft scandal, among other incidents.

This revealing portrayal of the dizzying round of money and scam that is the Tokyo underworld throws new light on contemporary Japan and ranks as essential reading for a full understanding of Japan-U.S. relations.

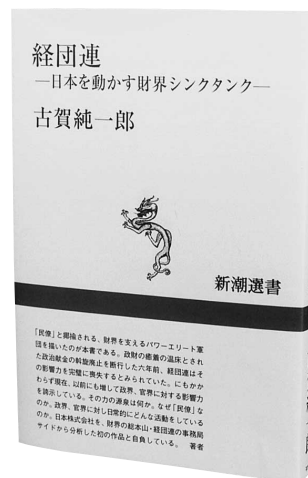
## ECONOMY

**Keidanren: Nihon o ugokasu zaikai shinku tanku** [Keidanren: The Business Think Tank That Moves Japan]. Koga Jun'ichirō. Shinchōsha, 2000. 191 × 130 mm. 294 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-600588-3.

This book describes recent developments involving the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren), the activities of which are little known to the general public but have an enormous impact on Japanese politics and government.

The threat to the Keidanren's very raison d'être posed by the government's move to prohibit corporate contributions to political parties is revealed in recent moves to turn itself into a think-tank. It now plays the role of a nerve center for gathering information from corporation—regarding, for example, government plans for deregulation and tax reforms—and passing it on to concerned politicians.

The officers at Keidanren head-

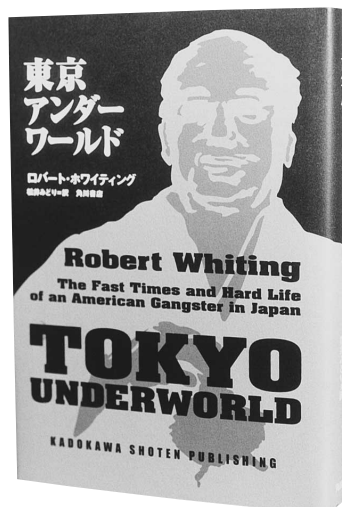


Cover design: Shinchōsha

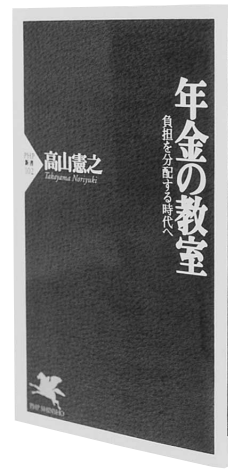
quarters deal with government bureaucrats on an equal footing and are regarded by many as representing Japan's "private-sector bureaucracy." They have played a significant part in shaping and facilitating public policy, as in the case of the government's efforts to reform the tax system. With his engaging journalistic approach—using documentary style stories about how the organization has fulfilled its role, accounts of a typical day in the life of the president of Keidanren, and so on—the author sketches a vivid picture of the power and actual conditions of one of the hubs of "Japan Inc."

Drawing on his skills as a news service reporter, the author constructs a fascinating account backed by thorough research. The work is also a valuable reference source.

**Nenkin no kyōshitsu: Futan o bumpai suru jidai e** [Lessons on Pensions: Distributing the Welfare Burden]. Takayama Noriyuki. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2000. 171 × 105 mm. 212 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-569-60860-4. While the public pension plan remains the cornerstone of social security for senior citizens, the series of



Cover design: Video-Richard



Cover design: Ashizawa Taii

cutbacks in pension payments and increases in insurance premiums over the last few years have shaken the faith of many Japanese, young and old, in the pension system. This book provides a thorough explanation of Japan's pension problem through an analysis of the key issues being debated, including the reserve fund formula, privatization, and pensions for women. The author is a Hitotsubashi University professor and pension specialist who played a leading role in the 1994 round of government reforms of the pension system, which are conducted every five years.

As the low birth rate and aging population trends continue, public spending on post-retirement pensions is expected to rise sharply in the years ahead. To cover those costs, the government's plan is to make the burden on working people much heavier. Critical of this approach, the author argues instead for an appropriate balance of the burden. New rules need to be established, he says, to ensure that the load is shared equally by workers, pensioners, and the government.

The reference section contains a succinct overview of the pension system, making the book a handy guide to understanding the system and what the future holds for old age social security.

**"Shakkin bōbiki" no keizaigaku: Gendai no tokuseirei** [The Economics of Debt Canceling: The "Virtuous Decree" of the Modern Era]. Kitamura Ryūkō. Shūeisha, 2000. 173 × 106 mm. 230 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-08-720048-5.

The government's decision to pour vast amounts of taxpayer money into covering the bad loans of endangered financial institutions had already

raised eyebrows and triggered public protests, when it was learned that the enormous debts of large general contractors, distributors, and other major corporations were to be written off. At a time when the "big bang" of financial deregulation was supposed to start a new era of individual responsibility, how could anyone justify wiping out such massive debts at the national level?

Many Japanese have found the policy of debt canceling hard to swallow. This book explains what is behind it, at the same time describing the nature of the economic difficulties currently facing Japan. He introduces a precedent in the *tokuseirei* ("virtuous decrees"), which were debt- and tax-canceling decrees issued occasionally by rulers in medieval times.

A journalist specializing in economic issues, the author has closely followed Japan's progress through the overheated "bubble" economy, its collapse, and the subsequent prolonged recession. Based on his wide reading in medieval history he concludes that the *tokuseirei*-style system, which has survived from medieval times to the present, has acted to sap the resources of the individual citizen.

While providing an easy-to-understand account of recent economic affairs, this book presents a discourse on the nature of Japan in historical perspective.

**Ureru jinzai: Eguzekutibu sāchi no gamba kara** [Marketable Qualifications: Executive Search in Practice]. Tachibana Fukushima Sakie. Nikkei BP Sha. 2000. 181 × 118 mm. 242 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-8222-4186-6.

