

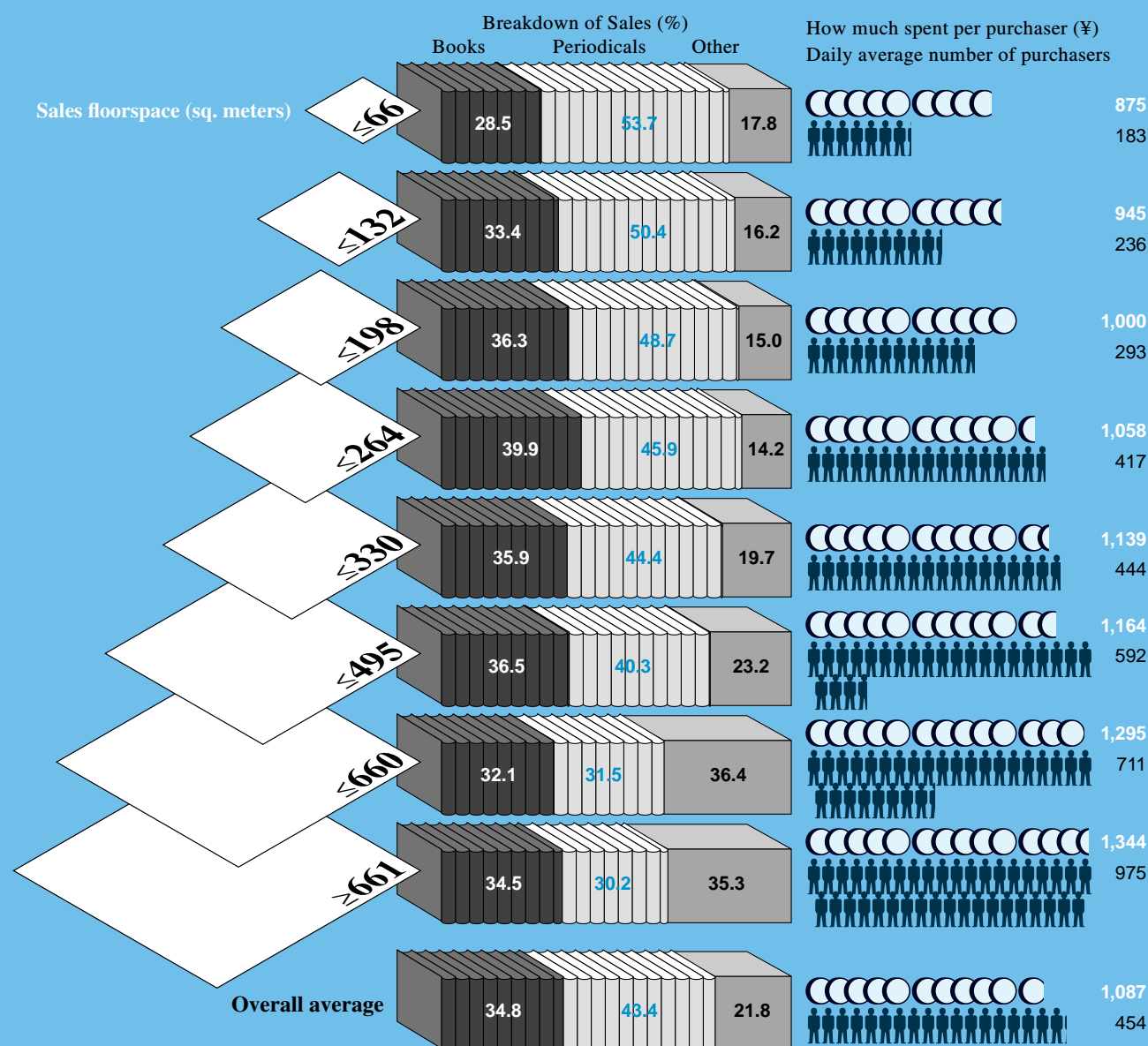
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Japanese Book News

Women and the Family in Recent Japanese Literature
Bookstores at a Turning Point
Japanese Books in Austria

Breakdown of Sales and Per Customer Purchase By Scale of Bookstore Floorspace



Note: Category of "other" under breakdown of sales is subtotal for sales of CDs, stationery goods, and related items.
Source: *Shoten keiei no monosashi*: "Shoten keiei no jittai" [Measurements in the Bookstore Business: "Current Conditions in Bookshop Management"], Tohan Co., 2000, p. 29.



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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Contents

Women and the Family in Recent Japanese Literature	
Ōsawa Machiko	1
Bookstores at a Turning Point	
Kiyota Yoshiaki	3
Japanese Books Abroad	
Austria: Too Small for Translation?	
Sepp Linhart	5
From the Publishing Scene	
Tanka on the Internet	
Koyama Tetsurō	7
Big Sellers in the Recession	
Kiyota Yoshiaki	7
New Titles	8
Events and Trends	20
In Their Own Words	
Through the Translator's Tunnel	
Ogawa Yōko	22

From the Editor

The last in our series of articles looking back on the twentieth century contributed by members of the advisory board of *Japanese Book News* is an essay by Ōsawa Machiko. In April 1999, the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Law for Men and Women went into effect. Removing discrimination between men and women at all levels of labor management—job recruitment, hiring, assignment and promotion—previously no more than a desirable objective toward which employers were expected to strive, now became an obligation backed up by law. In June 1999 the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society was enacted, stipulating the responsibility of national and local governments to promote a gender-equal society. It also stresses the importance of facilitating the efforts of both men and women to maintain their households as well as engage in activities/work outside the home. Against this changing social backdrop, Ōsawa examines how images of women and the family in recent literary works have changed.

As illustrated in the diagram on the cover of this issue, the number of booksellers in Japan has been falling steadily. Total floorspace devoted to book sales, however, has risen, indicating the trend toward fewer, larger bookstores. The figures comparing sales of different types of publications, moreover, reveal that small bookshops rely on periodicals for more than half their sales. Shuppan News Company managing director Kiyota Yoshiaki examines the implications of these figures and reviews the issues Japanese bookstores face today: the opening of large-scale bookshops, convenience-store sales of periodicals, and the rapid proliferation of discount bookstores specializing in "new-used" books.

In the Japanese Books Abroad column, University of Vienna Japanologist Sepp Linhart reports on publishing in Austria, lamenting the conditions that hamper the publication of translations of Japanese books there.

Under From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō recounts the vigorous activity relating to tanka poetry on the Internet. Starting with this issue, Kiyota Yoshiaki, of Shuppan News, becomes a regular contributor to this page. He looks at what is behind the titles that become big best-sellers despite the publishing slump.

For In Their Own Words, novelist Ogawa Yōko describes the pleasure of seeing her work enjoyed by others in translation and in the special rapport that author and translator can share.

Japanese Book News address:

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

Women and the Family in Recent Japanese Literature

Ōsawa Machiko

In 1960, the number of married women working outside the home was about one in ten. Today, forty years later, the proportion is one in three. In 2001, pursuant to the enactment of the Basic Law for a Gender-equal Society in June 1999, ways of improving the environment for women's economic independence are being debated in the Japanese Diet. Since the end of World War II, few countries have so reified the housewife as the ideal lifestyle for women as Japan. This and other patriarchal attitudes, inclinations, and practices can explain why women's talents in other directions have been neglected and why their return on educational investment remains low.

The number of working women rose markedly in most of the advanced nations in the 1960s and 1970s. More women in these countries began to pursue advanced education and to acquire skills that enabled them to move into many new areas of the labor market. This brought about changes in gender relations and in the character of the family. In Japan, by contrast, while an increasing number of women were indeed entering the workforce, those who were competing on the same ground as men and pursuing careers commensurate with their skills, were few. The index that is usually cited to illustrate this situation is the percentage of women in management positions. In the United States, for example, women now account for 44 percent of management jobs, while the figure for Japan is only 9 percent.

The level of education among Japanese women has also risen steadily, but in contrast to other industrialized nations, in Japan the better educated the woman, the less likely she is to return to work once having become a full-time housewife. One possible reason is the lack of job opportunities that sufficiently challenge such women. The percentage of full-time housewives who are also highly educated, therefore, is quite high. The weak correlation between education and careers for working mothers also reflects the enduring ideology of the housewife as the ideal lifestyle for women.

Frustration and Vacillation in a Changing Environment

Quite recently, however, a major change has come about that is sharply altering this tradition. As a result of prolonged recession, the lifetime employment of men, which was the main factor of security for full-time housewives, is no longer guaranteed. The *Wall Street Journal* (March 26, 2001) carried a story about a Japanese housewife whose husband was laid off and was forced to look for a new job. This kind of story showed how changes in the economy have worked to increase the risks of being a full-time housewife.

How have writers portrayed the situation of working women in the context of these economic changes and the resulting changes that have taken place in the family? Readers of *Japanese Book News* will have noted this theme in many of the books introduced in previous issues.

In 1997, a woman in her late thirties was found murdered in an apartment near the entertainment quarter of Shibuya, Tokyo. Investigation revealed that she had been

a member of the corporate elite, a career woman employed at Tokyo Electric Corporation. It also found that she had lived a double life, working as a dynamic member of the company management by day and by night as a prostitute. It was a controversial and disturbing incident that drew considerable media attention because she was a career woman on the managerial track.

In 1986, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) was promulgated. In most workplaces prior to that time, it was the general rule that women performed clerical jobs while men took positions of responsibility and were gradually promoted through the ranks in what is known as *sōgōshoku*, or regular career-track jobs. With the enactment of the EEOL, many companies introduced a two-track hiring system, offering opportunities for managerial-track advancement to women as well as maintaining the previous system for women content with low-level clerical positions.

The way toward advancement for women may have been paved, but it was an extremely narrow path, and only the smartest, highest-performing women were hired for the managerial-track posts. How much could a woman really accomplish in a work environment oriented completely to men? The women who were hired for managerial-track jobs became the focus of close public scrutiny. The fact that the murdered woman in the Shibuya incident had been a member of this female elite was what really titillated public interest.

Two widely read works were based on the incident. One was a nonfiction account by Sano Shin'ichi: *Tōden OL satsujin jiken* [The Tokyo Electric Company Female Office Worker Murder Mystery] (Shinchōsha, 2000; see JBN, No. 32, p. 14). The other was a mystery, by Hisama Jūgi, *Daburu feisu* [Double-faced] (Gentōsha, 2000). They probed the true personality of the victim as well as the two faces she adopted.

While working women in general are potentially two-faced, presenting one visage on the job and the other after working hours, both these books portray the murder victim as an anomaly: a woman described by one author as "obviously" psychologically troubled (Sano) and by another as obsessed with sex (Hisama). Neither male author appears to have taken a square look at the sexuality of the ordinary working woman.

Many working women, however, are quick to recognize the similarities between themselves and the murder victim. Female office workers reportedly continue to visit the site where the woman's body was found out of empathy for her situation. As I see it, the murder victim was a woman who did not like or accept herself to the very end. Her's was the story of the frustration and the dilemmas faced by any woman of talent and ability who attempts to pursue a career in a male-centered society and of so many women living in isolation in today's mass urban society.

As new opportunities for working have opened up, young women often vacillate between following the example of their mothers as full-time housewives and

taking up the challenge of life as an independent woman. A work of fiction that effectively portrays that ambivalence is *Hebi o fumu* [Tread on a Snake], by Kawakami Hiromi (Bungei Shunjū, 1996; see JBN, No. 18, p. 18), which won the Akutagawa Prize in 1996.

In a public park one day, protagonist Hiwako (a single working woman), accidentally steps on a snake. "Since you stepped on me, it's all over," says the snake, and, taking the form of an old woman who claims to be her mother, it moves into Hiwako's apartment. Night after night the snake, as her "mother" incarnate, appears and pleads with Hiwako: "You should really come into this world." Hiwako, while convinced she can no longer join the world of her mother, still finds the temptation hard to resist. She represents women who are torn between traditional values and contemporary realities.

Another compelling theme is how girls, wanting to be good and to be loved, instinctively adopt their mother's voice as their own. *Haha no hattatsu* [A Mother Evolves] by Shōno Yoriko (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1996), for example, a novel written in a humorous and rhythmical style, recounts how the protagonist kills her mother, who had completely dominated her, and reinvents within herself a new mother. In order to live as an independent individual in the new age, she has to liberate herself from the voice, generated in society and spoken through the mother, that taught her what society regards as the desirable way to live.

A work that evokes the feelings of many women who live isolated lives controlled by the voices of society is Akasaka Mari's *Vaiburētā* [Vibrator] (Kōdansha, 1999; JBN, No. 28, p. 17). The real theme of this book, however, is the loneliness of contemporary city dwellers that is so often left undetected amid the clamor of those voices. The irresistible impulse to establish real contact with the other is skillfully expressed through the journey on which the protagonist embarks after meeting a long-distance truck driver. "I want to touch you," she blurts out to the truck driver. Then she bursts into tears, "as if something inside her was starting to melt."

