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Japanese Book News

A New Brand of Women's Literature
The Passing of a Unique Editorial Culture
The Changing Face of Japanese Fiction

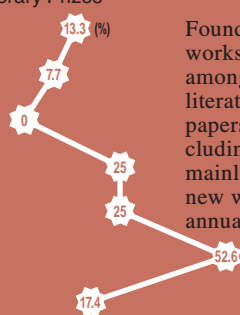
Women Writers in the Limelight

Akutagawa Prize

Number of Recent Winners of Major Literary Prizes by Gender

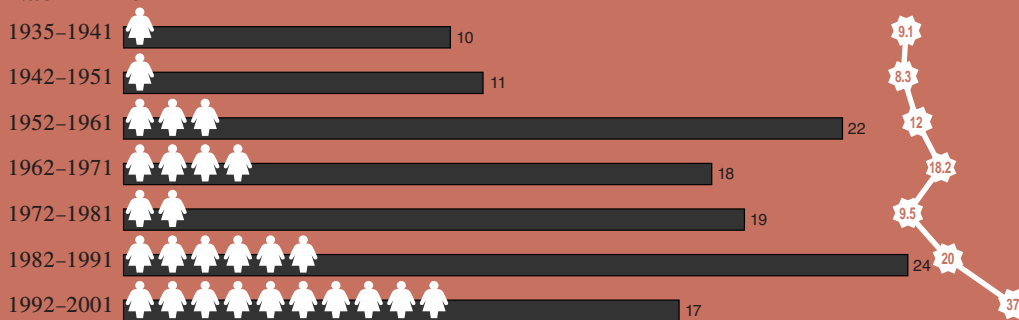


Proportion of Women among Recent Winners of Major Literary Prizes



Founded in 1935. Winning works are chosen from among short works of pure literature published in newspapers and magazines (including coterie magazines), mainly by unknown and new writers. Awarded twice annually.

Naoki Prize



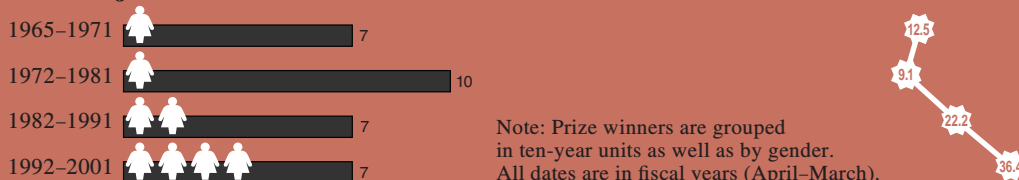
Founded in 1935. Intended for works of popular fiction, short or long, written by unknown, new, and mid-career writers, published in newspapers, magazines (including coterie magazines), or in book form. Entries chosen by nomination. Awarded twice annually.

Noma Literary Prize



Founded in 1941. Suspended during World War II and resumed in 1953. Awarded annually to one of the best literary works of the year, either fiction or nonfiction.

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize



Founded in 1965 by Chūō Kōron Sha (now Chūō Kōron Shinsha) to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the company's founding. Entries chosen by nomination. Awarded once a year.

Note: Prize winners are grouped in ten-year units as well as by gender. All dates are in fiscal years (April-March).



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

Women writers are vigorous today. As shown in the cover diagram, the number of women winning major literary prizes has been increasing. Herself an active writer whose *Bunshō dokuhon san'e* [To Those Books on How to Write] won the 1st Kobayashi Hideo Prize for literary criticism in 2002 (see JBN No. 37, p. 6), Saitō Minako introduces popular women writers and their works, discussing the qualities their writing shares as well as why and how they are supported by a large female readership. She also notes that male readers of this genre of fiction targeted mainly at women have increased.

The spread of e-publishing, publishing on-demand, on-line bookstores, and other new mechanisms making use of the Internet has plunged Japan's publishing industry into an era of change. This rapidly changing environment has had a profound impact on the role editors once played. Member of the advisory board of *Japanese Book News* Kogawa Tetsuo explains what editors meant to the publishing industry in its heyday, describing what they were like, how they acted, and what kind of relationship they had with authors along with some of the legends and anecdotes passed down from those days. He discusses how the role of editors has changed with the times and what kinds of influences the changes will bring to the publishing world from now on.

