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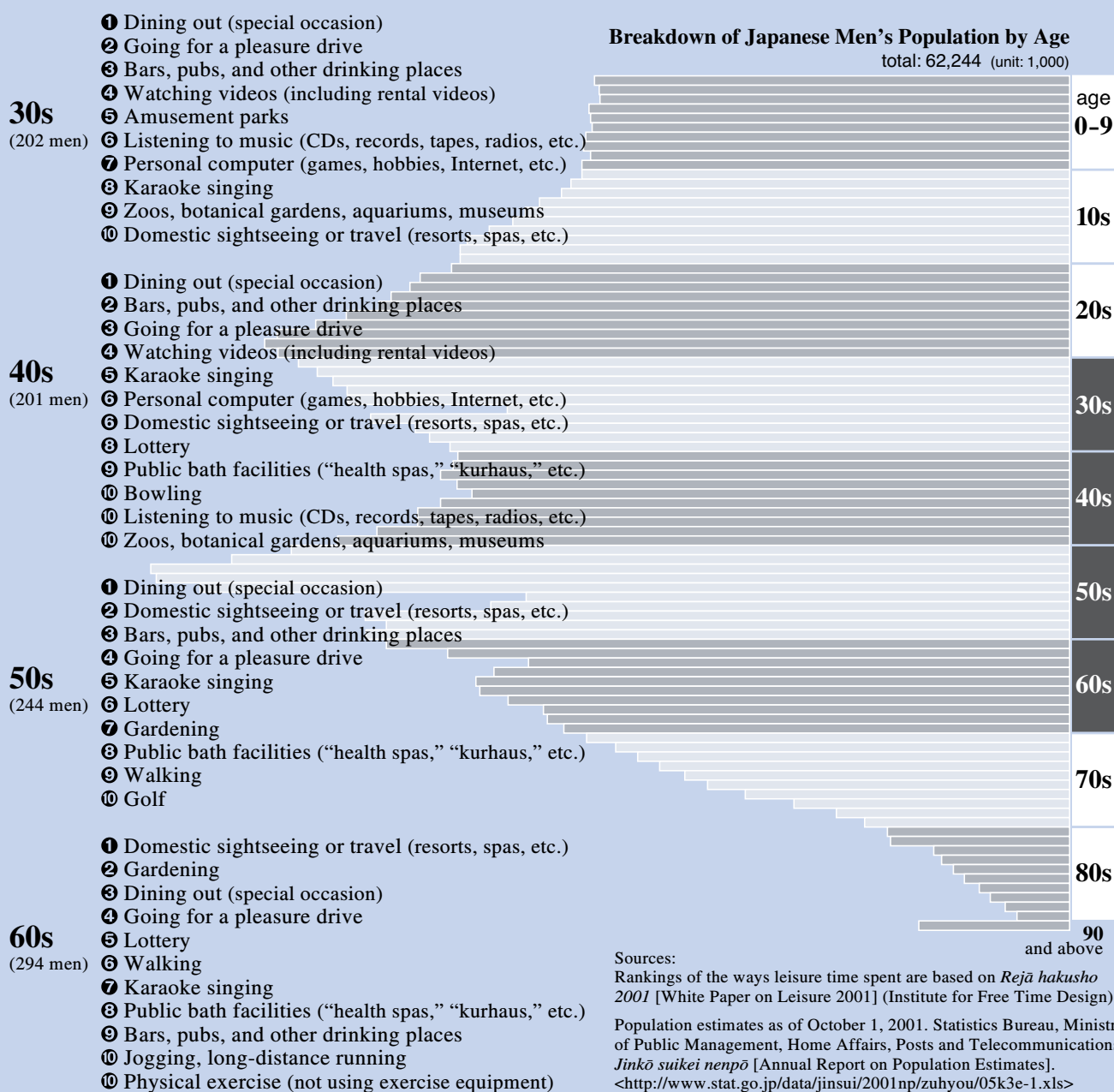
Japanese Book News

Business Fiction in a New Era

The Emergence of "Men's" Magazines

Japanese Children's Books: Non-fiction

Ways People Spend Their Leisure Time: Top Ten for Men by Generation (2000)



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

Conditions in Japanese industry and labor have changed greatly from the early postwar years, through the rapid economic growth era, to today, and people's attitudes towards work are now in the process of changing. As the economic recession drags on, the purchase of Japanese corporations that have fallen on hard times by foreign companies is growing more common. Journalist Saitō Takao discusses recent works of business fiction reflecting the impact of the increase of foreign investment. Reading this essay, along with "Business Fiction: Window on Culture" published nine years ago in the No. 3 issue of JBN in 1993, we can clearly see the impact on this genre of changes in economic conditions and attitudes toward work.

A number of magazines for middle-aged and older men have started to come out just in the last few years. As indicated by the graph on the cover of this issue, these age brackets account for the largest segment of the population of Japan today. A rush of new periodicals is aimed at this generation, people who entered adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s and have since actively pursued interests in fashion, hobbies, travel, and fine cuisine in addition to their work and careers. A notable feature of these magazines is the popularity of traditional Japanese tastes. Columnist Sakai Junko offers a cheerful, yet affectionately sardonic critique of the older-generation male readers of this genre.

The Children's Books column presents three titles in the non-fiction genre that deepen our appreciation of human life.

Under From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō calls attention to the boom in prize-winning fiction by resident Korean authors. Kiyota Yoshiaki introduces Japanese "books-in-print" resources.

The author of In Their Own Words for this issue is Matsuura Rieko, known for fiction written in a world all its own. For those who may wonder where her inspiration comes from, her discussion of the "pseudo-West" in fiction writing is thought-provoking.

Japanese Book News address:

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

Business Fiction in a New Era

Saitō Takao

The interminable business downturn drags on, prompting doleful prophecies of spiraling deflation, while globalization gathers its relentless momentum. The once-proud frameworks of Japanese-style management, long organized around lifetime employment and seniority, are clattering to the corporate floor. This is a time when conscientious, hard-working people grown accustomed to tranquillity and stability are beginning to wonder if the hopes and goals they once treasured for the future are gone forever. They are asking themselves questions like: What am I working for? Who am I, anyway? How should I live my life? What does my life mean?

The mood of these times pervades two recent works of business fiction: Takasugi Ryō's *Shōsetsu: Za gaishi* [Foreign Capital: A Novel] (Kōbunsha, 2002) and Kōda Main's *Rinretsu no sora* [Bitter Skies] (Shōgakukan, 2002). Delivering both suspense and entertainment, they are the talk of business district readers.

Takasugi Ryō, a leader of the business fiction genre, is known for an earlier novel, *Shōsetsu Nihon Kōgyō Ginkō* [The Industrial Bank of Japan], 5 vols. (Kōdansha, 1990–91), chronicling the rise and fall of the financial institution that was once a pillar of the postwar economy. His recent work depicts the Japanese economy overwhelmed by a massive influx of capital from the United States, and the men who strive valiantly to survive the onslaught.

The protagonist, Nishida Ken'yū, is an investment banking division vice president at Diamond Brothers (DB) in New York. Having been headhunted from a job at the Toho Long-term Credit Bank (TLCB) in Japan, he is assigned to guide a major merger between two large pharmaceutical manufacturers. Plans are going smoothly until a superior and a colleague steal the credit for what has been achieved so far, and eventually the project is frustrated.

Infuriated, Nishida quits DB and goes back to Tokyo, where he takes a job at Grace Securities, a foreign firm that had formerly wooed him. There, however, he again faces bitter disappointment and finds that the firm is issuing large quantities of nearly fraudulent private placement bonds. It is also paying hundreds of millions of yen in kickbacks to a top executive in a client firm on instructions from the American owner. He ends up leaving there as well.

Nishida's old company, TLCB, eventually goes bankrupt. When a new group of managers flock to the defunct TLCB and obtain absurdly favorable terms from the servile, ineffectual Financial Reconstruction Commission, they turn out to be former superiors at DB. Unable to forgive the heartless Anglo-Saxons trying to suck the blood of Japanese taxpayers, as well as the Japanese business leaders who have become their willing tools, Nishida joins forces with an old TLCB comrade to contrive to raise the bank from its deathbed.

Kōda Main, the author of *Rinretsu no sora*, has first-hand experience as a trader at a foreign-owned financial institution. Her name became well known last year as the author of *Nihon kokusai* [Japanese Government Bonds] (Kōdansha, 2000), a novel that depicts the deeper, underlying layers of the country's economic crisis. For *Rinretsu no sora*, she chose settings similar to those of *Shōsetsu: Za gaishi*—for example, a foreign-owned securities firm that sells fraudulent derivatives in massive quantity and then destroys the evidence of its dealings, and the lives of Japanese financial traders disturbed by the instructions they receive from New York and London but unable to avoid complying.

Protagonist Sakaki Yōji, president of Powell Asia Securities, is head of the most profitable strategic unit in the world's most powerful international financial group. But Sakaki is a puppet on a string. His group's wrongdoings start to become known to the Japanese authorities, however, and when the long-submissive Sakaki is handed a sum of over a billion yen as hush money, something snaps. A human being has his dignity, he finally realizes, and he resolves to act according to his conscience.

Who Is Really the Boss?

Both these novels derive their plots from various finance-related incidents and events of the late 1990s. One was the collapse of the Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan and its dramatic takeover by the investment firm Ripplewood Holdings, with major participation by Citigroup. This acquisition was tantamount to a sellout of a massive share of the country's assets to the United States by the Japanese government itself. It was said to have involved secret maneuvering by the Goldman Sachs investment bank and leaders of the Mitsubishi group, ultimately in collusion with the head of Keidanren, one of the country's major business organizations, and other leading members of the business world at the highest levels.

There was also the case of the dollar-denominated Princeton notes sold to Japanese corporations by the Tokyo branch of Cresvale International Limited, a French-owned securities firm. When the notes went into default, the people involved were accused of fraud. In another such incident, the banking licenses of six companies in Japan belonging to the Credit Suisse Group were revoked.

With the country slipping from its status as an international economic power and big capital from Europe and the United States preying on our economy, what does it mean to work in Japan? Is it going to turn out to mean submission to the exploitation of the West? Observing events like these, many Japanese instinctively fear the rising specter of economic colonialism. The authors of the two works introduced here have skillfully presented in compelling fictional form this widely shared, though not openly expressed, foreboding.

Of the various genres of literature, business fiction has shown remarkable development in its portrayals of people of the corporate world in Japan since the rapid growth era beginning in the 1960s. Outstanding authors have drawn their themes from this history—the dynamic power struggles among the entrepreneurs who led the heavy and chemical industries, the overweening pride of high-ranking bureaucrats, the *sōkaiya* racketeers who suck the sweet nectar of corporate assets, the monsters and scoundrels that flock to the stock market, the insider tales of often-bloody infighting between corporate affiliates—and they have been very widely read.

Reality Through the Fictional Looking-glass

Business fiction was once mainly associated with powerful human drama. In recent years, however, the genre is increasingly the vehicle for conveying information. Due in part to demand from readers, the trend responds to their need to understand the social and economic structures around them that have grown too complex for the ordinary person to readily grasp. Current events and future prospects that seem inscrutable no matter how thoroughly they are reported in ordinary news coverage are sometimes more accessible to the layperson when presented in the form of fiction.

How does a human being survive such complexities? One senses in *Shōsetsu: Za gaishi* and *Rinretsu no sora*

the authors' attempts to answer the questions like this that readers seem to be unconsciously asking. So it may be that the business novel is evolving into an instrument of information and education for readers.

These, of course, are not the first works of business fiction to identify the dread felt toward foreign-owned financial institutions. Ōshita Eiji's *Shōsetsu Nippon baishū* [The Buy-out of Japan: A Novel] (Shōdensha) came out in 1998. Ōshita, a skilled writer for a weekly magazine turned novelist, has a bold style that fits his theme, and this work is by no means inferior to the two books mentioned above. It attracted less attention than the others, perhaps, because it came out slightly before its time.

The festering sores of traditional Japanese society had become obvious to everyone, causing initial rejoicing with the advance of globalization. Only now, as they witness rising unemployment and the widening disparity between rich and poor, are Japanese finally awakening to the gap between what they expected from globalization and its realities.

Foreign-owned business is a theme of other genres of writing as well. Foreign capital is a crucial concern in Japan today. Among the constant stream of personal accounts and non-fiction works of this type, only a few are worthy of mention, but let me outline some of the more substantial.

Further information about the books in the Children's Books section on page 6 and the New Titles section starting on page 8 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.
P. O. Box 5030
Tokyo International Post Office 100-3191
Tel: 03-3292-3753 Fax: 03-3292-3764

Bungei Shunjū
3-23 Kioicho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8008
Tel: 03-3265-1211 Fax: 03-3239-5482

Bunka Tsūshinsha
7 Fl., Towa Bldg., 3-5-5 Hongo
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033
Tel: 03-3812-7466 Fax: 03-3812-7465

Chikuma Shobō
Komuro Bldg.
2-5-3 Kuramae
Taito-ku, Tokyo 111-8755
Tel: 03-5687-2671 Fax: 048-666-4648

Chūō Kōron Shinsha
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Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8320
Tel: 03-3563-1431 Fax: 03-3561-5922

Gentōsha
4-9-7 Sendagaya
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0051
Tel: 03-5411-6211 Fax: 03-5411-6225

Iwanami Shoten
2-5-5 Hitotsubashi
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8002
Tel: 03-5210-4000 Fax: 03-5210-4039

Iwasaki Shoten
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Tel: 03-3812-9131 Fax: 03-3816-6033

Kawade Shobō Shinsha
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Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0051
Tel: 03-3404-1201 Fax: 03-3404-6386

Kōdansha
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Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8001
Tel: 03-5395-3676 Fax: 03-3943-2459

Meta Brain
3-10-14-214 Ebisu-Minami
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0022
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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8001
Tel: 03-5281-1630 Fax: 03-5281-1640

Shūeisha
2-5-10 Hitotsubashi
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0003
Tel: 03-3230-6393

Sōshisha
2-33-8 Sendagaya
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0051
Tel: 03-3470-6565 Fax: 03-3470-2640

Suenaga Tōru's *Meiku manē!* [Make Money!] (Bungei Shunjū, 1999) is a firsthand account by a top trader who worked at Salomon Brothers for ten years. What are we to make of the world of finance, which even an author well accustomed to such a milieu is moved to describe as "nothing more than an industry of moneygrubbers serving moneygrubbers"?