With the advent of the affluent society, times have completely changed in Japan, and established lifestyles are being challenged. Hosaka Kazushi's *Kusa no ue no chōshoku* [Breakfast on the Grass] (Kōdansha, 1993; JBN, No. 7, p. 18) and *Ikiru yorokobi* [The Joy of Living], Shinchōsha, 2000), vividly depict this theme. It is also treated in this year's Naoki Prize-winning *Puranaria* [Planaria] (Bungei Shunjū, 2000) by Yamamoto Fumio. Hosaka takes a new look at the meaning of living and of existence, not by metaphorical literary images of ordinary events and interaction with animals, but rather by capturing them with intense immediacy.

The lifestyle of their parents' generation is no longer a viable model for younger people. Yamamoto Fumio articulates the emptiness that the younger generation feels regarding the values and lifestyle of the older generation. Her characters are young people who, while seeking to live by some other standard of values, cannot identify what they want to live by and are trapped in frustration and bewilderment.

In one of the stories included in *Puranaria*, entitled "Dokoka de wa nai koko" [Not Somewhere But Here], a high school girl blurts out to her mother, who handles all the tasks of a housewife to perfection, "Watching you is so irritating!" "I don't want to end up like you! I hate the

way you live, Mother!" And she moves out of her home, hoping to find a job and establish her freedom as soon as possible.

Hearing those words, the mother suddenly realizes how her husband, who was reassigned to a subsidiary company after his employer had been forced to lay off workers, must feel. Like him, marginalized because he is no longer needed by his company, she finds her whole *raison d'être* in life threatened when she is no longer needed by her daughter.

Japanese society has indeed entered a new phase. The time when all a woman had to do was choose whether to be a full-time housewife or be a career woman is over. Now the challenge she faces is to determine what kind of life she will find truly rich and fulfilling.

The Broken Social Contract

With the advance of women into the workforce, the nature of the family in Japan has changed immensely. Japan's social institutions rested for a very long time on the foundations provided by the traditional family. Between the government, the corporations, and workers, there was an implicit social contract based on the traditional family.

Companies guaranteed their workers secure jobs. In return, workers devoted themselves completely to their companies. The government supported the activities of corporations, using various systems of subsidies in order to help them maintain that employment security. And in the home, the wives assumed the tasks of childrearing and caregiving, nurturing their husbands, and supporting the framework of Japanese social security.

Today, that social contract has been broken. Middle-aged and older men, who exhausted themselves to fulfill the expectations of their companies, are being laid off, and the unemployment rate in Japan is now higher than it is in the United States. The breakdown of the family, however, began long ago, in the 1960s, as voiced by Kojima Nobuo in *Hōyō kazoku* [The Embracing Family] (Kōdansha, 1965). The story chronicles the collapse of the marriage of two well-educated city dwellers who met and fell in love, after the wife starts an affair with an American soldier stationed in Japan.

While the Kojima book depicts the demise of the family of tradition, Tsushima Yūko explores the shape of a new framework that seeks to transcend the "modern" family with her portrayal of the household set up by a woman who, taking her daughter with her, leaves her husband, in *Hikari no ryōbun* [The Territory of Light] (Kōdansha, 1979).

In post-World War II Japanese society, where the modern family emerged even while the mindset of the patriarchal family system remained firmly in place, there have been many books featuring women who suffer when things do not go as they would like (e.g., Enchi Fumiko's *Onnazaka* [tr., *The Waiting Years*, 1971]), or mothers who sacrifice themselves for their children (e.g., the suffering mother as seen through the eyes of her son in Yasuoka Shōtarō's *Umibe no fūkei* [Kōdansha, 1959; tr., *A View by the Sea*, 1984]).

The subject of the physical attractiveness or sexuality of wives and mothers has long been taboo in Japanese society, but recent books have boldly challenged this taboo. In Kirino Natsuo's Naoki Award-winning *Yawarakana hoho* [Soft Cheeks] (Kōdansha, 1999, JBN, No. 28, p.

Continued on p. 21

Bookstores at a Turning Point

Kiyota Yoshiaki

Japan has approximately 23,000 booksellers (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry study), including second-hand bookshops (*koshoten*) of the traditional variety and stores specializing in relatively recent, almost-new used books, known as *shinkoshoten* (new-used bookstores). Bookstores are almost everywhere throughout the country. In addition to the stalwarts of the industry—the long-established bookstore chains like Kinokuniya, Maruzen, Sanseidō, and Asahiya—new booksellers like Junkudō, Bunkiyōdō, and Kōeidō now have nationwide chains. The number of these new booksellers has been rapidly increasing in the past few years, and many operate under the franchise system.

Among the new book marketing enterprises is Book Off, a chain of new-used bookstores, for example, that markets recently published secondhand books in nearly new condition at 50 percent discount through more than five-hundred shops nationwide. Across the country there are currently a total of 1,500 new-used bookshops. The sudden proliferation of this upstart type of shop and the threat they pose to established bookstores selling brand new books is now the source of much consternation among publishers.

Of Japan's 23,000 booksellers, about 20,000 are so-called new-book booksellers (*shinkan shoten*). It is difficult to tell whether this number is too many or too few. At first glance, 20,000 might seem excessive for a country with a population of 120 million like Japan, but when we note that half of (mainly rural) townships and villages do not have even one bookstore, the number does not seem so large. Moreover, the vast majority of bookshops are very small, with an average sales floorspace of only 90 square meters. Average floorspace ten years ago was even smaller, at 60 square meters. The average has risen in the past ten years because of the spread of large-scale bookstore outlets. The 1990s marked a turning point for booksellers in Japan, and as many as 10,000 (an average of 1,000 per year) booksellers were forced to close their shops over the same time period.

Of these 20,000 new-book booksellers, less than half, or only 8,853 (as of April 2000) are members of the Japan Booksellers Federation. The membership of the Federation, in fact, started to fall off year by year after peaking at about 13,000 in 1987, with 649 closing down in 2000 alone, and dropping to the level at which it stood nearly thirty years ago, in 1972. The figures show clearly the tough economic realities booksellers now face. The

dropoff in membership in the Federation, moreover, has an incalculable impact on the publishing world in general. The decrease in the number of booksellers means fewer places where readers can actually see and touch books; it means the loss or narrowing of sales opportunities. The Federation is hoping to develop new strategies for increasing its membership, but so far no effective plan has emerged.

Bookstores, whether large, medium-size, or small, have long been treasured as the space where books find their readers, where readers can pick out a book and scan its pages, and compare it with others in its category. The regular bookstore customer frequently comes across titles that unexpectedly pique his or her interest and orders others that are not on the shelves. For such customers, the time spent browsing in the bookshelves is part of the pleasure of reading. In Japan, bookstores have long been the place of encounter with books closest to home. Many of us have fond memories as children of stopping by the neighborhood bookshop with our mothers on the way home from shopping.

There are several reasons the number of small and medium-sized booksellers is decreasing. One is the rapid rise over the past twenty years of competition from convenience stores. Convenience stores have recently added paperbacks and comic books to their usual newsstand corner selling magazines, weekly/monthly comics, and newspapers. Starting in 2000, they drew even closer to the territory of bookstores when they became the pickup points for merchandise ordered via the new breed of on-line bookstores. Almost all the approximately 50,000 convenience stores currently operating throughout Japan sell magazines and comics.

Convenience stores are direct competitors of new-book bookstores. Because they stock only magazines, comics, and a limited number of paperbacks, the sales efficiency at convenience stores is higher than at regular bookstores, making major inroads into the sales turf of the latter.

For understanding the new market trends, a look at the breakdown for total annual publishing sales is particularly instructive: the figure for 2000 was approximately ¥2.5 trillion (¥1.5 trillion for periodicals and ¥1 trillion for books). Total sales for periodicals, in other words, is distinctly higher than for books. (Book and magazine sales has been falling for four consecutive years, dropping to the level reached in 1993.) Of the ¥1.5 trillion sales of periodicals, roughly ¥500 billion is from sales through

Number of Booksellers and Total Sales Floorspace (1999 and 2001)

1999	Number of booksellers	22,296	3,913,536	Total sales floorspace (sq. m.)
2001		20,939	4,152,066	

Source: *Bunka tsūshin* [Culture Communication] (Bunka Tsūshinsha, May 14, 2001).

Notes: Store floorspace is calculated based on total figures provided by booksellers (17,378 for 1999 and 17,216 for 2001). Videos, CDs, stationery goods, and related items may be sold along with books and periodicals.

convenience stores, giving them 30 percent control of the magazine and newspaper market. Seven-Eleven Japan alone earns ¥140 billion on periodicals, and Lawson's and Family Mart together brought in ¥160 billion. Other convenience-store chains account for the other ¥200 billion in sales.

For small and medium-sized booksellers, sales of magazines and comic books account for about 60 percent of total sales, so the entry of neighborhood convenience stores into the market is undermining their share of the market. No wonder business is tough for local bookstores.

The number of new-used booksellers has also risen sharply in just a few years. It is estimated that their annual sales totals about ¥100 billion. They market mainly paperbacks (*bunkobon*), comic books, and CDs. The prices are set uniformly at 50 percent of the listed price. Some stores have bargain corners selling books for 100 yen per copy, and collected works or series are sold by the volume under this category. Comic books are the bulk of their business because sets and series are sold at low prices.

New-used booksellers, another new source of competition for new-book bookshops, are winning over consumers for the low prices of almost-new books. The number of outlets is rapidly increasing. (In 2000, a major new-used bookseller opened an outlet in New York.) Publishers and new-book sellers alike blame the drop in sales of new books partly on these sellers. In May 2001, a group of manga artists started a movement protesting the business practices of the new-used booksellers, claiming that they are obstructing the sales of new manga books. How much effect such a campaign will have remains to be seen. In Japan books and magazines have to be sold at the retail prices dictated by publishers under the resale price maintenance system. This means that new-book booksellers cannot sell at a discount. New-used booksellers, on the other hand, can market almost-new books at a 50, even 70 percent, discount.

What may be a peculiarly Japanese feature of the urban reading scene are the numerous *manga kissa*, or shops where customers pay a table charge for drinks or a per-time-unit charge for access to the store's manga collection, with additional charges for extended time. Manga fans frequent these places, possibly another factor behind the slackened sales of books at new-book bookstores.

A development in a rather different realm from that of new-used booksellers and *manga kissa*, is the sharp increase in recent years in use of public libraries. Japan has some 2,500 libraries (small as this may seem by comparison with the number in the United States and Europe). While there are those who criticize public libraries as free-of-charge rental libraries, they are open to all citizens and the higher the rate of their use (including lending) the better. Some even go so far as to claim that libraries pose a threat to new-book booksellers. On the contrary, it seems to me, the people who frequent libraries are actually the inveterate readers who also frequently buy books at new-book bookstores. I believe libraries function to broaden readership, not threaten it. What libraries need to do now is to purchase as many newly published books as they can to meet the needs of the reading public. Japanese libraries generally tend to have small, usually outdated collections. Indeed, one reason Japan has so many bookstores, especially in the cities, may be because of the scarcity of libraries and the paucity of their content.

Another recent phenomenon is the appearance of bookstores with a huge sales floorspace. The 1,000 some small and medium-sized booksellers forced to discontinue business each year does draw media attention, but even more coverage is given to the opening in the past few years of over ten outlets of major bookstores with floorspace of 3,000 or more square meters. Today, Japan has twenty-one bookstores with a sales floorspace of at least 3,000 square meters, including two with a floorspace of more than 6,000 square meters. These bookstores offer a very wide variety of books, and their interiors are attractively designed, undeniably in imitation of large book outlets in the United States. But large shops are welcomed by customers because they are almost certain to find the books they want.

One reason so many large shops have appeared within a short time is that in Japan it is cheaper to lease space for bookshops than that for business in other industries. (A large bookshop attracts customers to a building, thereby working to the advantage of the building owner, and the rate of use per unit of floorspace is commensurately high). Another reason is that a great deal of space is required to fulfill customer demand by making available as many books as possible. (In the case of the Junkudō outlet in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, which boasts the largest sales floorspace of any bookstore in Japan, 200,000 titles are on display.)

However, the launching of bookshops with massive floorspace has nearly ceased. Some of them are doing well, but others have turned out to be failures. The slump in the publishing business and a tendency among readers to limit spending on books have reduced the merits of the large-store venue.

While the business of ordinary bookstores may be sluggish, the year 2000 saw the proliferation of online bookstores operated by booksellers, book agents, companies in non-publishing industries (such as transport), or by overseas concerns (e.g., Bertelsmann Online, Amazon). These cyberspace bookstores compete with one another with services designed to set them apart from their competitors. They cannot sell publications at discount under the resale price maintenance system, and it is difficult to absorb delivery costs when the accepted margin for booksellers is 22 percent of the listed price. Special services for customers who accumulate points for regular shopping are hard to administer. Success or failure in online bookselling depends on how easy they make it for users to search for books, how much information on publications they can provide, how convenient the services, and how fast the goods ordered reach the customer.

Some doubt that online bookstores can appreciably increase their share in Japan's bookstore-saturated market. The weeding-out process in online book-selling, it is said, is already over. As of 2000, the sales of online bookstores made up less than 2 percent of the ¥1 trillion in total book sales. People in the business now believe that the peak of online bookstore sales will probably be 5 percent at most.