The author, who is managing director at the leading recruiting firm Korn/Ferry International, says that Japan lacks people in business with the training and experience to function in the international environment. If it cannot start producing such people, she warns in this book, Japan could end up as a nation bankrupt of core human resources.

Tachibana points out similarities between the economic situation in Japan today and the United States a decade ago, namely mergers among large corporations, a rise in foreign capital takeovers, and radical corporate downsizing in response to financial difficulties. Another current phenomenon is the emergence of new businesses run by people in their twenties and thirties. The demise of



Cover design: Sakagawa Jimusho

conventional practices that virtually guaranteed lifelong employment at the same company and a seniority-based promotion system, for example, has spurred a free, borderless market for jobs, and ushered in an era when competence and hard work take precedence over seniority. At a time when Japan is suffering from institutional fatigue, it is all the more necessary, the author argues, to encourage independent-minded individuals who are prepared to exercise their freedom and go beyond conventional frameworks.

## CULTURE

**Koko de kurasu tanoshimi** [The Pleasures of Living Here]. Yamao Sansei. Yama to Keikoku Sha, 1999. 194 × 132 mm. 335 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-635-31006-X.

This is a collection of essays by a poet and writer who is also a farmer. Born in 1938, the author lives in a tiny village of a dozen or so households on the island of Yakushima in Kagoshima prefecture. The book describes his life on the island since he moved there with his family twenty years ago. While enjoying a "simple" lifestyle—tapping natural springs for drinking water, scouring the beach for driftwood for cooking and heating the bath—everyday he grapples with the challenge of maintaining their livelihood and contemplates its links to the workings of the universe. He expresses this idea in the poem at the beginning of the book: "We live not one life / We live one day, then the next / living one day after another."

The essays were previously serialized in the monthly magazine *Out-*



Cover design: Hara Ken'ya



Cover design: Matsuzawa Masaaki

door (Yama to Keikoku Sha). The author incorporates the idea of living into the so-called “outdoors,” which usually means occasional leisure activities, travel, or adventure pursuits. While many essays have been published on the experience of shifting one’s life from an urban to a rural environment, the author’s approach to the environment as rooted in a local community encourages a fresh appreciation for what local community means to human beings.

**Minami no seishinshi [Spirituality in the South]. Okaya Kōji.** Shinchōsha, 2000. 196 × 133 mm. 207 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-411502-9.

While on a trip to Okinawa in his youth, critic Okaya Kōji (b. 1929) had two encounters that significantly influenced his life thereafter. One was with the *otaki*, or holy places found around Okinawa, and the other was the work of Yanagita Kunio, founder of Japanese folklore studies. Although containing no shrines, *torii* arches, or other material emblems of worship, *otaki* are sacred places found

throughout the Ryukyu islands. This book is an account of Okaya’s search among the *otaki*, following the footsteps of Yanagita, Orikuchi Shinobu, and other folklore scholars, for traces of the earliest gods of these places.

Okaya, who calls himself an “island freak,” visited *otaki* on islands south of Okinawa that can only be reached by boats leaving once a day or sometimes once or twice a week. To the personal reflections and impressions he recorded while touring the region, he adds detailed historical and folkloric information. Suspecting that the “empty woods” of which *otaki* consist represent the original form of the Japanese shrine, Okaya sees a contrast between the “forests of stone” that are Europe’s Gothic cathedrals and the woodlands (*otaki*) of these southern islands. He interpretes that contrast as revealing the deep-rooted Japanese distrust of the tangible.

## ART

**Chūka zuzō yūran [Pleasure Trip to the World of Chinese Iconography]. Sugihara Takuya.** Taishūkan Shoten, 2000. 194 × 151 mm. 272 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-469-23212-2.



Cover design: Gōtsubo Hiroko

In contemporary Japan, Chinese art tends to be passed over in favor of Western art. By adding what he calls “the spice of iconography,” Sugihara, a specialist in classical Chinese art, highlights the special allure of Chinese art and invites the reader to explore the origins of Japanese art up to the end of the Edo period in the mid-nineteenth century.

Standard subjects of classical Chinese painting—portraits of Confucius and Shi Huang-di (259–210 B.C.; the

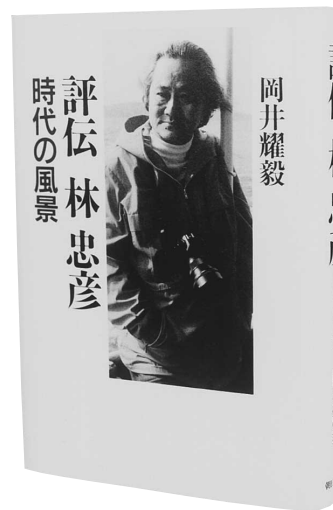
“First Emperor”), depictions of the gods of wind, lightning, prosperity, and so on—have long been favorite motifs for Japanese artists as well. In some cases, however, such Chinese works and their reception in Japan have been subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. One painting from the Kanō school of the late Edo period was long known as a portrait of Confucius when in fact it was of Zhu-ge Liang (181–234; the famed Shu-dynasty military strategist). Paintings on the theme of the attempted assassination of Shi Huang-di by Jing Ke, an assassin sent by a rival kingdom, are another case in point; while both Chinese and Japanese versions depict the same scene from the same tale, and iconographically they are almost identical, the emperor is portrayed in the former as a tyrant and in the latter as a wise ruler. Enhanced with numerous illustrations, this book is the author’s invitation to the entertaining pleasures of the world of Chinese art.

**Hyōden Hayashi Tadahiko: Jidai no fūkei [Landscape of an Era: A Biography of Hayashi Tadahiko]. Okai Teruo.** Asahi Shimbunsha, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 462 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-02-257526-3.