Gaishi no jōshiki [What Everyone Knows about Foreign Capital] (Nikkei BP, 2001), is a guidebook to the foreign-capitalized financial sector by Fujimaki Takeshi, former Tokyo branch manager of Morgan Guaranty Trust Company. The author's humorous style serves all the more effectively to convey the heartlessness of the world he portrays.

Sako Katsunori's *Saraba, itoshiki Matsuda* [Farewell, My Beloved Mazda] (Bungei Shunjū, 2001) is a personal account not of the world of finance but of the automobile industry. The author, a former executive who ultimately took voluntary early retirement, provides an unvarnished chronicle of his own experiences and the changes that took place at Mazda when it came under the control of the Ford Motor Co.

The topics taken up in *Shōsetsu: Za gaishi* and other works of this genre are ones that will probably remain on the minds of Japanese for some time to come. The dread and the humiliation are for us to endure, but much more still remains for investigative journalism to pursue, a challenge I myself shall pursue. (*Saitō Takao is a journalist.*)

Best-sellers, Dec. 2000–Nov. 2001

Fiction

1. *Jūnibanme no tenshi* (*The Twelfth Angel*), Og Mandino (Kyūryūdō, ¥1,200)
2. *Mohōhan* [The Copy Cat], Miyabe Miyuki, 2 vols. (Shōgakukan, ¥1,900 each)
3. *Shōrō nagashi* [Sending Off the Spirit of the Deceased], Sada Masashi (Gentōsha, ¥1,429)
4. *Kindaichi shōnen no jikenbo: Jashūkan satsujin jiken* [Cases from the Files of Boy-detective Kindaichi: The Heretic House Murder Case], Amagi Seimaru (Kōdansha, ¥857)
5. *Ikiru kotoba anata e* [Words for Encouragement in Your Life], Setouchi Jakuchō (Kōbunsha, ¥1,238)
6. *Tengoku e no kaidan* [Stairway to Heaven], Shirakawa Tōru, 2 vols. (Gentōsha, ¥1,700 each)
7. "Jibun no ki" *no shita de* [Beneath "A Tree of My Own"], Ōe Kenzaburō, illustrations by Ōe Yukari (Asahi Shimbunsha, ¥1,200)
8. *Tamashii* [Soul], Yū Miri (Shōgakukan, ¥1,238)
9. *Shatou rūju* [Chateau Rouge], Watanabe Jun'ichi (Bungei Shunjū, ¥1,524)
10. *Shikikan tachi no tokkō* [The Suicide Attacks of the Commanders], Shiroyama Saburō (Shinchōsha, ¥1,400)

Non-fiction

1. *Chizu wa doko e kieta* (*Who Moved My Cheese?*), Spencer Johnson (Fusōsha, ¥838)
2. *Kiseki no hō* [The Law of Miracles], Ōkawa Ryūhō (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan, ¥1,600)
3. *Shin ningen kakumei* (9, 10) [The New Human Revolution, vols. 9 and 10], Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shimbunsha, ¥1,238 each)
4. *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, ¥1,600)
5. *Puratonikku sekkusu* [Platonic Sex], Iijima Ai (Shōgakukan, ¥1,300)
6. *Hikari ni mukatte hyaku no hanataba* [One Hundred Bouquets Facing the Light], Takamori Kentetsu (Ichimannendō Shuppan, ¥1,238)

7. *Shihanbon Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* [A New History Textbook, Trade Edition], Nishio Kanji, et al. (Fusōsha, ¥933)
8. *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo* [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud], Saitō Takashi (Sōshisha, ¥1,200)
9. *Za burū dei bukku* (*The Blue Day Book*), Bradley Trevor Greive (Take Shobō, ¥980)
10. *Purojekuto X: Ridā tachi no kotoba* [Project X: Words of Great Leaders], Imai Akira (Bungei Shunjū, ¥1,238)

Business

1. *Kanemochi tōsan binbō tōsan* (*Rich Dad, Poor Dad*), Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter (Chikuma Shobō, ¥1,600)
2. *Shigoto ga dekiru hito dekinai hito* [People Who Can Perform on the Job, and Those Who Can't], Horiba Masao (Mikasa Shobō, ¥1,400)
3. *Nazeka shigoto ga umaku iku hito no shūkan* (*The Personal Efficiency Program: How to Get Organized to Do More Work in Less Time*), Kerry Gleeson (PHP Kenkyūsho, ¥1,350)
4. *Takenaka kyōju no minna no keizaigaku* [Professor Takenaka's Lectures on Economics for Everyone], Takenaka Heizō (Gentōsha, ¥1,300)
5. *Za gōru* (*The Goal*), Eliyahu Goldratt (Daimond Sha, ¥1,600)
6. *Keizai no nyūsu ga yoku wakaru hon: Ginkō, Yūcho, Seimei-hoken hen* [Guide for Understanding Economic News: Banks, Postal Savings, and Life Insurance], Hosono Masahiro (Shōgakukan, ¥1,400)
7. *Keizai no nyūsu ga omoshiroi hodo wakaru hon: Nihon keizai hen* [Guide for Understanding Economic News with Ease: The Japanese Economy], Hosono Masahiro (Chūkei Shuppan, ¥1,400)
8. *Kanemochi tōsan no kyasshu furō kuwadoranto* (*Rich Dad's Cashflow Quadrant*), Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter (Chikuma Shobō, ¥1,900)
9. *Runessansu* (*Renaissance*), Carlos Ghosn (Daimond Sha, ¥1,840)
10. *Jakku Ueruchi waga keiei* (*Jack: Straight from the Gut* [Welch, John F., Jr.]), John A. Byrne, 2 vols. (Nihon Keizai Shimbunsha, ¥1,600 each)

(Based on book distributor Tōhan Corporation lists.)

The Emergence of “Men’s” Magazines

Sakai Junko

Magazines expressly for men did not even exist in Japan until only a few years ago. There were—and still are—a number of magazines for young men, like *Popai* [Popeye], founded in 1976 by Magazine House, and *Hotto doggu puresu* [Hot Dog Press] started in 1979 by Kōdansha, but none were aimed at mature male readers.

Of course, there have always been magazines whose readership was predominantly male. One category of these are specialty magazines in business and sports or for hobbies like cars and board games (*go* and *shōgi*) in which men just happen to be more involved and interested. Another includes the “shūkanshi,” weekly magazines like *Shūkan gendai* [Weekly Gendai, founded in 1956] (Kōdansha) and *Shūkan posuto* [The Weekly Post, 1956] (Shōgakukan) that are expressly designed to appeal to men, each issue sandwiched with color glossies of nudes and bikini-clad girls.

For a long time, the only non-specialty magazine really aimed at men that carried information unrelated to business or sex was *Sarai* [Serai, 1989] (Shōgakukan). Yet such magazines have long been plentiful for women; indeed, most magazines aimed at women featured neither work/career-related themes nor appealed to sexual fantasies. The launching of a new title like *Nikkei ūman* [Nikkei Woman] (Nikkei Home), focusing on women and the economy, first published in 1988, and the surge in popularity of erotic “ladies comics” for women therefore captured considerable attention.

Why are men’s magazines such a recent phenomenon? Until the 1990s, it seems fair to say, men did not have the need or leisure to pursue personal interests. They had their hands full just going to work and supporting their families. There was no need to think about travel, clothes, or food because their housewife spouses would take care of all such matters. Under such conditions, no magazine aimed at men at the height of their careers would sell. Nowadays, however, there are quite a few magazines that closely resemble *Serai*, among them *Ikkōjin* [Individuals, 2000] (KK Bestsellers), *Obura* [Obra, 2001] (Kōdansha), *Rapita* [Lapita, 1995] (Shōgakukan), *Otoko no kakurega* [Men’s Retreat, 2001] (Idea Life, Co. Ltd.), and *Jiyūjin* [Free People, 2001] (Karatt Inc.). Depending on the magazine, the targeted age bracket might be somewhat higher or lower, but all of them are designed to appeal to adult male readers.

Since all of these magazines also profess to appeal to the intellect, none of them print glossies of bikini-clad girls or nudes. Although they may sport a titillating style, like the *Obra* feature of stylish nude photos by the Berlin-born photographer Helmut Newton, for example, or the article in *Jiyūjin* introducing various hot spring inns with the alluring headline “Said to Cure Even Erectile Dysfunction, Baldness, and Cancer?” most of them do not go further.

Why this sudden proliferation of men’s lifestyle magazines, intended to help “intelligent, adult men spend their leisure time fully and enjoyably”?

Longer Lives, More Leisure

One reason, we may imagine, is the increased average lifespan. People now live ten years, twenty years, or even longer after they retire. Men who realized there was no sense waiting out those years just sitting around reached for the magazine *Sarai*. Unaccustomed to computers, men of the *Sarai* generation seem to find the magazine format congenial. The fact that so many of these magazines are being published at a time when people are said to be reading less probably indicates that men past middle age still need to get their information through printed media.

The prolonged recession is another reason. Compared to the hard-driven, frantic pace of life during the “bubble” era, the country is pervaded by a sense that things seem to have come to a standstill, both in the economy and in politics, causing people to slow down, to take more time, and move at their own pace. Topics like how to make homemade soba noodles, the pleasures of traveling the scenic route via local train lines, and enjoying gardening, which are the stock of men’s lifestyle magazines, attract readers precisely because they have the leeway to pursue varied interests.

At the same time, it is the recession that has made many men wake up to the fact that work is not everything. Once they began to consider it important to enjoy their personal lives outside of work and pursue richer, fuller lives, they found men’s lifestyle magazines the perfect textbooks.

The rising popularity of *wa*, or Japanese-style taste, has also supported this publishing trend. Whether it is enjoying Japanese cuisine, donning kimono and *haori*, collecting pottery or going to see a kabuki performance, the current boom is agreeable to seniors. Men’s magazines have duly capitalized on such fashions, running many Japanese-style features, like “Beat Takeshi’s Introduction to the Tea Ceremony” (*Obra*, May 2002), “Peaceful Japanese Retreats” (*Otoko no kakurega*, March 2002), and “Superlative Soba” (*Ikkōjin*, May 2002).

The boom in Japanese-style taste is a blessing for the older generations. Older people obviously appreciate “tradition” better than young people, and enjoying the finer side of Japanese culture is usually costly. Possessed of greater financial resources, they have the advantage over the young in the indulgence of *wa* tastes.

Perhaps the boom is part of the swing of the pendulum. When the economy was prospering, people’s gaze was fixed abroad, and there was much ado about internationalization. But now that the economy has taken a turn for the worse and stagnation has set in, people realize they are tired of always looking outward. And when they turned their gaze inward, what they found was the comforting ambience of *wa*.

The *wa* boom can also be attributed to a somewhat defiant attitude of people willing to be content with what they have: “Who cares if we can’t speak English,” they think, “Japan is pretty good as it is!” That sort of sentiment also has its roots in the recession.

The Women's Magazine Formula for Men

Society is aging. The recession has made "leisure" and *wa* the fashion. These elements form the background of the men's lifestyle magazine boom, and yet I believe there is more at work than meets the eye. Every time I see the table of contents of a men's lifestyle magazine, I cannot help thinking: Isn't this just women's-magazine content cleverly repackaged for men?

Take the following:

"Sen Sōshitsu's 'Committed' Tea and 'Healing' Tea"
(Sen is head of the Urasenke School of tea ceremony, which goes back four centuries)

"How to Look Good in Clothes You Never Before Had the Confidence to Wear"

"Let's Go to Maison Hermès" (Maison Hermès is the recently opened Tokyo branch of a French luxury brand of fashion goods)

This is not the table of contents of *Katei gahō* [House and Home Illustrated], the eminent women's magazine founded by Sekai Bunka Shuppansha in 1957, but of *Obura*, one of the above-mentioned men's lifestyle magazines. Fashion, hot springs, gourmet dining, and *wa*—topics once reserved for women's magazines—are exactly those being treated in these monthlies for men.

Thinking confidently that at least there would not be any sections on beauty and glamour in a magazine like *Obura*, I was at first taken aback to find a piece entitled,

"Sensational!! From a Day Trip for Thalassotherapy to a Splendid Aromatherapy Overnight: Soothing Aesthetic Salon Treatment You Can Enjoy as a Couple."

A heading on the same page went: "Beauty isn't just for women. Men, too, want to look young."

As we can see, men's lifestyle magazines are essentially women's magazines in men's-magazine guise. Men seem to have always wondered what it would be like to live as a woman. Now they can satisfy their curiosity.

Men's magazines are indeed serving the same role as women's magazines. The main readership of *Serai*, for example, is reportedly men in their fifties and women in their thirties. Although the magazine is produced without particularly catering to the tastes of women in their thirties, it is effectively drawing their interest. Does this perhaps suggest the close proximity of the interests of men in their fifties and women in their thirties? In postwar Japan, many women have had leeway in their daily lives for some degree of enjoyment, while most men have been compelled to commit every waking hour to work, and had little leisure time.