New-book booksellers, both the old guard and the new breed, and online bookstores are engaged in an intense competition for survival. The problems they are struggling by trial and error to solve are those faced by the entire publishing world. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of Shuppan News Co.*)

Austria: Too Small for Translation?

Sepp Linhart

Austrians, especially Viennese, like to think of themselves as a highly cultured people. To be sure, a very substantial amount of the national budget is spent for support of the Vienna opera, yet funds for research are among the most limited of all EC countries. For the majority of citizens, a university education is still not regarded as a desirable goal, as it is for instance in Japan. The often-heard joke goes that if you already have one book, why buy another? Under these conditions, it is understandable that the world of Austrian publishing is less than flourishing, except for the field of music. Since the lingua franca of Austria is German, publishing companies here could have the advantage of the large German-speaking market of some 100 million, but unfortunately only very few Austrian publishers can take advantage of it. In reality, most Austrian publishing companies devote themselves to niche markets, and all the really big publishers are based in Germany.

Today, quite a few Austrians are counted among prominent writers in the German language, as were Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, and Georg Trakl in the early twentieth century. But while many modern Austrian writers of previous times started their careers by publishing with a smaller Austrian company and switched to a large German company when they became famous, these days most younger writers of talent secure contracts with German companies right from the beginning.

Little Interest in Translations

Commercial book publishing thus being almost entirely in the hands of big German companies, the small, weak, and under-capitalized Austrian publishers are not very active in publishing literature translated from other languages, including Japanese. On top of the basic costs of translation, Japanese publishers charge what are considered excessive sums for translation rights. To keep costs down, translations from “exotic languages” like Japanese are usually done via English, despite the drawbacks of this approach. As far as I know, only two modern works of Japanese fiction have been published by Austrian companies: One is Endō Shūsaku’s *Chinmoku* (*Silence*), translated in 1977 from the Japanese and put out under the title *Schweigen* by the Catholic publisher Styria. The novel, relating to Christian missionary history in Japan by a Japanese Catholic author, was distributed to Catholic church libraries in Austria and Germany. The other was Komatsu Sakyō’s sensational science-fiction novel *Nippon chimbotsu*, published by Paul Zsolnay Verlag, a company that has a certain authority in this field of literature, as *Wenn Japan versinkt* (1979). It is based on the English edition, *Japan Sinks* (Harper & Row, 1976). The publishing rights for both translations were later purchased by German publishers who have subsequently put out several editions of both. Austrian translators of Japanese into German like Fleur Wöss and Josef Bohaczek have done several other works of modern Japanese literature, but they have come out from German companies from the outset.

This situation is unfortunate, since Vienna was the

place where the very first work translated from Japanese literature into any Western language was published. Austrian polyglot August Pfizmaier (1808–1887) translated Ryūtei Tanekiko’s work of late Edo-period *gōkan* (books of illustrated, light fiction consisting of several volumes bound together), *Ukiyogata rokumai byōbu* [Floating-world Style Six-panel Screen], as *Sechs Wandschirme in Gestalten der vergänglichen Welt* in 1847. Apparently this translation was not a commercial success, and Pfizmaier stayed away from commercial publishing after that initial attempt. His many translations from Japanese literature, several thousand book pages in all, were all printed in the non-commercial proceedings of the Austrian-Hungarian Academy of Sciences, so that they unfortunately are not widely available to the reading public. Pfizmaier’s *Sechs Wandschirme*, however, was used to help translations into English, French and Italian, and there even appeared a modern German version during the Nazi era, which made use of Pfizmaier’s translation ninety years after the original translation had come out.

Japan in Austrian Literature Today

While publishers have shown little interest in putting out translations of Japanese writing, this does not mean that there is no interest in Japanese literary arts in Austria. There is an active haiku poetry club, and among former presidents of the Austrian P.E.N. club is Ernst Schönwiese, a particular devotee of haiku. One of Austria’s most celebrated contemporary poets, H. C. Artmann, who died in 2000, experimented with the haiku form, as well.

Even more conspicuous than among poets is the interest in Japan evident in the works of some leading Austrian prose authors. Peter Handke, one of the most prominent living authors of the German tongue, devotes many of more than 1,000 pages in his monumental novel *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht: Ein Märchen aus den neuen Zeiten* [My Year in No-man’s Bay: A Fairy Tale from Newer Times, 1994] to Japan, although the novel cannot be said to be a novel of Japan. The work recounts the stories of friends of the protagonist, one of whom is an architect and carpenter who receives a trip to Japan and a one-year stay there as a birthday present. The underlying theme of the novel is metamorphosis, and it takes place in fairy tales, as suggested by the subtitle. The architect/carpenter is transformed in Japan from a foreigner in an exotic country to a native who sees the familiar in the foreignness. In this way the “modern fairy tale” of Japan is a good example of the on-going process of globalism, but at the same time the author has not avoided imposing various stereotypes of Japan upon his readers.

Whether the stereotypes in Handke’s novel are the result of the author’s observations in Japan is not clear, but that does seem to be the case for the work of another well-known Austrian novelist, Gerhard Roth. *Der Plan* [The Plan] is a Japan novel Roth wrote in 1998 after returning from a lecture and reading tour in Japan at the invitation of the Austrian embassy in Tokyo. Like Handke’s novel, Roth’s also became a best-seller as soon as it appeared, although that does not tell us so much about the quality of their works but rather the authors’ command of numerous faithful fans. Roth’s story, a crime novel, is filled with the worst clichés about Japan.

While the novel received fairly good reviews among Austrian literary critics, it was unanimously condemned by those knowledgeable of Japan for perpetrating outdated stereotypes. Roth's protagonist, modeled after the author himself, is a librarian at Vienna's National Library who goes on a lecture tour to Japan, where he attempts to sell a tiny piece of Mozart's *Requiem* to a Japanese, who turns out to be a representative of a *yakuza* gangster organization. The story traces exactly the route Roth himself traveled, and he even incorporates characters, identified by their real names as people who helped and accompanied him. Especially lacking in good taste and common courtesy is his mention of the name and particulars of a Japanese university teacher who is depicted as a woman of enormous sexual appetite when it comes to foreigners. Such portrayals confirm Roth's penchant for the worst kind of orientalist clichés described in Edward Said's well-known work *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1979). Moreover, Roth incorporates an account of the Kobe earthquake, written by a Japanologist who graduated from Vienna University and has been living in Kobe for several years in such a way that it can be only called plagiarism.

Fortunately, the third conspicuous novel recently published about Japan, by a modern Austrian woman writer

named Elisabeth Reichart, is more politically correct: *Das vergessene Lächeln der Amaterasu* [The Forgotten Smile of Amaterasu] (Aufbau Verlag, 1998) is an absorbing and very intelligent novel dealing with cultural misunderstandings as well as with the status of women in modern Japanese society. It tells the story of an Austrian artist who has long dreamed of visiting Japan, and finally arrives there after marrying a Japanese singer. The singer once there deceives her, leaves her, and even sells her to a mysterious, strange Japanese who turns out to actually be a Viennese war criminal in disguise and who uses her as his assistant in his ritual suicide with the sword. While the first part of the novel is rather conventional, the second part is so bizarre and grotesque that it haunts the reader long after having finished the last page.

After 1998, the fashion of incorporating Japan-related themes into works of fiction seems to have faded, although Austrian popular culture, including its cuisine, continues to be influenced by things Japanese, as it was about 100 years ago. Perhaps this influence might eventually lead to a more serious interest in modern Japanese literature and to an increase in translations directly from Japanese. (*Sepp Linhart is professor of Japanology and Director of the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria.*)

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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Tel: 03-3266-5111 Fax: 03-3266-5118

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Yama to Keikoku Sha
1-1-33 Shiba Daimon
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Tanka on the Internet

Koyama Tetsurō

The world of tanka poetry is alive and vigorous—on the Internet. There is a contest that accepts submissions in this genre of short verse via the World Wide Web and starting this year (January 27, 2001) a company has launched a project for sales of tanka collections published on-demand.

In January, the public Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) network showed a program entitled “Welcome to the World of Electronic Tanka.” Hosted by well-known tanka poet Masuno Kōichi, it showed how enthusiasts, from a 17-year-old high school student to a 69-year-old former bank employee, post original tanka on their own websites, send poems to fellow tanka enthusiasts, and otherwise network through cyberspace. It is now estimated that there are at least 30,000 people publishing their tanka on the Internet, and in January the 1st Internet Tanka Contest (sponsored by NHK Gakuen and other groups) was held. Some 2,200 poems were submitted by about 1,000 poets ranging in age from 9 to 89.

At the end of 2000, the tanka monthly *Tanka kenkyū* celebrated the publication of its 800th issue by compiling an extra anthology supervised and edited by three established tanka poets, Homura Hiroshi, Katō Jirō, and Sakai Shūichi. It also offered an original poetry award (Utau Sakuhin Shō), for which entrants submitted their works mainly via the Internet.

Reflecting the lively tanka circles active on the Web, efforts have been made to sell tanka anthologies via that medium as well. Within Book Park, an on-demand publishing service operated by Fuji Xerox, where Katō works, is situated a new site for the publishing of tanka,

called “Uta-no-Ha” (<http://www.bookpark.ne.jp/utanoha/>). Five poem anthologies were put on sale on the site in January, including one by Katō himself, entitled *Īji pai* [Easy As Pie].

One reason that tanka has caught on so quickly on the Internet and flourished there is the brevity of the verse. Composed of only 31 syllables in 5-7-5-7-7 units, they are one of the literary genres best suited to electronic publishing and exchange. Among short-verse forms in Japanese literary tradition, there is also the yet-briefer haiku, with its units of 5-7-5 syllables, but a larger proportion of writers of tanka are among the younger generations who feel at home in the society of the Internet.

Tanka, moreover, are the product of the waka poetry tradition, in which poets commonly exchange verses and gather for poetry writing parties. For those carrying on that legacy today, there is nothing odd or uncomfortable about coming together to exchange poems via the Internet or holding Internet poetry gatherings in cyberspace chatrooms.

Through the ages, it was the norm for poets to belong to a poetry society and write tanka under the supervision of the society’s leader. Those who remained with the society as faithful followers of its head would, over the course of a long career, eventually be rewarded with prominent positions in the hierarchical world of the art. Today, those who prefer not to belong to such rigidly structured societies are turning to their computers and the Internet to fulfill their desire to write tanka in an atmosphere free of restraint. (*Koyama Tetsurō is editor, Cultural News Section, Kyodo News.*)

Big Sellers in the Recession

Kiyota Yoshiaki

Recession haunts Japan’s publishing world. Sales have fallen off four years in a row since 1997. While it may be hard times for books in print in general, sales of a few titles have been phenomenal—rising well over a million copies. Especially since 1997, a remarkable number of books have become big hits with readers. The top best-seller each year has sold far more than one million copies:

- 1997, *Shitsurakuen* [Lost Paradise], by Watanabe Jun’ichi (Kōdansha), 2.7 million copies
- 1998, *Taiga no itteki* [Little Drops in the Great River], by Itsuki Hiroyuki (Gentōsha), 1.8 million copies (JBN, No. 24, p. 18)
- 1999, *Gotai fumanzoku* [No One’s Perfect], by Ototake Hirotada (Kōdansha), 4.5 million copies (JBN, No. 27, p. 19)
- 2000, *Dakara anata mo ikinuite* [Here’s Why You Too Should Start Over], by Ōhira Mitsuyo (Kōdansha), 2.2 million copies (JBN, No. 32, p. 10)

Some of the books that ranked second or third on the best-seller’s list sold more than a million copies. Despite

the recession in the publishing business, the books that do sell, do exceedingly well. Why?

One reason is that publishers, book agents, and book-sellers adopt aggressive sales strategies for titles that are on the best-seller’s list. These works are showered with advertising and sales promotion funds, and prominently displayed in multiple ways in large bookstores. The synergistic effects of media coverage further accelerate sales. Because such efforts are directed at titles that are already doing well despite the recession, they sell all the better.

Two decades ago, in 1981, Japan had just been hit by the second oil shock, and just as today, books were not selling. It was then that *Madogiwa no Totto-chan* (*Little Girl at the Window*; trans. Dorothy Britton, Kodansha America) by TV personality Kuroyanagi Tetsuko started to set records. As of today, it has sold a total of 5 million copies, a figure not yet surpassed by any other title. No doubt that book’s unprecedented success and the phenomenon seen in today’s publishing world under recession share something in common. Recession seems to be the generator of phenomenally big sellers. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of Shuppan News Co.*)

New Titles

MEDIA

***Shimbun no shakaishi: Igrisu shoki shimbunshi kenkyū* [A Social History of Early Newspapers in Britain].** Shibata Masao. Kōyō Shobō, 2000. 216×151 mm. 230 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-7710-1162-1.

When Britain abolished licensing and censorship of publishing in the late-seventeenth century, it laid the foundations for freedom of speech and freedom of the press throughout the modern world. Exploring the early era of newspaper publishing in Britain in relation to the social and legal systems of the day, this book consists of nine scholarly papers written and published over a ten-year period by a specialist in media history.

While accounts of Britain's press history have traditionally emphasized the heroic struggle for freedom of speech, the author believes the establishment of newspaper publishing as a commercial enterprise was an equally important factor. Including under "newspapers" any news publication dealing with current affairs, he clarifies the role they played in society, taking into account such factors as distribution and circulation, libraries and other reading facilities, readers, and advertising.

