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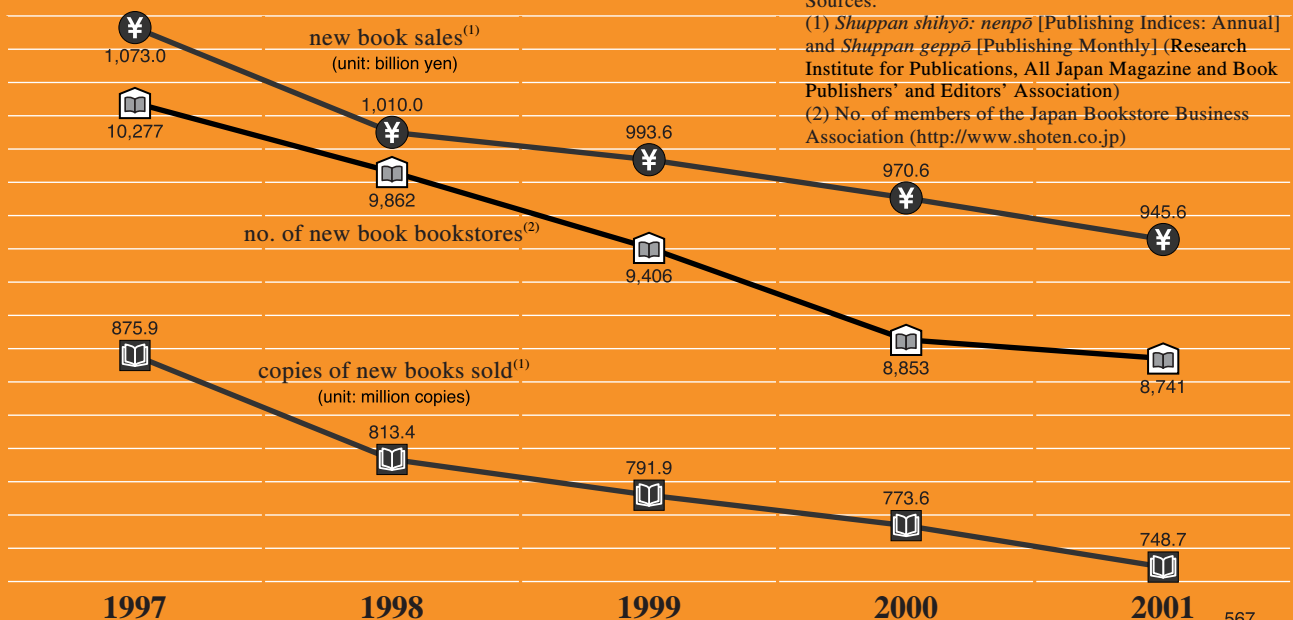
Japanese Book News

Remembering and Reviving Culture

New-Used Bookstores

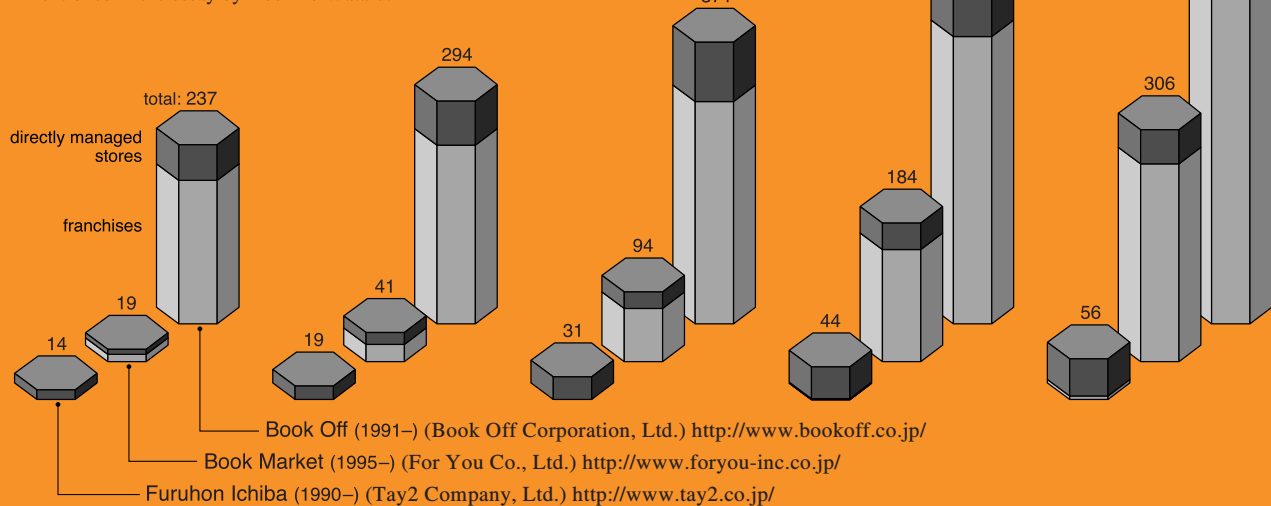
Japanese Children's Books: Fiction

New book sales trends



No. of new-used bookstores (*shinkoshoten*)

Results of a separate questionnaire survey of stores mentioned in the essay by Hoshino Wataru.



The Japan Foundation

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

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From the Editor

A new millennium has begun, but associations with the 1950s, sixties, and early seventies are much in vogue in recent years. A bar that serves school lunches of that era is the talk of the town, a video game on the theme of an elementary school child's summer vacation in those days goes on sale, and special exhibits on life and times back then are mounted at museums all over the country. Nostalgia in this vein is notable in book publishing as well, as reflected in a number of titles introduced in recent issues of *Japanese Book News*. Member of the JBN advisory board Kawamoto Saburō describes this trend and the social and psychological backdrop against which it has emerged.

Japan's publishing world is groaning under the prolonged recession. Annual sales of books and magazines for 2001 decreased for the fifth consecutive year. Not only small local bookstores but large urban stores have faced bankruptcy or shrinkage of their operations; long-established, highly respected publishers are being forced to navigate extremely rough waters. A notable number of books have been coming out, as frequently seen in JBN's New Titles, that analyze the situation, explore its causes, and offer prescriptions for revival or survival. Everywhere in the debate on the publishing recession is mention of the new-used bookstores (*shinkoshoten*). This issue offers an objective perspective on the background and features of this new brand of bookstore, how they stand and what role they play within the Japan's publishing industry today.

Children's Books in this issue introduces select titles in the genre of fiction.

Koyama Tetsurō's essay under From the Publishing Scene introduces the Kobayashi Hideo Prize for literary criticism newly established by the Shinchōsha publishing company. Kiyota Yoshiaki reports on developments in the publishing industry during 2001.

For In Their Own Words, writer Kobayashi Kyōji compares the Japanese word "hon'yaku" with its English equivalent, "translation," bringing to our attention the differences in ways its practice has evolved. The act of translating, suggests this thoughtful essay, is viewed differently by native speakers of European languages and by native speakers of Japanese.

Japanese Book News address:

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

Remembering and Reviving Culture

Kawamoto Saburō

In Kugahara, an old, largely residential area of Ōta ward in the southern part of metropolitan Tokyo, the small Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era (Shōwa no Kurashi Hakubutsukan) opened about two years ago. The museum is no splendid edifice with displays in glass cases; it is an ordinary family dwelling preserved as it was lived in through much of the Shōwa era (1926–89).

The director of the museum is Koizumi Kazuko, scholar of life in the Shōwa era and the history of Japanese furniture, implements, and daily life. The contents of the house are explained in detail in her book *Shōwa no Kurashi Hakubutsukan* [Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2000; see *Japanese Book News*, No. 34, p. 15).

The museum is a two-story, wood-frame house originally designed and built in 1951 by Koizumi's father, an architectural engineer. It housed a family of six. With its tile roof, clapboard walls, sliding front door with glass panels, veranda (*nure-en*), second-story windows with handrails, shoji and *fusuma* panels, tatami-floored rooms, and Western-style front parlor off the entrance way, it preserves the architectural style typical of urban homes just about anywhere in Japan from around the 1930s until the early 1960s. It is the kind of house familiar from the *Sazae-san* comics by Hasegawa Machiko and in the works of Mukōda Kuniko.

When rapid economic growth began in the mid-1960s, however, lifestyles rapidly began to change—to be westernized—and today examples of this kind of modest, Japanese-style dwelling are rapidly vanishing. Feeling that something irreplaceable is about to be lost, Koizumi Kazuko determined to make her own home into a museum. She has preserved a genuine example of life in the Shōwa era.

The *chabudai* (low table for use in a tatami-floored room), *hibachi* (portable brazier), *o-hitsu* (rice-server), pre-electricity icebox, *kaya* (mosquito net), and many other standard household items in the museum make older-generation visitors wax nostalgic with memories of their childhood. The early 1960s is only about forty years ago, but the lifestyle of that era is already the stuff of increasingly distant memories.

The fact that the content of the Shōwa museum is already history testifies to the speed at which Japanese society changed in the last half century. In the feverish drive to catch up with Western society begun with the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japanese gradually discarded the old (architecture, lifestyles, customs, and culture) and incorporated the new into their daily lives. In the often-cited words of the great writer Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), modernizing Japan was ceaselessly and busily “under construction.”

In the history of the culture of daily life, dramatic changes began to occur from around the time the Olympic Games were held in Tokyo in 1964. With the

rapid spread of household appliances, private car ownership, the spread of large housing complexes (*danchi*), and the sprouting of high-rise condominiums (*manshon*), tremendous changes took place in the typical Japanese way of life. The *chabudai*, *hibachi*, mosquito nets, and other items preserved and displayed in the Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era began to disappear from households around that time.

Influential writer Yoshimura Akira, who was born in the second year of Shōwa (1927), writes in his collection of essays recalling life when he was a boy, *Shōwa saijiki* [Events and Customs of the Shōwa Era] (Bungei Shunjū, 1993):

I believe the fourth decade (1955–64) of the Shōwa era has special importance in the history of Japanese lifestyles. During these years, a considerable number of the implements and customs of daily life that had been passed down from the Edo period (1603–1867), through Taishō (1912–26) and Shōwa disappeared.

Surely this observation is confirmed by the experience of most Japanese who lived during the postwar period. When Japan lost the war and surrendered in August 1945, its political systems were transformed under the American-led Occupation that followed, but the lives of ordinary people were not much different than they had been before the war. The “*chabudai* lifestyle” continued. Then suddenly, in the mid-1960s, that lifestyle began to change completely.

The Ferment of “Retro Culture”

The nineteenth-century educator and thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) had once observed that the pace of change in modernizing Japan was so rapid that a person experienced two generations in a lifetime. It was as if one person were living in two different eras. Again in the 1980s, as the speculation-bloated “bubble” economy swelled, Japanese society entered yet another transitional phase. In the sixties, the attainment of an affluent society through rapid economic growth had been the goal most Japanese supported and devoted their lives to. As the eighties wore on and the bubble economy swelled, however, people began to have misgivings about the ceaseless process of growth and change.

It was around that time that people began to recall with nostalgia the way life used to be before rapid economic growth began. The “*chabudai* lifestyle” was not as affluent as that of the “bubble” era, to be sure, but people fondly remembered its modesty and sense of contentment, and the warmth and tranquility it had offered.

As more and more old buildings were torn down and high rises were constructed in their place, a counter-trend arose recalling the merits of the *chabudai* lifestyle, and thus began the “retro culture” movement stressing the recollection of the past.

The retro culture movement brought back into the limelight the old *shitamachi* areas of Tokyo around Asakusa and Fukagawa where the townscape and architecture that had been familiar until the mid-1960s has been to some extent preserved. Members of the younger generations started attending performances of kabuki and listening to *rakugo* storytellers. Once-popular films, comics, and television animation series were revived and their value evoked once again.

Representing this trend in the publishing world were newly launched magazines like Shōgakukan's *Sarai* and Toshi Shuppan's *Tōkyōjin*. Both were oriented more to culture than political and economic topics and they focused on daily life, manners, and fashions. Attention concentrated not on "cutting-edge" Japan or the "current Tokyo trends," but on the Japan of old or recent past.

For the society that had feverishly pursued growth and more growth, this trend offered a welcome tonic. The "*chabudai* lifestyle" held an irresistible nostalgia. What was known as "retro culture" shaped a major current in the publishing world from the 1980s into the 1990s. A wide variety of books recalling life in the 1950s and early sixties were published, along with many collections of photographs of Tokyo of former times. The retro culture boom was the perfect moment for the revival of the photographs of Kimura Ihei (1901–74) and Kuwabara Kineo (b. 1913), who had captured on film the images and lifestyle of the urban middle class of the late 1920s and 1930s.

Another noteworthy trend was the reappraisal of the works of film director Ozu Yasujiro (1903–63). Numerous books about Ozu were published and almost all his major works were made available on video. Ozu had immortalized in his films the lifestyle of the substantial middle class established before the war and continuing much as it had been after 1945; the *chabudai* lifestyle was the shared memory of a large segment of the population. The world of *chabudai* and tatami, of shoji doors and kimono in which Ryū Chishū, master of the kind, warm-hearted father role, and Hara Setsuko, the period's paragon of womanhood, performed is not just nostalgic to people of the older generations; younger people born much later are strongly attracted to the ethos of those times as well. The works of Ozu Yasujiro were frequently featured in magazines like *Sarai* and *Tōkyōjin* as symbolic of "retro culture."