The current proliferation of men's lifestyle magazines may be explained as reflecting a stage at which both men and women are seeking to improve the quality of their lives. At the same time, it may have something to do with the phenomenon of the feminization of males that has been drawing attention recently among biologists. I am happy enough to congratulate men on being able to enjoy the pleasures of gourmet dining and hot springs, but it is rather hard to embrace the image of a man in his fifties happily reading an article on "Soothing Aesthetic Salon Treatment You Can Enjoy as a Couple!" Are such misgivings only the result of my own perhaps-rigid perceptions of gender? (*Sakai Junko is a columnist.*)

Men's Magazine Data

Magazine title (publisher)	Frequency Founding	Circulation	Age bracket	Recent feature <URL>
<i>Serai</i> (Shōgakukan)	twice monthly September 1989	230,000	50s	Recipes for Making Superior Roux: Gourmet Curry Made for Staff at Noted Restaurants (Vol. 14 [July 2002]) http://serai.shogakukan.co.jp/kongo_jigo/kongojigo.html
<i>Lapita</i> (Shōgakukan)	monthly winter 1995	125,000	30s–40s	Nine Recommended Trips for Men of Intellect and Taste, 9 Plans: Journey Back to Your Boyhood This Summer! (August 2002) http://www.lapita.net/
<i>Otoko no kakurega</i> (Idea Life)	monthly July 1998	150,000	35–50s	Private Compartment Pleasures of Train Travel (August 2002) http://www.atama.co.jp/kakurega/top.htm
<i>Brio</i> (Kōbunsha)	monthly June 1999	85,000	30s	The Weekend Commute to the Karuizawa Resort: Case Study—The Cottage Folks Prepare for Summer (August 2002) http://www.kobunsha.com/magazine/brio/
<i>Ikkōjin</i> (KK Bestsellers)	monthly April 2000	200,000	40s	Fine, Out-of-the-way Kaiseki Restaurants for Your Special Guests: Enjoy Traditional Gourmet Dining in a Relax Private Space (August 2002) http://kk-bestsellers.com/magazine/ikkōjin/index.htm
<i>Nikkei otona no Off</i> (Nikkei Hōmu Shuppansha)	monthly January 2001	150,000	30s–50s	Metropolitan Restaurants with Splendid Views (August 2002) http://www.nikkeihome.co.jp/2f/off/brand_new/
<i>Jiyūjin</i> (Karatt)	quarterly January 2001	150,000	30s–60s	You, Too, Can Be a Sushi Gourmet (spring, 2002) http://www.karatt.com
<i>Obra</i> (Kōdansha)	monthly March 2001	100,000	40s–50s	Our "Project X": How to Break Away from the Salaryman Life (August 2002) http://www.o-obra.com
<i>Lives</i> (Daiichi Progress)	quarterly June 2001	100,000	30s–40s	The House and Room I Really Want (summer 2002) http://www.livesjapan.com/mag/index.html
<i>Shima e</i> (Seihōdō)	bimonthly August 2001	50,000	20s–60s	Rebun, Island of Flowers, and Rishiri, Island in the Shadow of Its Own Fuji (June 2002)
<i>Leon</i> (Shufu-to-seikatsu Sha)	monthly September 2001	40,000	30s–50s	Middle-aged Dandies Have Astounding Watches! The New World in Old-world Clockworks: How to Choose Both Classic and Sexy Wristwatches (August 2002) http://www.shufu.co.jp/CGI/magazine/data_out.cgi?syori=leon
<i>Miles</i> (Tokuma Shoten)	monthly September 2001	120,000	40s	In Quest of Rest on a Rejuvenating Personal Journey (August 2002) http://www.tokuma.jp/CGI/magazine/view.cgi?jnl=life

Non-fiction

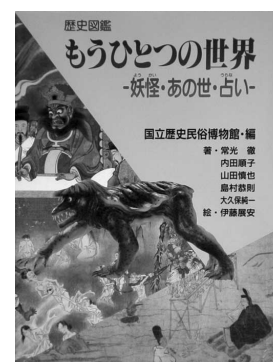
***Mō hitotsu no sekai: Yōkai, ano yo, uranai* [The Other World: Monsters, the Afterlife, and Divination].** Text edited by the National Museum of Japanese History; illustrations by Itō Ten'an. Iwasaki Shoten, 2001. 290 × 220 mm. 47 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-265-03741-0.

Do ghosts and apparitions really exist? What happens after a person dies? Is there a heaven and a hell? These are simple questions human beings have pondered and tried to answer since time immemorial.

This book introduces the ways the Japanese imagination has conceived the invisible and the otherworldly, in richly visual form, with historic

paintings, prints, and drawings interspersed with photographs of customs as they are practiced today.

There is the nocturnal procession of one hundred odd and grotesque monsters marching through a Heian period picture scroll and the comical, distinctly human image of the kimono-garbed octopus priest (*tako sōjō*) seen in *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints from the Edo period, among many others. The reason more pictures have been preserved that depict hell, rather than the heaven people naturally hoped for, says the book, is that such images were meant to instruct and exhort people by showing the tortures they would suffer if they



were not good. There is also a brief introduction to the ideas behind the divination of the *onmyōji* (Heian period experts in magic and incantations), the stories of whom have recently become quite popular.

The simple and easy-to-read explanations are based on research in folklore studies. (Grade four and above.)

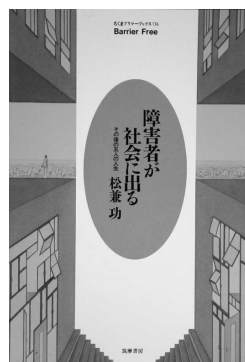
***Shōgaisha ga shakai ni deru: Sonogo no gonin no jinsei* [Out Into the World: The Lives of Five People with Disabilities].** Text by Matsukane Isao. Chikuma Shobō, 2000. 180 × 130 mm. 200 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-480-04236-9.

The author, born with cerebral palsy, attended a school for students with physical and mental disabilities from elementary through high school. Using his nose to type, he is currently an active writer. The physical environment for persons with disabilities has improved over the twenty years since the author graduated from

high school, but even now, harsh and painful realities persist.

In order to help those of younger generations to understand the difficulties that people with disabilities face and how they struggle to overcome them, this book records the lives of five of the author's classmates—three men and two women—after their graduation.

One of the men was repeatedly turned away from job interviews



because of his disability. One of the women, who had not been allowed by the local board of education to go to school until she was fourteen, ended up getting married, but describes the bullying her children endured because of her condition. The five classmates have different personalities and have

taken different paths, but all of their stories ring with "the determination to seek happiness." (Junior and senior high school students.)

***Yume no Edo kabuki* [Dreamworld of Edo Kabuki].** Text by Hattori Yukio; illustrations by Ichinoseki Kei. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 330 × 230 mm. 56 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-00-110648-5.

This large-size picture book reconstructs, in sixteen minutely detailed paintings and appended explanation, the way theaters in the heyday of kabuki flourished as a part of the daily lives of the townspeople of the late Edo period (1603–1867). Completed after eight years of cooperative effort between the author,



who is a specialist in modern performing arts, and the illustrator, a manga artist, this picture book, in capturing perfectly the charm of the Edo kabuki theater, fascinates children and adults alike.

Comprised of two parts, the book's first half consists of the illustrations, starting with the extravagant *kao-mise* performances to present the lineup of a kabuki family's performers at the start of each annual season. The brightly colored

scenes capture everything, from the moment the acting troupe enters the city of Edo and the excitement and turmoil of opening day, to the subdued pathos that marks the season's close. The expressions of the people in the drawings are brimming with animation, vividly evoking the tension among the performers and the stagehands and the excitement and anticipation of the audience.

The second half consists of detailed commentary by the author, providing notes and interpretations of the illustrated pages. Although some specialist terminology appears, it is written in an easy-to-understand manner. (Grade one and above.)

Resident Korean Author Boom

Koyama Tetsurō

The most-talked about Japanese film in recent months has been *Go* [Go!]. It placed at the top of the top-ten Japanese films listed for 2001 in the film magazine *Kinema jumpō* and took the FIPRESCI (International Film Critics Association) Award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival held in California in January 2002.

Released last year, the movie is based on a novel of the same title by Kaneshiro Kazuki that won the Naoki Prize in 2000. The central character of the novel (Kōdansha, 2000) is a young, second-generation resident Korean (*zainichi*) man who falls in love with a young Japanese woman. The story depicts their separation when he confesses to her his ethnic background and later, their reunion. Like the movie, the novel also has a strong following among young people.

The term *zainichi*, although a general term describing persons of foreign nationality who reside in Japan for an extended period of time, refers most often to permanently settled North and South Koreans. The relationship between Japanese society and the *zainichi* population is fraught with complex frictions deriving from the history of Japan's colonization of the Korean peninsula (1910–45). Long discriminated against in Japanese society, many Korean *zainichi* have taken Japanese names. This history and social context is reflected in *Go* as well.

Author Kaneshiro himself is a resident Korean, but he is only one of a number of popular *zainichi* writers who have risen to prominence among contemporary writers in Japan in recent years, creating something of a boom. Others include Yū Miri, winner of the Akutagawa Prize in 1997 for *Kazoku shinema* [Family Cinema], and Gengetsu, recipient of the same prize in 2000 for *Kage no sumika* [Dwelling in the Shadows]. Of a somewhat older generation, Yan Sogiru received the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize for *Chi to hone* [Blood and Bone] in 1998 (see JBN, No. 23, p. 16; No. 25, p. 22). There is also Sagisawa Megumu, the one-quarter Korean author of *Kimi wa kono kuni o suki ka* [Do You Love This Country?] (1997), in which the main character is a third-generation resident Korean.

In the history of the Akutagawa Prize, presented twice yearly beginning in 1935, Yi Hoeseong was the only resident Korean author to receive the prize between its first and ninety-ninth awards. In contrast, three—Lee Yangji, Yū Miri, and Gengetsu—have been recipients between the one-hundredth (1989) and the one-hundred twenty sixth (2002) awards, a more than tenfold increase.

These authors' rise to prominence reflects important changes in *zainichi* society. Bound as they were by strong ties to their motherland, resident Koreans once assumed they would one day return to the country of their roots. Today, however, the vast majority of the younger generations have grown up in Japan and have never known any other home; they take it for granted that they will go on living here. "Returning to the homeland" is not part of their mind-set. They no longer view Japanese society in terms of its relationship with the land of their ancestors; they now think of Japanese society just as it is and as they have lived in it. Trying to define and understand "Japanese society," in which they both suffer and thrive, is an endeavor they share with Japanese themselves. Their exploration of the nature of that society is probably the reason *zainichi* literature has won a wide readership in Japan.

Another reason is that, regardless of how much *zainichi* society has changed and how much more fully Japanese society has accepted those of Korean stock in their midst, there is still unseen discrimination toward *zainichi* as well as a sense of incompatibility and otherness that Japanese are not aware of but resident Koreans keenly feel. Resident Koreans view Japanese society from a perspective slightly removed from that of Japanese themselves.

This is an ideal position for writing fiction, yet resident Koreans, as fluent in Japanese as any person of mainstream stock, see things day to day from a perspective that ordinary Japanese can hardly imagine. Many more talented *zainichi* authors are likely to make their appearance in the Japanese literary world. (Koyama Tetsurō is senior writer, *Cultural News Section*, *Kyodo News*.)

Book Publishing Information Printed and Digital

Kiyota Yoshiaki

General information on books in print in Japan can be found in two main publications: *Shuppan nenkan* [Publishing Yearbook] (Shuppan News Co.) and *Hon no nenkan* [Annual of Books] (Nichigai Associates). The first catalogs all newly published titles put on the market during the year. Offering data on publishing trends and conditions in the industry, statistics, lists of periodicals published, and a directory of publishers, it presents a total picture of the industry during the year.

The *Hon no nenkan*, on the other hand, is known for its annotations (up to 200 characters each) on each newly published title. The annotations are composed simply based on the information in the table of contents, afterward, quotations from the *obi* ("sash" placed around the jacket to promote sales), etc., but make the annual a convenient

source of information on the content of each book.

Most of the publications with information on published works come out in printed form, but now there are also a number of works available on CD-ROM and in searchable databases accessible via the Internet. Information thus obtained is used for various purposes.

From 2002, the *Shuppan nenkan*, which contains information on all books published during the year, also has a CD-ROM that lists 610,000 titles of previously published books for which publishers have copies in stock.

The 610,000 books in print items represent the data that has been published annually in a four-volume set in printed form over the past twenty years as the *Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku* [Books in Print in Japan] (Japan

Continued on p. 21

New Titles

MEDIA

Shomotsu ni tsuite: Sono keijikagaku to keijijōgaku [On Books: The Physical and the Metaphysical]. Shimizu Tōru. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 205 × 153 mm. 382 pp. ¥4,600. ISBN 4-00-023359-9.

This history of books, from clay tablets to the electronic age, is a provocative one. Scholar of French literature and literary critic Shimizu (b. 1931) sees books both in terms of their physical/material form and their capacity in that particular physical form to appeal to human intellect, imagination, and passions. It offers an innovative perspective considering books at the intersection of these two aspects.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

More momentous in the history of books than Gutenberg's invention of moveable type, says Shimizu, was the shift from writing on scrolls made from papyrus to books made of sheets of parchment. And he emphasizes the significance of the great library of Hellenistic civilization in Alexandria as a monument of memory. A specialist in Stéphane Mallarmé, the author examines how the French symbolist and poet was conscious of books as a physical form. His chapter pursuing this question through a

wealth of reference works makes absorbing reading.

Explaining how computers have formed a new genre in a territory bordering on books and perform fascinating feats never seen before, the book takes the fresh view that they represent yet a new chapter in the history of books.