The book includes an extensive bibliography, an index, and a wealth

of materials on relevant laws, circulation statistics, and other background information.

***Zusetsu Nihon no masu media* [The History of Japan's Mass Media in Diagrams].** Fujitake Akira, ed. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2000. 182×127 mm. 306 pp. ¥1,160. ISBN 4-14-001897-6.

Advances in information technology have set in motion major changes in the mass media. The spread of Internet use has already made it difficult to speak of mass media solely in terms of the conventional schema of one-way communication from media organ to audience.



Cover design: Kurata Akinori

Reflecting this era of dramatic change, this book is an extensive updating and revision of *Zusetsu Nihon no masu komyunikēshon* [A History of Mass Communication in Japan in Diagrams], published in 1980 and edited by Fujitake and the late Yamamoto Akira. While the present book, like the earlier volume, makes available a wealth of data for understanding the historical development and current condition of Japan's mass media, the situation is now described in fresh, concrete detail after twenty years of continuous change. Focusing on seven areas of the media (the original five: newspapers, broadcasting, publishing, advertising, and cinema; plus two additional areas, music and media frontiers), a number of the field's foremost scholars provide up-to-date sketches of developments backed by informative statistics and diagrams. The appended list of books for further reading and the chronology of the mass media further enhance the book's value as a reference source.

THOUGHT/PHILOSOPHY

***Dejitaru na jidai* [The Digital Age].** Nakamura Yūjirō. Seidosha, 2000. 195×133 mm. 374 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-7917-5856-0.

Born in 1925, Nakamura Yūjirō is a philosopher known for his groundbreaking inquiries into such subjects as common sense, the body, rhythm, and medicine. He has a particular interest in the nature of information as a new integrative locus of human knowledge that transcends the dichotomy of the material and the conceptual. In this book, he considers the phenomena he has personally experienced with the digitalization of technology since the late-1990s, and the fundamental issues involved.



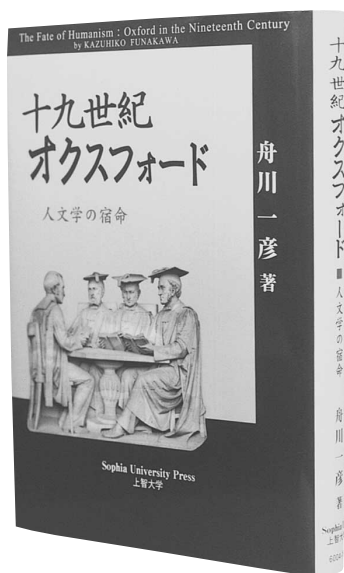
Compiling various essays and lectures previously prepared by the author, the book presents his perspectives from various angles on the intellectual and philosophical issues raised by the advent of the IT society. The topics considered include the virtual versus the real; information ethics and genetic engineering; the "resonance of rhythm," which the author sees as essential to true communication; the relationship of science and culture; the lives and work of various artists, including trumpet player Kondō Toshinori and butoh dancer Teshigawara Saburō; and, in an ontological study of basic verbs, the Japanese *naru* in comparison with the German *es gibt* as employed by Martin Heidegger and the French *il y a* as used by Emmanuel Levinas.

This is a book of philosophy for the new era.



Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 6.

Jūkyū-seiki Okusufōdo: Jimbun-gaku no shukumei [The Fate of Humanism: Oxford in the Nineteenth Century]. Funakawa Kazuhiko. Sophia University Press (Jōchi Daigaku), 2000. 215 × 151 mm. 318 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-7972-6004-1. The principles of modern education based primarily on classical Greek and Roman literature, history, and philosophy—humanism—were formulated at Oxford University in the nineteenth century. Tracing how that educational approach fulfilled its mission over the century that followed, this book examines the role of humanist scholarship in the West.



Cover design: Takami Aya

Despite the important role played by the humanities in the development of institutionalized research at universities, surprisingly little substantive study has been done on the classical humanism of the nineteenth century. This was because studies in humanism at British and American universities were largely led by members of their English studies departments, and little emphasis was placed on the elements of classical education.

The author attempts to reconstruct humanism as a unique and dynamic historical phenomenon that supports the spiritual root of today's faculties of the humanities.

Tegami no naka no Nihonjin [Japanese in Their Letters]. Handō Kazutoshi. Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 173 × 108 mm. 246 pp. ¥710. ISBN 4-16-660138-5. In this book, Handō Kazutoshi (b. 1930), former magazine editor and author of nonfiction works dealing mainly with modern history, discusses the qualities of letters written by prominent figures in Japanese history.

Handō describes the reading of these letters as having the immediacy of personal encounters. Among the works he examines are the terse, humor-filled requests for daily needs of Zen monk and poet Ryōkan (1758–1831); letters by the “Lady of Yodo,” concubine of the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) who, though later portrayed as an arrogant and tactless woman, nonetheless wrote letters of great courtesy and sensitivity; and the amusing missives of key Meiji Restoration activist Sakamoto Ryōma (1836–67) to his beloved sister Otome before he was assassinated for being ahead of his times.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

According to writer Kōda Rohan (1867–1947), a good letter is one that conveys the author's message clearly, is brief and to the point, and whose writing echoes the character of the author. Through the letters of various religious, military, and literary figures—including Buddhist priests Shinran (1173–1262) and Nichiren (1222–82), warlords Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and novelists Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) and Nagai Kafū (1879–1959)—this book reveals aspects of their personalities that in some cases typify and in others diverge from widely accepted images.

HISTORY

Nihon no rekishi: “Nihon” to wa nani ka [History of Japan: What Is “Japan”?]. Amino Yoshihiko. Kōdansha, 2000. 193 × 135 mm. 370 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-268900-6. Amino Yoshihiko (b. 1928) has devoted much of his career to reevaluating the overall framework of Japanese history. In this work he mobilizes all the scholarship he has pursued thus far to the task of identifying what we know as “Japan.”

Commonly held ideas that define what Japan is, says Amino, are based on misconceptions: for example, that it is an isolated island country; that its agriculture centered around rice cultivation since the Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C.–ca. A.D. 300); and that its people are racially homogenous. He calls such widely accepted views fabrications, partly remnants of the prewar imperialistic view of history that traced Japan's origins in the “age of the gods,” and partly as errors resulting from blind spots in the study of modern history.

“The Japanese,” he points out, denotes nothing more or less than the people under the national system of the state of Japan. Noting that the very name Nihon (or Nippon; Japan) was settled upon at the end of the seventh century, Amino maintains that this must therefore be regarded as an important historic milestone and the true starting point of Japanese self-awareness as a national entity. While exposing the flaws in conventional images of the Japanese nation and its people, he paints a new picture of its history spanning some 1,300 years.

This book is the introductory volume to Kōdansha's twenty-six volume *Nihon no rekishi* [History of Japan].



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

ECONOMY

Kenshō baburu: Han'i-naki aya-machi [The "Bubble" Economy: The Innocent Mistake]. Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, ed. Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, 2000. 194 × 129 mm. 278 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-532-16361-7.

Japan in the late 1980s was swept by a wave of financial speculation and asset inflation such as it had never experienced before. The phase in the 1990s after the financial madness and investment intoxication died down has been labeled Japan's "lost decade." As the economic stagnation and lethargy of post-bubble recession drags on, the "bubble" is being called the greatest failure of the postwar Japanese economy.



Cover design: Kawakami Shigeo

Written by journalists for a major financial and business daily newspaper who witnessed the bubble's economic frenzy at close quarters, this book is a careful reexamination of exactly what happened during those years. It looks at the phenomenon in terms of circumstances, morals, and people's moods, analyzing motives that now seem misguided but in the context of the time seemed to be the only feasible response.

Through exhaustive scrutiny of the individual elements that combined to overheat the economy—including a policy of ultra-low interest rates under the slogan of international cooperation, the subsequent surge in land prices, the collapse of the bureaucracy-led mechanism of policy-making, and the general euphoria of the people—the book explains the true nature of the country's economic wrong turn in its historical context and offers a prescription for healthy economic growth

for the future. Included in the appendix is a handy chronology of the bubble economy era and its aftermath (1985–2000).

Shijō-shugi no shūen: Nihon keizai o dō suru no ka [The Demise of the Free-market Doctrine: What to Do about the Japanese Economy]. Sawa Takamitsu. Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 173 × 104 mm. 232 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430692-2.

The majority of Japanese economists today are advocates of free market economics. They argue vehemently for Americanization of Japan's "Japanese-style" economic system and for comprehensive reform in keeping with free market principles. Against this backdrop, the econometrician author of this book calls for a reappraisal of the market-first approach.



Under the free market policies advanced by British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, the author argues, the so-called power of the market became a form of oppression against the weak of society, and, as European voters reacted against such policies, left-of-center governments came to power throughout the region. Noting these developments, the author suggests that reform toward a more market-driven system may be necessary but is not sufficient. While ensuring efficiency by carrying out free market reforms, he argues, "third way" reforms should be implemented to minimize such negative side effects as an increased gap between the rich and poor, deterioration of public health and education services, and breakdown of the traditional family unit. He outlines a plan for building an efficient and just system while checking excessive market tendencies.

SOCIETY

Bosei-ai shinwa no wana [Pitfalls of the Maternal Love Myth]. Ōhinata Masami. Nihon Hyōronsha, 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 232 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-535-56156-7.

Written by a woman who has studied the subject of maternity for over twenty years, this is a critique of the conventional notion that mothers are by nature loving, nurturing, and devoted to the healthy development of their children.



Cover design: Komai Yūji

Though not denying the importance of raising children with love and affection, the author (b. 1950) calls attention to the problems accumulating around the prevailing myths about childrearing and motherhood. In Japan, these include the myth of maternal love, which glorifies the mother alone as supremely qualified to raise children, and the myth according to which it is believed a child must be cared for exclusively by its mother until the age of three. She identifies these and other myths as the products of national policies devised in the Taishō era (1912–1926) and as essentially delusions unrelated to the realities of mothers' lives today. Such myths, she asserts, make women waver in attempting to plan their lives, exacerbate the stresses of child-rearing, and inhibit the development of bonds between children and their fathers. The author warns of the grave potential ramifications of the myth of maternal love, noting how increased childcare stress, tension between spouses, and isolation from society can lead to child abuse and other extreme behavior.

A culture that makes childraising a purely maternal responsibility, observes Ōhinata, is one that does not

require men to develop as fathers. She criticizes the lack of measures in the employment system that would allow fathers to participate more fully in raising their children and advocates an approach to childcare based not on a presumed maternal instinct but on the joint task of childraising by mother, father, and community.

Chichioya kakumei [The Fatherhood Revolution]. Nagayama Yasuo.

Shinchōsha, 2000. 190 × 131 mm. 218 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-424103-2.

Written by a practicing dentist and literary critic (b. 1962), this is an empirical-cum-literary study of fatherhood. The author explains how, while neither a child psychologist nor a sociologist, he was inspired to write such a book by the birth of his own child.

Being a father is intrinsically a burden, but Nagayama writes of the “three agonies”—of just being a father, of being a father in Japan, and of being a father in these times. Taking the realities of parenthood as his starting point, he considers why the difficulties of fatherhood are thus compounded, what lies at the end of that struggle, and what it really means to have children and raise them properly. Through a broad inquiry—ranging from how Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) and Mori Ōgai (1862–1922) measured up as fathers, to aspects of works by such contemporary writers as Ōe Kenzaburō (b. 1935), Yū Miri (b. 1968), and Machida Kō (b. 1962)—he concludes that to be a father and deal seriously with one’s children is to take part in the continuing revolution aimed at making the world a better place.

This book offers sympathetic encouragement to Japanese fathers struggling to raise children in a society where traditional paternal values have eroded.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

Danjo masatsu [Friction Between the Sexes]. Kashima Takashi. Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 193 × 132 mm. 286 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-00-001291-6.

Despite the enactment of the Law on Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women in 1986, Japan’s corporate society is still dragging its feet in establishing true equality for men and women. Why do calls for equality end in mere lip service? Why do managerial jobs almost invariably go to men while women comprise the majority of part-time workers? Why are more and more women unattracted by the idea of marriage?



Cover design: Fujii Keiko

The answers to these questions, says Kashima, lie in the gender value gap—women having already embraced new values while men continue to cling to older conventions—and in the slow pace of change in social institutions as a whole. Companies, communities, households, marriages, and families are still largely premised on the traditional gender roles of breadwinner husband and homemaker wife. Lifestyles, meanwhile, are diversifying and values are changing at an unprecedented pace, forcing people to adjust and generating conflict and friction.

The frictions are not solely those that arise between men and women. The author considers their multi-layered nature, taking into account such factors as the economic hard times, the conflicts of interest between full-time housewives and working women, and the emergence of male workers who have begun to question the priorities of conventional corporate management.

A journalist with a long-standing interest in gender equality, the author draws on years of investigation, a rich

store of data, and a keen understanding of the issues involved to analyze the current state and future prospects of progress toward the ideal of gender equality.

Josei rōdō to kigyō shakai [Working Women and Corporate Society].

Kumazawa Makoto. Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 173 × 105 mm. 230 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430694-9.