The Reappreciation of Daily Life

From the latter half of the 1990s, the "retro culture" trend deepened and broadened. Initially simply the object of fond memories, this world was increasingly recognized as offering much of value; people began to see what was positive and good in old things and ways of life. Today there is a strong trend toward reviving aspects of the traditional culture of daily life in the present day.

This trend is not the sort of high-profile "return to Japan" movement that occurred now and then after the Meiji Restoration (1868) when Japan began its drive toward "civilization and enlightenment" and began the process of modernization and westernization. Sometimes such movements went too far, resulting in excessive nationalism or xenophobia.

The "post retro culture" that has evolved from the deepening of the "retro culture" boom is not anything like that; it is not colored by ideology. It is simply a matter of ordinary people turning their gaze toward the small things of daily life that were the norm until only quite recently and rediscovering therein their wisdom and inherent joys. They are beginning to notice unassuming beauty in the lives their parents and grandparents once lived. Their response is more a matter of memory than of tradition, more a reappraisal of the quality of ordinary daily life than a return to so-called traditional culture. Gazing at the *chabudai* and *hibachi* displayed by Koizumi Kazuko in the Museum of Life in the Shōwa Era, they are reminded of the lives their parents lived, both the hardships and the joys.

Looking back at the past was once dismissed as retrogressive. The whole nation was pressing forward without pause from the time modernization began in the mid-nineteenth century, aiming constantly to catch up with and to stay abreast of the West. When people expressed nostalgia, they felt they had to qualify it by saying "not just out of nostalgia," and so on. To remember the past with fondness, however, is to recollect how things were in a former time and remember those who are now gone. What people are trying to do now is something different from reviving "traditional culture." Going back in time and picking up fragments of memory, they are using them to reconstruct the modest, healthy way of life that was once the norm for ordinary people.

The upsurge of "post retro culture" can be attributed to an urge to reconsider the past that was familiar and close to home and to reawaken buried memories. We remember the *sentō* (public bathhouses) that were part of every neighborhood only forty years ago. We recall the streetcars that once clattered up and down the streets of Tokyo. We bring back memories of the rivers and streams that used to run through our towns and are now buried somewhere, completely out of sight and sound. By remembering, we enrich our lives.

Such memories are recorded, for example, in Katō Mineo's photograph collection, *Tōkyō kieta machikado* [Tokyo's Vanishing Street Scenes] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1999; see JBN, No. 31, p. 14). The photographs were taken by a person born in 1929 who noticed, about the time of the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, how rapidly the Tokyo townscape was changing. He decided to capture the remaining images of the old townscape on film before they vanished entirely. The photographer is not a professional, but he took his camera everywhere in the city of Tokyo, determined to record the townscape that was rapidly disappearing.

Even after the Olympics, fields and rice paddies could still be found here and there in metropolitan Tokyo. Rivers flowed through abundant greenery. In sheltered alleys too narrow for cars to enter, children played with energy and imagination. In recording this landscape, this photo collection, too, is a "museum of life in the Shōwa era."

Several other works in this genre have been taken up in past issues of *Japanese Book News*, including *Maboroshi shōgakkō* [Primary School of Our Dreams]

Continued on p. 4

New-Used Bookstores

Hoshino Wataru

Since the latter half of the 1990s, the Japanese publishing world has been in its most serious recession ever. According to a survey by the Research Institute for Publications, a think tank of the All Japan Magazine and Book Publishers' and Editors' Association, annual book and magazine sales rose steadily from 1950 (when the survey began) until 1997 with only a single year recording a decrease from the previous year. From 1997, sales went into decline and 2001 was the fifth year in a row of decreasing sales. Among the various reasons suggested for this slump is the appearance of a new brand of used bookstore, the *shinkoshoten* or "new-used bookstore."

This neologism, combining the contradictory terms "new" and "used books," refers to retail stores that differ from traditional used bookstores by dealing in "nearly new used books." It is the term used for the category of business represented by Book Off (Book Off Corporation), which opened its first store in Sagami-hara, Kanagawa prefecture in 1990. Amid all the media attention focused on Book Off's business model at that time, the word became the general term for this new business. Now, however, rather than simply meaning "a store dealing in new used books," *shinkoshoten* has become something of an epithet for the new businesses that pose a threat to new-book booksellers and the major publishing companies that print comics.

The sale of used (secondhand) books is nothing new. Among traditional used bookstores are those that deal in valuable classics, or "rare books," and those that sell at cheap prices books that have circulated once, or "used books." There is no difference between the books on sale at new-used bookstores and at the traditional secondhand bookstores. The difference lies in the way the used books and the customers are treated.

The image of a traditional secondhand bookstore is that of a dimly lit, cramped interior, choked with books and lined with shelves that reach to the ceiling, where an elderly shopkeeper glares out from within, appraising the customers as much as the books they come to sell. There is an atmosphere about these shops that makes customers without some knowledge about books hesitant to enter what seems like their inner sanctums. In many cases, cheaper used books, like pocket paperbacks (*bunkobon*) and manga, are sold from wheeled carts conveniently placed at the store entrance; the pride in the superior status of rare books as opposed to used books hangs palpably in the air.

It is easy to imagine what new-used bookstores are like if you think of the exact opposite of the traditional secondhand bookstore. In their spacious and brightly lit interiors, bookshelves are arranged systematically with orderly displays of manga, pocket paperbacks, and others, lined up according to author or genre. Working the cash registers are part-timer high school and college

students who greet the customers with cheerful voices when buying or selling books. Moreover, purchased books are cleaned and sold in almost the same pristine condition as new books.

No one hesitates to buy or sell books at a *shinkoshoten*. These stores will even buy up the cheaper books one once could not get a secondhand bookstore to buy, and will not complain about customers who stand around reading in the shop for hours on end.

Until now, it was impossible for used bookstores to pose a threat to new-book booksellers—to consumers, the two types of business performed entirely different functions. New-used bookstores, however, sell used books as a substitute for new books.

Sakamoto Takashi, president of Book Off, stressed from the outset in interviews with newspapers and magazines that his goal was to supply consumers with books at low prices. The words "price busting" danced across the headlines of the interview articles, giving the impression that he was supplying new books at lower prices.

Publishing Industry at Bay

The influence of these *shinkoshoten* began to increase rapidly around 1995. The rapid developmental change can be observed by comparing the results of a 1998 Research Institute for Publications survey with current figures.

At the time of the survey, Book Off had an annual sales of 9 billion yen from 320 stores, but sales for April 2000–March 2001 rose to 17.7 billion yen, while the total number of stores, as of January 15, 2002, has grown to 629 (a total of 494 franchises). Alongside these figures are those of Book Off's major competitors: Book Market, which has prospered enough to begin offering its stock to the public, grew from 54 shops and an annual sales of 2 billion yen, to 346 shops and 8.3 billion yen, while Furu-hon Ichiba, which also became prosperous enough to go public, grew from 25 shops and an unknown annual sales to 67 stores and 14.1 billion yen per year. When the others in the business are included, it is estimated there were over 1,500 new-used bookstores throughout Japan at the time of the 1998 survey, with sales exceeding 50 billion yen per year. Judging solely by the growth of the three major companies, it is probably safe to say that the business has expanded to several times that size. Among new-book booksellers, only Maruzen, the largest in the industry, and Bunkyo-dō, which has 200 stores nationwide, trade their stocks publicly.

The publishing industry feels a serious threat from the growth of these new-used bookstores, because trade in books that have already been sold once produces no revenue for the publishing companies or the authors. The comics and pocket paperbacks from which *shinkoshoten* get their main source of strength, moreover, were until

now the principal merchandise of medium-sized book-sellers, and when they are sold at low prices it damages the new-book business as a whole.

If, referring to the data from 1998 mentioned above, we suppose that the 50 billion yen in annual sales for all of the new-used bookstores was garnered by selling books at about 40 percent of their fixed retail price, the total sales of those books at the fixed retail price would have come to 120 billion yen. The realization of this loss is what irritates those in the publishing industry.

The new-book bookselling industry, meanwhile, contends that shoplifted merchandise is being converted to cash at the new-used bookstores, and is seeking regulations by police and local government. Publishing houses and authors, meanwhile, have begun asserting that secondhand bookselling is an infringement of copyright. But, lacking sufficient factual data or basis in copyright law, these claims have not sufficed to check the activities of new-used bookstores.

The backdrop of the expansion of the *shinkoshoten*, of course, is the recent recession, with consumers' move toward finding lower prices running nearly parallel with the development of new-used bookstores. The recession cannot be the only reason, however, since traditional used bookstores are not exhibiting the same kind of vigor in the face of the business slump.

Bookselling by the Manual

The complete and thorough standardization of all procedures for the buying and pricing of books, collected and written in manual form, is what supports the *shinkoshoten* system. When buying books, traditional used bookstores appraise them one at a time, determining the market price for which they expect a book to sell, whereas new-used bookstores establish purchase prices using objective standards that anyone can judge, such as how much time has passed since a book's printing, or how damaged or frayed it is. They apply these standards to pricing as well, and start selling all books at the uniform discount price of 100 yen after a certain period has elapsed since first publication. Purchasing and sales at *shinkoshoten* can be done by anyone without any knowledge of the merchandise.

This standardization has made the used bookstores—until now difficult for all but semi-professional readers to use—into places that consumers who know little to nothing about books can freely patronize, and where even amateurs can become clerks. The standardization of operations in a manual, moreover, has made it a simple matter to develop a franchise and expand rapidly.

The background for the rapid expansion of these new-used bookstores can be summed up as follows:

From the 1970s through the 1980s in Japan, mass-market publications like comics and pocket paperbacks spurred the rapid development of the publishing market. These products were sold by the millions, and even at their low retail price generated tremendous profits, pushing up the sales of the major comic publishers like Kōdansha, Shōgakusan, and Shūeisha.

At the time, Japan was buoyed up by the bubble economy, and nearly every household was continuously purchasing these mass-market publications, many of

which were stuffed in cardboard boxes and put away in closets after being read.

Such mass-market reading matter, however, is easily replaced, and readers move quickly from one book to the next. Books that are cheap and easy to read also tend to be quickly forgotten and cast aside. In a sense then, the new-used bookstores, which will buy up old comics and paperback books, are catching the spillover from a market saturated with mass-market publications.

It could also be said that the resale price maintenance system, imposed by the publishing companies to restrict the price of books, has played a role in the expansion of the new-used bookstores. If there were no fixed retail prices, it would be difficult for used bookstores to appeal to consumers with low prices, because the possibility that newly published books would be sold at discount at ordinary book stores would eliminate the need to go to a used bookstore to buy it for less later.

Ironically, the mass-market publications from which the publishing industry so flourished and the retail price maintenance system that was intended to give it stability also gave birth to the parasitic *shinkoshoten* business model. Today, the parasite poses a threat to the host.

The rapid expansion of new-used bookstores, however, recently began to drop off. Competition to buy up the comics that sell so well has evidently sprung up between the different new-used bookstores. Several of those in the trade have developed nationwide store franchises, resulting in intense competition in various parts of the country.

The direction of the new-used bookstores is being watched closely: Will this new business continue to spread? Or will it be regulated under pressure from the ultimate source of books, the publishing industry? (*Hoshino Wataru is staff writer of Bunka Tsūshin, a newspaper focusing on the mass media industries.*)

Continued from p. 2

(No. 20), *Shōwa daidokoro natsukashi zukan* [Nostalgia from the Kitchens of Shōwa] (No. 23), *Shōwa renren: Ano koro, konna kurashi ga atta* [Shōwa Nostalgia: This Is How We Lived] (No. 26), and *Shōwa shōnen zukan* [Shōwa Children Illustrated] (No. 30).

Putting trendy names like “retro culture” and “post-retro culture” to aspects of evolving social history may seem to reduce them to mere passing fashions, but these terms do express a significant phase in society's evolution. For many people, social change took away the established moral standards and norms of daily life; for them the remembering of lost customs and manners of life and the renewal of their memory is part of an important process of building patterns of daily life that are not swayed by narrow ideologies but planted firmly in the earth of time-tested wisdom. (*Kawamoto Saburō is a literary and film critic.*)

Fiction

Murayama Kazuko sakuhin shū
[Collected Works of Murayama Kazuko]. 3 vols. Text by Murayama Kazuko; illustrations by Murayama Tomoyoshi. Edited by the Committee for the Collected Works of Murayama Kazuko. JULA Shuppankyoku, 1997, 1998, 1998. 21.5 × 14.5 cm. 94 pp; 101 pp; 97 pp. ¥1,500 each. ISBN 4-88284-190-8; 4-88284-191-6; 4-88284-192-4.

In "Kawa e ochita Tamanegi-san" [How Mr. Onion Fell in the River], Mr. Onion arrives at the Hotel Potato only to find its rooms are full and he must stay in the basement. As he settles into bed in the darkness, the bed begins to move, and turns over at the

window sill, tossing him outside into the river. He had gotten not into bed but into the automatic garbage disposal box. Next morning, distressed to find his lodger has disappeared, the Potato proprietor places an ad in the newspaper asking after his whereabouts, and later Mr. Onion comes back to the hotel. The proprietor apologizes by putting him up in a fine guest room, and Mr. Onion becomes so fond of the hotel that he decides to go into business with the Potato proprietor.