Shuppan saisei: Amerika no shuppan bijinesu kara nani ga mieruka [Publishing Resurgence: What We Can Learn from the American Publishing Business]. Kagawa Hiroshi. Bunka Tsūshinsha, 2001. 194 × 132 mm. 238 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-938347-06-7.



Cover design: Majima Masashi

As president of Tuttle Shōkai, a Japanese book distributor specializing in Western-language publications, the author has intimate knowledge of the industry in the United States. Arguing that there are many aspects of the American publishing world that Japan could learn from, he introduces and analyzes the business models that have proven profitable in the United States.

The author describes a variety of mechanisms not established in Japan, such as a sales system featuring seasonal catalogs of information about new titles and calculations of the number of copies to be published based on advance orders; a diversity of outlets and sales approaches not limited to bookstores; and joint publication, capital tie-ups, and other publication activities in collaboration with publishers in other parts of the world. All of these help reduce the risks inherent in publishing ventures.

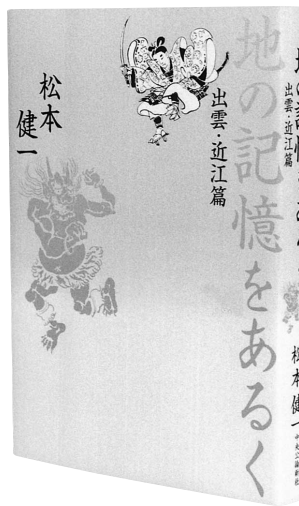
Fine-tuning reader surveys and management practices and constructing a reliable publication database in Japan, says the author, are indispensable.

Highlighted with anecdotes from the author's personal experience, this book carefully explains the inner workings of the publishing business in the United States. At the same time, it provides useful insights from which readers overseas can learn more about Japan's publishing industry today.

GEOGRAPHY

Chi no kioku o aruku: Izumo Ōmi hen [Tracing the Memories of the Earth: Izumo and Ōmi]. Matsumoto Ken'ichi. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 191 × 131 mm. 282 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-12-003184-5.

This collection of travel accounts traces the memories of the land from ancient times to the present, scrutinizing in the process the contours of Japanese society and culture. The author (b. 1946) is a critic of modern Japanese politics, society, and literature.



Cover design: Suzuki Masamichi

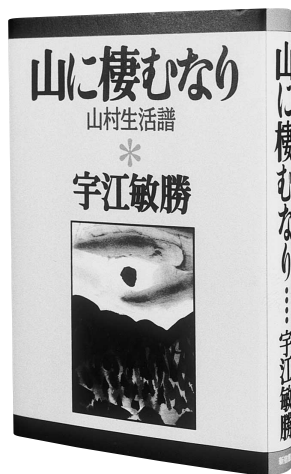
The book first chronicles a journey that begins with a trip from Matsue to Izumo (Shimane prefecture), the origin of the Japanese creation myth. In the city of Matsue he pursues the footsteps of people like Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), the great writer and translator who became a Japanese citizen under the name Koizumi Yakumo. In Izumo he speculates that the local tradition in which a defeated

Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 2.

party is not disgraced can be traced to the “Kuni-yuzuri” myth (as described in ancient chronicles) according to which the land was given over to the heavenly deities by the local deity.

The next travelogue concerns a tour from Kyoto along the old Ōmi highway to what is now Shiga prefecture, recalling various incidents of history. Meiji-era government leaders, samurai heroes of medieval times, and other figures linked to this region are given a thorough treatment. At Mt. Kurama, he unveils his theory that the spot marks a kind of great divide—the fossa magna—in Japanese culture between east and west. To the east the legends of the heroes of antiquity center around Minamoto no Yoshitsune; to the west they pivot on the tales of the Taira clan.

Yama ni sumu nari: Sanson seikatsu fu [To Dwell among Mountains: An Account of Life in a Mountain Hamlet]. Ue Toshikatsu. Shinjuku Shobō, 2001. 193 × 131 mm. 226 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-88008-235-X.



Cover design: Tamura Yoshiya

This is basically a collection of essays the author (b. 1937) wrote in his spare time while pursuing a career in forestry, and published in 1983. For the recent edition he added an “epilogue” reporting on events since that time.

The book describes a mountain hamlet in Wakayama prefecture of fifteen dwellings and thirty inhabitants. With residents moving away and those who remain steadily growing older, the labor force needed to cultivate the fields and rice paddies is dwindling; the hamlet will eventually vanish. Life in the village is rather lonely, but the author relates

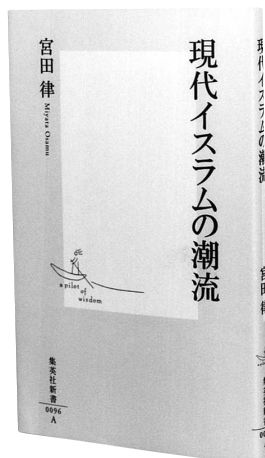
lively stories of a childhood playing in the valley stream, of the sumo tournaments held at the local shrine, and the drinking parties of his youth. There were happy moments with his aging mother gathering edible wild-plants, and some stimulation in the establishment of new farms to augment the self-sufficiency of the depopulated village. Numerous anecdotes evoke village festivals, the quirks of his neighbors, and other cameos of local life.

Today, twenty years later, the author lives in a nearby village several hundred meters from the old dwellings. Long since retired from forestry, the author, now in his sixties, concentrates on his writing. His unaffected, matter-of-fact style, as appealing today as twenty years ago, vividly evokes the man who resolved to “dwell among mountains.” This is reading worth savoring.

POLITICS/ECONOMY

Gendai Isuramu no chōryū [Trends in Contemporary Islam]. Miyata Osamu. Shūeisha, 2001. 173 × 106 mm. 206 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-08-720096-5.

This is a concise summary of Islam for the general reader by a specialist on Islamic areas of the world. It explains and discusses Islamic traditions, the Muslim lifestyle, the differences between the Sunni and Shiite sects, and the development of Islamic political movements growing out of the emphasis on education and welfare. The author offers his interpretation on the Palestinian problem, Islam as a religion devoted to peace and

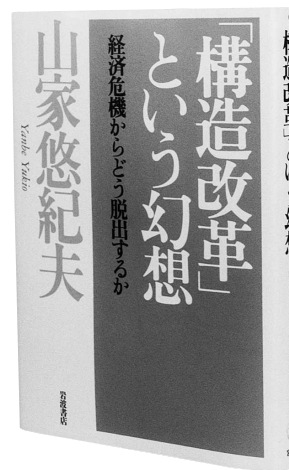


Cover design: Hara Ken'ya

stability, and the role of jihad. He also makes suggestions about what we need be aware of to coexist with Islamic society. Incorporating accounts of the differences in Islam from one social environment to another as well as the author's direct experiences and insights on Islamic societies, the book is accessible and easy to read.

The author expresses his strong concern about the tendency to stereotype Islamic society as dangerous. He argues cogently that the world in the twenty-first century cannot be discussed without an understanding of the 1.2 billion people of Islamic society. The tendency in the non-Islamic world to view Islamic political movements as threatening and as advocating violence, he says, should be corrected. The book was published three months prior to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

“Kōzō kaikaku” to iu gensō: Keizai kiki kara dō dasshutsu suru ka [The Illusion of “Structural Reform”: How Will We Get Out of the Economic Crisis?]. Yanbe Yukio. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 187 × 131 mm. 220 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-00-022817-X.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

The Japanese government claims that “without structural reform there can be no economic recovery.” This book argues that structural reform as the government has pursued it is nothing but an illusion, and is even standing in the way of economic recovery. The author (b. 1940) is an economist who left his job at a bank-managed think tank for a university professorship.

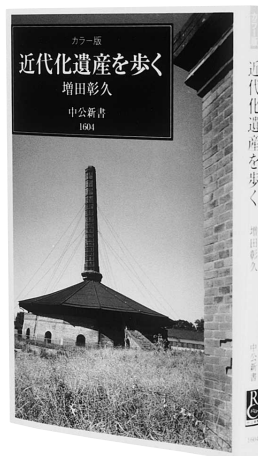
The primary nature of the government's structural reform, the author claims, is to fortify the power of the

supply side, to strengthen the haves, and further weaken the have-nots. Even the so-called “lost decade” of the 1990s was not entirely spent in recession, he argues, citing data showing that the economy started to recover twice during that time, once in 1996 and again in 2000. The reason recovery did not succeed, he believes, was due to hasty enforcement of the financial system reforms and a slowdown in consumption. He emphasizes in particular that the 2000 economic recovery was a result of revisions made in the structural reform program.

Structural reform should be suspended, Yanbe believes, and business-boosting measures such as reduction of the 5 percent consumption tax rate should be adopted instead. Although in direct opposition to the views prevailing today, he convincingly demonstrates with solid data that the current structural reforms are unproductive.

CULTURE

***Kindaika isan o aruku* [Strolling Through the Heritage of Modernization]. Masuda Akihisa.** Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 173 × 109 mm. 222 pp. ¥980. ISBN 4-12-101604-1. Following the opening of the country in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan achieved modernization with phenomenal speed, under such slogans as “civilization and enlightenment,” “enrich the country and strengthen its arms,” and “increase production, promote industry.” It rapidly absorbed an influx of Western culture, acquired the latest technology from

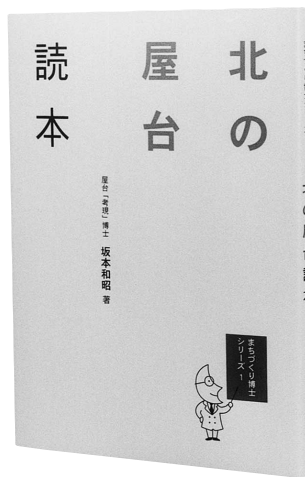


Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

Europe and the United States, and erected many buildings indispensable to a modern nation.

This full-color *shinsho* pocket-sized book does not take up the usual “important cultural assets” considered landmarks of the country’s heritage. The author (b. 1939), who became a photographer after retiring from work at a construction firm, focuses instead on prefectural office buildings and police stations, prisons, train stations, customs houses, and hotels, as well as bridges, tunnels, dams, power plants, smokestacks, radio towers, and other public works structures. The 108 structures in the book include some still in active use and others that have since been torn down. All of them, however, as the “embodiment of dreams our forebears poured their hearts into,” are strong and beautiful. This work conveys their historical value as well as their form through photos and text.

***Kita no yatai dokuhon* [Tale of the Northern Market Stall]. Sakamoto Kazuaki.** Meta Brain, 2001. 182 × 128 mm. 143 pp. ¥1,680. ISBN 4-944098-32-4.



Cover design: Yamamoto Mariko

This book describes a project for the revitalization of the city of Obihiro, Hokkaido, through the central concept of market-street food stalls. Located on the Tokachi plain, Obihiro is a frigid place in winter, known for heavy snows. It has a history of about 120 years since settlement by a land reclamation party, but its most prosperous days have passed.

A group of young people felt that active person-to-person interaction, along with a flourishing central marketplace closely bound to the local

lifestyle was needed to revive the business and entertainment district of the city. Pooling their funds, knowledge, and abilities, they seek to build a distinctive atmosphere for the town. The author (b. 1958), who played a leading role in the project, gives a vivid account of their efforts.

Contrary to the efficiency-first values of twentieth-century business which show no concern for the environment, their plan aims to provide safe food while promoting local production and consumption, taking as its starting point itinerant stalls (*yatai*) that represent the beginnings of business in Asian food culture. The results of a questionnaire survey conducted by the group in 2000 and an account of its publicity campaign activities are also included.

***Matsuo obaba hyakusai o ikiru chikara* [Grandma Matsuo: The Strength to Live One Hundred Years]. Ishikawa Junko.** Sōshisha, 2001. 193 × 134 mm. 310 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7942-1085-X.

Ishikawa (b. 1942) first visited Itō Matsuo (1894–1993) in 1970. She continued her visits for twenty-three years, until just before Itō died. The current work is based on interviews from those twenty-three years.

Doted upon as a “darling grandchild” while small, Matsuo became a teacher at twenty. Soon after, she married a young advocate of a utopian farming community. She then faced the hardships of serving a stern mother-in-law and raising children, while continuing to teach. After resigning her teaching position of seventeen years, Matsuo supported her

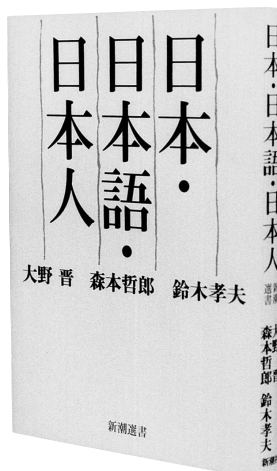


Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

husband, who became village head, and contributed to the lifestyle reform movement and efforts to raise the status of women in rural communities.

The account of this woman's life, told in her native Iwate dialect, brims with the strength and humor of a person who learned to live with a positive outlook, making the most of adversity. She embarked upon the project of publishing her late husband's diary after turning ninety, after she discovered the ardent love for her expressed in its pages, despite the proud and brusque manner he adopted as the head of an old established house. The source of the energy of this woman who survived nearly a century was clearly her in-born warmth and depth of feeling.

Nihon, Nihongo, Nihonjin [Japan, Japanese, the Japanese]. Ōno Susumu, Morimoto Tetsurō, and Suzuki Takao. Shinchōsha, 2001. 191 × 130 mm. 202 pp. ¥1,100. ISBN 4-10-603504-9.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

Compiled from the proceedings of a roundtable discussion on the future of Japan, this volume presents the ideas of three outspoken critics on the subject of the Japanese language: linguist Ōno Susumu (b. 1919), who is known for his theory on the relationship between Tamil and Japanese; former newspaper journalist and critic on civilization Morimoto Tetsurō (b. 1925); and socio-linguist Suzuki Takao (b. 1926), authority on foreign-language education.