For many years, working women in Japan have struggled under an employment structure that relegates them to low-paid, subordinate, and short-lived positions. Under the 1999 revision of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, enacted as part of Japan’s broader effort to create a society free of gender discrimination, women’s participation in the workforce has diversified, expanding to include professional and managerial positions, clerical work, and temporary dispatch hire, as well as “freelance part-time” work, late-night jobs, and “part-time” positions (in reality equivalent to a full-time work load but at much lower wage rates). But while the bastions of a discriminatory employment structure have thus been shaken somewhat, real reform is still a long way off. Many women keenly feel that traditional male and female roles have changed little in corporate society.



Drawing on a wealth of data, this book provides a statistical account of the changes in Japan’s female workforce over the years, describes its growing diversity and depth, and analyzes the persistence of gender-biased job assignment practices from the perspective of corporate logic and in view of increasingly independent-minded women. The author also reports on a number of new endeavors to improve employment conditions for women and overcome gender discrimination in corporate society.



Cover design: Sekiguchi Seiji

***Jūnana-sai no kiseki* [Since the Age of Seventeen]. Hashiguchi Jōji.** Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 215 × 150 mm. 511 pp. ¥2,571. ISBN 4-16-356550-7. In 1988, photographer Hashiguchi Jōji (George) (b. 1949) published *Jūnana-sai no chizu* [A Map of Seventeen-Year-Olds], a collection of photographic portraits of 102 seventeen-year-olds from all over Japan, along with their comments on the topics of “the present” and “the future.” The present volume is a follow-up in which he interviewed thirty-eight of the original group to find out how they have spent the intervening decade and learn about their current thoughts and aims.

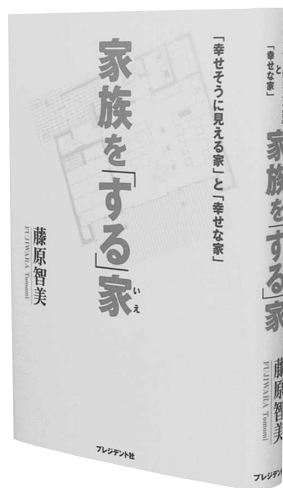
Each interview is presented as a separate chapter beginning with a photograph of the subject at age seventeen and ending with a photograph of him or her taken in 1999. In the symbolically placed intervening texts the subjects relate—in tones sometimes sincere, sometimes cheery, nostalgic, or dry—the life paths they have taken across the span of time separating the two photographs. At seventeen they had expressed their dreams for the future—becoming a race driver, civil servant, hairdresser, a sumo referee, or getting married and raising a family. A decade later, some had fulfilled those dreams while others had followed quite different paths. Each chapter tells a unique story of youth.

Rejecting the idea of comparing the way different individuals live, the author affirms that one person’s life is exclusively his or her own, and for that reason is intrinsically precious—a sentiment that many readers of this book will share.

***Kazoku o “suru” ie: “Shiawasesō ni mieru ie” to “shiawase na ie”* [“Doing” Family: “Happy-looking” Homes and Happy Homes]. Fujiwara Tomomi.** President Sha, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-8334-9060-9.

Winner of the Akutagawa Prize in 1992 for *Untenshi* [Driver], writer Fujiwara Tomomi (b. 1955) examines in this non-fiction book the issues of home and family, including their relation to the recent rise in juvenile crime.

Marketing strategies in Japan’s housing industry generally target married women in their mid-thirties. The homes built often display a patchwork of styles based on various images of home-and-family happiness, from “American suburban” to doll-house style to European rococo. When reality fails to live up to such visions, it is the housewives who face the struggle to mold reality into the preferred ideal. Husbands, meanwhile, are likely to regard their primary family responsibility as accomplished after the purchase of a home, and stay aloof from household affairs.



Cover design: Ogata Tōru

In this context, the author observes, a family becomes for some people somewhat of a contrivance, rather than a natural unit that forms as a result of familial bonds. He considers what kind of dwelling, as the receptacle of family life, best suits this era of the contrived family. Pointing to examples from Western societies, he stresses the importance of the master bedroom as the fulcrum of the home—a point reflecting his concern about the recent popularity of houses in which husband and wife have separate bedrooms.

***Kindai kazoku no magariikado* [A Turning Point for the Modern Family]. Ochiai Emiko.** Kadokawa Shoten, 2000. 194 × 132 mm. 280 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-04-702113-X.

The image of family envisioned by most Japanese consists of a breadwinner father, a nurturing mother as a full-time homemaker who takes care of her husband and children, and two or three charming young children. According to this author, a sociologist and researcher on the modern family, this nuclear family scene is simply the product of the specific historical circumstances of Japan’s modern era.



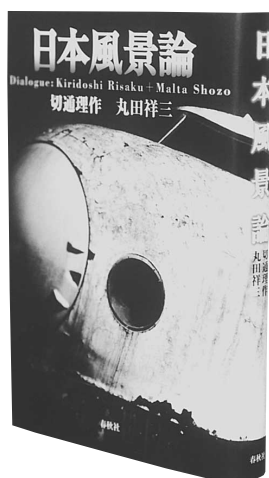
Cover design: Kadokawa Shoten

In this book, Ochiai probes the nature of the family from various angles, explaining the realities of the Japanese family from the Edo period (1603–1867) to the present, and analyzing images of the family as presented in women’s magazines, television serials, and other popular media. The “turning point” in the title refers to both the nature of the modern family and to the discourse regarding it. She predicts the advent beyond that point of an “age of the individual” and the emergence of the postmodern family as “a network that links the life course of the individuals within it.” To make the requisite theoretical breakthrough in discourse on the modern family, she argues, it is necessary to combine studies of the family, which have tended to focus on mentality, with demographic studies.

Moving back and forth between discussions of theory and presentations of empirical material, the author projects a vision of family life after the current period of radical change in familial, marital, and parent-child relations.

Nihon fūkei ron [Scenes of Japan]. Kiridōshi Risaku and Maruta Shōzō. Shunjūsha, 2000. 194 × 131 mm. 358 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-393-33193-1. This book consists of an in-depth discussion on contemporary society between critic Kiridōshi Risaku and photographer Maruta (Malta) Shōzō. Former high school classmates, the authors were both born in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympic Games and in many ways a major watershed for Japanese society.

The dialogue unfolds in three parts. In the first, the authors focus on railways as a symbol of the modern period, beginning with the topic of the Shinkansen “bullet train,” which began operation the year they were born, and recalling the era of the Japanese National Railways’ “Discover Japan” campaign, which was aimed at increasing passenger traffic by inducing Japanese to “rediscover” their own country.



Cover design: Nakayama Ginji

In part two, they reexamine the period through which they and their TV generation lived from the viewpoint of their own roots in “new town” (newly developed suburban) communities, considering, for example, the progress of the automobile-oriented culture as manifested in family restaurants, drive-in fast food chains, and large, immaculate supermarkets.

In part three, the discussion turns to war as they learned of it vicariously through their parents’ generation. A story about how city dwellers found their way out of the carnage in the wake of wartime airraids by following streetcar tracks gives way to the epilogue featuring the *chinchin-densha* streetcars. Having begun with the space-age, high-speed “bullet train,” the dialogue concludes with a look at the more leisurely pace of the trolley

cars that shared the streets with pedestrians.

EDUCATION

Kodomo no kiki o dō miru ka [Understanding the Crisis among Children]. Ogi Naoki. Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 173 × 104 mm. 244 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-00-430686-8.

The environments of children in Japan are in an increasingly critical state. The breakdown of discipline in elementary schools is destroying normal classroom study; violent crimes are committed by ostensibly “ordinary” children in fits of rage; bullying (*ijime*), while becoming more covert and cruel, is still spreading; more and more children are opting not to go to school; and adults are committing new forms of child abuse. So grave have such phenomena become that many observers regard them as symptomatic of a broader “social pathology” that extends beyond the confines of individual schools and homes.

In this book, a former junior high school teacher who now heads a clinical education research facility considers what is happening in the world of children today and where clues may be found to reversing its downward spiral. Drawing on extensive field work, the author explains the actual nature of the crisis and the diverse social and historical factors that spawned it. From that vantage point, he searches for ways to rejuvenate childrearing and educational practices.

Building on such concepts as community involvement in the childcare and educational systems, and the creation of adult-child partnerships as one of the top priorities of adult society, the author calls for a break from conventional attitudes to schooling and childrearing.



CULTURE/ENTERTAINMENT

Hibi danshō: Ozawa Shōichi teki jinsei [Every Day a Confab: The Ozawa Shōichi Life]. Ozawa Shōichi. Shōbunsha, 2000. 192 × 131 mm. 312 pp. ¥2,100. ISBN 4-7949-6459-5. This is a collection of talk show-style conversations conducted with various personalities in recent years by Ozawa Shōichi (b. 1929), an actor and popular-entertainment historian.



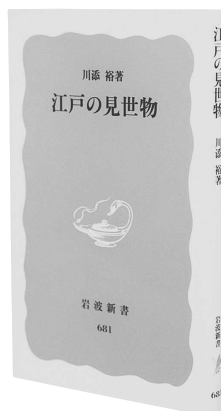
Cover design: Minami Shimbō

A regular personality on a long-running radio program, Ozawa is well known as a master conversationalist. In one session, he and *rakugo* (comic monologue) performer Yanagiya Kosanji enjoy a lively exchange about a sushi-and-noodle shop on the island of Sado. With Amino Yoshihiko, a historian with a special interest in nonagrarian people, Ozawa displays his own erudition in exploring the roots of *sarushibai* (performing monkey shows). With critic and Kabuki scholar Gunji Masakatsu, he considers the Yoshiwara district, formerly a center of licensed prostitution and popular entertainment in the Japanese capital. In other sessions, Ozawa engages horse trainer and former jockey Shibata Masato in a spirited discussion of the fine points of horse racing; joins playwright-novelist Inoue Hisashi and actor Seki Keiroku in reminiscing about comic actor Atsumi Kiyoshi (1928–96), star of the popular *Otoko wa tsurai yo* (It's Tough Being a Man) film series; and trades boasts about pet cats with Sano Yōko, the picture book author of *Hyakuman kai ikita neko* (trans., *The Cat Who Lived a Million Times*).

Featuring a diverse lineup of guests and covering a wealth of topics, this book showcases Ozawa's humor and gift of gab.

Edo no misemono [Edo Misemono]. Kawazoe Yū. Iwanami Shoten, 2000. 173 × 104 mm. 246 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-430681-7.

Kawazoe (b. 1956), a representative of the Institute of Misemono Cultures, an organization devoted to the study of *misemono* (public shows and exhibitions), sees such events not only as an important barometer of popular culture during the Edo period (1603–1867) but as a feature of the historical backdrop of today's mass culture. In this book, he prevails upon readers to think of *misemono* not in the narrow historical sense, but in a broad purview that includes television programs, zoos, and other “shows” as we know them today.



In its heyday in the late-Edo period, *misemono* was show business on a scale that sometimes outstripped even the Kabuki theater. Late-Edo shows were far different from exhibitions of the strange and grotesque with which many people associate them nowadays. Typical attractions included displays of handicrafts skillfully made from common materials like bamboo, shell, and porcelain; marvelous acrobatic feats; lifelike dolls; and camels and other rare animals from abroad that were advertised as having the power to alleviate the symptoms of smallpox or other ailments and to bring about various benefits such as concubial harmony.

The author bases his description largely on accounts by people of the Edo period who actually saw such shows, and on the *misemono-e* (*ukiyo-e* prints and handbills) that were distributed in conjunction with them. From these valuable primary sources, as well as statistics on such aspects of the shows as the size of venues, profits earned, and effect on the economy, he constructs a convincing picture of this distinctive genre of popular entertainment.

Izakaya kamome uta [Ode to Izakaya]. Ōta Kazuhiko. Shōgakukan, 2000. 187 × 129 mm. 276 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-09-379177-5.

Ōta Kazuhiko (b. 1946) is a graphic designer and university professor. This book is an account of his conversations and experiences while traveling around Japan drinking in *izakaya* (drinking establishments) he had never visited before.

Wherever his journey took him, the author chose only long-established taverns and bars that enjoyed the loyal patronage of local people. After arriving in an unfamiliar town and securing lodgings, he would stroll around the streets where its taverns and bars were clustered, enter one that seemed suitable, and inquire about its menu. He would order a local dish or two, and while drinking fall naturally into conversation with the proprietor and any other customers who happened to be around. Invariably, people would gradually open up as they inbibed. “In virtually every drinking establishment,” the author observes, “as long as I went in with an open heart, there was always someone there willing to tell a story.”



Cover design: Ōta Kazuhiko

The author has a taste not only for good drink, but also music and the cinema. In the taverns of provincial towns throughout Japan, he discusses old movies, meets aging jazz musicians, and listens to extraordinary tales from before, during, and immediately after World War II.

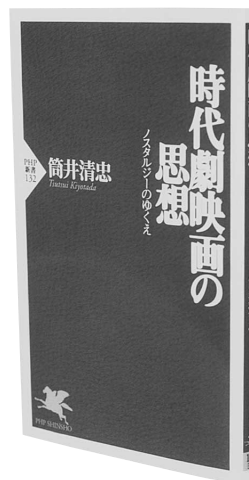
Reading Ōta's book of tavern yarns is almost as pleasurable as embarking on one's own journey to meet such people and hear their tales.