Stories for young children, nursery rhymes, and picture-stories featuring personified vegetables, animals, and objects of daily life are collected in these three volumes. They portray the



kinds of mistakes children are prone to make and indulge their wishes and fantasies with a gentle tone and dry humor. The contemporary touch of the illustrations by the author's husband, an artist specializing in stage sets, make the stories, created more than fifty years ago, fresh even today. (Preschool through grade four.)

Shōnentachi no natsu [Boys' Summer]. Text by Yokoyama Mitsuo; illustrations by Murakami Yutaka. Poplar Sha, 2000. 21.5 × 15.5 cm. 207 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-591-06635-5.

It is the summer of 1964, when sixth-grader Kōji is living on the banks of the Shimanto river on the southern side of the island of Shikoku with his grandmother and two younger brothers. The world-wise Kōji is sharing his knowledge of the secret to running fast and using the public bathhouse with his buddy Mamoru, the sheltered son of a dentist. Then along comes Keizō, a transfer student

new in town. Keizō makes no effort to fit into his class at school, but then something happens and he joins up with Kōji and Mamoru. The three come up with a plan to build bamboo rafts and float down the Shimanto river; it would make the last summer



of elementary school one to remember.

As soon as the summer is over, Kōji, the story's narrator, has to bid farewell to the country town

he loves so much to live in the big city of Osaka where his parents are working. Mamoru has to start studying hard to prepare for the entrance examination to the private junior high school his parents want him to go to. Keizō worries about his sister, who has been placed with a foster family, while he waits for his mother, serving time in prison, to come home. Told with dialogue in the distinctive lilt of the local dialect of Shikoku, the story vividly evokes the image of these characters, each carrying his own cares and worries as they fully indulge in the pleasures of boyhood. (Grade five and above.)

Oni no hashi [Bridges of the Demons]. Text by Itō Yū; illustrations by Ōta Daihachi. Fukuinkan Shoten, 1998. 22.0 × 16.0 cm. 341 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-8340-1571-8.

Based on legends surrounding Heian period (794–1185) courtier Ono no



Takamura, this story depicts him as a boy. At twelve, Takamura anguishes over the death of his half sister, who dies after falling into an

abandoned well. A month after the accident, when he goes to the well and looks in, he is suddenly sucked into its depths. When he comes to his senses he finds himself on a riverbank with the bridge to the netherworld stretching before him. As he stands there, the ghost of the great general Sakanoue no Tamuramaro comes along. The general chases off approaching demons and returns Takamura to the real world.

The story goes on to introduce the girl Akona, whose father had built the Gojō bridge in Kyoto. She and her sidekick, the hulking Hitenmaru, a former demon, take care of the

bridge. Getting to know this pair and moving back and forth between the two bridges—one in Kyoto and the other at the entrance to the netherworld—the young Takamura grows to adulthood overcoming his struggle with himself and the memory of his little sister's death.

Introducing a storytelling world set in the Japanese historical and cultural milieu as well as a fascinating plot and cast of characters, this is the work of a young author of great promise. Winner of the 3rd Children's Literature Fantasy Prize (1997). (Grade five and above.)

Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 19.

Kobayashi Hideo Prize for Critical Writing

Koyama Tetsurō

Long-established publisher of literary works Shinchōsha recently founded the Kobayashi Hideo Prize to recognize outstanding works of critical writing. Just as Shiga Naoya (1883–1971) was called the “god of fiction,” Kobayashi Hideo (1902–83) was known as the “god of literary criticism.”

Kobayashi’s career as a critic began when his essay “Samazama naru ishō” [Various Patterns] won a prize in a journal competition in 1929. His leading works include *Watakushi shōsetsu ron* [On the “I-Novel”], *Dosutoefusukii no seikatsu* [The Life of Dostoevsky], *Mujō to iu koto* [The Meaning of *Mujō*], and *Motoori Norinaga*, a study of the noted Edo-period scholar of literature and Japanese thought (1730–1801). Kobayashi was close friends from his youth with prominent poets Tominaga Tarō and Nakahara Chūya, writers including Kon Hidemi, Nagai Tatsuo, and Ōoka Shōhei and he was well acquainted with cultural figures like literary critic Kawakami Tetsutarō and art critic Aoyama Jirō, and remained a major presence in the Japanese literary world until his death. His thinking and way of expressing ideas had a strong impact on leading critics and writers of the next generation like Nakamura Mitsuo, Fukuda Tsuneari, and Etō Jun.

Marking what would have been Kobayashi’s one-hundredth birthday this year, the publisher Shinchōsha is in the midst of publishing the *Kobayashi Hideo zenshū* [Collected Works of Kobayashi Hideo] (14 volumes, 2 supplementary volumes). The new prize also commemorates the occasion.

Literary criticism has played a key role in the history of modern and contemporary literature in Japan, yet there are few literary awards today that recognize and encourage critical writing. The Gunzō New Writers Award, which is open to previously unpublished submissions, has a category for criticism, as does the Itō Sei Literary Prize. The

Mishima Yukio Prize, too, may be awarded to works of criticism. Such prizes are now a rarity, especially after the termination in 1982 of the Kamei Katsuichirō Prize, which had specifically targeted criticism, and the ending in 1997 of the Hirabayashi Taiko Literary Prize, which also had a category for literary criticism.

A significant number of literary critics active today, including Kawamura Jirō, Takahashi Hideo, Noguchi Takehiko, Ikeuchi Osamu, and Karatani Kōjin were first recognized when they received the Kamei Katsuichirō Prize. With its disappearance, opportunities to recognize and encourage the work of critical writers grew conspicuously fewer, making it difficult for their work to reach the reading public. An award solely for literary criticism was much desired.

Kobayashi Hideo’s own criticism was not, of course, limited to literature. Among his most important writings are *Mōtsuaruto* [Mozart], *Gohho no tegami* [The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh], and *Kindai kaiga* [Modern Painting]. He also discusses the French philosopher Henri Bergson in *Kansō* [Impressions]. For that reason, the newly founded prize is aimed not only at writing in the field of literature, but at works in all genres of criticism—music, art, and thought.

Simultaneously with the founding of this new prize, Shinchōsha also plans to inaugurate a new quarterly journal centering around criticism called *Kangaeru hito* [The Thinker]. Shinchōsha hopes, through this journal and the Kobayashi Hideo Prize, to call to attention and better encourage critical thinking and its expression in today’s society. The Kobayashi Hideo Prize is expected to play a dynamic role in recognizing able and insightful critical writers. The much-anticipated first screening for the prize will take place September 2, 2002. (Koyama Tetsurō is editor, *Cultural News Section*, *Kyodo News*.)

Tough Times for the Publishing Industry

Kiyota Yoshiaki

With sales declining for the fifth consecutive year in 2001, the first year of the new century, the publishing industry in Japan suffered one of its worst years ever. One reason for the slump is the decrease in people’s inclination to buy such non-essentials of daily life as books and magazines due to the recession. They are also spending more of their time using the Internet and cell phones, playing video games, watching television, and accessing other media. Spending on new forms of media has been increasing, diverting money formerly spent on books and other printed matter.

The five-year decline in sales marks the degree of the industry’s distress. While sales in 2001 fell to the level recorded in 1991, the number of new titles has been increasing. Some 70,000 new titles now come out annually, indicating publishers’ feverish efforts, by sheer forward motion, to keep from toppling. The result, however, is a vicious circle in which the publication of such a quantity of similar titles causes competition among books in the

same category, fewer sales opportunities, and an increase in unsold book and magazine returns.

A number of notable developments occurred in 2001. First was the decision to continue the resale price maintenance system that requires the sale of publications at their fixed price. That decision was made after more than ten years of talks between the publishing industry and the Fair Trade Commission.

Second, book distributor Suzuki Shoten, which dealt mainly in books for specialized fields in the humanities and social sciences, went bankrupt, sending shock waves through the industry. It has been said that such developments offer a prime opportunity for a fundamental reappraisal of the distribution system itself.

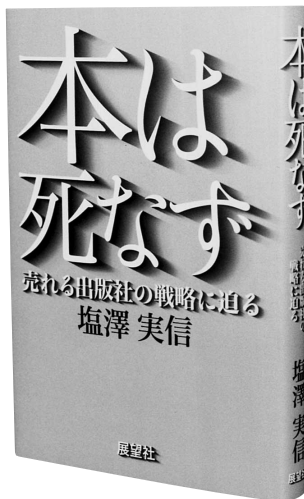
Third, J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, a worldwide best-seller, was a tremendous hit. A total of 10 million copies of the three volumes published in Japanese were sold. Many books related to the series have come out.

Continued on p. 21

New Titles

MEDIA

Hon wa shinazu: Ureru shuppansha no senryaku ni semaru [Books Will Not Die: Successful Publishers' Tactics Close Up]. Shiozawa Minobu. Tenbōsha, 2001. 193×131 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-88546-081-6. Despite the continuing recession in the industry, a number of publishers have been successfully producing best-sellers. How do they discover and tap the potential of writers and produce books that capture the interest of the reading masses? This book is a collection of interviews with top executives and editors of twenty publishers of varying size and history, including Gentōsha, Sōshisha, Kōdansha, and Shōgakukan, by a journalist who focuses on issues in the publishing industry. Shiozawa asks penetrating questions, and the responses are concrete and persuasive.



Cover design: Michiyoshi Gow & Tsujimura Akiko

The interviews tell, for example, of the unknown author whose story of his eventful life sold a million copies, and of the poetry anthology by a new writer that became a super best-seller of over 2 million copies, although publications of this kind rarely sell as many as 3,000. Successes like these may look like good luck or happy accidents, but the in-

terviewees clearly show that their tactics for creating such hits are not just clever tricks; they have been following very solid principles: be willing to break away from convention, don't be afraid of taboos, build human networks, and so on.

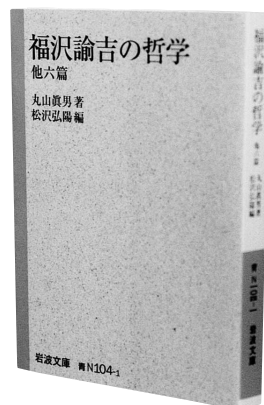
THOUGHT/RELIGION

Fukuzawa Yukichi no tetsugaku [The Philosophy of Fukuzawa Yukichi]. Maruyama Masao. Matsuzawa Hiroaki, ed. Iwanami Shoten. 2001. 147×104 mm. 336 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-381041-4.

Prominent Meiji-era educator and thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) is known as the founder of what is today the prestigious Keio University. This book consists of seven essays and lectures on Fukuzawa produced by Maruyama Masao (1914–96), leading postwar political scientist and scholar of Japanese intellectual history, from the early postwar period until 1991.

Maruyama offers an interpretation of Fukuzawa's writings and speeches, which were extremely diverse in subject-matter and remarkably flexible in stance. A man of penetrating insight on his times, Fukuzawa seems to have felt no hesitation or contradiction in changing positions on issues. Rather than examining specific points of what Fukuzawa said and wrote, Maruyama focuses more on his intellectual approach, his consciousness of the role he played as an opinion leader of the time.

Fukuzawa was misunderstood and misinterpreted when only part of his flexible thought was presented as



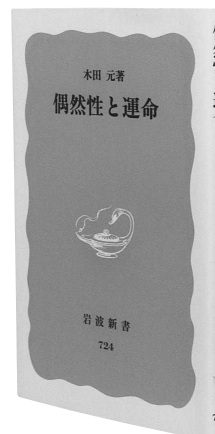
Cover design: Nakano Tatsuhiro

representing the whole. In this book Maruyama attempts to correct the false images of Fukuzawa that were created by those who tried to interpret him to serve purposes of their own. Maruyama thus draws out the universal side of a thinker for whom intellect was a means.

While reserving comment about Fukuzawa's personality, this book offers an excellent portrayal of the qualities for which the Meiji thinker was so widely admired.

Gūzensei to unmei [Chance and Fate]. Kida Gen. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 172×104 mm. 204 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-00-430724-4.

The "red thread" is a kind of legend according to which people believe they are predestined to meet. Convinced that they are linked by an invisible link from a previous life that has destined them to meet again in this life, for some reason young couples like to think that their meeting, even though it is purely by chance, is the result of destiny.



The inclination to think this way, says philosopher and phenomenologist Kida Gen (b. 1928), derives from what Martin Heidegger called the temporal structure of human existence. He argues that a couple may think of their first meeting as predestined because their past experiences are reconstructed in what he calls an "intense, privileged moment of love," and furthermore because the timelines of their lives come together.

The book treats a theme Kida has been studying since early in his career. While admitting that there is no decisive answer to the quandary of chance versus fate, he examines the

Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 19.

concept of chance from the standpoint of phenomenology and the philosophies of Heidegger and Kuki Shūzō (1888–1941). He looks at the question of “destiny” in intellectual history as seen in the work of Leibniz, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Simmel, and Jaspers. The essays are written in a style accessible to the general reader.

***Inochi no hajimari to owari ni* [At the Beginning and End of Life].**

Yanagisawa Keiko. Sōshisha, 2001. 193 × 131 mm. 206 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-7942-1065-5.

With rapid advances in medical technology made over the past few decades, the ways we view life and death have undergone fundamental changes. It is precisely at a time like this, argues life scientist Yanagisawa (b. 1938), that we must adopt a firm ethic of reverence for life. She takes up a variety of issues, from artificial insemination and prenatal diagnosis to dignified death and medical care for the elderly.