Agreement among them that the Japanese language is the very core of Japanese culture forms the point of departure for their assertions, which

include the following: Limiting the number of *kanji* in standard usage is not a healthy trend for Japanese-language education today. The excessive use of *katakana* words represents the “digitalization” or oversimplification of terms. Those who advocate adopting English as an official language of Japan are ignorant of the realities of language. Japanese seem to be trying to abandon their native tongue—virtually asking for cultural colonization; such thinking must by all means be changed.

The volume also contains an essay by each of the three, originally written for this publication.

Onaji toshi ni umarete: Ongaku, bungaku ga bokura o tsukutta [Born in the Same Year: Music and Literature Gave Us Life]. Ozawa Seiji and Ōe Kenzaburō. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 197 × 134 mm. 218 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-12-003180-2. Orchestra conductor Ozawa Seiji and Nobel laureate Ōe Kenzaburō were both born in 1935, Ozawa in Mukden (now Shenyang), northeastern China (then occupied by Japan) and Ōe in the hills of Ehime prefecture.

This book reproduces a dialogue between these two international figures held in Nagano prefecture and Tokyo, occasioned by the awarding to both of honorary doctorates by Harvard University in 2000.

A dialogue had also been held between Ozawa and Ōe nearly forty years earlier, when their careers had just begun. In the years since, Ōe fathered a son, Hikari, who was born with mental disabilities but also a re-

markable gift for music. Ozawa has begun to channel his energies into the education of young people in the field of music. “Now we are on the other side; we are the parental generation, responsible for training the younger generations,” says Ozawa. This viewpoint runs throughout their discussion. They exchange ideas about art, the education they received, family and friends, as well as what kind of education and society is needed to prepare Japanese for the twenty-first century. The key to good communication, they both fully agree, is a greater appreciation of the individual.

SOCIETY

Dōbutsu-ka suru posuto modan: Otaku kara mita Nihon shakai [Animalization in the Postmodern Era: Japanese Society from the Otaku Perspective]. Azuma Hiroki. Kōdansha, 2001. 173 × 106 mm. 194 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-06-149575-5.



Cover design: Sugiura Kōhei & Satō Atsushi

The author (b. 1971), up-and-coming critic specializing in philosophy and “culture and representation,” describes *otaku* as people who steep themselves in comics, anime, computer games, computers, and other closely related genres of subculture to the point of obsession. The *otaku* of the 1990s, he observes, took relatively less interest in “stories” than in “characters”; they dissected characters into symbols that excited their desires (e.g., blue hair, eyeglasses, cat's ears, etc.) and organized them into databases transcending work and character.



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

The French philosopher Alexandre Kojève observed that animals have only desires that can be satisfied without relying on other animals, while human beings have desires that involve other human beings. The behavioral principle of the *otaku*, who consume one product after another in pursuit of ever more effective and emotionally satisfying combinations of the symbols accumulated in their databases, demonstrates the animalistic qualities described by Kojève.

Citing various theories on media and communication from contemporary critiques, the author presents his ideas on the society and times through an analysis of *otaku* subculture.

***Hi no shizumu kuni e: Rekishi ni manabanai mono tachi yo* [Ye of the "Land Where the Sun Sets": When Will You Ever Learn From History?]. Irokawa Daikichi.** Shōgakukan, 2001. 194 × 133 mm. 318 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-09-626083-5.

The author (b. 1925) is an authority on modern and intellectual history whose views are oriented to the perspective of the people. He is also active in various citizen's movements.

Delivering a stern critique in his distinctive style on events and social conditions from the end of World War II to the present, Irokawa explores the issues that underlie various recent events, human life and death seen from the point of view of the man on the street, local culture and customs in his own community, and so on.

Dealing with such topics as Japanese understandings of history, the emperor system, the debate over the constitution according to which

Japan relinquished the right to make war, the pros and cons of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, environmental problems, and the rights of pollution victims, Irokawa is particularly skeptical about the future of a country that does not seem to learn from history. Between the lines of his forthright proposals one senses an undercurrent of despair.

Having lived through extremely tumultuous times, the author argues the importance of making one's own personal history the point of departure for learning from history.

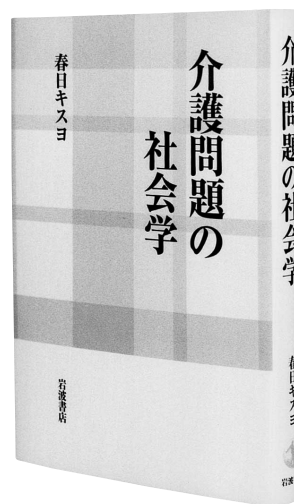
***Hōmuresu sakka* [Homeless Writer]. Matsui Kei.** Gentōsha, 2001. 194 × 131 mm. 271 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-344-00112-5.

This is the true story of a fiction writer (b. 1958), mainly of war simulation stories, who found himself wandering the streets a homeless man. The planned publication of two manuscripts had been cancelled, leaving him with no source of income, and in January 2001, unable to pay the rent, he and his family were evicted from their home. His pregnant wife and little daughter were taken in by a public welfare facility, but with no space for men available, the author found himself on the street.

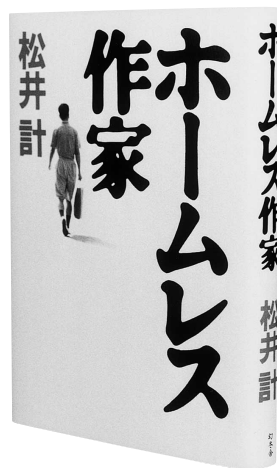
His bankruptcy may not have been due entirely to the recession in the publishing industry. But the book brings home to the reader the stern reality that anyone in Japan in any type of job could suddenly find themselves homeless in an era when the unemployment rate is rapidly rising. Happily, the author has managed to return to a normal life following the publication of this and two other books.

***Kaigo mondai no shakaigaku* [The Sociology of the Caregiving Problem]. Kasuga Kisuyo.** Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 193 × 131 mm. 252 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-00-022421-2.

In April 2000, a new system of insurance for support of caregiving was launched with much fanfare, and an important shift, from private to public, took place in the leading issues of caregiving for the elderly. Even after the insurance system went into effect, however, many problems remain unresolved.



Composed of nine essays, this is an admirable attempt to explain from the standpoint of feminist ethnography the various issues of caregiving in Japanese society: How do the rights of those who receive caregiving and the rights of those who give it conflict with each other within the family? How will the so-called enhancement of social security services change the nature of human relations within the family? Why is caregiving always the woman's job and why is nothing done to lighten her burdens in the family? Why do Japan's elderly women often carry the double burden of care for elderly spouses and parents?



Cover design: Yajima Takamitsu

The story unfolds in a reflective tone, recounting how he fended off the cold, how difficult it was to get work without having a fixed address, the struggle every day just to find a place to sleep, earn even a little cash, and obtain something to eat. Swallowing his pride as a writer, he managed to earn a modest sum taking advantage of his experience managing a secondhand bookstore. And so on.

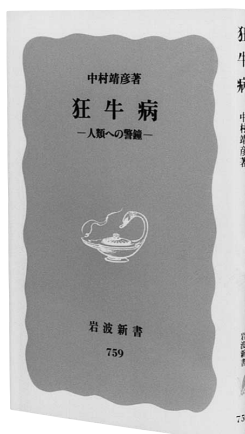


Cover design: Morisaki Tadashi

The author (b. 1943) is a sociologist known for her important original research on welfare problems from a gender-based viewpoint usually lacking in conventional debate. The current work is based on painstaking fieldwork and interviews.

Kyōgyūbyō: Jinrui e no keishō [Mad Cow Disease: Warning to Humankind]. Nakamura Yasuhiko. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 173 × 105 mm. 226 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-430759-7.

“Mad cow disease” (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE), which first broke out in England in 1986, spread to Germany and France and other parts of the European continent in the autumn of 2000. The news Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), the condition thought to be produced if humans are infected, is fatal, triggered panic across Europe.



Dismissing these events as fires on other shores, Japanese groundlessly and naively assumed that nothing of the kind could ever happen to them. The announcement in September 2001 of Japan's first case of BSE sent shockwaves through the country. The publication of this easy-to-understand, compact introductory volume about BSE was timely, for the bungled handling of the issue by the government made accurate information hard to find.

Through investigative reporting and interviews with researchers, the author (b. 1935), a journalist in charge of agricultural and food issues at NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), deepens our understanding of why BSE occurred to begin with, its impact on the economy and society, and its significance for civilization today.

Rokujussai no raburetā: Otto kara tsuma e, tsuma kara otto e [Love Letters at Sixty: Husband to Wife, Wife to Husband]. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, ed. Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2001. 194 × 134 mm. 230 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-14-005369-0.

In autumn 2000, when a certain bank invited couples in their fifties and sixties to submit love letters written from husband to wife and from wife to husband, they were inundated with an unexpected 16,000 letters in a matter of a little more than two months. This book is a collection of 74 of these letters to wives and 91 to husbands, selected from the total.



Cover design: Kanie Seiji

Japanese men and women of these age brackets very rarely tell each other “I love you” in so many words, but the thoughts inscribed in the limited space of a postcard are filled with tender affection for their partner. One goes “Even after all these years, you know, I never even properly proposed to you. Now, let me say it loud and clear: Thank you for marrying me!” Each letter reveals a unique saga—solo postings to distant branch offices (*tanshin funin*), retirement, illness, death of the partner, and so on. The writers look back on the path they have come—as companions, helpmates, and sometimes adversaries—and are finally able to express their true gratitude and caring.

One might even read this volume as a case study of these generations of Japanese. The letters singularly and candidly capture the image of the generation of married couples who were the force behind Japan's postwar development.

Ronsō chūryū hōkai [Debate: The Collapse of the Middle Class]. Chūō Kōron Henshūbu, ed. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 173 × 109 mm. 288 pp. ¥720. ISBN 4-12-150001-6. Until not long ago, Japan prided itself on a large middle class and the relatively small disparity in income between the various strata of society, but lately participants in a lively debate have pointed out that the gap between rich and poor has widened. What has happened to Japan's middle class? Will some new kind of social stratification emerge? This book is a collection of nineteen essays discussing such questions by economists and sociologists published in leading opinion journals and national newspapers during 2000 and 2001.

The essays examine middle-class attitudes from the viewpoint of income analysis, capacity to perpetuate social status from one generation to the next, and capacity to pass on levels of academic achievement from one generation to the next. The arguments advanced in these essays are wide-ranging, from those that propose inheritance taxes should be raised 100 percent, thereby preventing stratification of society, to those arguing for a new class society.

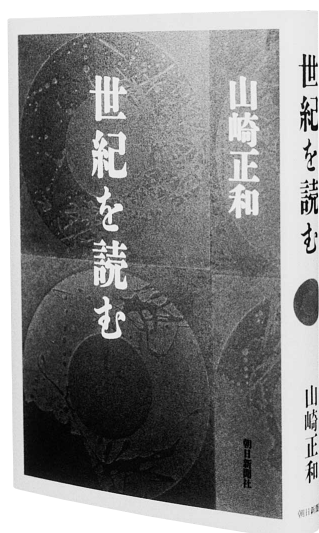


Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

There are essays that say income disparity is a good thing and those that condemn it, but the fact that the subject has evoked such debate indicates at least that the once-popular myth that “we all belong to the middle class” is a thing of the past. In attempting to understand the psychology of Japanese amid the prolonged recession and their many anxieties about the future, and in

projecting what the future holds for Japan, this book contains much of interest.

Seiki o yomu [Reading the Century]. Yamazaki Masakazu. Asahi Shimbunsha, 2001. 193 × 131 mm. 306 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-02-257668-5. Playwright, literary critic, and university president, the author (b. 1939) is among Japan's leading intellectuals. This book is a collection of essays, centering on his commentaries on current affairs published monthly in 1999 and 2000, along with miscellaneous newspaper articles.



Cover design: Tada Susumu

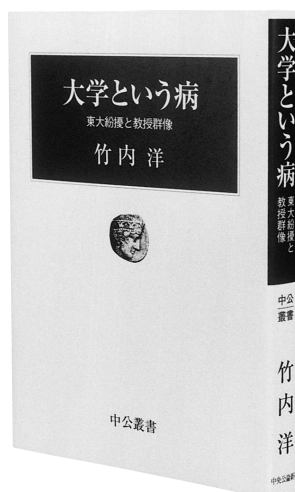
A total of fifty-six essays and articles deal mainly with art, literature, and sports, “cultural phenomena in the narrow sense.” “Contrary to conventional thinking,” Yamazaki says, “no aspect of society is more sensitive to current events or a better barometer of the times than culture.” Theater, Snoopy, and photographs are among the many topics through which the author analyzes the contemporary era, showing his lively curiosity in his times, his broad-ranging knowledge, and the keen insight for which he is well known.

Of particular concern to the author in taking up the subject of the turn of the century are the “signs of the end of the nation-state as a force of culture” brought about by the advance of globalization, as well as “the fallacy of the concept of global civilizations.” With its perceptive reading of the turn of the century attuned to the underlying reverberations of the times, this is an intellectually stimulating work.

EDUCATION

Daigaku to iu yamai: Tōdai funjō to kyōju gunzō [The University Malaise: Tokyo University Disputes and Professorial Factions]. Takeuchi Yō. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 191 × 131 mm. 294 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-12-003186-1.