Jidaigeki eiga no shisō: Nosutaruji no yukue [The Philosophy of Period Films: Beyond Nostalgia]. Tsutsui Kiyotada. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2000. 172 × 105 mm. 212 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-569-61338-1.

Although Japan's *jidaigeki* or period films provide useful clues and sources for understanding Japanese culture and society, they have been the subject of very little substantive scholarship. Through a careful consideration of an extensive selection of pre- and postwar films, this author (b. 1948) tries to get to the essence of the *jidaigeki* culture from a sociological point of view.

The book reveals how the nature of period films—their content, images, protagonists, and so on—changed with the times from the emergence of the genre in 1908 to the time of director Kurosawa Akira. The author considers the distinctive characteristics and aesthetic of each studio or director, and provides valuable insights into the workings of the industry at that time. Also intriguing is his analysis of films about the end of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867). Dividing these into pro- and anti-shogunate films, he maintains that the principal themes of both types were nostalgia for bygone days and the mourning of people who died unnatural deaths in the political turmoil of the time.

Tsutsui suggests that period films offered models of upright and admirable character. In their depiction of figures of strong character and high moral principles, as well as of the beautiful natural environment in which those people live, he believes, period films hold considerable significance for our troubled contemporary age. He advocates their further devel-



Cover design: Ashizawa Taii and Nozu Akiko

opment dissemination for the purpose of more than just nostalgia.

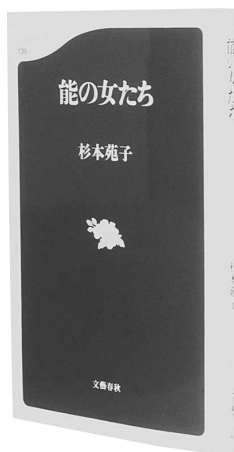
With its numerous photographs and reader-friendly style, the book is also useful as a general commentary on *jidaigeki*.

***Nō no onna tachi* [Female Characters of Noh]. Sugimoto Sonoko.**

Bungei Shunjū, 2000. 173 × 108 mm. 214 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-16-660139-3. Noh, a form of musical dance-drama originating in the fourteenth century, is Japan's oldest professional dramatic art. This book, by a writer (b. 1925) known for her unique works of historical fiction, explores the stories of female conflict and struggle passed down in Noh's dramatic traditions, taking up twelve plays including "Hagoromo," "Kanawa," and "Sumidagawa."

Noh plays often feature female characters, although as a rule these roles are played by male performers. The actor transforms himself into the required female type—young maiden, middle-aged mother, old woman, demon, deity—by donning the appropriate mask and designated costume of the role. The effectiveness of such devices is evident in the electric force that can bind both audience and stage.

The book examines in detail the impressive dramaturgy to be found behind the rigorously stylized performances: the complex jealousies of two sisters in love with the same man; the embarrassment of a stunning beauty when an aging servant becomes infatuated with her; the frenzied grief of a mother whose child has died.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

***Shōwa no kurashi hakubutsukan* [The Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era]. Koizumi Kazuko.**

Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2000. 210 × 148 mm. 159 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-309-72704-2. Koizumi Kazuko is a specialist in architectural engineering and the history of Japanese furniture and interior design. She is head of the Institute for Research on the History of Daily Life and director of the Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era, located in Tokyo's Ōta ward. The museum is the house designed by her architectural engineer father for their family and built in 1950 according to the requirements for applicants for low-interest loans from the government-affiliated Housing Loan Corporation. Preserving the original structure and materials of the modest urban dwelling of the era before Japan's rapid economic growth, the museum displays the furnishings, kitchen wares, clothing, and other articles of daily life from the Shōwa era extending from 1926 to 1989.



Cover design: Fire Dragon

Among the furnishings and household goods of those times are many thought of now as nostalgic relics of a bygone age: the *chabudai* or low folding table used in tatami rooms, the mosquito net (*kaya*), the multipurpose wooden tub (*tarai*), foot-warmer hot-water bottles made of tin and ceramic (*yutampo*), the pre-electricity icebox, to name a few. Introducing the uses and lore of these items common until the mid-1960s, Koizumi offers an intimate look at the early postwar part of Shōwa (1945–89) through reminiscences of her own childhood and family life.

NONFICTION

***Sei to shi no Minya Konga* [Life and Death on Minya Konka]. Abe Mikio.**

Yama to Keikoku Sha, 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 318 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-635-17153-1.

Abe Mikio (b. 1953) is a photographer whose work mainly depicts mountainous, polar, and other remote regions of the world.

In 1981, Abe took part in an expedition sent by a Hokkaidō mountaineering association to climb Minya Konka (7,556 m.) in China's Sichuan province. Within about one hundred meters of the peak, one member of the party had a fall and the group decided to turn back. Just as they started down, seven of the party, tied together by a single rope, fell to their deaths before Abe's eyes.

As he points out in this book, Abe attributes the tragedy to problems in the group's demanding schedule, in the level of mutual understanding among its members, and in their knowledge of high-altitude climbing. To help prevent such loss of life on mountains, he has worked since the accident to educate people on the dangers of avalanches. In 1994, however, he received more bad news: colleagues in his educational activities went missing on Minya Konka soon after reporting that they had found what seemed to be the remains of four of the climbers from the 1981 expedition.

The book retraces Abe's nineteen-year association with Minya Konka, including his efforts to recover the remains of his fellow climbers and fulfill what he sees as his destiny as a survivor.



Cover design: Miyauchi Hiroyuki

Bashō wa donna tabi o shita no ka [What Travel Was Like in Bashō's Day]. Kanamori Atsuko. Shōbunsha, 2000. 215 × 152 mm. 460 pp. ¥4,600. ISBN 4-7949-6457-9.

In this work, a documentary writer (1946) recreates the travels of Matsuo Bashō, the renowned late-seventeenth-century poet who journeyed on foot through various areas of Japan and wrote prose and poetry based on his experiences in the places he visited.

Works such as Bashō's poetic diary *Oku no hosomichi* [The Narrow Road to the Deep North] and the diary of his traveling companion and protégé Kawai Sora (1649–1710) are written too pithily to yield much information about what Bashō's travels as a whole were actually like. The author therefore adopts a method of comparing Bashō's and Sora's writings with selections from some forty other travel diaries.

The author chronologically portrays what travel in general must have been like during the Edo period (1603–1867), and elucidates the distinctive features of each place Bashō visited, introducing descriptions by his contemporaries. The interweaving of these two approaches offers clues for understanding Bashō from today's vantage point in terms of the historical-geographical form of literature that the poet himself sought to achieve. Along the way she introduces the reader to numerous reference works, paintings, and other relevant materials.



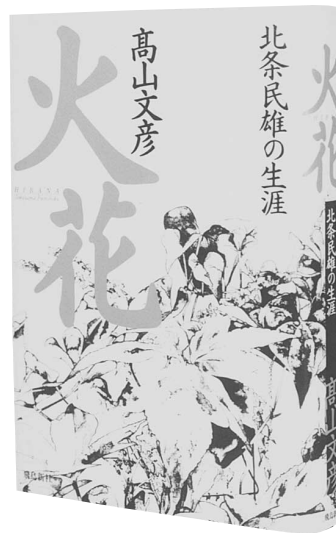
Cover design: Minami Shimbō

Hibana: Hōjō Tamio no shōgai [Sparks: The Life of Hōjō Tamio]. Takayama Fumihiko. Asuka Shinsha, 1999. 194 × 133 mm. 398 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-87031-373-1.

Hōjō Tamio (1914–37) contracted leprosy, or Hansen's disease, at the age of nineteen. At twenty, he was admitted to a leprosarium, and he died at the age of twenty-three. Hōjō proved a gifted writer, authoring several masterful stories on the theme of leprosy, including *Inochi no shoya* [The First Night of Life].

In Hōjō's day, leprosy was considered incurable and feared as a disease that could be caught even from a cremated leper's ashes. Lepers suffered forced segregation under the Leprosy Prevention Law and were subjected to prejudice and discrimination. In many cases even their own families struck them from the family register and severed relations with them. Leprosariums were known to force inmates to undergo vasectomies.

This book sets Hōjō's life and literary world against that social backdrop. It describes his relationship with Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), who introduced Hōjō's work to the reading public, supported, and loved him. It also describes Hōjō's close ties with friends in the leprosarium who shared his love of literature.



Cover design: Ogata Shūichi

Although Hansen's disease was rendered completely curable by medication during the postwar period, it was not until 1996 that the Leprosy Prevention Law was repealed. Indeed, in view of lingering prejudices, the author has chosen not to divulge certain facts of Hōjō's life, including his real name.

Kitazono-chō kyūjū-san banchi: Amano Tadashi san no koto [Number Ninety-three Kitazono-chō: The Story of Amano Tadashi]. Yamada Minoru. Henshū Kōbō Noa, 2000. 193 × 131 mm. 212 pp. ¥1,995.

Yamada Minoru (b. 1930) is a writer and scholar of French literature. In this book, he describes the world of poet Amano Tadashi (1909–93) through recollections of visits to Amano's home in Shimogamo, Kyoto, the address given in the title.

Twenty-five years after first meeting the poet himself, Yamada read an anthology of Amano's poetry and was immediately hooked. Their houses being not far apart, he began visiting Amano to talk with him. Amano was then 72 years old. A rather shy person, Yamada always visited him with an editor of his acquaintance. Amano's literary style was caustic and probing, yet at the same time full of spirit and humor.



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

Yamada notes how Amano gradually gained weight over the last decade of his life, and muses that the poet's language seemed to lose its critical edge as his condition changed. In this process, it seems, he sees Amano as a man growing old, and superimposes on this portrait an image of his own future.

The pages are enlivened with Yamada's keen, French Moralistic-style observations of human nature.



Cover design: Tabuchi Yūichi

***Nihonjin no bōshi* [The Hat as Symbol of Modernity in Japan]. Higuchi Satoru. Kōdansha, 2000. 193 × 136 mm. 446 pp. ¥3,400. ISBN 4-06-210296-X.**

In the era when men wore their hair in topknots, few Japanese wore hats. With the opening of the country to the West and the national effort to absorb Western culture and modernize, men cut off their topknots and began wearing Western headgear. Today, however, is once more an age of mostly hatless fashion.

This author (b. 1948), a literary critic, noticed that writers and artists from both East and West have expressed distinctive views about hats. He considers poet Nakahara Chūya (1907–37), who donned a pot hat for a portrait photograph taken soon after he moved to Tokyo; Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916), who introduced hats into almost all of his novels; and Sōseki protégé Uchida Hyakken (1889–1971), whose works include numerous memorable passages on the topic of derby hats. He locates other hat-related lore in the works and lives of Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), and Mishima Yukio (1925–1970), and considers such Western examples as Jonathan Swift’s philosophy of hats, the strange hat Gustave Flaubert put on Charles Bovary’s head, and paintings by Edouard Manet of men wearing top hats.

In keeping with poet Hagiwara Sakutarō’s (1886–1942) famous line about “the face beneath the hat,” the author describes the various visages under the hats. Probing the endless enigmas of hats in the literature, art, and society of various times and places, he devises an original hat phi-

losophy of his own in considering the “face” of modernity.

***Pikaresuku: Dazai Osamu den* [Picaresque: A Biography of Dazai Osamu]. Inose Naoki. Shōgakukan, 2000. 194 × 132 mm. 486 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-09-394166-1.**

Inose Naoki (b. 1946) is the author of numerous works of nonfiction dealing with the spiritual and cultural history of modern and contemporary Japan. This volume on the life and work of Dazai Osamu (1909–48) completes a trilogy of biographies of prominent writers.

Dazai made five attempts to take his own life either alone or with a love-suicide partner. From the evidence of Dazai’s circumstances on each occasion, the author concludes that these were “pretend” suicides, or what he calls “suicides staged in order to go on living.” He attributes Dazai’s “failure to fail” in the fifth attempt to the single-mindedness and calculating, methodical nature of his partner on that occasion, Yamazaki Tomie. In this way, the author seeks to revise the commonly accepted view of Dazai as a weak-willed man who thought himself unfit to be counted among humanity.



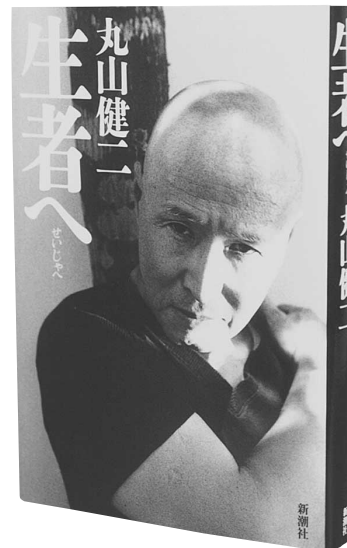
Cover design: Suzuki Seiichi Dezainshitsu

The book begins with the enigma of a fragment recovered from Dazai’s wastepaper basket that is thought to have been a draft of a suicide note. It reads: “They’re all mean and greedy. Ibuse-san is a scoundrel.” Writer Ibuse Masuji (1898–1993), best known for his novel *Kuroi ame* [Black Rain], was Dazai’s lifelong mentor and supporter. In considering the true nature of their relationship,

the author draws on a wealth of materials to overturn conventional images of Ibuse and throw light on the differences between the two men—both of whom wrote creative works based on citations from other writers—in their attitudes toward and skill in incorporating the writing of others into their works.