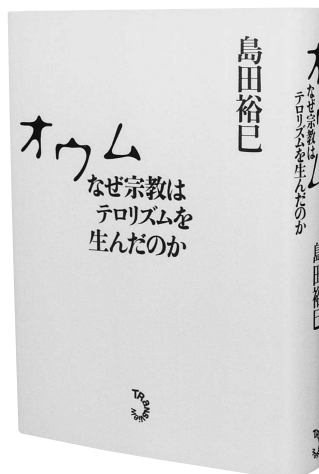
She looks at specific cases, such as the abortion of a severely impaired fetus, as well as instances of cessation of medical treatment, assisted suicide, and euthanasia—all of which fall under the rubric of “dignified death” in Europe and the United States—and delves into such questions as: To whom does life belong? What is ethical and what is natural?

The author has suffered from an unidentified illness since her thirties. When her condition took a turn for the worse in 1998, she made up her mind to seek a dignified death. An experimental drug, however, improved her condition sufficiently to

allow her to write. Unable to personally respond to the many requests she receives to speak because of her condition, the author presents her lectures in the form of this collection of essays. Written in a quiet, thoughtful style, they encourage each individual to reflect on life for themselves.

***Ōmu: Naze shūkyō wa terorizumu o unda no ka* [Aum: Why Religion Gave Birth to Terrorism].** Shimada Hiromi. Transview, 2001. 215 × 151 mm. 542 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-901510-00-2.

The Aum Shinrikyō cult sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway system in 1995 sent shock waves throughout the country. And today, while hearings for Aum founder Asahara Shōkō and other leaders are still in progress, the cult is reportedly in the process of reviving itself under the name Aleph.



Cover design: Koma Takahiko

The author, a scholar of religion who provoked so much controversy in the media for his views on Aum that he was forced to resign his university post, has devoted himself completely to uncovering what really lay behind Aum’s terrorism.

Presenting an overall view of the Aum-related incidents, Shimada clarifies the true nature of the cult. His detailed study of Aum doctrine and ascetic practice and close analysis of the massive documents available on the subject sheds light on the elements in Japanese society that spawned such an organization.

Particularly important are the essays on Nakazawa Shin’ichi, the scholar of religion said to have greatly influenced Asahara Shōkō and the followers of Aum, and on writer Murakami Haruki, who inves-

tigated the Aum affair from a literary standpoint in his series of interviews published as *Underground*. This book deserves a place among the standard works on Aum Shinrikyō.

HISTORY

***Edo oku-jochū monogatari* [A Tale of Edo Oku-jochū].** Hata Hisako.

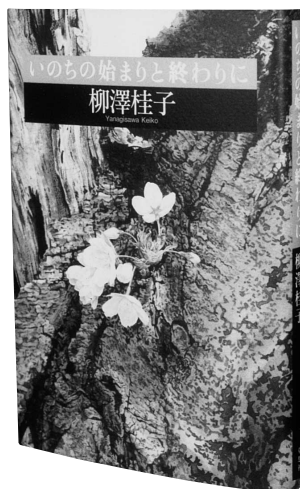
Kōdansha, 2001. 173 × 105 mm. 236 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-06-149565-8.

The *oku-jochū* is the general term for the women who served in the inner palace (*oku*) of the shogun’s castle in Edo and in the daimyo mansions during the Edo period (1603–1867). Their jobs varied widely. Some took care of household tasks, while others did clerical work. Still others played semi-administrative roles as aides to the wife of the shogun or daimyo. Among the *oku-jochū* were also consorts who mothered children of the shogun or daimyo.



Cover design: Sugiura Kōhei & Satō Atsushi

This book traces the lives of several such women whose diaries, letters and other records remain, and by examining these documents attempts to provide an accurate picture of the *oku-jochū*. Thus revealed are independent-minded women who had their own ideas and took the initiative in making important decisions in their lives regarding work, marriage, divorce, and so on. The book plainly depicts their daily lives, jobs, wages, the way they were hired, structures of promotion, and their lives after retiring from service. The world depicted here is different from that familiar to most readers, and at the same time something of a microcosm of Japanese society. This is a book



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

long awaited by specialists and fascinating for any reader interested in history.

Hito wa naze tatakau no ka: Kōkogaku kara mita sensō [Why People Fight: An Archaeological View of War]. Matsugi Takehiko. Kōdansha, 2001. 188 × 127 mm. 260 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-06-258213-9.

The people of the Jōmon period (ca. 10,000 B.C.–ca. 300 B.C.), while they had individual disputes, says the archaeologist author (b. 1961), did not make war. War emerged only with the advent of “advanced culture” in the Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C.–ca. 300 A.D.). How did disagreements over food supplies among villages in an agricultural society become organized into displays of power and armed force? Based on extensive archaeological data—battle-scarred bones, weapons buried with the dead, enormous ancient tumuli, etc.—the author establishes a periodization of history based on advances in military technology. For each of these eras, he shows the relation between developments in society and world events, and closely observes the traces of war throughout the Japanese archipelago in an attempt to identify the mechanisms that contributed to the evolution of war.

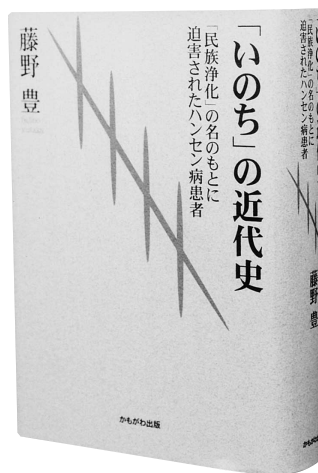


Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

From information gathered about weapons, defense works, and other artifacts, the author concludes that, in the minds of ancient Japanese warriors, the preferred weapons were swords and knives, combat at close-quarters was considered the ideal, and higher value was placed on individual character and spiritual strength than physical prowess or reason. The au-

thor boldly asserts that the traditions and style of waging war in the Yayoi period had a great impact on war in modern Japan and argues that archaeology should not end with the study of artifacts, but should shed light on the present.

“Inochi” no kindaishi: “Minzoku jōka” no na no moto ni hakugai sareta Hansenbyō kanja [A Modern History of “Life”: The Ostracism of Leprosy Patients in the Name of “Ethnic Cleansing”]. Fujino Yutaka. Kamogawa Shuppan, 2001. 194 × 132 mm. 686 pp. ¥7,500. ISBN 4-87699-587-7.



Cover design: Kawamoto Hiroshi

This history of leprosy (Hansen’s disease) by a specialist in modern Japanese history (b. 1952) was first published in a quarterly journal in a series continuing over nine years. Spanning more than 100 years, from the end of the Tokugawa period (1867) until the “Leprosy Prevention Law” was abolished in 1996, it looks at how the disease and its patients have been treated in Japan, documenting the ideologies and theories that justified a cruel policy of isolation for leprosy sufferers.

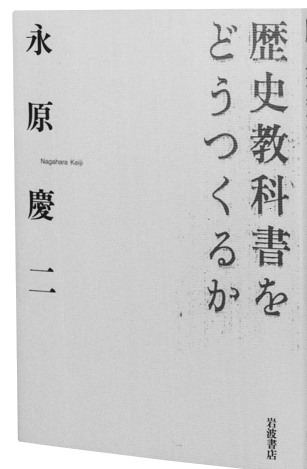
Leprosy was initially explained as an infectious as well as an hereditary disease. Despite the fact that the two are logically contradictory, these two theories supported official policy toward leprosy: the isolation policy, because the condition was supposedly infectious, and forced sterilization, because it was purported to be hereditary. Even after it was known that both isolation and sterilization were unnecessary, the policies went unchanged, continuing to deny patients’ rights and perpetuate discrimination

and ostracism. The author focuses on patient’s rights throughout the book, showing what their lives were like under such conditions, and how they fought back against the injustice they suffered.

In addition to the political aspect, the author gives due attention to the cultural dimension of the issue, looking at how leprosy was portrayed in movies and other media.

Rekishi kyōkasho o dō tsukuru ka [How Should a History Textbook Be Made?]. Nagahara Keiji. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 182 × 128 mm. 246 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-00-002526-0.

In April 2001 a controversial history textbook for use in junior high schools, compiled by the Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform), was approved by the education ministry. The textbook drew strong criticism and official protests in China and Korea against what are considered distortions and concealment of the facts of history.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

Nagahara Keiji (b. 1922), a veteran historian and author of history textbooks, holds that behind the appearance of the textbook lies the chauvinist view of the way Japanese history ought to be taught that has been firmly in place since the Meiji era (1868–1912). Analyzing that backdrop, the author stresses the need for a relative view of Japanese history seen objectively in the context of world history. He argues that a textbook must be based on the understanding of history from the internationally accepted perspective of human rights. He also discusses the education ministry’s textbook review

and approval system, introducing the Ienaga textbook review case and the 1997 Supreme Court ruling recognizing the illegality of revisions the ministry had demanded of historian and textbook writer Ienaga Saburō. “The review system must not be a form of censorship threatening the freedoms of scholarship, ideas, and education,” declares Nagahara.

SOCIETY

Gaikokujin rōdōsha shin jidai [A New Era for Foreign Laborers]. Iguchi Yasushi. Chikuma Shobō, 2001. 172×106 mm. 206 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-480-05888-5.

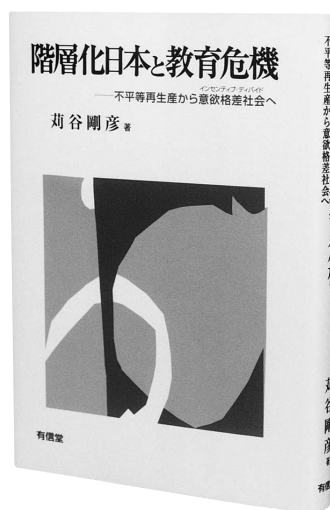
In Japan, where the birthrate is sharply declining at the same time society is rapidly aging, the workforce supporting the economy is decreasing at a faster rate than the population. Particularly in industry, debate is growing over acceptance of more foreign workers to compensate for the shortage.

Formerly involved with foreign labor affairs at the Ministry of Labor, the author (b. 1953), now a university professor, outlines and explains the current policies and issues concerning overseas workers and presents what he considers the sensible path Japan should pursue with regard to labor.

Acceptance of foreign labor is indispensable, he says, but more important than the question of “quantity” are “qualitative” matters such as how to encourage workers from overseas to settle in Japan with their families and how to build a society in which they can work alongside Japanese. To achieve this, he advocates reforming

the systems for training foreign workers and giving them practical skills. Rather than simply seeking already acquired skills workers bring with them from overseas, Japan should work together with other Asian nations and mobilize its own organizations and institutions to train workers from overseas, and have some of them remain in Japan.

Kaisōka Nihon to kyōiku kiki: Fubyōdō saiseisan kara iyoku kakusa shakai e [The Stratification of Japanese Society and the Education Crisis: From the Perpetuation of Inequality to the “Incentive-Divide” Society]. Kariya Takehiko. Yūshindō Kōbunsha, 2001. 215×151 mm. 246 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-8420-8525-8. Concerns over the decline in children’s scholastic achievement has sparked extended debate in Japan in recent years. In this study, a scholar of social education (b. 1955) argues that the growing stratification of the loci of education and a lack of attention to the question of “social class” in the debate over education are partly responsible for the situation.



Cover design: Etō Masako

Education is a cross-generational endeavor, easily revealing class disparities among members of the parents’ generation. In the post-World War II period, education played an important role in major demographic and rapid social changes. It nurtured what is now thought of as a peculiarly Japanese egalitarianism—the notion that “anyone can succeed if they try hard enough”—and the “middle class consciousness” held by the overwhelming majority of the population. The author calls attention

to the fact that an “incentive divide” is widening between the advantaged children of well-educated parents in professional/managerial jobs, and other children.

Based on empirical data, the author examines the state and mechanisms of the disparities among students. Showing the impact of this stratification on Japanese society, he proposes that opportunities be provided for people to return to school or continue their education in order to mitigate the inequalities.

Kodomo to iu kachi: Shōshika jidai no josei no shinri [The Value of Children: The Psychology of Women in the Low Birth Rate Era]. Kashiwagi Keiko. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 173×109 mm. 236 pp. ¥840. ISBN 4-12-101588-6.

The declining birth rate is now the subject of debate in Japan from many different perspectives. A developmental psychologist, the author (b. 1932) argues that what is missing in the debate is an understanding of the psychology of women.

First, says Kashiwagi, while perhaps considered self-evident in contemporary Japan, the “value of children” varies in history and in different parts of the world depending on social conditions and even the gender of the children. She then calls attention to the fact that while people once spoke of being “blessed with” (*sazukaru*) children, in today’s era of birth control, they now speak of “making” (*tsukuru*) children, reflecting the important role of parental intention and planning in the matter of childbearing. Now empowered to make choices in their lives in various areas such as work and hobbies, women now decide whether to

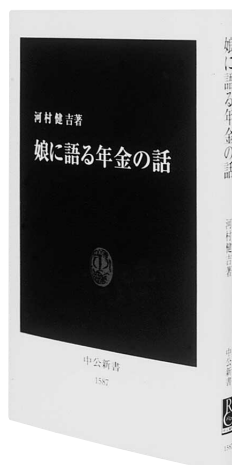


Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

“make” a child after carefully weighing the positive and negative merits of having a child for their own lives. Based on this analysis, the author concludes that the real “culprit” behind the decreased fertility rate is the society that compels women to bear the burdens of child rearing.