The Faculty of Economics at Tokyo Imperial University (today the University of Tokyo) in the 1930s was the scene of fierce factional struggles among the Marxists, liberals, and progressive nationalists. Amid the government's efforts to drive out leftist-leaning professors, the battle to take over the leading posts intensified until finally the top professors of all the factions were placed on indefinite leave on the pretext of ending the factional strife.



A Kyoto University specialist in educational sociology, Takeuchi (b. 1942) evokes a vivid picture of the university dispute, interwoven with descriptions of the times, the prestige of scholars, and the then-growing role of journalism. Those in the university clung stubbornly to appearances even with the university itself in crisis. This hypocrisy, declares the author, remained the same at the time of the 1970s student movement.

One of the big issues in Japanese education today is the call for reform of the universities, but the author argues that “university reform should expose and even attack the hypocritical nature of the university,” and he warns that academics must continually reflect on their activities.

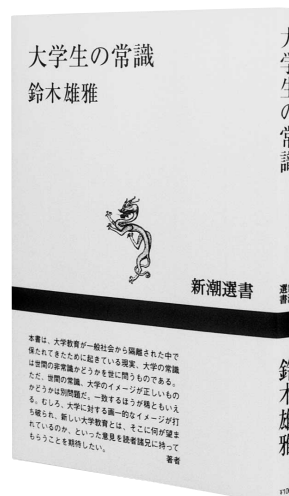
Through a wealth of anecdotes and reference data he considers the

serious malaise from which the universities have suffered in Japan since long before World War II.

Daigakusei no jōshiki [What Every College Student Knows]. Suzuki Yūga. Shinchōsha, 2001. 191 × 130 mm. 191 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-10-603507-3.

Japanese universities today are known to be difficult to get into, but easy to graduate from. Universities have been transformed into places where students learn more than anything about how to have a good time, while their scholastic abilities and cultivation in the arts and culture are apparently on the decline. With the birthrate steadily dropping, the education ministry launched a series of structural reforms, including consolidation and staff reductions at national and other public universities.

Against this backdrop the author (b. 1942), based on his seventeen-year career at a private university in Tokyo and calling himself “Professor S of the department of literature,” sets forth an account of the lives and attitudes of today's college students, and sheds light on what conditions are like for teachers. Chapter one, based on Professor S's own teaching schedule, paints a realistic picture of the teaching, research, and other school-related business university professors must attend to. Chapter two introduces the students' lectures, seminars, exams, theses, club activities, part-time jobs, job searches, and other activities, as well as their own thoughts about them. In chapter three, the author discusses the role of the university in an age of fewer children.



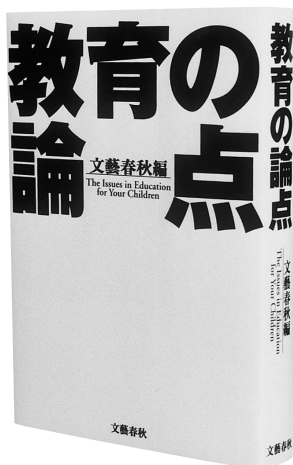
Cover design: Shinchōsha

Capturing the reality of the university from the perspectives of both the student and teacher, this work is full of penetrating insights.

Kyōiku no ronten: The Issues in Education for Your Children.

Bungei Shunjū, ed. Bungei Shunjū, 2001. 188 × 130 mm. 374 pp. ¥1,381. ISBN 4-16-357640-1.

Concern about the alleged decline in scholastic abilities of students in Japan has lingered for some time, and now, with introduction of the education ministry's new Guidelines for the Course of Study starting in April 2002, which aim to reduce the content of the curriculum by 30 percent for greater "leeway" in the program of study, the debate over school education has again grown lively.



Cover design: Torisu Mitsuko

This volume includes twenty-five essays and source materials on the "hot topics" of discussion in the field of education in Japan today, including what education ministry officials hoped to accomplish through the new Guidelines; rebuttals from elementary schools and *juku* remedial study schools; a report by a junior high school principal faced with the problem of "classroom breakdown" (*gakkyū hōkai*); the pros and cons of the "compulsory volunteer work" proposed by the National Council on Educational Reform (Kyōiku Kaikaku Kokumin Kaigi); and arguments for and against information technology (IT)-geared education. The selection provides a full rundown of the issues in Japanese education today.

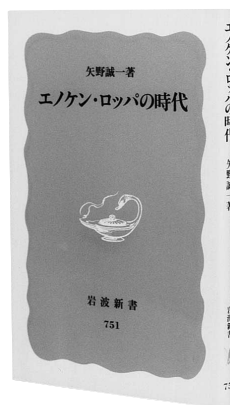
The essays are written from various angles by leading figures in their respective fields. The authors include

journalist Saitō Takao, Naoki Prize-winning writer Shigematsu Kiyoshi, and Tokyo governor Ishihara Shintarō.

ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

***Enoken Roppa no jidai* [The Heyday of Enoken and Roppa]. Yano Seiichi.** Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 173 × 105 mm. 212 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-00-430751-1. This book seeks to bring the ethos of an era to life by contrasting the life stories of two vastly popular comedians. The author (b. 1935), a stage and theater critic, describes the two stars with a fond nostalgia for the old days of Shōwa (1926–89), the era that occupied most of the twentieth century, and particularly for the old Tokyo scene.

"Enoken" was Enomoto Ken'ichi (1904–70), the son of a shoe shop keeper. Known as the "king of comedy," he was popular with audiences for his marvelous sense of rhythm and his agile movements. "Roppa" was Furukawa Roppa (1903–61), the sixth son of a baron under the Meiji peerage and a university graduate. He enjoyed the reputation of a "literary lad (*bungaku seinen*) with a princely air." He won acclaim with his voice imitations.



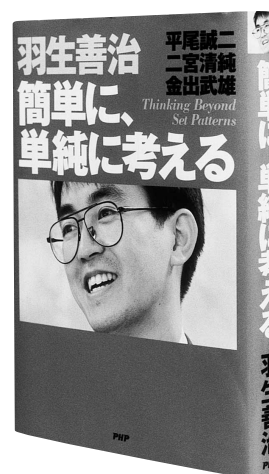
The splendid rivalry of these two men, so different in upbringing and the character of their art, galvanized the comedy scene of the era. Their shows opened first in the popular old-fashioned entertainment district of Asakusa, Tokyo, and later moved on to the new amusement center in the more central Marunouchi. The story moves on to the events of the fifteen-year war (1931–45) and then to the greatly changed and confusing

atmosphere of postwar times, a milieu to which neither managed to adjust, culminating in the close of both their careers and their lives.

Kantan ni, tanjun ni kangaeru: Thinking Beyond Set Patterns.

Habu Yoshiharu. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2001. 195 × 133 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-569-61899-5.

Habu Yoshiharu (b. 1970) is the young *shōgi* (Japanese chess) genius who achieved what none of his predecessors could by taking all of the seven major professional *shōgi* titles.



Cover design: Ishizawa Yoshihiro

A collection of three edited dialogues that took place between Habu and Hirao Seiji, the coach for the Japanese national rugby team from 1997–2000, Ninomiya Kiyosumi, the spirited sports journalist, and Kanade Takeo, professor and researcher on robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, this book clarifies ideas like "information discard," "avoiding patterns," "giving the opponent the initiative," and other instincts, strategies, and ways of thinking that brilliant *shōgi* players display. Speaking freely with the three authorities in their respective fields, Habu draws out the views of each man, and uses their remarks as a springboard for expressing his ideas about *shōgi*. This approach to dialogue itself exemplifies the exquisite technique of a champion *shōgi* player.

Habu claims that *shōgi* and life are separate realms. It is nevertheless fascinating to see that aspects of his theory of *shōgi*—e.g., intuition counts most, one way of grasping the optimal move is to short-cut the thought process—can readily be applied to life in general.



Cover design: Suzuki Kazushi & Nikawa Noriko

Nijisseiki shashinron shūshō: Buraiha sengen [The End of Photography in the 20th Century: "A Taste of the Hardboiled"]. Nishii Kazuo. Seikyūsha, 2001. 193 × 133 mm. 314 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-7872-7144-X.

This is the final work by photography critic Nishii (1946–2001), known for his dense writing style and distinctive ideas. Long involved in editing a photograph-centered weekly magazine published by a newspaper company, Nishii wrote harshly of the lack of a critical eye in the photographs published in the the photo-journalism weeklies. It is time, he declared, to recapture photography's social function in transmitting reality.

"The photograph is a dangerous medium, subject to ideology," warns Nishii. The book describes in detail through a wealth of photographs and a unique perspective the historical and social background of photography in the twentieth century. Two chapters are devoted to Roman Vishniac, who recorded in photographs the world of the Jews. He shows how contemporaneous photographers in Japan and overseas tried to defend the spirit of criticism.

"My criticism is not aimed at the world of photography," he writes, "What I say is directed at this very age in which I have no choice but to live." This collection of critiques forms a kind of last will and testament to his contemporaries by a writer who lived his short life with intensity and conviction.

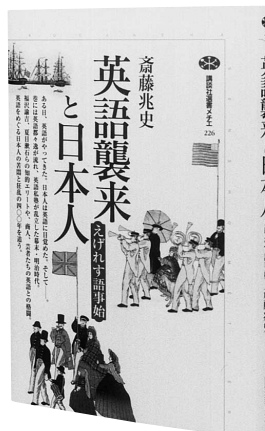
LANGUAGE

Eigo shūrai to Nihonjin: Egeresugo koto hajime [The English-language Invasion and the Japanese: The Beginnings of Learning English]. Saitō Yoshifumi. Kōdansha. 2001. 188 × 128 mm. 194 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-258226-0.

This book, which traces the history of Japan's reception of the English language, is written by a linguist (b. 1958) who believes that the keys to improving English education will be found in the history of the study of English in Japan since the start of its modernization.

As soon as the study of English replaced "Dutch learning" as the medium for importing Western civilization in the mid-nineteenth century, many private schools teaching English were established, and the struggle for mastery of this language began. According to the author, the three historical figures whose portraits are displayed on Japanese bank notes symbolize the development of the history of learning English: Educator Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), depicted on the 10,000 yen note, author of *Bushido, the Soul of Japan* Nitobe Inazō (1862–1933) on the 5,000 yen note, and novelist Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) on the 1,000 yen note.

The study of English in those days was successful due to the strenuous efforts on the part of learners, who were members of the social elite. This point should be given more attention, says the author, when people discuss how to improve English education today. Introducing numerous intriguing episodes, the book sheds light on this little known aspect of history.



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

Kanji to Nihonjin [Kanji and the Japanese]. Takashima Toshio.

Bungei Shunjū, 2001. 173 × 108 mm. 250 pp. ¥720. ISBN 4-16-660198-9.

Language is inherently spoken; writing is not a necessity for language. But for the author (b. 1937), a specialist in Chinese language and literature, "Japanese is the exception" in that writing has precedence over speaking. After its introduction to Japan some thirteen- or fourteen-hundred years ago, the Chinese language and its orthography (known as *kanji* in Japan) became part of the core of Japanese daily life and thought. Particularly after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, *kanji* were used to coin Japanese compounds for the many new Western things and concepts entering the country. Since then, Takashima claims, Japanese could not function without the support of written characters. Homonyms, whose meaning could only be differentiated by envisioning them as written in *kanji*, proliferated.

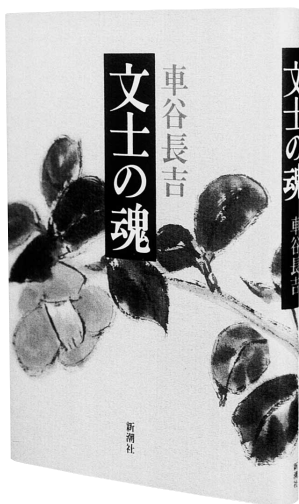


Cover design: Sakata Masanori

The adoption of *kanji* from China, Takashima is convinced, was actually a misfortune for Japanese culture. Not only is writing Japanese in *kanji* very difficult and often confusing, the influx of Chinese halted the development of Japanese. Nonetheless, he concludes, since Japanese can no longer do without *kanji*, Japanese people have no choice but to go on using a mixture of indigenous Japanese words and Chinese characters.

This book is the amplification of a three-part article originally written and translated for *Japanese Book News* in 1998 and 1999 (see Nos. 23–25). The book is easy to understand, providing many concrete explanations of analogies and other features of both Japanese and English.

Bunshi no tamashii [The Soul of the Novelist]. Kurumatani Chōkitsu. Shinchōsha, 2001. 196×132 mm. 162 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-10-388405-3. The author is recipient of a number of literary prizes, including the prestigious Naoki Prize, but even he once anguished during a long interlude, unable to identify the line dividing fiction from mere composition. Seeking the answer to his quandary in the work of previous writers, he absorbed himself in reading, and this book introduces the works of Japanese fiction that had a particularly strong impact upon him. Kurumatani selects a few works under each of fifteen headings including “popular fiction” and “horror stories,” with his critical and analytical response. Throughout, the book addresses his ideas about the nature of fiction and what constitutes a work considered a masterpiece. This book can be recommended as a guide both to reading modern and contemporary Japanese fiction and to understanding specific works.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

The *bunshi* of the title is the term used for professional writers, with the added connotation of those committed to literature. The final chapter introduces the difficult, often troubled lives of the typical *bunshi*, who devoted themselves intensely to their art, despite hardship and illness. It is a book that powerfully expresses the author's own passion for literature.

Chonmage to nekutai: Jidai shōsetsu o tanoshimu [Topknots and Neckties: Enjoying Historical Fiction]. Ikeuchi Osamu. Shinchōsha, 2001. 196×133 mm. 230 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-10-375503-2. The author (b. 1940), a prominent scholar of German literature, discusses how the stories of Japanese historical fiction—set in the medieval “warring states” period (1467–1568), the Edo period (1603–1867), and other eras—relate to our own times, thereby offering a fresh perspective on this genre.