***Seija e* [To Become a “Living Being”]. Maruyama Kenji. Shinchōsha, 2000. 196 × 135 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-10-419203-1.**

Since receiving the Akutagawa Prize at the age of twenty-three, Maruyama Kenji has distanced himself from literary circles while continuing to write from his base in the Azumino area of Nagano prefecture. Common to his novels is an intense urge to give expression to a free, proudly aloof spirit and to pursue the essential energy of existence.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

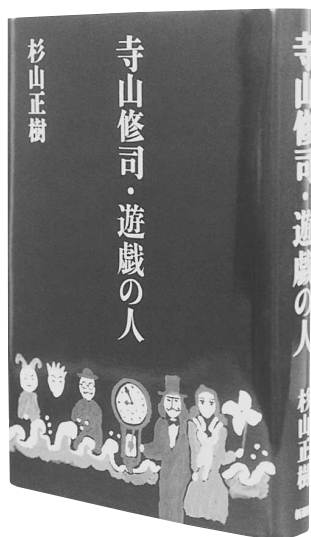
This work is an autobiographical essay in which Maruyama pointedly asks, both of himself and of others, what it is to be a “living being.” The essay poignantly attests to the discord with others that he has experienced since childhood as a result of his tendency to passionate ideas and behavior, and to his rejection of his father, a high school literature teacher who loved the masterpieces of the Japanese literary tradition. Captivated by Melville’s *Moby Dick*, he resolves to become a novelist despite the enmity he feels toward his father for “escaping into literature.” Yet even today, though his reputation as a writer is now secure, he remains averse to stability and yearns for ever-higher levels of spiritual inspiration and adventure.

Terayama Shūji: Yūgi no hito

[Terayama Shūji, Man of Play].

Sugiyama Seiju. Shinchōsha, 2000. 196 × 135 mm. 302 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-10-441401-8.

Terayama Shūji (1935–83) was not only a haiku and tanka poet but also a playwright, scriptwriter, novelist, essayist, and song lyricist. While still a university student, and at a time when tanka poetry was expected to express a straightforward emotional response to reality, Terayama burst onto the literary scene with purely fictional verses entirely unrelated to his own experience. Attracting attention as an avant-garde poet, he continued to defy conventional values and accepted attitudes through diverse avant-garde activities that made him a leading figure among the youth of his day.



Cover design: Wada Makoto

While often composed of elements from previous writings, both his own and others', Terayama's works nonetheless displayed a genius for molding those elements into fresh fictive worlds. Although he was frequently denounced and dismissed as a fraud in some quarters, he gained a considerable following throughout the world.

The author, a close associate of Terayama's since his literary debut, provides a detailed account of the writer's work and scandal-filled life, from his mysterious background and spectacular rise to fame, through a career lashed equally by praise and censure, accusations of plagiarism, and an alleged peeping-Tom incident, to his untimely death at the age of forty-seven.

FICTION

Hiji [Secret]. Kōno Taeko. Shinchōsha, 2000. 191 × 132 mm. 268 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-10-307806-5.

Just before their formal engagement, Seitarō witnesses his girlfriend Asako's involvement in a traffic accident that leaves her with seven stitches in her left cheek and a permanent scar.

The two are married and Seitarō enjoys a successful career at a general trading company, rising to the position of managing director. So perfect is their conjugal bliss that even their son remarks that they are his favorite married couple. Their two sons give them no trouble as they grow up, and both find themselves ideal marriage partners.

The secret is the conflict in Seitarō's heart over the scar on Asako's face. He wants to tell her that he married her not out of chivalry or a sense of duty but because he really wanted to, but precisely because he thinks she must have wondered about that herself, he can't bring himself to say so. When Asako dies suddenly, Seitarō finds he has fulfilled his vow of togetherness until death without ever being able to say the words he has kept locked in his heart.

Despite the profound emotions involved, Seitarō's inner struggle is told simply and without exaggeration. Though the couple's trouble-free married life is almost too good to be true, the fine detail with which their daily life is portrayed is vivid and realistic.

It is a superb example of the literature of conjugal love written with outstanding skill.



Cover design: Shinchōsha



Cover design: Maebashi Takamichi

Inochi [Life]. Yū Miri. Shōgakukan, 2000. 194 × 133 mm. 231 pp. ¥1,238. ISBN 4-09-379204-6.

Author Yū Miri won the Akutagawa Prize in 1997 for *Kazoku shinema* [Family Cinema]. This work, in which she confronts and lays bare the painful facts of her own life, has been the center of controversy.

Writing with great intensity, she tells of her relationship with a married man, her pregnancy by him, the man's change of heart, her part in the battle against cancer of playwright Higashi Yutaka, whom she admired and lived with for ten years. Eventually she gave birth to the child out of wedlock, and Higashi's death followed not long after. Admitting that she probably would have had an abortion if Higashi had not developed cancer, she wonders how a person could thus reject the prospect of one life ending and at the same time consider preventing another from beginning. Against this backdrop of the cycles of life and death, she weaves a story touching on such diverse themes as the love-hate relations between men and women, the nature of family, the problems she faces as a Korean resident in Japan, aspects of medical care in Japan and abroad, and the drugs and final-stage treatment of cancer. Also included is an account of the court case in which she was sued for libel and invasion of privacy for her novel *Ishi ni oyogu sakana* [Fish Swimming through Stones].

Yū published this work in serial form in a weekly journal even as what she depicted was actually unfolding. A touching and heroic self-portrait, it caused a sensation when it appeared.

Jimbochō no kaijin [Strange Characters of Jimbochō]. Kida Jun'ichirō. Tokyo Sōgensha, 2000. 194 × 132 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-488-01285-X.

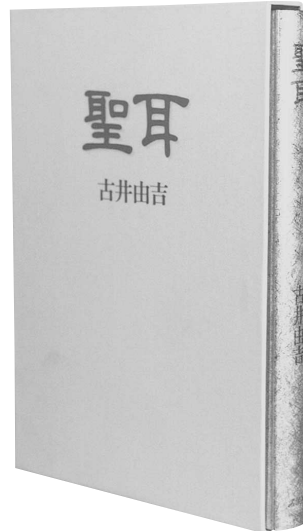
This is the latest collection of mystery writings about strange incidents related to rare old books and their seekers, written by bibliographer Kida Jun'ichirō (b. 1935). The three stories included in this volume are set in Tokyo's Jimbochō district, mecca of book lovers and secondhand book collectors from all over Japan. The leading character of the stories is a writer named Kita, the author's alter ego.

"Tenrankai no kyaku" [Exhibition Visitor] is set at the height of the old-books boom of the 1960s. Kita meets a dubious character at an exhibition. The man is known as a collector of poetry anthologies who would do anything to get a book he wants. A book is stolen at the exhibition site. The riddle is how he stole it. "'Yūtsu na aijin' jiken" [The Case of the "Melancholy Lover"] relates the activities of bibliophile groups that sprang up throughout the country in the 1970s. A poet and well-known book collector named Takano tells Kita that he will make available a copy of a book for which Kita has long been searching. The plot thickens as Kita goes to attend a book exchange meeting arranged by Takano. "Demmō kaikai jiken" [The "Heaven's Net" Incident] is set against the rapid spread of Internet use in the late 1990s. A thief breaks into a secondhand bookstore that engages in online sales, and steals books and a computer. The following week,

a librarian is murdered at a university and it is found that books and a computer have been stolen there as well.

Seiji [The Imperial Ears]. Furui Yoshikichi. Kōdansha, 2000. 193 × 130 mm. 266 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-06-210380-X.

This is a collection of twelve inter-linked short stories by author Furui Yoshikichi (b. 1937). The title is taken from the final story, in which Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930) realizes the distant sound of a woman crying late at night is a deception.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

The book as a whole is a thought-provoking exploration of the curious nature of perception and sensibility, particularly in terms of keen powers of hearing. The central character is an elderly man with failing eyesight, whose situation draws on the author's own experience of being hospitalized five times for eye surgery. As if to compensate for his poor vision, the man has a keen sense of hearing. Written in a distinctive narrative style, the stories describe this aural sensitivity through the stream of the real, remembered, and imagined sounds the man perceives. The boundary between life and death blurs, dream and memory blend with reality, and the author, the protagonist, and other characters as well, seem occasionally to merge into a single consciousness.

None of the individual stories exhibits a gripping, dramatic plot, nor are the links between them always clear. But as one story follows upon the other, a "quiet commotion" builds amid the seeming tranquility, revealing the world in its true aspect beyond the boundaries of life and death, dream and reality, and time.

Ura bājon [The Other Version]. Matsuura Rieko. Chikuma Shobō, 2000. 188 × 131 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-480-80358-0.

This is Matsuura's (b. 1958) first work since her celebrated novel *Oya-yubi P no shugyō jidai* [The Edification of Big Toe P; see JBN, No. 7, p. 19], which appeared seven years ago.

The book consists of eighteen self-contained short stories, each titled with the name of a character appearing in it. The stories are actually part of a broader narrative about an obscure, forty-year-old writer who lives in the house of the friend of twenty years. Each month, in lieu of rent, she writes a twenty-page short story for her landlady-friend. Printed in bold at the end of each story are the friend's comments—mainly consisting of stinging criticism and sarcastic jibes—which effectively destroy each story's fictive world.



Cover design: Milky Isobe

Having shared since their teens an interest in homosexuality, sado-masochism, and other unconventional forms of sexual love, the two women have the soured but unseverable kind of relationship in which each person knows the other only too well. Noticing that the writer is ignoring her relentless, biting criticisms, the friend soon begins serving her written questionnaires and cross-examinations, and a full-blown battle ensues. The eighteenth and final story, "Masako," is written by the friend about the writer, who has by then moved out.

The book is designed, as its title suggests, to allow various alternative interpretations. The author displays extraordinary innovation not only in the book's overall structure but also in the variety of styles and techniques with which she distinguishes each of the stories within the story.



Cover design: Ogura Toshio

Events and Trends

Shōjo Shōsetsu Authors in Literary Limelight

A number of writers now active at the forefront of Japan's literary scene—Yamamoto Fumio, Iwai Shimako, Ono Fuyumi, Arai Motoko, Fujimoto Hitomi, Shimamura Yōko, Kakuta Mitsuyo—share a common bond: They are all former writers of *shōjo shōsetsu*, or fiction targeted mainly at teenage female readers, such as that published in the twenty-five year old series Cobalt Bunko, put out by the publisher Shūeisha.

Yamamoto is known for fiction that adeptly captures the psychology of young girls today. In January 2001 she received the prestigious Naoki Prize for her novel *Puranaria* [Planaria] (Bungei Shunjū). She also won the Yoshikawa Eiji New Writers Award in 1999 for *Ren'ai chūdoku* [Addicted to Love] (Kadokawa Shoten).

Competing with Yamamoto's work for the Naoki Prize this year was Iwai Shimako's *Okayama onna* [Okayama Woman] (Kadokawa Shoten), a collection of short stories. Iwai has won a large readership for her distinctive horror stories set in the hills of her native Okayama. In 1999, her "Bokkē kyōtē" became the first short story to

win the Japan Horror Fiction Award. Her anthology, with "Bokkē kyōtē" as the title story and including three more works, published by Kadokawa Shoten, won the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize in 2000.

Ono Fuyumi's *Tōkei ibun* [Strange Stories from Tōkei (Tokyo)] (Shinchōsha) drew attention when it was short-listed for the 5th Japan Fantasy Novel Prize. Her *Shiki* [Demon of Death] (Shinchōsha), published in 1998, was very popular among mystery and horror story fans.

Arai Motoko has established a strong following among SF readers. Fujimoto Hitomi is known for her historical romances told in Western settings. Shimamura Yōko has become a writer of romances, while Kakuta's works now fall in the *junbungaku* category of orthodox fiction.

An even older generation of writers, were, in fact, former writers of *shōjo* and junior fiction, including Yoshiya Nobuko, and Setouchi Jakuchō.

Story-like Business Books

Notable in top spots on Japan's best-seller list these past few months are a number of business books, but they are clearly stamped out of quite a different mold from conventional—usually exceedingly dull and dry—works in the genre. Many are translated from other languages and feature cover designs with the kind of cute illustrations usually seen on children's books. The writing inside is plain and simple, with

barely a trace of the esoteric lingo of economics or business. A notable characteristic of these books, however, is that they have adopted the story form to relay their message in a readily accessible manner.

One book that has stayed at the top of the best-sellers' list for quite a few months is *Chizu wa doko e kieta?* (Fusōsha, 2000), the Japanese translation of Spencer Johnson's *Who Moved My Cheese?*, a slim volume of less than one hundred pages. The story revolves around two little people and two mice, searching for cheese in a maze. Through this simple tale, the author presents his argument that we must learn to adapt readily and quickly to change. A number of companies have adopted this book for their personnel training programs. Many readers are attracted to the book not as a guide to doing business but for its wisdom and good sense for getting through life in general.