Hayashi Tadahiko (1918–90) made his debut as a professional photographer in 1940, when he was twenty-two and Japan was already deeply embroiled in war. By the time Japan declared war on Great Britain and the United States in 1941, Hayashi was publishing his work in leading magazines of the day, including *Fujin kōron* and *Asahi kamera*. Realistically capturing the people and atmosphere of the wartime and postwar periods, and turning after the war to



Cover design: Shinchōsha



Cover design: Kumagai Hiroto

portraits of prominent literary figures, Hayashi recorded a distinct era in the twentieth-century history of Japan.

The author, who is fifteen years younger than Hayashi, was a foreign correspondent for the *Asahi shimbun* newspaper and its Seoul bureau chief before becoming editor-in-chief at the *Asahi kamera* magazine. This is one of several histories of photography and biographies of photographers he has published so far.

The book quotes Hayashi's son Yoshikatsu as commenting that his father "always turned toward the sun like a sunflower, but the other side of that outward-looking face was shadowed by a dreadful gloom. He was a man of both extremes, and there was always an animal-like air about him."

The story of Hayashi, whose exuberance attracted so many people, is interspersed with photographs from Hayashi's massive oeuvre. It is a story that vividly portrays the turbulent Shōwa era.

## LANGUAGE

**Kaisō kyūjūnen [Memories of Nine Decades]. Shirakawa Shizuka.** Heibonsha, 2000. 174 × 116 mm. 436 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-582-82434-X. Born in Fukui prefecture in 1910, Shirakawa Shizuka attended night school while working at a law firm, eventually graduating at the age of thirty-three. Beginning with the study of ancient Chinese inscriptions on bone and tortoise-shell, he went on to distinguish himself in research into the psychological makeup of the people of ancient China. With the publication of a trilogy of dictionaries of etymology, archaic words, and

ideograms, he earned a reputation as a leading scholar of Chinese ideograms.

This memoir consists of articles Shirakawa wrote about his academic career for a newspaper column, plus eleven interviews and discussions with intellectuals such as literary critic Etō Jun and historical novelist Miyagitani Masamitsu. Various aspects of Shirakawa's career testify to his vigorous spirit of independence. He published and distributed his own research papers in mimeographed editions, formed a research group with other kindred spirits, and published a long, weighty collection of papers based on the research group's lectures. This account reconstructs the formation of Shirakawa's original and universalistic system of knowledge.

## LITERATURE

**Haiku-teki ningen tanka-teki ningen [Haiku People and Tanka People].**

**Tsubouchi Toshinori.** Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 193 × 133 mm. 248 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-00-002976-2.

Japan has a poetic tradition in which any thing, sentiment, or scene can be captured in a seventeen-syllable haiku or a thirty-one-syllable tanka. While this tradition forms the soil that nurtured modern Japanese prose, according to the author it was not until Masaoka Shiki (1867–1902) that poets started to specialize in either tanka or haiku. Until then, he asserts, neither form stood out as a completely separate genre.

The author describes the point of departure for his own poetic experience as discovering "a language that opens me up to a realm of time and

space different from reality." Confessing to being a haiku poet who actually prefers tanka, he posits two character types: "haiku-type" people and "tanka-type" people. The former are objective, cool-headed, and self-mockingly clownish. The latter are subjective, passionate, and self-absorbed. He discusses the qualities of haiku and tanka in terms of these types, suggesting that "it is on those occasions when one seeks a state of reciprocal resonance between the two that the 'I' of individual inner life becomes more versatile and supple than before."

Written by a practicing poet, this book sets forth a theory of poetics that bridges the worlds of haiku and tanka.

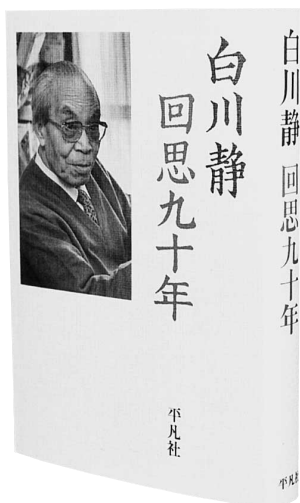
**Kappo suru Sōseki [Sōseki Walking Tall]. Maruya Saiichi.** Kōdansha, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-06-210266-8.

Having started out as a scholar of James Joyce, Maruya Saiichi has distinguished himself as an English literature scholar, literary critic, and novelist. This book is a probing, creative inquiry into the works of another novelist and English literature scholar, Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916).

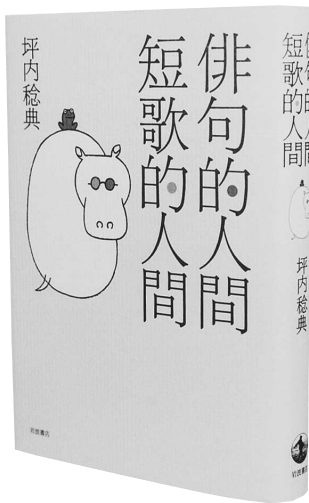


Cover design: Wada Makoto

The book consists of three parts, dealing respectively with the novels *Botchan*, *Sanshirō*, and *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (*I Am a Cat*). In analyzing *Botchan*, Maruya points out that reference to characters by means of nicknames is a technique dating back to such works as Rabelais' *Gargantua* and the Japanese classic *Tale of Genji*. Similarly, in the lists of synonymous swear words that make up *Botchan*'s diatribes, Maruya identifies the device of enumeration as derived from classical rhetoric.



Cover design: Yamazaki Noboru



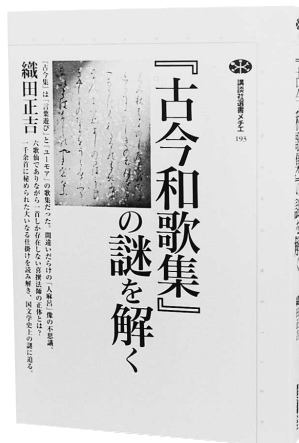
Cover design: Tōjimbara Norihisa

Fresh though such observations are, however, the book is perhaps most striking for its sweeping scale. Maruya asserts that while Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Franz Kafka all transmuted classical literature even as they drew from it—that is, they all embodied “modernism”—Sōseki achieved something very similar to their work before they did. The main theme of this book is Maruya’s attempt to verify that thesis.