Musume ni kataru nenkin no hanashi [What I Tell My Daughter about Pensions]. Kawamura Kenkichi. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 173 × 109 mm. 268 pp. ¥880. ISBN 4-12-101587-8.

Prompted by a conversation with his daughter, this book came about when a former bank employee (b. 1943) experienced in designing corporate pension plans decided to write an easy-to-understand book for young people wanting to know more about pensions.



The book depicts the emergence and development of the pension system in the historical context of the twentieth century. It reviews the role of pension plans in relation to social security, employment policy, the issues of the low birth rate and the aging population, as well as economic policy, and considers social security pensions for the twenty-first century. Showing the distinctive features of Japanese pension plans, the author criticizes the recent proposals to cut pension benefits, privatize the *kōsei nenkin* program (the government-managed pension plan for corporate employees), and supplement pension funds from consumption taxes.

Pointing out the long hours and other harsh working conditions, job segregation by gender, and threat of layoff as companies restructure to

cope with the recession, the author holds that people’s decreasing confidence in the public pension system is closely linked to the worsening of employment conditions, a major factor behind the low birth rate. He argues that employment conditions need urgently to be improved as part of the effort to reform the pension system.

Ryūgen to dema no shakaigaku [The Sociology of False Reports and Rumors]. Hiroi Osamu. Bungei Shunjū, 2001. 173 × 107 mm. 226 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-16-660189-X.

The author is a sociologist specializing in the social problems resulting from natural disasters. In this book, he divides false reports into two kinds: the eruptive type, which spread rapidly after an incident of widespread destruction, and the permeating type, which spread slowly through everyday channels of communication and last a long time. Analyzing the social and psychological conditions and mechanisms at work in the propagation of rumor, the author provides an abundance of examples—from malicious rumors (like the reports that Koreans had started fires and poisoned wells that led to massacres of Koreans in the wake of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923), to folkloric rumors (like the legend of the “slit-mouth woman” and her hideous grin, which has been circulating among elementary and junior high school students since about 1979 in a number of variations).

The author points out that rumor is an attempt to make sense of a vague situation resulting from a lack of information, and stresses the importance of accurately supplying people



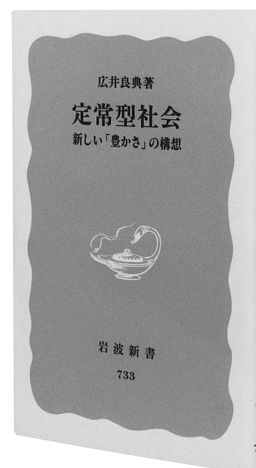
Cover design: Sakata Masanori

with missing information. Devoting an entire chapter to the economic damage inflicted on tourism, the agriculture, marine, and other industries when exaggerated or inaccurate information circulates about a disaster, he cites the heavy responsibility of the government and the news media.

Teijō-gata shakai: Atarashii “yutakasa” no kōsō [The Stationary Society: Plan for a “New Affluence”]. Hiroi Yoshinori. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 172 × 104 mm. 190 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-430733-3.

Japan’s national policy ever since the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912) has been the incessant pursuit of ever-greater material affluence. Is there any future for Japan, where economic growth has stopped and the recession continues?

A specialist in social security and the philosophy of science, the author (b. 1961) urges that in the twenty-first century Japan should seek to become a society in a “stationary state” as affirmatively viewed by J. S. Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848). Japan should aspire to a “society in which a sufficient affluence is achieved and economic growth is not an absolute objective,” in other words, argues the author, a zero-growth society.



Observing that the “stationary society” (*teijō-gata shakai*) is also a “sustainable welfare society,” he underlines the necessity of integrating social security and protection of the environment into a system that harmonizes with economy to accommodate declining fertility rates and an aging population, and deal with environment issues. He proposes that consumption, inheritance, and

environment taxes be used to achieve these ends.

The book's proposals for reappraisal of the true meaning of affluence and for building a society that places high value on the "slow flow of time" are thought-provoking for Japanese who have yet to discover what should replace the constant pursuit of growth.

Waseda hatsu, gomi ga machi o genki ni shita [How Waste Reinvented a Town: It All Started in Waseda]. Fujimura Bōyō. Shōgyōkai, 2001. 182 × 128 mm. 223 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-7855-0203-7.

In 1996 the author (b. 1944), who had been in the process of developing an empty-can collecting device for drink dispensing machines, met people of the Tokyo shopping district of Waseda. This book tells how various ideas for using trash to generate new business led to the resuscitation of the shopping district, and also explains how a new business model was developed.



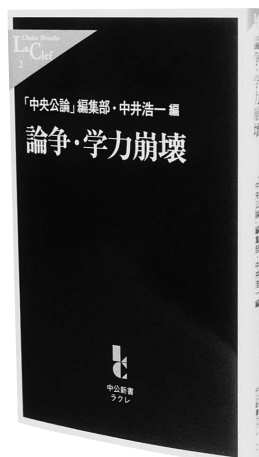
The key to the success of the Waseda shopping district campaign was the empty-can collecting device. When you put an empty can or PET bottle into a machine equipped with the device, you can play a short video game on the machine's screen, and if you win the game you get a ticket for a free cup of coffee or a free meal at a shop in the shopping district. "Eco-stations" with drink machines equipped with the lucky ticket can-collectors were installed all over the town, and almost immediately the number of abandoned empty cans and PET bottles decreased. The tickets, which asked for the holder's address

and age, revealed to local shopkeepers an accurate picture of their clientele, helping them to adjust their inventories and improve their sales, invigorating the business of the shopping district as a whole. The experiment begun in Waseda is reportedly now part of a nationwide network.

EDUCATION

Ronsō gakuryoku hōkai [Debate: Breakdown of Scholastic Achievement]. Chūō Kōron Henshūbu and Nakai Kōichi, eds. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 173 × 109 mm. 314 pp. ¥760. ISBN 4-12-150002-4. The alleged decline of scholastic achievement at the elementary, secondary, and university level has recently been a center of controversy in Japan. With the education ministry's new Guidelines for the Course of Study, which reduce the content of study at elementary and junior high schools by about 30 percent, to be adopted starting in April 2002, the debate grew even more intense. This collection of essays, dialogues, and round-table discussions previously published in opinion journals, general-interest magazines, education-related journals, and newspapers, follows the evolution of the debate and the major points at issue. It presents the various arguments and counter-arguments in a balanced manner, providing an objective overview of the discussion.

Part 1 of the book introduces the views of those concerned about scholastic decline and opposed to the education ministry's policy of easing the burdens of schoolwork on chil-



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

dren; part 2 follows the discourse of pros and cons concerning ministry policy, including a dialogue between the education ministry's policy section chief and a university professor opposed to the policy; and part 3, including results of questionnaire surveys conducted among school teachers, deals with the subject by focusing on responses among teachers in the classroom and local government administration.

The book vividly reveals the rather chaotic nature of the debate due to a gap in understandings of *gakuryoku*—literally, "learning ability"—and a lack of empirical data supporting arguments of the debaters. It also highlights the problematic nature of the university entrance examination system.

CULTURE

Amerika "chi-Nichi-ha" no kigen: Meiji no ryūgakusei kōryūtan [The Origins of American "Japan Hands": The Story of Student Exchange in the Meiji Era]. Shiozaki Satoshi. Heibonsha, 2001. 194 × 130 mm. 262 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-582-84211-9.



Cover design: Iwaya Junsuke

During a sojourn in the United States the historical journalist author (b. 1961) came across some 100 photographs of Japanese from the 1870s including members of the Iwakura Mission and men and women from Japan who had come to study in and around Boston around that time.

The photographs had been passed down by descendants of Boston financier Gilbert Atwood. Atwood,

along with Japanologists Edward Morse, Ernest Fenellosa, and Percival Lowell, were leaders of the social elite of Boston in their day. All belonged to prestigious families, had studied at Harvard University, and made names for themselves. Devoted to various cultural good works, it was they who became the leading supporters of students from abroad who came to Boston to study. Focusing his account on these “Brahmins,” as they were known, the author sets forth the drama of intellectual exchange between Japan and the United States in that early phase.

The important role played by the talented and able young Japanese students who studied in the United States and later put their advanced learning to use in modernizing their country is widely recognized. These men and women were also important sources of information about Japan at a time when Americans knew little about the newly opened country on the eastern edge of Asia. Based on meticulous research, the author explores the dawn of encounter between Japan and the United States from a new perspective.

Chikoku no tanjō: Kindai Nihon ni okeru jikan ishiki no keisei [The Birth of Tardiness: The Formation of Time Consciousness in Modern Japan]. Hashimoto Takehiko and Kuriyama Shigehisa. Sangensha, 2001. 215 × 152 mm. 364 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-88303-083-0.

On January first in the sixth year of Meiji (1873), Japan adopted the solar calendar, switching to a system of fixed hours (*teiji-hō*) following the movements of the clock, from the

variable hour system based on seasonal time in which day and night were divided into equal periods, and adjusted for the season. This work traces the development of time consciousness in Japan up to the present.

Part one examines the improved regulation of time that resulted from the introduction of railways. Comparing the length of time devoted to labor during the Edo period (1603–1867) with that since the Meiji period (1868–1912), part two reveals how, from the Taisho era (1912–26) onward, uses of time became gradually more regulated and disciplined. Part three looks at how time discipline was taught in the schools, and introduces the movement urging housewives not to waste time. Part four covers the measurement of time and the events surrounding the shift from the old lunar calendar to the new solar calendar in the early Meiji era. The discrepancies the shift created between the new calendar and traditional awareness of seasonal change can be observed in the seasonal words used for haiku poetry. Part five explores the close relationship of time to the economy and reasons for the intensely busy lives from which Japanese today often suffer. (An English translation of chapters 2 to 5 is forthcoming from the International Center for Japanese Studies [Nichibunken]. See <http://www.nichibun.ac.jp>).

Ibunka rikai [Understanding Cultural Difference]. Aoki Tamotsu. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 173 × 104 mm. 212 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-430740-6.

This book is based on lectures prepared by a noted cultural anthropologist (b. 1938), for a series broadcast on NHK educational television.

Aoki believes understanding of cultural differences takes place on three levels: natural, social, and symbolic. The intrinsic values, behavior patterns, customs, beliefs, etc., of a particular society belong to the symbolic level, and form a cultural core that is difficult to grasp from the outside. This poses the greatest challenge to cultural understanding.

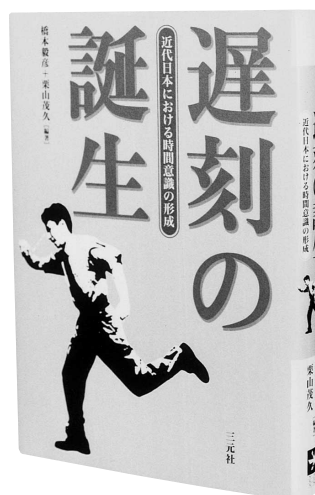
Modern cultures, the author also contends, are created through the absorption of foreign cultures; they are “composite cultures” in the sense that they grow and take shape by contact



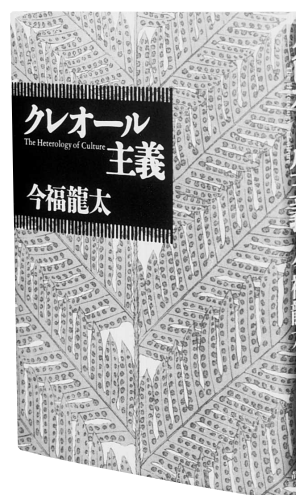
with other cultures. The mixture is different for each culture, and the distinctive qualities of culture are preserved in each different mix. The author believes that studying the elements of these composite cultures is essential to understanding culture in general.

Based upon the author's own fieldwork and experiences, such as his training as a Buddhist priest while studying in Thailand, the book discusses the challenges and issues of cultural understanding in today's modern world in an easily accessible style.

Kureōru shugi [Creolism: The Heterology of Culture]. Imafuku Ryūta. Seidosha, 2001. 194 × 132 mm. 294 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-7917-5894-3. By “creolism” the author of this work, a cultural anthropologist (b. 1955), means a “removing of identifying links to a particular language, ethnic group, or nation, and a voluntary equal acceptance of everything—desert, jungle, or fertile plain—within the self.” In other words, it is an attempt to voluntarily remove oneself



Cover design: Tōdaiji Michie



Cover design: Koma Takahiko

from the institution of the state through the practice of the creole ideal transcending language and nation.

This title is a reprint of a book published ten years ago composed of articles previously serialized in the magazine *Gendai shisō* (Seidosha) based on travels in Cuba, New Mexico, and Brazil. Imafuku opposes the established essentialism of culture. Examining the “facts” and “realities” about tradition, race, ethnic group, and so on expounded by sociologists, he reveals what they have made impossible to see. Reformulating understandings of languages and cultural institutions, he seeks to define a new cognitive landscape that allows coexistence of the heterogeneous.

Mizu no mori [The Water Forest]. Takayama Fumihiko. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 196 × 134 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-12-003165-9.