Cover design: Shinchōsha

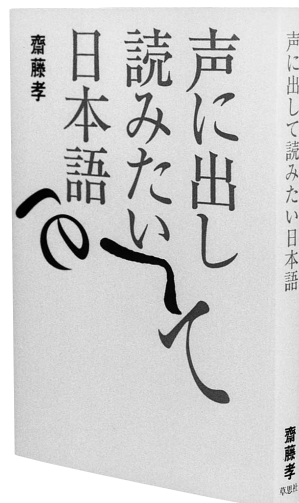
Ikeuchi takes up twelve authors with well-established readerships, from Nakazato Kaizan (1885–1944), the author of the uncompleted epic *Daibosatsu tōge* [Great Bodhisattva Pass] who may be regarded as the pioneer of the historical novel in Japan, to Shiba Ryōtarō, the vastly popular author of works like *Saigo no shōgun* (*The Last Shogun: The Life of Tokugawa Yoshinobu*) who can be said to have perfected the genre. Ikeuchi naturally covers such famous names in the genre as Ikenami Shōtarō and Shibata Renzaburō, but he also brings in those like Matsumoto Seichō, known for mysteries like *Suna no utsuwa* (*Inspector Imanishi Investigates*) that involve social issues, and San'yūtei Enchō, the *rakugo* storyteller and master of original horror fiction.

The modesty (*hanikami*) displayed by Yamamoto Shūgorō's works and the scintillating turns of plot and exquisite nonsense of the Yagyū ninja stories by Gomi Yasusuke, he says, evoke the essence of the genre. This unconventional collection of essays goes far to deepen our appre-

ciation and enhance our enjoyment of historical fiction.

Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud]. Saitō Takashi. Sōshisha, 2001. 188×131 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-7942-1049-3.

Recitation was once popular in Japan; people savored the pleasing sound and rhythm of phrases and passages that could be enjoyed with the whole body by reading them aloud and learning them by heart. Alarmed to observe that this valuable culture of recitation may be on the verge of extinction, the author collects from various sources passages and texts that are pleasing to read aloud. Briefly annotated, the selections are aimed to convey the attractive qualities of the Japanese language.



Cover design: Maebashi Takamichi

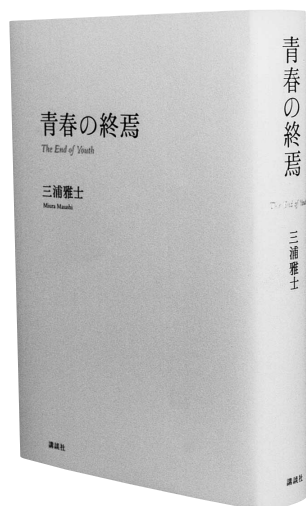
The passages are drawn from a broad spectrum of literature, from the classics, kabuki plays, *rōkyoku* ballads, *rakugo* storytelling, poetry (*waka*, *haiku*, *kanshi*), songs taught in the schools, as well as proverbs and tongue twisters. They include, for example, the well-known opening lines of *Makura no sōshi* [The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon], *Wagahai wa neko de aru* [I Am a Cat], and even *tsuketashi-kotoba* (expressions that add emphasis to some particular word or phrase by tacking on random alliterative or rhythmical words, like “Odoroki momo-no-ki sansho-no-ki” [“Surprise! (homonym ‘surprise tree’), peach tree, pepper tree”]). All are sayings and phrases that have survived the test of time. Listening to the rhythm, tempo, and power of these

texts, as the author says, “you feel a strength that goes deep down, sinking into your very core and making you feel the language deeply.”

Seishun no shūen [The End of Youth]. Miura Masashi. Kōdansha, 2001. 194 × 131 mm. 486 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-06-210780-5.

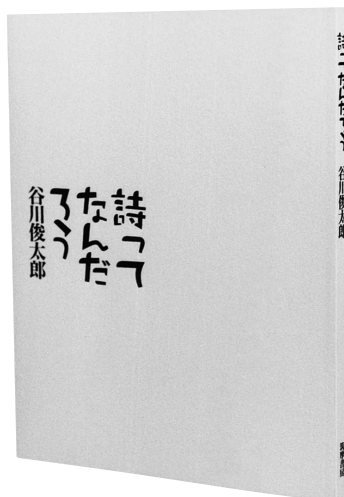
“Since the end of the 1960s the splendor of youth went into eclipse,” says the author. “By the 1970s its aura had quietly vanished.”

This book is a study of youth aimed at explaining this thesis. The word *seinen* (lit., “green years”) appeared as a translation for the English “youth” for the first time in 1880. The beginning of the twentieth century was the heyday of literary works about youth (*seinen*, *seishun* [“green spring”]). “Modern Japanese literature essentially represents the agony called youth,” writes the author, and from that perspective he provides a detailed history of the now-archaic “seishun,” drawing extensively on the work of various writers.



Cover design: Kondō Kazuya

The phenomenon of the “free-wheeling youth”-centered culture spread worldwide as a male privilege accompanying the rise of industrial capitalism and expansion of the bourgeoisie. In the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, a genre of stories on the splendor of “youth” emerged in Europe, Russia, Japan and elsewhere. As the nature of capitalism changed in the 1960s–70s, however, the luster of youth began to fade. Focusing on 1960s Japan, this book brings into clear relief the saga of *seishun*.



Cover design: Hirano Kōga

“Shi”-tte nan darō [What Is Poetry?]. Tanikawa Shuntarō. Chikuma Shobō. 2001. 188 × 148 mm. 138 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-480-81438-8. A leading Japanese poet today, Tanikawa (b. 1931) says he is often asked “What is poetry?” by children and adults alike. The nature of poetry is really hard to explain, and the question can be “answered only through poems themselves,” he says. So he produced this book, as “a rough sketch of poetry as I see it.”

The world of poetry is profound, rich, and infinitely diverse. This book gives a glimpse of the overall picture of Japan’s long tradition of poetry, ranging widely from children’s verses, the *iroha uta* (the Heian-period poem made up of the forty-eight *kana* characters, each used only once, conveying a Buddhist view of transience), proverbs, riddles, *shiritori* (word game in which contestants search for words, the first letter or syllable of which is the last letter or syllable of the previous word given), to *haiku* and *tanka*, hymns, Japanese translations of foreign poems, and contemporary verse.

Feeling that the endeavor to show children how Japanese poetry can reach across time and space is missing in the teaching of poetry in the schools, Tanikawa collected, selected and arranged the poems in this book, not as a so-called anthology but as a collection that even children can read to help them answer the question “what is poetry?”

Te no kodoku te no chikara: Matsuyama Iwao no shigoto 2 [Solitude of Hands, Power of Hands: The Work of Matsuyama Iwao, Part 2]. Matsuyama Iwao. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 196 × 134 mm. 446 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 4-12-003201-9.

This book is a collection of essays previously published in various magazines, by architect and literary critic Matsuyama (b. 1945). The essays consider people who lived perhaps inconspicuous but distinctly individualistic lives either outside of or at the mercy of the trends of the times: Diane Arbus, a woman photographer whose work focused on outlaws; Kōda Rohan’s keen eye for daily affairs, language, and phenomena relating to water; Samukawa Sokotsu, a poet who devoted his life to the great haiku poet Masaoka Shiki and his works; the houses and the five senses architects and their clients are so particular about; ideas about houses of poets and novelists, famous or nameless; craftsmen and their times; *tanka* and its era; and the author’s friends and neighbors. As one reads one becomes aware that Matsuyama’s intense attention and deep attachment to the world of “small” things is in fact linked to the essence of the world as a whole.



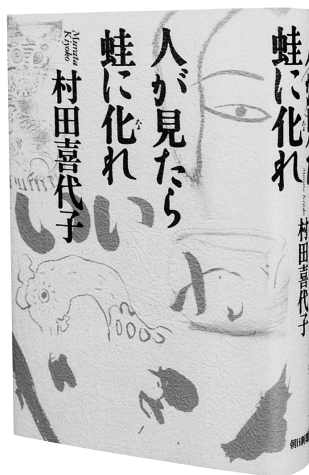
Cover design: Matsuyama Iwao and Chūō Kōron Shinsha

Repeatedly asking the reader, “Have you ever seen the Milky Way?” he warns of our inclination to lose sight of, or be totally oblivious to, the truly valuable things that are right around us. The message running throughout the book is the importance of striving to pay attention to those things.

FICTION

Hito ga mitara kaeru ni nare [If Someone Looks At You, Turn into a Frog]. Murata Kiyoko. Asahi Shimbunsha, 2001. 193 × 134 mm. 546 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-02-257686-3.

Set in the period after the bursting of the asset-inflated bubble, this is a novel revolving around antiques. The author is an Akutagawa Prize winning writer (b. 1945) originally from Kyushu. Beginning with a scene in an antique market in Kyushu, which is known as a treasure-house of old curios, the story portrays the foibles and personalities of people under the spell of antiques. It centers around three middle-aged couples: a curio dealer and his ex-wife, who fly to London in search of Genroku (late-seventeenth century) dolls once exported from Japan, at the request of an eccentric collector; a husband-wife team who hunt for valuable finds among household treasures of old families throughout the country; and a man (and his common-law wife) who illegally excavates at the sites of old kilns and sells the pottery fragments and unsuccessful works of pottery he finds there.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

In the antiquities market, good and bad luck play a major role. A dealer can come across an unexpected treasure one moment, and take a big loss the next, and the ups and downs of it all are both funny and pathetic. Such are the trials and tribulations that befall the characters in this story.

The title of the book is a phrase from writer Aoyama Jirō based on a poem by Kobayashi Issa. It is said Aoyama mumbled this phrase to his

treasured jars and tea bowls whenever he went away from home.

Neko no kyaku [The Feline Guest]. Hirade Takashi. Kawade Shobō Shinsha. 2001. 193 × 131 mm. 138 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-309-01430-5. This is the first novel by poet Hirade (b. 1950). Set in a quiet residential district in late-1980s Tokyo, the story centers around the encounter and sad parting of a middle-aged couple (a writer and his wife) living in a rented cottage within the large compound of an elderly landlord's residence, and a cat.

A newly-acquired kitten from a neighbor's house begins to come play in the landlord's big garden full of trees and plants. It also frequents the cottage, eating and even spending the night. The writer and his wife are delighted by the kitten's sagacity and lightning-like agility. Its presence grows so important in their lives that they consider it "a gift sent from afar." They are suddenly parted from the kitten when it is killed in an accident.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

The story as a whole is infused with the theme of transience—the deaths of a friend and the landlord, the demolition of the main house (and the cottage) and its luxuriant garden, the severing of the relationship by the neighbor following the cat's death, and so on. Toward the end of the story, another cat begins to visit them at their new abode, a heart-warming sign portending that a contented current of time may again flow through the couple's world. The author's clear, unadorned style of writing brings out the feeling of their happiness.

Saigo no kazoku: Out of Home.

Murakami Ryū. Gentōsha. 2001. 194 × 132 mm. 326 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-344-00212-4.

This book, written by Murakami Ryū (b. 1952), a well-known writer of many novels exploring the pathology of people today, deals this time with the question "what is family?"

Making sure all four family members are gathered at the supper table has been part of the creed of the Uchiyama family. Until only recently they were just an ordinary family. But now, the twenty-one year-old son has become a recluse, shutting himself up in his room almost all the time, refusing to see anyone for a year and a half. The senior-high school student daughter vacillates about her future, facing the prospect of college entrance examinations. The mother, who has been commuting to a counselor in hopes of finding a solution to the withdrawal symptoms of her son, has been dating a younger man. As the recession drags on, the father, in his late forties, is threatened with the possibility of layoff from his company.

One day, through a hole on the black sheet of paper covering the window in his room the son witnesses a scene of domestic violence next door. His attempts to save the woman from being mistreated trigger signs of his recovery from his reclusiveness. His sister and mother, too, eventually find their own paths to take. The family bonds seem to loosen and disintegrate, but the message of the story is, as the author says, "You have to be able to live on your own. Ultimately, that is the only way you can rescue someone close to you."



Cover design: Suzuki Seiichi Design Shitsu

Events and Trends

Works on the Emperor and Emperor System

A number of ambitious works on Japan's emperor system have recently come out. In April 2002 publication began on an Iwanami Kōza series entitled *Tennō to ōken o kangaeru* [Studies on the Emperor and Kingship] (Iwanami Shoten). According to the publisher, this series aims to "situate the emperor system in the broad context of world history, study it from various angles, and identify the issues of scholarly inquiry." Compilation of the series is under the supervision of an editorial committee made up of five eminent scholars including Amino Yoshihiko and Kabayama Kōichi. Contributors are scholars not only of history but many other disciplines. The title of the first volume, published in April, is *Jinrui shakai no naka no tennō to ōken* [The Emperor and Kingship in Human Societies]. Next to appear in the series to be complete in ten volumes are *Shūkyō to ken'i* [Religion and Authority], *Tōchi to kenryoku* [Governance and Authority], and *Jendā to sabetsu* [Gender and Discrimination].

Political scientist Hara Takeshi's *Kashika sareta teikoku* [The Empire Made Visible] (Misuzu Shobō, 2001) is a major work that traces the tours across the country made by the emperors/crown princes in the Meiji, Taishō, and early Shōwa eras. It portrays the process by which their appearances before the people helped to give visual shape to the nation.