Wide-ranging, replete with rambling digressions, and thoroughly enjoyable, this work breaks completely new ground in research on Sōseki.

**“Kokin waka shū” no nazo o toku** [Unraveling the Riddles of the Kokin wakashū]. Oda Shōkichi. Kōdansha, 2000. 188×127 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-06-258193-0.

Oda Shōkichi (b. 1931) is a writer for radio and television and also a critic who has published works on jokes, tricks, and other kinds of wordplay. This book was written as part of Oda’s life work, which is the study of the *Hyakunin isshu*, a classic collection of one hundred waka poems.



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

The *Kokin wakashū*—commonly known as the *Kokinshū*—is an anthology of over a thousand waka poems commissioned by Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930). In Oda’s view, the *Kokinshū* is a collection of poetic humor and wordplay. In this book, he carefully extracts, arranges, and analyzes various aspects of the poems that emerge when the anthology is viewed in terms of this hypothesis.

He muses about the mistaken references to the Nara-period poet Kakimoto no Hitomaro, and ponders the true identity of Priest Kisen, who is listed in the *Kokinshū* as one of the “six poet sages” and yet is represented by only one poem. Oda suspects that

mysteries such as these are ingenious contrivance of Ki no Tsurayuki, the chief compiler of the *Kokinshū*.

**Meibun o kakanai bunshō kōza** [Lessons on How to Avoid Writing “Fine Prose”]. Murata Kiyoko. Ashi Shobō, 2000. 194×131 mm. 286 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-7512-0776-8.

A novelist (b. 1945) known for her unusual imagery, unconventional sensibility, and versatile imagery, this author has won several literary awards, including the 1987 Akutagawa Prize for her novel *Nabe no naka* [In the Pot]. The present book is a handbook on writing skills compiled from her newspaper column, which was in turn based on lectures prepared for an adult education writing course.



Cover design: Mōri Kazue

The book’s five parts deal respectively with fundamentals, practice, questions, self-study, and appreciation. The author repeatedly stresses that writing well is not difficult, and she presents simply but powerfully the principles and special know-how of writing. Topics discussed include handling of opening lines, themes, structure, the relationship between dialogue and descriptive text, and characteristics of words to keep in mind in descriptive writing. We learn, for example, that Japanese prose writing has no fixed forms or patterns.

Murata illustrates the conundrum of her title with a wealth of examples ranging from Natsume Sōseki to elementary school students. In the end, the distinctive features of the Japanese language emerge in sharp relief, helping readers steer away from affectedly elaborate writing and write truly good prose.

**Meruhen tanjō: Mukōda Kuniko o sagashite** [Birth of a Fairytale Family: In Search of Mukōda Kuniko]. Takashima Toshio. Aesop Sha, 2000. 194×131 mm. 278 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-900963-13-5.

Born in 1929, Mukōda Kuniko wrote a number of hit programs as a television scriptwriter, and she was also acclaimed as an essayist and fiction writer, winning the Naoki Prize in 1980 for a series of short stories. Her work grew even more popular following her tragic death in a plane crash in 1981.

A professedly subjective, unrestrained commentary on the most important of Mukōda’s works, this book analyzes their appeal and notes their weak points, establishing a completely fresh critical perspective on Mukōda’s life and work.



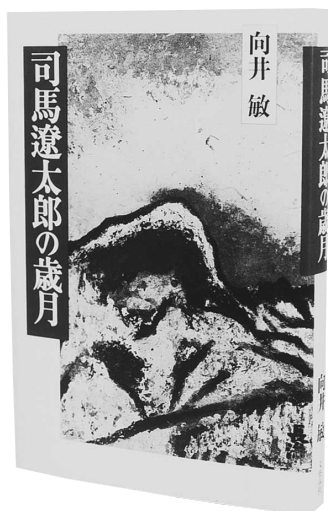
Cover design: Ogata Shūichi & Takahashi Kiyomi

The work with which Mukōda first gained prominence as an essayist and writer was a series of essays originally serialized in a PR magazine published by a retail store association in Tokyo’s Ginza district and later published together under the title *Chichi no wabijō* [Father’s Letter of Apology] (1978). The series began with reminiscences about food, but as its popularity grew Mukōda shifted the spotlight to the story of her family. She depicted the “good old days” of her family in the early 1930s in a way that made her story seem typical of city dwellers of the prewar part of the Shōwa era (1926–89). Neither Mukōda herself nor her readers, however, appreciated the considerable gap between urban white-collar workers of prewar times, who lived comfortable but very frugal lives as members of the urban elite, and themselves, postwar white-collar workers to be sure and far more affluent, but

no longer a social elite. Takashima calls attention to this interesting double misperception regarding the Mukōda fairytale.

**Shiba Ryōtarō no saigetsu [The Final Years of Shiba Ryōtarō].** Mukai Satoshi. Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 194 × 134 mm. 258 pp. ¥1,476. ISBN 4-16-356500-0.

Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96) was one of Japan's most widely-read historical novelists and critics of culture of the postwar era. Even today, several years after his death, the tremendous influence his extensive oeuvre has had on both intellectuals and the general public shows little sign of waning. His massive Collected Works, totaling sixty-eight volumes, was published in three stages. The present book is a one-volume compilation of the commentaries written by literary critic Mukai Satoshi for the third stage of the Collected Works.