Cover design: Ogata Shūichi & Itō Yū

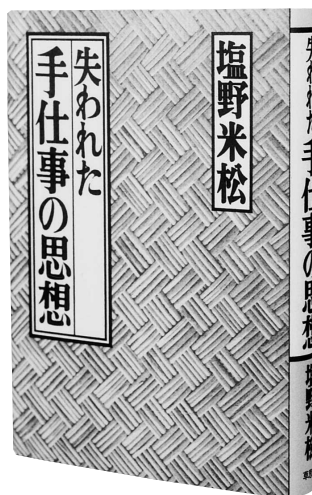
This is a collection of essays by the non-fiction writer who recently won both the Ōya Sōichi Non-fiction Prize and the Kōdansha Non-fiction Prize for *Hibana: Hōjō Tamio no shōgai* [Sparks: The Life of Hōjō Tamio] (see JBN, No. 34, p. 16). The essays describe the author's travels through the world's largest-scale virgin beech (*buna*) forests of the Shirakami mountains on the border of Aomori and Akita prefectures, the beech forests of Oku-aizu in southwestern Fukushima prefecture, through the alpine meadows of Shiga, Nagano prefecture, to his native town of Takachiho in Miyazaki prefecture, home of a legend about the descent of the gods there.

In the course of his journey, the

author met people who live in and defend their native mountains, including hunters (*matagi*) and the descendants of woodworkers (*kijishi*), as well as people who had resisted reckless development and road construction at the time of the preparations for the 1998 Winter Olympics held at Shiga Kogen in Nagano prefecture. One story tells of the logging roads cut through the ancient *buna* forests, the heavy logging, and the failure of the replanted cedars to grow, resulting in erosion of the mountains. Another recounts how the landscape of the Shirakami mountains was protected by registration as a World Heritage Region, but how that meant the shutting out of the people who had made their living there. While told in a detached, factual style, the essays have the flavor of a great epic of the landscape of Japan in antiquity.

Ushinawareta teshigoto no shisō [The Vanishing Philosophy of Handcrafts]. Shiono Yonematsu. Sōshisha, 2001. 194 × 134 mm. 255 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-7942-1074-4.

While pursuing a career as a writer, the author (b. 1947) has been actively interviewing and writing down the stories of craftspeople all over Japan for the past twenty years. The kind of arts and crafts that were shaped by the local climate and culture, that used raw materials skillfully and frugally, conserving supplies for future generations, and in which the artists mastered the techniques and the work ethic and passed them on to their heirs—these crafts began to vanish around the time rapid economic growth began in the 1960s.



Cover design: Tamura Yoshiya

Through the stories of craftsmen and craftswomen who have not been able to pass on their skills to the younger generation, this book considers Japan in the contemporary age.

Interviews with artisans who are the last of their kind in more than twenty crafts, including blacksmithing, fishhook making, *kokera* thatching, and fine bamboo work crafts, fill the first chapter. The second chapter deals with the cycle of the seasons, the growth cycle of raw materials, and the links among different occupations, seen from the viewpoint of the perpetual cycle of birth and death (*rinne*). The following two chapters discuss the demise of the apprentice system and other problems by drawing on the stories of the interviewed craftspeople and heard in the workshops of *miyadaiku* carpenters.

In our society of mass production and mass consumption, where the accumulation of experience is no longer valued, the figure of the traditional craftsman is rapidly vanishing. What have we, who are living in this society, irretrievably lost? The book offers a sharp critique of today's civilization.

ENTERTAINMENT

Kurosawa Akira no shokutaku [Kurosawa Akira's Dinner Table]. Kurosawa Kazuko. Shōgakusan, 2001. 150 × 105 mm. 239 pp. ¥514. ISBN 4-09-402296-1.

“Cooking is ultimately an art; anyone who does not understand good taste, has no imagination.” So went the creed of film director Kurosawa Akira, a man known for his prodigious and appreciative appetite. In this book, an essay collection of quite a rare flavor, Kurosawa's daughter (b. 1954)—his manager as well as the person in charge of cooking in the Kurosawa household—shares memories of her father and his eating habits observed close at hand. It tells what Kurosawa was particular about and introduces many seasonal dishes for spring, summer, autumn, and winter as well as a number of original Kurosawa family recipes.

Kurosawa Akira had a habit of wanting to eat something he discov-



Cover design: Ōno Tsuruko & Creative Sano Japan

ered he liked day after day, so there were frequently times when the family became quite tired of crab croquettes or sea bream or flounder sashimi. Matters related to eating could set off explosions of his considerable temper but might also be the occasion for restoring him from a sulk to good cheer. The stories display the humor and keenly observant eye of a daughter who deeply loved and respected her father. It is a fine book, written with wit and elegance, that brings back to life and endearingly portrays a great man. The anecdotes of meals with staff and members of film casts on location are especially enjoyable.

Miyazaki Hayao no sekai [The Worlds of Miyazaki Hayao].

Kiridōshi Risaku. Chikuma Shobō, 2001. 173 × 106 mm. 334 pp. ¥940. ISBN 4-480-05908-3.

This is a thorough and empirical critique of the works of Miyazaki Hayao, who was awarded the top prize at the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival for *Sen to Chihiro no*



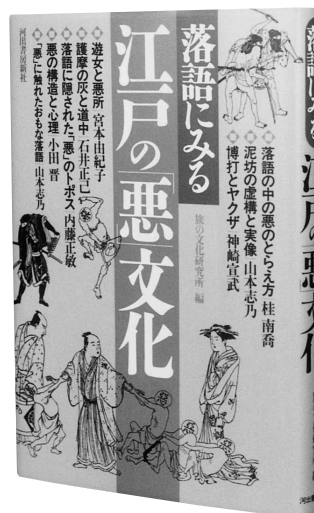
Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

kamikakushi [Spirited Away]. The author is a culture critic (b. 1964) who has been watching Miyazaki films since he was in junior high school.

For both works for the cinema like *Kariosuroto no shiro* (Lupin III: Castle of Cagliostro), *Kaze no tani no Naushika* (Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind), *Tonari no Totoro* (My Neighbor Totoro), and *Mononoke hime* (Princess Mononoke) and animation series for television like *Mirai shōnen Conan* (Future Boy Conan), the book records in detail Miyazaki's own words about his works as well as comments by members of his staff. Author Kiridōshi retells each story in digest form and minutely describes the personalities of each of the characters, the features of the drama as well as new techniques introduced and certain memorable scenes.

He discusses many other aspects of Miyazaki's work: what he sees as the proper relationship of human beings to the natural environment and how that stance has changed through his career, his view of girlhood through an analysis of his heroines, etc.

Rakugo ni miru Edo no "aku" bunka [The Culture of "Evil" in Edo as Seen in Rakugo]. Tabi no Bunka Kenkyūjo. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2001. 194 × 131 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-309-24248-0.



Cover design: Endō Kei

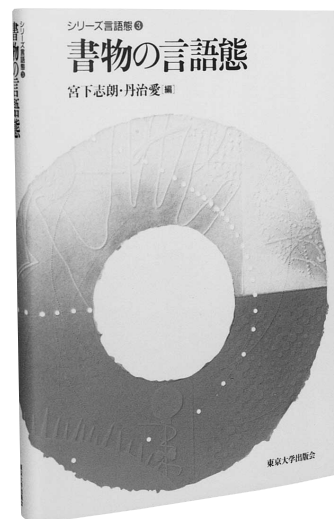
This book is the final volume of a series of studies on various aspects of Edo period (1603–1867) culture seen from the perspective of *rakugo* storytelling. Seven authors, including story tellers and folklorists, contributed essays to this anthology.

Even in what were outwardly the peaceful times of the Edo period, there was crime and evil: thieves, swindlers, gamblers, prostitutes, and murderers. These realities are portrayed in the basically comic art of *rakugo*. One of the authors declares that until now *rakugo* stories were never considered a legitimate source for historical or literary research. Careful scrutiny of the scenes of everyday life portrayed in the stories, however, offers a vivid picture of the lives of the common people at the bottom of the Edo-period social ladder.

The topics under discussion include the real and the false image of thieves as suggested by the severity of punishments of the times, the shogunate's handling of the *okabasho* ("wayside") pleasure quarters other than the officially regulated Yoshiwara quarter, and the location of places where "bad" deeds took place as seen in its geographical relationship with execution grounds, holy places, etc. Introducing the storylines of *rakugo* tales such as "Natsu doro" [A Summer Thief] and "Mō hanbun" [Another Half Glass], the essays explore the seedy side of culture in the Edo period with keen insight.

LANGUAGE

Shomotsu no gengotai [The Language of Books]. Miyashita Shirō and Tanji Ai, eds. Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai (University of Tokyo Press), 2001. 215 × 151 mm. 304 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-13-084063-0.



Cover design: Suzuki Takashi & Takigami Asako

This book is part of the six-volume “Series Gengotai” resulting from a joint research project conducted at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

The “language sciences” of the twentieth century, including linguistics, succeeded in clarifying the nature of inherent language ability, universal grammar, and the structures of human cognition. The linguistic sciences, which cover all fields of human language with all their diversity of historical, social, and cultural background, have grown so intricately interrelated that some attempt needs to be made, drawing on new knowledge and insight, to review their complex relationships.

This series, calling the totality of human linguistic practice “gengotai,” delineates the expanding territory of research that reaches out increasingly into other disciplines in its periphery. Its studies examine what interdisciplinary questions and approaches are feasible. This third volume discusses the emergence and functions of books as media from the perspectives of books and literacy, the creation and revision of texts, the functions of authors and readers, and so on.

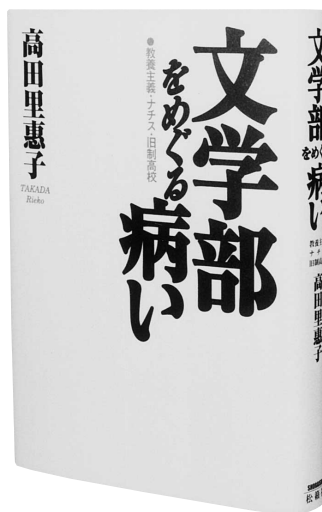
LITERATURE

Bungakubu o meguru yamai: Kyōyō shugi, Nachisu, kyūsei kōkō [The *Bungakubu* Syndrome: Cultural Elitism, Nazism, and the Prewar Higher Schools]. Takada Rieko. Shōraisha, 2001. 193 × 134 mm. 356 pp. ¥2,380. ISBN 4-87984-216-8. From the latter part of the Meiji era (1868–1912) to the pre-World War II period, the select and aloof world of Japan’s cultured elite was presided over partly by specialists in German literature. This book is a short history and critique of the prewar higher schools (*kyūsei kōkō*, which prepared students for entrance to the imperial universities), the faculties of letters (*bungakubu*) at the prewar imperial universities, and the military, written by a scholar of German literature (b. 1958) from a feminist perspective.

One of the German literature scholars the author takes up was known, on the one hand, for his translations of Hermann Hesse and,

on the other, for having introduced Nazi literature to Japan during the war. The purpose of the book is not to denounce such figures, but to demonstrate how oblivious they were to the inherent contradictions of their stance, which the author believes derives from the cultural elitism they acquired at the prewar higher schools. Herein emerges the image of the “bungaku seinen,” the young men who steeped themselves in fine literature, and suffered from both superiority and inferiority complexes. Re-reading the novels—like Hesse’s *Sharin no shita* (*Unterm Rad*) and Takeyama Michio’s *Biruma no tategoto* (*The Harp of Burma*)—in the way the prewar higher school students read offers a new and fresh perspective on the structure of their thinking.

The subtitle, says Takada, refers to the exquisite solidarity of male alliances. The book is not only an excellent discourse on modern Japan’s introduction of foreign cultures, but an original and interesting satire on male culture.



Bunshi no ippin [Literati Treasures]. Yajima Yukihiko. Photographs by Takahashi Masatsugu. Bunshun Nesco, 2001. 210 × 144 mm. 279 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-89036-136-7. What can we learn about the lives of great writers of the past from the personal effects they left behind? This book introduces 138 items that belonged to 117 well-known writers with brief but powerful sketches by non-fiction writer Yajima (b. 1957) and skillfully composed black-and-white photographs by Takahashi (b. 1947). These are all objects without



Cover design: Matsuzaki Osamu

particular intrinsic worth in themselves, that are memorable because of their close connection with the lives of well-known writers. In these pages we can sense the warmth and gaze of their former owners.

The collection includes many quite famous items like Hagiwara Sakutarō’s guitar, Miyazawa Kenji’s cello, and Dazai Osamu’s cape as well as some surprises, like the bucket that Saitō Mokichi was known to have used as a urinal and an underkimono featuring an image of the thunder god that Tanizaki Jun’ichirō is said to have received from his third wife’s father. Some are deeply touching, like the notebook in which Kaneko Misuzu, author of poetry for children, whose husband prohibited her from writing poetry or even letters, wrote down the words of her baby daughter during the slightly less than a year before her suicide. There is also the ghastly death mask of Kobayashi Takiji, the proletarian writer who was tortured to death by the authorities.

The volume very fortunately contains a complete list of the museums, memorials, and institutes where these items are preserved.