Another example is *Kanemochi tōsan binbō tōsan* (Chikuma Shobō, 2000), the Japanese translation of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, as narrated by Robert Kiyosaki with Sharon Lector, which became popular because of its simple formula for learning the secrets to success. The story centers around dialogues and interactions among the author as a boy, and his two fathers—Rich Dad and Poor Dad—and continues in easy-to-understand, narrative fashion, introducing along the way specific anecdotes from the author's own business experience. The wisdom

Best-sellers, General, Dec. 2000–May 2001

1. *Chizu wa doko e kieta?* (*Who Moved My Cheese?*), by Spencer Johnson. Translation by Kadota Misuzu (Fusōsha, ¥838). A parable of advice for dealing with changing times and circumstances.
 2. *Kanemochi tōsan binbō tōsan* (*Rich Dad, Poor Dad*), by Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lector. Translated by Shirane Mihoko (Chikuma Shobō, ¥1,600). A self-made businessman shares the secrets of his success.
 3. *Hari Pottā to kenja no ishi* (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*) and *Hari Pottā to himitsu no heya* (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), by J. K. Rowling. Translated by Matsuoka Yūko (Seizansha, ¥1,900 each). The first two volumes in the Harry Potter series.
 4. *Yū-gi-ō: Ofisharu kado gēmu dyueru monsutāzu Kōshiki kado katarogu za varyuaburu bukku 3* [YU~GI~OH!: Official Card Game Dueling Monsters Official Card Catalogue—The Valuable Book 3], edited by the *Shūkan Shōnen Jump* Editorial Department (Shūeisha, ¥762). Official catalogue of card games based on the manga *Yū-gi-ō*.
 5. *Yū-gi-ō: Dyueru monsutāzu 4 Saikyō kettōsha senki* [YU~GI~OH!: Dueling Monsters 4 Battle of Great Duelists] 2 vols., edited by the *V Jump* Editorial Department (Shūeisha, ¥667). Strategy guide for the Game Boy version YU~GI~OH!
 6. *Puratonikku sekkusu* [Platonic Sex], by Iijima Ai. (Shōgakukan, ¥1,300). A TV entertainer's account of the true events of her life.
 7. *Yū-gi-ō: Ofisharu kado gēmu dyueru monsutāzu Kōshiki rūru gaido, Sauzando rūru baiburū* [YU~GI~OH!: Official Card Game Dueling Monsters Official Rule Guide—The Thousand-rule Bible], edited by the *Shūkan Shōnen Jump* Editorial Department (Shūeisha, ¥476). Rule guide for the YU~GI~OH! card game.
 8. *Shin ningen kakumei 9* [The New Human Revolution, vol. 9], by Ikeda Daisaku. (Seikyō Shimbunsha, ¥1,238). The leader of a large lay-Buddhist organization writes about its history and activities.
 9. *Kiseki no hō* [The Law of Miracles], by Ōkawa Ryūhō. (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan, ¥1,600). A collection of sermons given by the president of a religious organization in 1999.
 10. *Shigoto ga dekiru hito dekinai hito* [People Who Can Perform on the Job and Those Who Cannot], by Horiba Masao. (Mikasa Shobō, ¥1,400). An in-depth analysis of the qualities of competent people in this new century.
- (Based on book distributor Tōhan Corporation lists.)

imparted here, however, is genuine: the book has been selected as a textbook for use in some U.S. business schools.

The above two books were translated from English, but books from other languages feature the same practical but reader-friendly approach. Also popular is *Inu ga oshieru okanemochi ni naru tame no chie* [A Dog's Advice on How to Get Rich] (Sōshisha, 2001), a translation from the German *Ein Hund namens Money* by Bodo Schäfer (Munich: G. Lentz Verlag). The charmingly told storyline, in which a dog named Money teaches a little girl the way to wealth, has apparently struck a responsive chord among Japanese readers.

Increase in Bilingual Publications

The number of magazines and newspapers published bilingually, in Japanese and other languages, has recently grown. With the increase in non-Japanese nationals residing in Japan, there is rising demand for publications with practical information on daily life in Japan for residents who do not read Japanese. A number of periodicals provide information on housing, hospitals, restaurants, shops, and other community-specific topics.

The *Hiragana Times*, published by Yakku Kikaku, has a nationwide circulation of 130,000. This monthly magazine, which runs English translations alongside the articles in Japanese, is apparently popular not only among non-Japanese readers but Japanese interested in studying English. *Kaibigan* (published by Newcom) is a monthly newspaper published in Tagalog and Japanese. The Tagalog articles run information on daily life in Japan for the benefit of readers with limited fluency in Japanese. The Japanese-language arti-

cles introduce topics about customs and culture in the Philippines aimed at promoting better understanding of the Philippines among Japanese readers.

Some English-Japanese bilingual periodicals are aimed at introducing Japanese culture. One of these, *Tokion* (published by Knee High Media), aimed at presenting Japanese young people's culture to an overseas readership, publishes English translations alongside articles in Japanese.

Book Reviews on Television

Book publishing may be on hard times as Japan's recession drags on, but some titles can be seen battling the trend on television programs featuring recently popular titles. Extensive coverage of leading best-sellers like *Who Moved My Cheese?* and *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, and works by entertainers like Iijima Ai's *Platonic Sex* (Shōgakukan) and Ishihara Yoshizumi's *Ishihara-ke no hitobito* [The Ishihara Family] (Shinchōsha) has given a valuable extra kick to sales.

Book review programs on television are getting increasing attention. On "Hon Para! Sekiguchi-dō Shoten," which started in April 2000, popular entertainers present titles they recommend and a panel of guests consider their reviews and decide to buy or not buy the books accordingly. *The Blue Day Book* (Take Shobō), a small widely read book of photographs of animals with inspirational messages in the "healing" (*iyashi*) category of publications, became a big hit after it was introduced on this show. Another best-selling title launched by the program was *Minikui ahiru no ko datta watashi* [I Was an Ugly Duckling], the autobiographical story of model and entertainer Umemiya Anna.

Influential among young readers and TV audiences is the book-review seg-

ment of the weekly program *Ōsama no buranchi* [The King's Brunch]. A veteran editor introduces a handful of books each week. *Rōdokusha*, Japanese edition (Shinchōsha) of Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader* (Vintage) surged to unprecedented sales for a work of translated literature after it was introduced on this program.

Japan Broadcasting Corporation's (NHK) "Shūkan bukku rebyū" [The Weekly Book Reviews], meanwhile, is probably the program of longest standing. Well-read personalities from various walks of life introduce books, which are then critiqued by other guests on the show. Sustained by numerous faithful fans, this program has just passed its tenth anniversary.

Low-priced Comics

Low-priced comic books have begun appearing mainly on the racks of convenience stores at prices from 100 to 300 yen. Started off by Shōgakukan, other publishers including Shūeisha, Shinchōsha, Nihon Bungeisha, Riido-sha, Hakusensha, and Chūō Kōron Shinsha were quick to jump on the low-price bandwagon.

Forerunning Shōgakukan managed to capture many readers with revised editions of previously popular comic titles like *Oishinbo* [The Gourmand] and *Gorugo 13*. In its wake, other publishers have had success with formerly popular titles like *Rupan Sansei* [Lupin III], *Aa! Hana no ōendan* [Ah! The Cheering Squad], *Hokuto no ken* [Fist of the North Star], *Shiti hantā* [City Hunter], *Jarinko Chie* [Chie the Kid].

While some say consumers are drifting away from manga books, the sales for these low-priced editions suggest that making available the mainstay works of a genre at low prices is one way of securing a market.

Continued from p. 2

18), the protagonist takes her family to vacation in the summer house of her lover, who is staying there with his family. The image of the uninhibited, sexually attractive mother, making love to another man under the same roof where her husband sleeps, makes its appearance in this novel.

It is hard to say how the Japanese family will evolve from now on. The literature of the postwar era clearly shows how dramatically images of both the family and of the mother figure have changed. Following World War II, Japanese society united itself in the task of economic development aimed at achieving prosperity. The result was a society that placed the group above the individual and

that narrowly defined the lives of the women within it and the nature of the family. Today, however, the focus of identity and assertiveness is shifting from the group to the individual, and Japanese literature, too, reflects a profound reappraisal of long-accepted values, the challenging of taboos, and the groping toward new roles and images for men and women. This literature suggests, moreover, that in the twenty-first century Japan will be increasingly a society based on the individual with greater space for those who wish to live for their own goals and according to their own values. (*Ōsawa Machiko is professor of Economics, Japan Women's University.*)

Through the Translator's Tunnel

Ogawa Yōko

My trip to Saint-Malo in northwestern France in 1995 to participate in the annual literature festival there, especially after having been holed up in the Japanese countryside writing one story after another, was a valuable experience. The first overseas edition of one of my works, *La piscine* (*Daibingu pūru*; Diving Pool) translated by Rose-Marie Makino-Fayolle and brought out by the French publisher Actes Sud, had just been completed.

As I left Japan, the event weighed heavily on my mind. How was a writer like myself, accustomed to relying only on words to express herself, supposed to talk about literature in a country that spoke a different language? Nevertheless, I found Saint-Malo to be an unequivocally beautiful place. The town embraced by ancient ramparts is charming and the seas are calm, the spires of the castle soar into the sky over the beach at low tide, evoking a long and romantic history. I was content simply to gaze out at the picturesque landscape from the window of my hotel room.

Unfortunately, I was not free to while away the time in wistful daydreams. I was supposed to appear before an assembled audience of French participants, talk about my ideas on literature, and do a reading.

Partly because the sponsor had not been able to obtain the services of a properly trained interpreter, I found I could not get across what I wanted to say, so while feeling rather exposed out there on the stage, I tried to look as inconspicuous as possible. Throughout the conference, I never knew whether people really understood what I was trying to convey in my stories. I felt tense and out of place until it was nearly over.

My book saved the day. There was the translation, *La piscine*, and no matter how inept I might be at communicating with the people there, I was unmistakably its author. It was just a small and slender volume, but the fact that its author was none other than myself gave me courage. I do not think I have ever thought of any of my works as so dear as I did then.

As the lectures and talks ended and the book signings began, my sense of being out of place gradually began to fade. People I had never seen before appeared one after another before me, an unknown writer from an island in the distant Far East. They picked up my book, gazed at its cover, and leafed through its pages; some asked me questions, others reached out to shake my hand. With great care I signed each one, inscribing my name both in Japanese characters and with a romanized signature.

The sight of my novel passing into the hands of people whose language I did not know was curiously moving. I could not exchange pleasantries with the French people who came up to me—not about so much as the weather or what I had had for lunch yesterday—yet through this book, we would share an understanding of the world of one story.

I did not meet Rose-Marie Makino-Fayolle, the translator of *La piscine* until five years after the festival in Saint-Malo, but in that time the number of my works

published in French by Actes Sud was steadily increasing. Our encounter left a deep impression on me, bringing back the feeling I had experienced at that book-signing session years before. We were meeting for the first time, but I quickly noticed that the quality of our mutual understanding of my fictional world was denser by far than any I had sensed with the editors, literary critics or journalists I had met so far. She had thoroughly explored the world I had created in my fiction, fearless of its darkness and shadows, and had delved into its depths until she grasped its hidden core.

This confident sense of shared understanding may be a special privilege enjoyed by a writer and his or her translator. Murakami Haruki, both a novelist and a translator of contemporary American literature into Japanese, says he wants the translator to have a “totally prejudiced love” for his work, and he likens the translation process to burrowing “an intimate and very personal tunnel.”

The translator grapples with a text with all his or her own biases and tunnels through it in his or her own way, pushing through to link the differences between the two languages. At the other end of the tunnel is the author. In short, my translator and I are linked by a private passageway undisturbed by any other.

Remembering the images of the sea and the castle at Saint-Malo and the landscape of island, I wrote a story. It is a love story filled with the foreboding of disaster, between an elderly translator and a young girl in her teens. That story, *Hôtel Iris*, was my first full-length novel to be published in French.



Ogawa Yōko was born in Okayama prefecture in 1962. She attended Waseda University in Tokyo. After graduation in 1984, she returned to Okayama, where she worked for a while before marrying in 1986 and beginning her career as a writer. She won the 7th *Kaien* New Writers Award for *Agehachō ga kowareru toki* [When the Swallowtail Butterfly Crumbles] in 1988. She was a candidate three successive years for the Akutagawa Prize for *Kampeki na byōshitsu* [The Perfect Hospital Room], *Daibingu pūru* [Diving Pool], and *Samenai kōcha* [Uncooled Tea] and then won the 104th Akutagawa Prize for *Ninshin karendā* [Pregnancy Calendar]. Among her other works are *Angelina* and an essay collection, *Yōsei ga mai-oriru yoru* [Evening When the Fairies Alight]. Several of her works have been translated into French, including *Les Abeilles* (*Domitorii*), *La Grossesse* (*Ninshin karendā*), and *L'Annulaire* (*Kusuri yubi no hyōhon*), and are available in Belgium, Switzerland, and Francophone Canada. Also, see JBN, Number 32, pp. 6 and 20.