Shiba serialized his last work of fiction, *Dattan shippū roku* [Adventures in the Land of the Tatars; about a mid-seventeenth-century samurai's adventures on the Chinese continent], in the monthly journal *Chūō kōron*. It ran for four years and was completed in 1987. Thereafter, he devoted himself exclusively to cultural criticism in such works as the historical travelogue of Japan *Kaidō o yuku* [Traveling the Highways], and *Kono kuni no katachi* [The Shapes of This Country], a collection of historical essays about Japan.

Mukai provides a detailed discussion of each of the works from the final phase of Shiba's career, covering such topics as his writing style, way of presenting his themes, and his narrative style. Mukai regards Shiba as unsurpassed in terms of the volume

of source materials he examined and the thoroughness of his research, and in this volume he carves a vivid image of the writer and his way of life.

## FICTION

**Hane to tsubasa [Feathers and Wings].** Kuroi Senji. Kōdansha, 2000. 193 × 130 mm. 312 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-06-210257-9.

The characters in this novel are people well advanced in years whose youth coincided with the postwar student movement. They took part in the May Day Incident, a clash between demonstrators and police outside the Imperial Palace in Tokyo in 1952. Through their experiences, the novel explores the memories and ideas of a generation who, half a century ago, were reading the Communist Manifesto and other seminal works in an era of intense political awareness that pervaded universities across Japan.

The central character is a retired man named Okudo. Through an old friend he meets a mysterious woman who says to him: "You're Ashizawa, aren't you? Kuboshima is dead." Although he has no recollection of either name, Okudo soon finds himself delving into the past. He is not the only one in the novel who is grappling with the past in one way or another. While some try to break free of it and some to reevaluate it from the perspective of the present, others are inescapably bound to it.

Through the intersection of the personalized historical memories of the several characters, the novel probes the meaning of Japan's politically turbulent past, when the country was



Cover design: Yamazaki Noboru

caught up in the wave of social reform following the end of the war.

**Kibō no kuni no ekusodasu [Exodus to the Land of Hope].** Murakami Ryū. Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 422 pp. ¥1,571. ISBN 4-16-319380-4.

Set in 2002, with Japan still languishing in recession, this novel opens with a news story about a young Japanese man who has become a guerrilla in Pakistan. "That country," he is quoted as saying flatly, referring to Japan, "has nothing to offer. It's a dead country."

Deeply affected by this report, junior high school students throughout Japan refuse to go to school. Using the Internet to create a vast network among themselves, they organize a protest movement against their schools, the education system, and contemporary society at large. Summoned to the National Diet, one of the leaders of the movement tells the assembly, "Japan seems to have just about everything a country could offer, but the one crucial thing it does not have is hope."



Cover design: Suzuki Seiichi Design Shitsu

Meanwhile, an Internet business launched by some of the rebellious young people becomes a worldwide success, making an enormous amount of money. As the effects of a yen-bloc Asian currency crisis hit Japan, the youngsters make savvy use of information and cause a sensation in the financial world. Later, they migrate en masse to Hokkaido, where, taking control of the local government and issuing their own currency, they set up a quasi-independent state.

Murakami's meticulous research and painstaking imagery gives the story a heightened sense of reality.

Taking up a range of current topics, from education and information to economics and the environment, the novel depicts both the hope and despair of contemporary Japan on a grand scale.

**Moeru hoho [Burning Cheeks]. Kuze Teruhiko.** Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 214×150 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,857. ISBN 4-16-319410-X.

Writer Kuze Teruhiko is also known for his achievements as a television producer and lyricist. This fantasy novel is the result of an editor's request that he turn his pen to the subject of "carnal evil."

The story concerns a boy of fifteen who, having fled war-ravaged Tokyo for a region in the north, lives with his father in a log house they have built in a village at the edge of a forest. The village has a coffee shop that still serves coffee—a luxury no longer available in the capital—as well as a time-worn cinema where the boy and his friends find a store of old clips from French films. The boys while away their free time away from the gaze of grownups drinking bitter coffee and splicing together film clips to reap the celluloid harvest of alluring young actresses. When an attractive married woman moves into an empty Western-style house in the nearby forest, the boy falls prey to a more immediate temptation. The woman is irresistibly, captivatingly beautiful. Though apparently having an affair with her, the boy's father remains enigmatic, both as parent and mature man. And then the lovely idyll is eradicated as bombs drop from the "graceful and elegant" American warplanes.

Kuze's aesthetic portrays "carnal evil" in the form of an adolescent

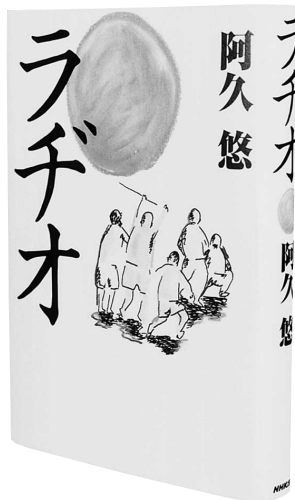


Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

boy's emerging sensuality set off by the glow of fine cinema, books, and poetry.

**Rajio [Radio]. Aku Yū.** Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2000. 194×133 mm. 342 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-14-005346-1. Formerly involved in writing for the broadcast media, Aku Yū is a fiction writer and lyricist. This autobiographical novel of a sensitive teenager living on the island of Awaji immediately after World War II is written in a brisk, rhythmical style.

The central character is a ten-year-old boy who lives with his father, a police officer, and his family in the quarters of the local police station. As developments in their home, school and community lives unfold—among them the introduction of coeducation, and the news that a friend of the boy's elder sister is pregnant—the children catch glimpses of the adult world, forge friendships, awaken to yearnings for the opposite sex, and weave their dreams of the future.



Cover design: KS (Nagatomo Keisuke & Katō Shigeki)

Radio, as the principal medium of news and entertainment, was a rich source of inspiration for almost everyone in those days. For the children of the story, the radio is a treasure chest of dreams and hopes. It is through the impact of the radio that one child, a newcomer to the school who has been unable to speak since his mother was killed in an air raid, is able to open up to the other children. At the farewell gathering marking the end of the school year, the protagonist and his classmates perform a radio play.