Hana gatami: Teito no shijin tachi [The Flower Basket: The Poets of the Metropolis]. Kuze Teruhiko. Toshi Shuppan, 2001. 215 × 152 mm. 244 pp. ¥1,714. ISBN 4-924831-97-2. During the period after World War I ended and the second world war broke out, the devastating Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 wiped away the musty culture of the Meiji era (1868–1912), and in this all-too-brief interwar period blossomed the

“era of the imperial capital” that displayed a rare balance of Western, continental, as well as Japanese culture. Written by writer and television producer Kuze Teruhiko (b. 1935), this volume is a memoir accompanied by anecdotes and literary associations evoking the works of his favorite poets—Kitahara Hakushū, Miyoshi Tatsuji, Saijō Yaso, Satō Haruo, Itō Shizuo, Tsumura Nobuo, Hagiwara Sakutarō, Nakahara Chūya—who lived in Tokyo in the prewar years when it was called *teito* (“imperial capital”). By looking at these poets as citydwellers, he offers fascinating insights on the peculiar ethos of the “imperial capital” that underlies their poetry.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

“Poems that exhibit an extraordinary shine often contain a dangerous poison,” says Kuze. “Only after you have drunk it down do you realize it is poison and find yourself intoxicated. Nevertheless, I steadfastly refuse to engage in the ‘research’ or study of ‘sources’ that might inoculate me against such poison.” Relying only on his own sensibilities, Kuze records the exhilaration of what he calls the “miraculous” encounter with each poem in fluid prose, bringing vividly to life the verses and their authors.

Modan toshi no dokusho kūkan [Reading Spaces in the Modern City]. Nagamine Shigetoshi. Nihon Editor School Shuppanbu, 2001. 193 × 132 mm. 264 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-88888-310-6. Tokyo of the 1920s and 1930s was a time of rapid advancement of the print media, when the habit of reading was rapidly popularized. This book is

a history of Japan’s reading culture that traces in concrete detail the emergence of reading habits in the modern age, written by a publishing history specialist (b. 1955) and drawing on a wealth of documents.

Backed up by careful documentary research, Nagamine demonstrates the functions of the bookstores, libraries, book rental shops, and *zasshi kaidoku kai* groups—whose members could read a number of magazines cheaply—that served as the intermediaries between the print media and readers.



Cover design: Nakayama Gin'ō

It was in this era that the rise of the educated middle class in urban areas and the expansion of railway networks led to the development of the suburban commuter culture. The now familiar scene in which commuters living in distant suburbs use their time riding trains and subways for reading got its start at that time. The commuter environment not only expanded the locus of reading from the home to public space, but significantly affected both the content and distribution systems of publications. The author examines the popularization of the print media, showing how general-interest journals like *Bungei shunjū* featured light essays and became leaders of the print media, and how the “1 yen books” offered systematic reading material for young people.

Uba zakari hana no tabigasa: Oda Ieko no “Azumaji nikki” [Matronhood in Full Bloom Takes to the Road: Oda Ieko’s Diary of a Journey to the East]. Tanabe Seiko. Shūeisha, 2001. 193 × 133 mm. 382 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-08-774530-9.

In 1841, four over-fifty women of well-off merchant houses in northern Kyushu and three manservants set off on a five-month, 3,200 kilometer journey. They traveled to Ise and on northward to Nikko, toured Edo (now Tokyo), and reveled in the sights of Kyoto and Osaka on their return journey.

Happening by chance upon “Azumaji Nikki,” the diary of one of these women, author Tanabe (b. 1928) found herself captivated by the richly expressive writing of Oda Ieko and delighted by the wealth of classical learning reflected in its accounts, the richness of her vocabulary, and beauty of her poetry. Tanabe decided to try to bring alive the journey of the four women for contemporary readers. After completing thorough research in voluminous historical documents, she recreated the journey in the freewheeling, evocative writing for which she is known.

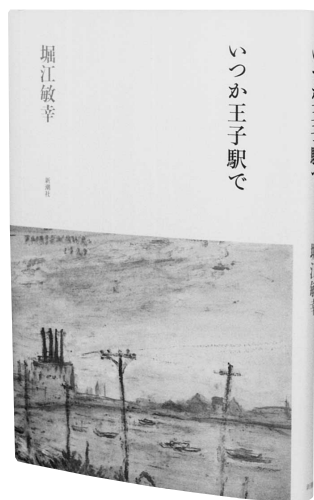
In the nineteenth century, women in their fifties were already grandmothers entering advanced age. It was also a time when travel for women was strictly restricted and controlled. But such liabilities certainly did not keep these women from crossing rugged mountain passes, coping with sudden illness among their number, or enduring whatever it took to evade the official barrier posts. And all the while, they wrote poetry about things that caught their fancy, purchased souvenirs everywhere they went, wine and dined at their inns, thoroughly enjoying themselves in every way. A fascinating journey of women who were tough, well-educated, and intelligent comes vividly to life in this volume.



Cover design: Mizuki Sō

Itsuka Ōji eki de [One Day at Ōji Station]. Horie Toshiyuki. Shinchōsha, 2001. 196×133 mm. 166 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-447101-1. The author is a scholar of French literature active also as a writer and translator. The protagonist of this novel is a man who lives along a suburban train line in the northern part of Tokyo, supporting himself by part-time university teaching and translation. His encounters with people at the public bathhouse and a local diner, and his growing friendship with the family of his landlord and other people of the town are described with a light, simple touch. Originally written for a horse racing magazine, the novel is sprinkled with stories related to horses—recollections of famous race horses, an episode recalling the time a notice of the death of a famous race horse was delivered, and so on. The images of running and racing—the commuter train that runs through the town, the protagonist's old bicycle, the dragon tattooed on the back of the seal carver with whom he becomes friends, the junior high school daughter of the landlord whom he tutors and who belongs to the track-and-field at school—add depth to the work as a whole.

Like his Akutagawa Prize-winning story *Kuma no shikiishi* [Le Pavé de l'ours] (see JBN, No. 35, p. 19), the essay-like quality draws one into the elaborate yet relaxed world of his writing.



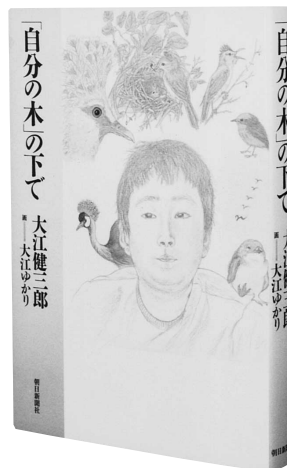
Cover design: Shinchōsha

“Jibun no ki” no shita de [Beneath “A Tree of My Own”]. Ōe Kenzaburō. Illustrations by Ōe Yukari. Asahi Shimbunsha, 2001. 188×129 mm. 194 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-02-257639-1.

This is a collection of messages for children by the Nobel prize-winning author (b.1935). The illustrations by Ōe Yukari, his wife, offer a sense of reassurance and restfulness.

Ōe describes memories from his boyhood, such as the time he spent entire days in the woods with an encyclopedia of plants, refusing to attend school; and how he built himself a tree house where he would do nothing but read “books I thought were important, but were hard to get through,” day after day.

Looking back over his life, he addresses young readers regarding such questions as: “Why do we have to go to school?” “What has been the purpose of our lives?” “How should you go about studying?” “Where can we get the strength to put up with irresponsible gossip?” He writes in a familiar and plain style, as if directly engaging one in conversation, and with the conditions under which children live today clearly in mind.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

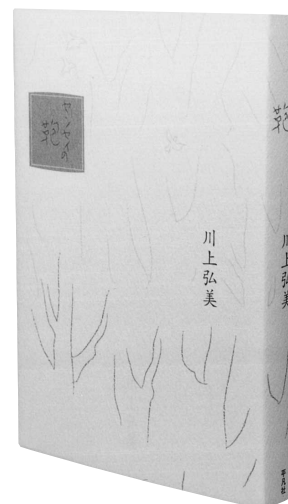
The only acts that are irredeemable for a child, says Ōe, are “murder” and “suicide.” How can you stand firm against such “irredeemable acts?” he asks. Like the variables we only define when we ultimately work out the answer to a mathematical equation, Ōe says, sometimes we have to make a place to set aside what seem to be such tough questions in life that we see no choice but suicide or murder, where we can take them out later and examine them

once more. This is an important volume, filled with memorable insights and episodes.

Sensei no kaban [Teacher's Briefcase]. Kawakami Hiromi. Heibonsha, 2001. 192×131 mm. 278 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-582-82961-9.

The author's most recent love story, this novel won the 2001 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize (see JBN, No. 36, p. 6). The protagonist is a thirty-seven year-old office worker named Tsukiko who is not particularly unpopular with men nor eager for a passionate love affair. She lives alone in the town where she grew up. Visiting a small bar in front of the station for a drink one day, she finds herself sitting next to her high school Japanese literature teacher. They meet at the bar now and then, but they each pour their own drinks and pay their own bills. “Sensei” (Teacher), as she calls him, is a widower, also living alone. He always sits up straight and carries a small black briefcase. Tsukiko is a little more than thirty years younger. They converse in formal language and maintain a decorous distance from each other, and while they tease and bait each other, Tsukiko begins to feel a warm spot for Sensei. They go on outings to gather mushrooms, to view the cherry blossoms, and share various other experiences as the seasons turn round. Eventually they go off on a weekend trip, just the two of them, but that night she sneaks down the hall separating their rooms, only to find Sensei writing haiku poetry . . .

Neither is very adept at love, but they are drawn together, in what seems like an unreal world. In the



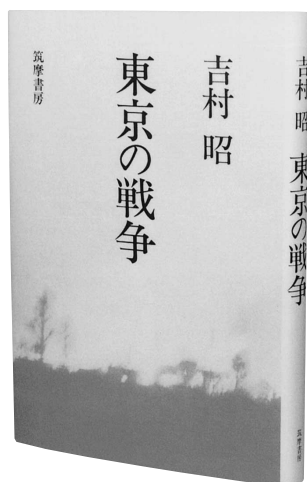
Cover design: Kyappu

end, Tsukiko is left, holding Sensei's briefcase as her keepsake.

Tōkyō no sensō [The War of Tokyo].
Yoshimura Akira. Chikuma Shobō,
2001. 193 × 132 mm. 198 pp. ¥1,500.
ISBN 4-480-81436-1.

The author, known for his historical fiction, records in this book memories of his experiences during the air raids that battered Tokyo toward the end of World War II.

Born (1927) and raised in the old *shitamachi* area of Tokyo, he was at an age when, as the war was coming to a close, those older than himself were being drafted into the armed forces while younger children were being evacuated to the countryside. Reflecting that not many of his generation would have been in a position to see and experience what he had, he decided to set down what it was like in Tokyo during the war and immediately thereafter.



Cover design: Ōmura Kazuhiko

The book portrays many of the usual and familiar scenes of those times—the firebombing of the city, the arrival of the Occupation forces, the trips to the country to barter for food supplies, the sardine-packed railway cars, etc. But it also contains engrossing and somewhat unexpected stories—given our usual perceptions of life during the war—about how, as a middle-school student, the author set off on a solo trip or sneaked into a *yose* theater to see a performance of comedians and storytellers.

This book, portraying life during the war from the viewpoint of the ordinary citizen, is valuable not only for its record of certain aspects of the war rarely found elsewhere, but also for its autobiographical interest.

Further information about the books in Children's Books section on page 5 and the New Titles section starting on page 7 may be obtained by contacting the following publishers.

Asahi Shimbunsha
Inquiries from overseas should be addressed to:
Mr. Hirano Book Export Dept. 2
Japan Publications Trading Co.
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Tokyo, 100-3191
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Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-8686
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Tel: 03-3814-1867 Fax: 03-3814-0979

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Tel: 03-3291-9831 Fax: 03-3291-9834

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Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai
(University of Tokyo Press)
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1-5-8 Fujimi
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1-8-1 Hongo
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-8691
Tel: 03-3813-4511 Fax: 03-3813-4514

Events and Trends

Year 2001 Best-Sellers

The following ranking of the top ten best-sellers (excluding *bunko/shinsho* paperbacks and books related to games) is based on data gathered between December 2000 and November 2001 by the major book distributor Nippan:

1. *Chizu wa doko e kieta?* (*Who Moved My Cheese?*), Spencer Johnson (Fusōsha).
2. *Hari Pottā to kenja no ishi* (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*), *Hari Pottā to himitsu no heyā* (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), *Hari Pottā to azukaban no shūjin* (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*), J.K. Rowling (Seizansha).
3. *Kiseki no hō* [The Law of Miracles], Ōkawa Ryūhō (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan).
4. *Kanemochi tōsan binbō tōsan* (*Rich Dad, Poor Dad*), Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lecter (Chikuma Shobō).
5. *Shin ningen kakumei* (9 and 10) [The New Human Revolution, vols. 9 and 10], Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shimbunsha).
6. *Hanashi o kikanai otoko, chizu ga yomenai onna* (*Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*), Alan Pease, et al. (Shufunotomo Sha).
7. *Jūnibanme no tenshi* (*The Twelfth Angel*), Og Mandino (Kyūryūdō).
8. *Puratonikku sekkusu* [Platonic Sex], Iijima Ai (Shōgakukan).
9. *Shigoto ga dekiru hito dekinai hito* [People Who Can Perform on the Job, and Those Who Can't], Horiba Masao (Mikasa Shobō).
10. *Batoru Rowaiaru* [Battle Royale], Takami Kōshun (Ōta Shuppan).

What is notable about this list is that works translated from other languages occupy half of the top ten best-sellers. This is the first time a translation has ranked first since Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston*

Seagull in 1974, and only for the second time since 1945. This top seller, *Who Moved My Cheese*, features two little people and two mice searching for cheese that symbolizes the purpose of life. It teaches the importance of adapting to change. At first the book was widely read among businesspeople, some companies even adopting it for their personnel training programs. Later the boom spread to young women. Its continuing success prompted the appearance of many similar books, some such blatant imitations that Fusōsha, publisher of the Japanese edition of *Cheese*, was forced to resort to court action to protect its copyright.