The role played by the empress in the formation of the modern Japanese state, on the other hand, is taken up in Wakakuwa Midori's *Kōgō no shōzō: Shōken kōtaigō no hyōshō to josei no kokuminka* [A Portrait of the Empress: Empress Dowager Shōken as Symbol and the "Nationalizing" of Women] (Chikuma Shobō, 2001). Wakakuwa convincingly argues how the Meiji nation-state, using the Meiji empress as a publicity icon, pushed for the incorporation of women into the state system. The publication in Japanese translation of John W. Dower's *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the*

Wake of World War II (Haiboku o dakishimete; Iwanami Shoten, 2001) last year, stimulated discussion of the emperor system from the standpoint of "emperor-system democracy."

A number of critical biographies seeking to portray the real figures behind the image of Japan's modern emperors have also come out. *Taishō tennō* [Emperor Taishō] (Asahi Shinbunsha, 2000; JBN, No. 35, p. 10) is a biography of Emperor Taishō by Hara Takeshi, author of the above-mentioned *Kashika sareta teikoku*. An impressive work based on a variety of sources, it presents a realistic figure of a man whose true personality was obscured by myths that dwelled on his weak constitution and purported eccentricity. The Japanese edition of *Emperor of Japan Meiji and His World, 1852–1912* (Columbia University Press, 2002) by Donald Keene, *Meiji tennō* (Shinchōsha, 2001), has also drawn attention to this topic.

Not only serious, major works like those mentioned, but lighter, more popular books are also selling well. Kasahara Hidehiko's *Rekidai tennō sōran: Kōi wa dō keishō sareta ka* [The Line of Japanese Emperors: The Story of the Imperial Succession] (Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002), covers over a thousand years and the lives of the one hundred twenty-four emperors to Shōwa in a compact *shinsho* paperback edition.

Fashion Magazines in Asia

The Japanese editions of fashion magazines from Europe and America—like *Elle Japon*, *Figaro Japon*, *Vogue Nippon*, and *Hāpāsu bazā Nihonban* [Harper's Bazaar: Japanese Edition]—have been conspicuous among Japanese women's magazines. Now a number of Japanese fashion magazines have been expanding sales in China and Korea.

The pathbreaker has been Shufunotomoshia, which launched the Chinese edition of its monthly *Ray* in 1995. Sixty percent of its articles are translated and reprinted from the Japanese edition, and 40 percent are prepared locally. Growing in popularity as a "fashion textbook" among young female office workers in China, its circulation, at 400,000 copies, now exceeds that of the Japanese edition,

giving it claim to the highest sales of any fashion magazine in China. In addition to *Ray*, Shufunotomoshia publishes Chinese editions of *Cawaii!* and two other periodicals.

Shōgakukan inaugurated its Chinese edition of *Oggi* in November 2001, and says circulation has already topped 50,000. Kōdansha, which launched the Chinese version of *ViVi* in January 2001, has plans to launch a Chinese edition of *With* (whose print-run in Japan is 750,000 copies) this autumn. A Korean edition of *25 ans (Vingt-cinq ans)* (Hachette Fujingahō Co. Ltd.) was founded in February of this year.

Fiction Set in Tokyo

Recently a number of foreign authors have published novels set in Tokyo. One is the psychological thriller, *The Earthquake Bird* (Time Warner Bookmark, 2002), which in 2001 received the CWA (Crime Writers' Association) John Creasey Memorial Dagger, the leading British literary award for first-time novelists writing crime fiction. Facing charges of murdering a compatriot with whom she was acquainted, the English woman protagonist begins to recount stories out of her past, and the background and truth of the incident gradually become clear. The author, Susanna Jones, lived in and around Tokyo for five years working as an English teacher.

The central character in *Rain Fall* (GP Putnam, 2002) is a professional assassin of elite figures who plies his trade on the Tokyo scene. Following up on one request for a hit, the assassin gets drawn into a political conspiracy between the Japanese and American governments. The author, Barry Eisler, sojourned in Tokyo and Osaka for three years as a corporate lawyer. All these works feature vivid and realistic portrayals of Tokyo and Japan based on the authors' experiences living there.

Among non-fiction as well, several noteworthy works have appeared that deal with Tokyo's seamier side. Through the life and career of Nick Zappetti—a man who on one side managed an Italian restaurant in Roppongi's bustling streets so characteristic of Tokyo, and on the other continued to hold secret dealings as the "don of the Tokyo Mafia"—*Tokyo*

Underworld (JBN, No. 33, p. 13) illuminates a side of Japan few rarely encounter. The author, Robert Whiting, is an American journalist with many years of experience living in Japan who is known for works, like *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* (The Permanent Press, 1977) and *You Gotta Have Wa* (Macmillan Publishing, 1989), which explained Japanese society and culture through the world of professional baseball. In 2002, *Tokyo Outsiders* (Kadokawa Shoten, 2002), the sequel to *Tokyo Underworld*, was also published. Reportedly, *Tokyo Underworld* is to be made into a movie directed by Martin Scorsese.

Sōseki Boarding House Plaque

A house in London where novelist Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) boarded while studying there has been designated an “historic edifice” by English Heritage, a government institution in the United Kingdom. The unveiling of the memorial “Blue Plaque,” made of blue steel carved with Sōseki’s name, took place on 22 March 2002. So far, some 800 figures including Karl Marx, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Mahatma Gandhi, Vincent van Gogh, Winston Churchill, John Lennon, and others have been recognized with the Blue Plaque. Sōseki is the first Japanese to receive this honor.

During his sojourn in England from October 1900 to December 1902, Sōseki lodged in five different boarding houses. The Blue Plaque is displayed at the South London Chase boarding house, which is said to have been Sōseki’s favorite. Author of *Botchan* [Botchan], *Wagahai wa neko de aru* [I Am a Cat] and *Kokoro* [Kokoro]—all of which are available in English translation—Sōseki is one of Japan’s most prominent authors. His portrait appears on Japan’s one-thousand yen currency notes.

Obituaries

On March 4, Hanmura Ryō, the Naoki prize-winning author of a diverse selection of works in science fiction, fantasy romance, historical fiction, and other genres, passed away from pneumonia. He was sixty-eight. Hanmura made his way through more than thirty professions—factory worker, chef’s apprentice, bartender, advertising company clerk, among others—before winning a science-fiction magazine story-writing contest and making his debut as an author in 1962. With the presentation of *Ishi no ketsumyaku* [Blood Ties of Stone] (Hayakawa Shobō) in 1971, he opened up the field of sci-fi fantasy with a historical romance from a science fiction perspective. His *Musubino-yama hiroku* [The Secret Record of Musubino-yama] (Hayakawa Shobō, 1973) received the Izumi Kyōka Prize in 1973; *Ama yadori* [Shelter from the Rain] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1975) the Naoki prize in 1975; *Misaki Ichirō no teikō* [Misaki Ichirō’s Resistance] (Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1988) the Japanese Science Fiction Grand Prize in 1988; and in 1993, *Kakashi nagaya* [The Scarecrow Tenement] (Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1992) was awarded the Shibata Renzaburō Prize.

Inui Tomiko, writer of books for children, passed away in January. While serving as editor of children’s books at Iwanami Shoten, she authored a number of original stories. Among her best-known works are *Nagai nagai penguin no hanashi* [A Long Tale about Penguins] (Hōbunkan, 1957), and *Hokkyoku no Mūshika Mishika* [The Little Polar Bear Twins] (Rironsha, 1961), and of those depicting her experiences of World War II, *Hikari no kieta hi* [The Day That Lost Its Light] (Iwanami Shoten, 1978), and *Yamanba minarai no*

musume [Mountain Witch in Training] (Fukuinkan, 1982), among other works.

Akutagawa prize-winning author, Kondō Keitarō passed away in February. He was eighty-one. In 1956 he was awarded the Akutagawa Prize for *Amabune* [Fisher’s Boat]. Of the same generation as Yoshiyuki Jun’nosuke and Yasuoka Shōtarō, he was known as the “third new face,” active in the late 1950s. Other works of note by Kondō include *Bishō* [Smile] (Shinchōsha, 1974), *Fuyu no arashi* [Winter Storm] (Shinchōsha, 1959), and *Umi* [Sea] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1967). Kondō, who graduated from the department of Japanese painting at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Now the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music), was also active in the field of art criticism.

Japanese-to-English translator, Kano Tsutomu (b. 1935) passed away July 5, of complications from lung cancer, at the age of 67. He was founder and editor of *The Japan Interpreter* (1970–80) and its predecessor, the *Journal of Social and Political Ideas in Japan* (1962–69). As head of the Center for Social Science Communication he trained and encouraged numerous J-E translators and editors of English-language publications in Japan. He supervised translation for the *Japan Foundation Introductory Bibliography for Japanese Studies* and the *Japan Foundation Newsletter* for many years. He was consulted in the inception of *Japanese Book News* and served as a member of the advisory board from No. 4 through No. 11. Devoted to a high standard of craftsmanship in Japanese-to-English translation and to the transmission of nonfiction writing in Japan to English readers, he was involved in countless publications in the social sciences and humanities for over forty years.

Continued from p. 7

Book Publishers Association). The price had risen to a costly ¥69,000 yen and sales had grown sluggish, leading to the decision to publish in the more economical CD-ROM format.

Now this CD-ROM has been combined with the *Shuppan nenkan* to make available the *Shuppan nenkan + Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM*.

The Internet and CD-ROMs have made information on book publishing readily accessible in recent years, but

whatever the other conveniences, it is not easy to browse or peruse listings presented in such digital media. For these purposes, the printed versions do seem to be easier to view. Although the younger generations may not feel the need for the paper versions in the future, it appears that for the foreseeable future, it will be desirable to make use of both the printed and digital versions of this valuable information. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of Shuppan News Co.*)

Non-Western Writers and the Fictive West

Matsuura Rieko

In my teens—those impressionable years when one's sensibilities are wide open to everything—much of the literature, music, and film that engrossed me was Western. There were times when I reflected how odd it was that, even as a Japanese, the culture I was most absorbed in and knew best was Western, but I do recall believing quite passionately that the truths I sought lay not so much in Japan as in the West. People like me, born after the end of World War II and reared on the products of Western culture without being conscious of them as alien, are by no means rare.

Even now, I think—duly conscious of the incongruity—it is a natural consequence of historical circumstances for non-Westerners to become fascinated not with their own culture but with the Western culture that overwhelmingly dominates the world. Eventually, as in my case, one awakens again to the incontrovertibly Japanese aspect of oneself and undergoes a phase when the superiority of Western civilization seems quite insufferable. At the same time, I could not help but look with fond nostalgia upon that part of my non-Western self that was so irresistibly drawn to the West—pathetic and comical as it might have been.

Reflecting on that time, I doubt that I was completely passive in steeping myself in Western civilization. With no Westerners in my immediate acquaintance, I could safely partake of just what I wanted of the imports that would enrich my life and not threaten it, without ever coming into first-hand contact with what was real or alive about the West. It could be said that the image of the West I picked up through literature, music, and film was one that I unconsciously fashioned to suit my own preferences. It was a pseudo-West with no guarantee of the extent to which it would faithfully reflect the West as it really was.

Indeed, this sort of wanton toying with images of a pseudo-West is a common affair among ordinary Japanese, if not among serious scholars of the West. I was raised, for example, reading the manga comics that have developed into quite a distinguished culture in Japan, and manga written for young girls are often portrayed in entirely Western settings and featuring all-Western characters. Those of us who read manga stories like that from the time we were small never thought twice about the authenticity of the images we were reading or seeing or thought them strange or exotic; we quite naturally identified with the characters and related to the worlds portrayed there. Westerners who read such works might find the pseudo-West portrayed there appalling, but Japanese readers of a certain age and over are more likely to enjoy the fiction and be quite unperturbed about any discrepancies with reality.

Although it is unlikely that the overwhelming predominance of Western culture will ever be shaken, images of the West and Western culture that are

exported to the non-West are rarely maintained in pristine, untouched form, but are invariably changed in accordance with conditions of the place to which they are transplanted. This, too, is historical inevitability.

The plot of *Ura vājon* [The Other Version], currently my most recent novel published in 2000, portrays Japan today through a maniacal character, known as an *otaku* in Japanese, who indulges in affairs not of the real world but a fantasy world. The protagonist of this work is a forty-year-old unmarried woman who has been reading original works on themes of or suggestive of homosexuality and sado-masochism since her teens, and who aspires to become a writer herself. Having taken up residence with a friend from her high school days after losing her job, she writes stories that she hands over to her friend in lieu of her monthly rent. These stories include those on the theme of lesbian SM among American women set in the United States.

Since I purposely turn the economically and militarily most powerful and culturally most influential United States into an imaginary world in which to unfold my stories, I am filled with curiosity about what Americans would think to read them. Painfully aware of how pathetic and comical it is to be engaged in inventing and diverting oneself in such imaginary worlds, however, I also wonder whether this non-Western perspective might not capture the imaginations of Westerners themselves.



Ura bājon [The Other Version]
Chikuma Shobō, 2000.



Oyayubi P no shugyō jidai
[The Edification of Big Toe P]
Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1993.

Matsuura Rieko was born in the city of Matsuyama, Ehime prefecture, in 1958. She majored in French language and literature in the Faculty of Literature, Aoyama Gakuin University. At age 20 she won the 47th Bungakukai New Writers Award for her literary debut work, *Sōgi no hi* [Day of the Funeral]. This novel was later short-listed for the Akutagawa Prize. In 1994 she was awarded the 33rd Joryū Bungaku Prize for *Oyayubi P no shugyō jidai* [The Edification of Big Toe P] (see *Japanese Book News*, No. 7, p. 19). Her other major works include the novels *Sebasuchan* [Sebastian], *Nachuraru ūman* [Natural Woman; made into a movie in 1994], and *Ura vājon* [The Other Version] (see JBN, No. 34, p. 19), and the essay *Yasashii kyosei no tame ni* [For a Gentle Castration].