Though the entire nation is reduced to poverty and covered with the scars of war, children and adults alike remain hopeful for the future. The richly poetic language of this novel

vividly evokes both the toughness and the gentleness of children of that time. Despite the chaos they lived through, they managed not to go astray.

**Yoru no Vinasu [Venus of the Night]. Murata Kiyoko.** Shinchōsha, 2000. 196×132 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-10-404102-5.

Murata Kiyoko is an accomplished short-story writer. This collection of nine short stories explores the inner lives of a number of middle-aged women and displays Murata's gift for absorbing story-telling and creative imagination articulated in unexpected connections and combinations.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

The "Venus" of the title story is an anatomical wax model created to be an exact replica of the Venus in Botticelli's painting. As related by a middle-aged woman to her friends, the story concerns a man who is the focus of infatuation by a wax doll. The doll's internal organs, which have been made from molds of real human organs taken from cadavers, are exposed to full view. The man finds the model "profoundly lovely," seeing in it "everything that we men have loved about women from time immemorial." Soon strange things start to happen, when it seems as if the wax Venus is responding to his feelings.

Another story in the collection, "Tsukushi-me," evokes an uncanny sense of life-force by combining the lies of a vivacious woman with the diminutive *tsukushi* (field horsetail) that is a harbinger of spring. "Kani-yu" [Crab Spa] examines death in the context of a reunion of former elementary school classmates. The volume represents a splendid array of finely wrought stories in praise of womanhood.

# Events and Trends

## Year 2000 Best-sellers

The year 2000 was the fourth year in a row of minus growth for the Japanese publishing industry. Sales through the year for books in literature and the arts were slow, while nonfiction works dealing with wisdom for living and psychology did comparatively well. The following ranking is based on data gathered between Dec. 1999 and Nov. 2000 by the major book distributor Nippan:

1. *Dakara, anata mo ikinuite* [Here's Why You Too Should Start Over], Ōhira Mitsuyo (Kōdansha). See *Japanese Book News*, No. 32, p. 10.
2. *Hari Pottā to kenja no ishi* (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*), and *Hari Pottā to himitsu no heyā* (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), J. K. Rowling (Sayzansha).
3. *Taiyō no hō* [The Laws of the Sun], Ōkawa Ryūhō (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan).
4. *"Suteru" gijutsu* [The Art of Throwing Things Away], Tatsumi Nagisa (Takarajima Sha).
5. *Hanashi o kikanai otoko, chizu ga yomenai onna* (*Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*), Allan and Barbara Pease, et al. (Shufunotomo Sha).
6. *Kore o Eigo de iemasu ka?* [Can You Say This In English?], (Kodansha International).
7. *Kodomo ga sodatsu mahō no kotoba* (*Children Learn What They Live: Parenting to Inspire Values*), Dorothy Law Nolte, et al. (PHP Kenkyūsho).
8. *Shin ningen kakumei* 7, 8 [The New Human Revolution, vols. 7 and 8], Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shimbun Sha).
9. *Haha no mai* [Mother's Dance], Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shimbun Sha).
10. *Keizai no nyūsu ga omoshiroi hodo wakaru hon: Nihon keizai hen* [The Book That Makes the Economic News Interesting: The Japanese Economy], Hosono Masahiro (Chūkei Shuppan).

The year's top title was *Dakara, anata mo ikinuite*, the autobiography of a woman who pulled herself out of juvenile delinquency and studied successfully to become a lawyer. The target of bullying in the eighth grade that drove her to attempt suicide, Ōhira committed various misdemeanors, and at sixteen married a gangster. The support and encouragement of a foster parent, however, convinced her to try to start over, and after years of intense study, she passed the highly competitive national bar examination. Autobiographical works like this one, as well as Ototake Hirotada's *Gotai fuman-zoku* [*No One's Perfect*] (Kōdansha, 1998) and Inoue Miyuki's *Ikite masu, jūgosai* [I'm Alive and Fifteen] (Popular Sha, 2000) are attracting a wide readership. Similar confessional works, like Korean novelist Yu Miri's story of childbirth and the death of her lover in *Inochi* [Life] (Shōgakukan, 2000), and entertainer Iijima Ai's completely candid account of her eventful life in *Puratonikku sekkusu* [Platonic Sex] (Shōgakukan, 2000), have also been selling very well.

## Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

On January 16, the winners of the 124th Akutagawa and Naoki prizes (for works published in the second half of 2000) were announced. Two winners for each prize were chosen. The Akutagawa Prize went to Seirai Yūichi (42) for "Seisui" [Sacred Water], published in the journal *Bun-gakukai*, Dec. 2000 issue, and Horie Toshiyuki (37) for "Kuma no shiki-ishi" [The Bear's Paving Stone], published in the journal *Gunzō*, Dec. 2000 issue. The Naoki Prize was awarded to Shigematsu Kiyoshi (37) for *Bitamin F* [Vitamin F], published by Shinchōsha and to Yamamoto Fumio (38) for *Puranaria* [Planaria], put out by Bungei Shunjū.

Seirai is a municipal civil servant in the employ of the city of Nagasaki. "Seisui," told in the first person, is the narrator's account of the relationship between the "father," founder of a supermarket chain and close to dying, and his childhood playmate, Sagari, a man some call a swindler who gets rich by selling mineral water under the brand "sacred water."