Brisk sales of business books in the broad sense was a major trend in book-selling in 2001: besides the three titles in this genre that ranked first, fourth and ninth in the above list, there were many others: ranking sixteenth was *Nazeka "Shigoto ga umaku iku hito" no shūkan* (PHP Kenkyūsho; translation of Kerry Gleeson's *The Personal Efficiency Program: How to Get Organized to Do More Work in Less Time*), nineteenth was *Takenaka kyōju no minna no keizaigaku* [Professor Takenaka's Lectures on Economics for Everyone], by Takenaka Heizō (Gentōsha), twenty-first was *Za gōru* (Diamond Sha; translation of Eliyahu Goldratt's *The Goal*), and twenty-second was *Keizai no nyūsu ga yoku wakaruru hon* [Guide for Understanding Economics News] by Hosono Masahiro (Chūkei Shuppan).

The three volumes in the Harry Potter series in second place on the best-seller's list are the Japanese translations of a fantasy series that has become a great hit worldwide. Their sales increased even further after the release of the cinematized version of the Harry Potter story at the end of 2001. Various related books and trademark goods related to the series have been put on sale, as well. The success of Harry Potter ignited a fantasy boom. Translations of other fantasy series from overseas drew widespread attention, including not only the classic Lord of the Rings series by J. R. R. Tolkien (published in Japan by Hyōronsha), but Ralf Isau's Neschan Saga series (Asunaro Shobō), and the Darren Shan series (Shōgakukan).

Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winners of the 126th Akutagawa and Naoki prizes, both among the most prestigious literary prizes, were chosen in January. The Akutagawa Prize was awarded to Nagashima Yū for "Mō-supido de haha wa" [At a Furious Speed, My Mother. . .] (published in the November 2001 issue of *Bungakukai*) and the Naoki Prize to two writers, Yamamoto Ichiriki for *Akane-zora* [Glowing Skies] (published by Bungei Shunjū, 2001) and Yuikawa Kei for *Katagoshi no koibito* [Sweetheart over My Shoulder] (Magazine House, 2001).

Last year Nagashima won the Bungakukai New Writers Award for *Saidōkani inu* [Dog in the Sidecar] and the same book was shortlisted for the Akutagawa Prize. "Mō-supido de haha wa" is set in a small city in Hokkaidō, describing daily life with a divorcée mother through the eyes of an elementary school boy. Episodes about how his mother falls in love, his grandmother dies, and the bullying he endures at school evoke the delicate distance between mother and child.

Yamamoto, author of *Sōryū* [Old Dragon] for which he won the All-Yomimono New Writers Award in 1997, writes period fiction set in the *shitamachi* merchant and entertainment districts of old Edo (now Tokyo) during the early modern period; among his major works are *Sonryō-ya Kihachirō shimatsu hikae* [Stories of Rental Agent Kihachirō] and *Ōkawa watari* [Crossing the Ōkawa]. *Akane zora*, the Naoki Prize-winning work, is a story about a tofu maker and his family from Kyoto who opens business in the Fukagawa area of Edo. Embattled by various difficulties, the family manages to stick together despite occasional estrangements.

Yuikawa was at first a writer of popular fiction for girls but later began writing works that skillfully capture the lives and romances of young working women. Her major works include *Ai nanka* [Forget About Love], *Betā hāfu* [My Better Half], and *Tameiki no jikan* [Time for Sighing]. The Naoki Prize winning work, *Katagoshi no koibito*, depicts the contrasting ways of life of two 27-year-old women who have

been friends since kindergarten. The protagonist is an independent-minded woman who is a competent office worker. She has a cynical view of men and love. Her attractive friend marries and divorces more than once in pursuit of the man who can secure for her an even more affluent life. The story revolves around the love affairs of these two quite opposite women.

Bookstart Movement

Bookstart, a program promoting “sharing books from babyhood” has been spreading to local communities in various parts of Japan. Its purpose is to hand over Bookstart packs—containing picturebooks recommended for babies and explanations about the project—to parents and caregivers of all infants brought to local health centers for regular under-twelve-month physical examinations. The Bookstart project began in 1992 in Birmingham, England, where studies report that children who spend time with books at home starting from infancy, as encouraged by Bookstart, tend to enjoy reading willingly and enhance their powers of concentration. Nine out of every ten local governments in England reportedly have introduced the program.

In Japan, the private-sector, non-profit organization, Bookstart Support Center of Japan, plays the leading role in the movement, and as of the end of 2001 the Bookstart scheme had been adopted by more than thirty local governments. From among seventeen picture books recommended by scholars of children’s literature and other specialists, local governments choose two and present them to infants and their parents/caregivers. The pack includes not only picture books but a volume of advice and recommendations

targeted at parents/caregivers, a list of recommended picture books, and other notes such as that of how to use the library. The packs are handed over personally by library staff and health professionals, who explain the content of the pack and the importance of spending time reading with infants. There are also many cases in which the Bookstart program is implemented together with activities for reading aloud to children and other programs conducted by local libraries.

Digital Library

On its website, the Japan P.E.N. Club has opened a digital library, Denshi Bungeikan (<http://www.japanpen.or.jp/e-bungeikan/>), which makes available free of charge the literary works of successive presidents and well-known Club members now deceased, as well as of currently active member writers. Based on the spirit of the International P.E.N. charter, which regards works of art as “the patrimony of humanity at large,” the library aims to make broadly available, both in Japan and overseas, the original Japanese works of club members in a wide variety of genres, including poetry, tanka, haiku, plays/scenarios, nonfiction, criticism, fiction, and children’s literature. The club also hopes to build a database consisting of an authors’ index accompanied by works with links to online editions of the works themselves.

Among works by Japan P.E.N. Club presidents available on the digital library are “Arashi” [Storm] by Shimazaki Tōson, “Kotoshi no aki” [This Year’s Autumn] by Masamune Hakuchō, “Kuniko” [Kuniko] by Shiga Naoya, “Kataude” [The Right Arm] by Kawabata Yasunari, “Michi” [Path] by Inoue Yasushi,

“Shiroi hito” [White Person] by Endō Shūsaku, and “Yami no patosu” [The Pathos of Darkness] by Umehara Takeshi (current president). Works by former club members (also in Japanese) no longer living include “Meiji-ki tanka shō” [Selected Meiji-era Tanka Poems] by Yosano Akiko, “Kōjō no tsuki oyobi kaisō” [The Song, “The Moon Over the Ruined Castle,” and Recollections] by Doi Bansui, “Haru wa basha ni notte” [Riding the Horse Carriage in Spring] by Yokomitsu Riichi, “Seihin no sho” [On an Honorable Poverty] by Hayashi Fumiko, “Chikamatsu Hanji no shi” [The Death of Chikamatsu Hanji] by Okamoto Kidō, “Rōgi-shō” [The Venerable Geisha] by Okamoto Kanoko, and “Tetsugaku nōto” [Notes on Philosophy] by Miki Kiyoshi. Also available are works by active members like Atōda Takashi, Inose Naoki, and Hisama Jūgi.

Jena Bookstore Closes

The Jena bookstore in Ginza, Tokyo, known as a source of latest information on Western culture through its sales of foreign books and magazines, closed in January. Founded in 1950, the 180-square-meter shop had about 30,000 books and more than 500 magazine titles. The name of the store came from the city of Jena, a university town near Weimar, Germany. Among the store’s regular customers are such household names as essayist Uekusa Jin’ichi, movie critic Yodogawa Nagaharu, and illustrator Wada Makoto. The store’s business went into decline due to the prolonged slump in the publishing world and the spread of Internet-based book retailing, which makes it possible for readers to obtain books and magazines from overseas more directly and at lower prices.

Continued from p. 6

Fourth, following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, books dealing with Islam, Afghanistan, and terrorism came out in large numbers. Many magazine issues were devoted to these subjects.

Fifth, a number of books came out analyzing the state of Japan’s publishing world. They include *Dare ga “hon” o korosu no ka* [They Who Would Kill Books; see JBN, No. 35, p. 8], *Shuppan daihōkai* [Great Publishing Crash; JBN, No. 36, p. 8], *Shuppan dōran* [Disturbance in the

Publishing World], and *Shuppan saisei* [Publishing Renewal]. All sold well, apparently not only among people in the industry but with readers in general.

There is no doubt that a major transition is occurring in the Japanese publishing world. Many are saying that the industry must do something to turn around the present situation and that more substantial public debate is needed, but so far, to little avail. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of Shuppan News Co.*)

Hon'yaku and Translation

Kobayashi Kyōji

In university I studied aesthetics. During lectures, every time an important concept came up the professor would turn and write across the blackboard the term for it in Greek, Latin, English, German, and French. That may make it sound as if the lectures were very difficult, but my point is rather that the philosophical terms we encountered, often influenced by classical Greek and sometimes with a common lexical derivation, bore surprising resemblances to each other. I don't know about everyday language, but from studying philosophy, I am constantly impressed at how the differences among European languages, in all their diversity, seem from the Japanese point of view little more than differences between dialects.

That thought came to mind when I was asked to write this essay on the subject of translation. It occurred to me that although the sentences I write are in Japanese, by the time readers see them, they will have been translated into English. I regard that process of mediating the text as *hon'yaku*, with all its Japanese connotations, but readers of the English version of course will think of the same process as “translation.”

Hon'yaku and “translation” are poles apart, in the first place, in the way the two terms developed. The trans- of “translation” has the meaning of cutting across, going beyond, or crossing over. That part of the word conveys the idea of one language crossing the boundary that divides it from another language.

As for the Japanese term *hon'yaku* 翻訳, which is Chinese in origin, it is made up of two characters, 翻 and 訳. The former originally means a bird flying using its wings, and from there, something flipping or turning over, turning upside down, going opposite. The word *hon'yaku* provides a clear sense of flipping verbal expression over, of turning words upside down or opposite to what they were.

These two distinct ideas—crossing the boundary between languages and flipping language over—are not just the product of different paths of language formation. They also embody differences between the ways native speakers of the various European languages and Japanese perceive the process of rendering one language into another.

I may be exaggerating a little, but when we Japanese sit down to translate something from another language, we have to be willing to upset our own language. Take, for example, the Japanese words for some bedrock

concepts in Western languages: *jiyū* (free, freedom, liberty); *shizen* (nature); and *keizai* (economy). Precisely the same ideas were not native to traditional East Asian cultures. Today in Japan *jiyū* is the accepted translation for “free” or “freedom,” but before the enterprise of translating Western literature got under way in the nineteenth century, it conveyed the meaning of having

one's own way, or acting freely without constraint. Occasionally Japanese intellectuals argue that *jiyū* never means just having one's own way but is accompanied by obligations. They may be correct if they are trying to define the English word “freedom,” but if they are attempting to define the Japanese word *jiyū*, they are wrong; originally *jiyū* did not have that implication.

The Japanese word for nature, which is *shizen*, literally means spontaneity or something that arises and forms on its own, reflecting the Buddhist origin of the word. It really does not correspond very well with the European idea of “nature.”

Turning to *keizai*, 経済, as soon as it came into use as a gloss for “economy” there was opposition. The word came from the phrase *keikoku saimin* 経国済民, or “manage the state, help the people,” which gave it a meaning closer to “politics” than to “economy.” The translator may have wanted to imply that that was the essential purpose of “economy,” but, to use *keizai* for “economy” does stretch the meaning rather far.

Whether we talk about *jiyū*, *shizen*, *keizai*, or other words, they have been firmly in place as translations for Western terms for well over a century. Most Japanese have long forgotten the original meanings and understand words today in the sense that is conveyed by the European and American terms they represent. To reach this point where the meanings match, Japanese had to adjust basic cultural and linguistic traditions, to turn them upside down, so to speak. Translation required us, to one degree or another, to divest words of their meaning and adduce new meanings; words that could be used in translations became available only after Japanese had detached them from some original cultural underpinnings.

For Japanese, translation is much more than the technical rendering of one word into another, achieved just by “crossing the borders between languages.” In order to succeed in the enterprise of *hon'yaku*, we have had to revise, delete, and adjust cultural assumptions, indeed, turn them upside down. For all I know, Europeans translating Japanese texts into their own languages may have exactly the same experience.



Kobayashi Kyōji was born in Hyogo prefecture in 1957. He entered the Faculty of Literature, University of Tokyo and joined a student haiku society to polish his sensitivities toward language. In 1984 he won the 3rd Kaiken New Writers Award for *Denwa otoko* [Telephone Man]. Now in the vanguard of post-modern literature, he has since been grappling with the theme “stories that dismantle the story.” His works, *Shōsetsu den jun'ai den* [A Story of Platonic Love] and *Zeusu gaden suibōshi* [The Decline and Fall of Zeus's Garden] were short-listed for the 94th Akutagawa Prize and for the 1st Mishima Yukio Prize respectively. In 1998 he was awarded the 11th Mishima Yukio Prize for *Kabuki no hi* [The Day of Kabuki] (see JBN, No. 25, p. 18). He is author of *Chichi* [Father] (see JBN, No. 29, p. 18). Writing haiku under the penname Nekozone (“Cat Shark”), he is author of *Jitsuyō seishun haiku kōza* [A Library of Practical Haiku for Youth] and *Haiku to iu asobi* [The Game of Haiku].