Horie is associate professor at Meiji University. The title of his story comes from the Jean de La

Fontaine fable about the bear who sees a fly on his sleeping friend's face and throws a paving stone at it, cruelly injuring his friend. The protagonist of Horie's story does not know this fable, but sees a bear in a dream, finds a stuffed bear, and so on. He stays with an old French friend of Jewish background and comes to know the landscape and the people there. The novel is a densely constructed work made up of several stories woven together. Horie also won the Mishima Yukio Award in 1999 for his *Oparaban* (JBN, No. 27, p. 20,) [Au paravant (Earlier)] (Seido-sha, 1998)

*Bitamin F* is an anthology of stories about the modern family, focusing on male protagonists in their thirties and forties. The titles of its seven stories are all English words beginning with "F": "Father," "Friend," "Fight," and so on. In all the families portrayed, the relationships between parents and children and between husband and wife are troubled. "F" stands for family as well. Shigematsu was also awarded the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize for his novel *Eiji* [Eiji] (Asahi Shimbunsha, 1999) (see JBN, No. 28, p. 16). Among his other works are *Naifu* [The Knife] (Shinchōsha, 1997) and *Teinen Gojira* [Gozilla in Retirement] (Kōdansha, 1998).

Yamamoto Fumio's prize-winning work *Puranaria* is a collection of five short love stories about women who, though they had previously been active, busy working women, lose their former vitality after suffering from illness or for other reasons and are ultimately unable to go back to work. The protagonist of the title story is diagnosed with cancer while still in her twenties and undergoes a mastectomy. After the operation she lacks the energy to do anything and finds herself envying the planaria, the microscopic organism that always regenerates itself no matter how many times it is cut in two. Yamamoto won the Yoshikawa Eiji New Writers Award in 1999 for *Ren'ai chūdoku* [Loveholic] (Kadokawa Shoten, 1998). Among her other works are *Kamikonshiki* [Paper Wedding Anniversary] (Tokuma Shoten, 1998) and *Rakka ryūsui* [Petals in the Stream] (Shūeisha, 1999).

## Japanese and Technology

Reflecting the numerous advances of technology in modern and contemporary times, the Japanese language has changed in many ways. Media critic Kida Jun'ichirō (in collaboration with Shimura Shōko and Matsuoka Eiji) has traced the changes that have taken place in Japanese in connection with the advance of technology in a CD-ROM entitled *Gijutsu to Nihongo monogatari* [Japanese in the Age of Technology] (published by Dai Nippon Insatsu, Inc., Information Communication Center, distributed by Transart).

The CD-ROM (a revised and expanded version of online publications made available by the Dai Nippon Insatsu, ICC at [www.honco.net](http://www.honco.net)) takes a largely cultural-history perspective to explore how Japanese adapted to the times by means of technology. The content is divided into six parts: "Japanese Type: The Passing of the Woodblock Tradition," "*Gariban* [Letterpress Printing]: Desktop Publishing a Hundred Years Ago," "Doing Away with Chinese Characters: Reorganizing the Japanese Language for Machines," "Furigana: The Phonetic System of the Japanese Language," "*WāPuro*: The Interface between the Japanese Language and the Computer," and "The Encyclopedia: How Technology Has Transformed the Organization of Knowledge." The aim of this CD is to describe the recent history of the Japanese language in connection with the technical advances

of contemporary culture, but also takes into account trends in China, Taiwan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

The CD-ROM (as well as the website) presents text together with photographic and cinematographic materials as well as sound in a complete multimedia package. It is available in both Japanese and English.

Kida Jun'ichirō is a writer, bibliographer, and critic specializing in modern history. Among his major works is *Nihon no shomotsu* [Japanese Books], *Nijusseiki o sawagaseta hon* [Controversial Books of the Twentieth Century], *Kida Jun'ichirō chosakushū* [Collected Works of Kida Jun'ichirō], and *Dai-san etsuranshitsu* [The No. 3 Reading Room]. Kida was a member of the Advisory Board of *Japanese Book News* from its inauguration until March 2001.

## Favorite Manga Artist-Writers

More than forty years have passed since the founding of the pioneering weekly comic magazines *Shūkan shōnen magajin* [Boys' Comics Weekly] (Kōdansha) and *Shūkan shōnen Sandē* [Sunday Boys' Comics] (Shōgakukan). Japanese are well known for their love of comics, and in September 2000 the mass-circulation daily newspaper *Mainichi shimbun* conducted a survey of Favorite Comic Artists Active in the Twentieth Century. The following list shows the top ten ranking manga artists based on the results of the survey and their leading works. The

top three names far outstrip those below in popularity.

1. Tezuka Osamu, *Tetsuwan Atomu* [Astroboy], *Ribon no kishi* [Princess Knight] and *Burakku jakku* [Black Jack].
2. Hasegawa Machiko, *Sazae-san* [Wonderful World of Sazae-San] and *Ijiwaru-baasan* [Bullying Grandmother].
3. Fujiko Fujio, *Doraemon* and *Obake no Q-Tarō*.
4. Toriyama Akira, *Dr. Slump* and *Dragon Ball*.
5. Adachi Mitsuru, *Touch* and *Miyuki*.
6. Inoue Takehiko, *Slam Dunk* and *Bagabondo* [Vagabond].
7. Miyazaki Hayao, *Kaze no tani no Naushika* [Naūshika of the Valley of the Wind] and *Tonari no Totoro* [My Neighbor, Totoro].
8. Motomiya Hiroshi, *Sarariman Kintarō* [Kintarō, Company Employee].
9. Aoyama Gōshō, *Meitantei Konan* [Detective Conan] and *Yaiba*.
10. Chiba Tetsuya, *Ashita no Jō* [Joe Tomorrow], *Ashita tenki ni naare* [Please Make Tomorrow Good Weather].

Seventh-place Miyazaki Hayao is, strictly speaking, an animation film artist rather than a comic artist, but he is ranked among the top ten because of the strong support he receives from manga fans. His animated films have been successive hits, and his *Mononoke hime* has opened in the United States as well.

### Continued from p. 6

some experience of life in Japan and familiarity with the furnishings mentioned in the novel. It would be extremely valuable, therefore, to set up ways to invite translators from other countries and give them opportunities to better understand the language they are translating.

A second hurdle is the problem of support for publishers. In order to promote translation and publication projects for Japan-related books, publishers overseas need help in obtaining necessary information. As demonstrated by the November 2000 program, the Japan Foundation has supported these actors in the cultural exchange arena over many years, and I am sure it will continue to encourage understanding of Japan among the peoples of other countries through Japanese literature and other publications. (*Andō Kazuo is Director of the Receiving Division of the Japan Foundation.*)

### Continued from p. 7

moment in the 365 days of the year anywhere in the streets of Tokyo when there was no human presence, no dog or cat, no perching pigeon, sparrow, or crow, no moving automobile or bicycle, not so much as a dragonfly or butterfly. You would be wrong. The spectacle in these photos is truly eerie, as if there had been a nuclear war, and every living, moving thing had been annihilated.

Some years ago, another interesting collection was published in Japan entitled *Gekkōyoku* [Moonbathed] (Shōgakukan, 1990) that was quite popular. It featured tropical flowers, plants, and other scenes illuminated only by the moon.

Gazing at these three volumes, you cannot help thinking that Japanese have a certain special talent for inventing unusual approaches and putting them to use in creative ways. (*Ikari Haruo is an essayist.*)

# The Partnership of Translation

Tsuji Hitonari

It was at the 1998 Frankfurt Book Fair that a French editor noticed my novel *Hakubutsu* [The White Buddha]. The translation began immediately, and two days after the French edition, *Le Bouddha Blanc*, was published I learned that it had been nominated for the Prix Femina Award, one of France's three most prestigious literary prizes. Coincidentally in Paris to promote the book, I found my name in the list of nominees in a small article in *Le Monde*. This prize had a hundred-year history filled with such illustrious winners as Romain Rolland and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. My editor, Marie Pierre, looking very pleased, told me how rare it was for an author published for the first time in France to be nominated for the award. Realizing that the other nominees included established writers from India and the Netherlands, I thought it had to be some kind of mistake. I returned to Japan, totally dismissing any idea that I might win. I never dreamed that two months later, the impossible would prove possible and I would be back on the plane to France.

My translator, Corinne Atlan, came to meet me at the airport. Several of my novels have been translated in other countries, but it was the first time I had ever met one of my translators. In her mid-thirties, Corinne carries herself with an Asiatic grace and serenity reminiscent of the traditional Japanese woman. We got along from the start and I found it easy to work with her.

One of the reasons *Le Bouddha Blanc* received the prize is clearly because it is so well written in French. Corinne told me that she had gone to great lengths to render my original text faithfully. She is the translator of many works by popular Japanese writers, but said that *Hakubutsu* had had special meaning for her. Her previous husband had been from Mongolia and she had lived in Japan, though for only a short time. I could see that she had a firm grasp of Asian thought and belief. I realized that no better person could have been found to give expression to the special ideas on life and death dealt with in the novel. The role of the translator is so decisive that it is possible the book would not have won the award had it been translated by anyone else.

I have since received several requests from other countries in Europe and other parts of the world to translate *Hakubutsu* into other languages. Contracts have been signed with publishers in Turkey and elsewhere and publication is imminent in some cases. When I think how the fate of my work may be swayed by what kind of translator it encounters, I involuntarily breathe a prayer. It is only natural to hope that a book, which you have borne and nurtured as you would a child, will be united with a talented and conscientious translator.

Corinne Atlan has nearly finished the translation of one of my other books, *Kaikyō no hikari* [Light on the Channel; see JBN, No. 18, p. 20] and the French edition is scheduled to appear in May. We have had various exchanges by e-mail concerning the content. Written before *Hakubutsu*, it won the Akutagawa Prize. The

story is set in a juvenile detention center in Hakodate, and Corinne had never been to that northern place. Her e-mail, asking what did I mean, "city built on a sandbar (*sasu*)?" made me really think. It is difficult to explain that isolated strip of sandy terrain in words, so I tried drawing a picture by way of reply. Since the image I was trying to get across was a closed, terrarium-like universe, she needed the correct image of the geography to convey the worldview of the story to the reader. She wrote me that the translation was harder than it had been for *Hakubutsu*, and I had to agree that the work is one of my more difficult ones, involving as it does the kind of hidden theme you might find in a role-playing game. Even after it won the Akutagawa Prize, I never talked about this concealed theme with anyone nor revealed anything about it in interviews. For the translation, however, I decided to explain it fully to Corinne because she had to take my place in presenting the novel to French readers. I am eager to collaborate again with Corinne Atlan in contributing to world literature through the translation of my works.

Tsuji Hitonari was born in 1959 in Tokyo. He started out as a musician, organizing a rock band in 1981 called Echoes, and in 1989 his first novel, "Pianishimo" [Pianissimo] won the Subaru Literary Award. In 1992 he inaugurated a literary magazine entitled *Gagyū*, and in 1995 directed his first movie, *Tenshi no wakemae* [The Angel's Share]. In 1997 he was awarded the Akutagawa Prize for *Kaikyō no hikari* [Light on the Channel], and the following year undertook the writing of the original story and film script for, directing, and composing the musical score for the movie "Sennen tabito" [Travelers of a Thousand Years]. In 1999, with Ekuni Kaori, he published *Reisei to jōnetsu no aida* [Between Composure and Passion], a two-volume love story in which he wrote from the man's perspective and Ekuni from the woman's (see JBN, No. 31, p. 22). The same year he became the first Japanese to win the Prix Femina Award, for the French translation of *Hakubutsu*.



In 2000 he wrote the script for the TV serial drama, *Ai o kudasai* [Give Me Love], and its theme song "Zoo," which he had composed during his days as Echoes bandleader, became a big hit. His other major works of fiction include *Nyūton no ringo* [Newton's Apple], *Haha naru nagi to chichi naru shike* [Maternal Calm and Paternal Storm], and an essay collection, *Garasu no tenjō* [Glass Ceiling].