The Children's Books column presents three titles in the genre of nonfiction.

Under From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō describes the boom in readings of fiction and poetry. Kiyota Yoshiaki provides figures from a recent report showing the critical stage of Japanese bookstores today.

The author of In Their Own Words is writer Takamura Kaoru. Her insightful and self-admonitory essay about the characteristics of contemporary writers and the works of fiction being churned out in keeping with the times, makes thought-provoking reading.

Japanese Book News address:

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

A New Brand of Women's Literature

Saitō Minako

From the mid-1990s, with major literary prizes going to Yamamoto Fumio, Yuikawa Kei, Ekuni Kaori, Kawakami Hiromi, and others, the achievements of women writers are beginning to gain the recognition they deserve. Their achievements are not, however, the product only of recent years. The fact that their work has begun to draw attention simply means that the current of literature by women that has been running beneath the surface for over fifty years since the end of World War II has finally joined the mainstream of contemporary literature.

I have taken to calling this new brand of women's literature "L literature," for the "l's" of ladies, love, liberation, etc. Written by women, featuring female protagonists, and aimed mainly at female readers, this new brand of fiction has a strong realistic stamp and stands apart from science fiction, fantasy, mystery, or horror. While resembling the works of earlier women writers of the so-called *joryū bungaku* genre in many ways, it is subtly different, mainly in that it is easy to read and not inclined to elaborate literary expression. The content of the stories appeals directly to the experience and concerns of young women in their twenties and thirties. Indeed, these works may be likened to merchandise tailored expressly to the tastes of ordinary women readers, who are mainly university and high school students and company employees (of the group known disparagingly in Japan as "office ladies"), as opposed to those interested in serious literature.

These works, once the exclusive territory of female readers, are now being made much of on the main stage of literature. This is not a bad thing in itself, and yet one is struck that much of the attention derives from what appear to be misunderstandings on the part of the male writers and critics who are hailing them. Let us look at the features and background of this genre.

The Search for Self

The new brand of women's literature is very diverse, but can be divided broadly into two main categories: realistic stories and somewhat romanticized stories of "girls grown into women." The major motifs of the realistic stories are love and work, which is quite natural since these two themes are by far the greatest topics of interest among young women today.

Prominent in this category are the works of Yuikawa Kei. Her *Katagoshi no koibito* [Lovers over the Shoulder] (Magazine House, 2001; see New Titles, p. 19), which won the 126th Naoki Prize in January 2002, features two female protagonists: one being a self-reliant woman who finds fulfillment in life through her work, the other believing that happiness for women lies in love and marriage. They are close friends but poles apart in personality and lifestyle. The story, which follows their constant haggling over the topics of men and work, has been hyped as "portraying the lifestyle of the 'new woman.'" Toward the end the two women take up housekeeping

with a young man, causing the critics to portray the story as a novel of the "new type of family." But appraisals like these are obviously mistaken. Stories revolving around female characters of contrasting types are common among Yuikawa's works and a typical device found in literature of this genre for a long time.

Shinoda Setsuko's 117th Naoki Prize-winning novel *Onnatachi no jihādo* [Women's Jihad] (Shūeisha, 1997), for example, was a long novel about the varied lifestyles of five women working at the same company. The different personality types and diverse lifestyles of the women—one is angling for optimal conditions for marriage, another fails even in marriage for lack of house-keeping skills, another is forced to leave her company even though she is a talented professional, etc.—are concretely reflected in their different approaches to work and love (marriage). Very roughly speaking, *Onnatachi no jihādo* is simply a complicated version of *Katagoshi no koibito*—a more complex combination of storylines with more characters. Yamamoto Fumio, who won the 124th Naoki Prize for *Puranaria* [Planaria] (Bungei Shunjū, 2000; see JBN, No. 35, p. 19), too, has frequently written about today's women frustrated in work and love. Both Yuikawa and Yamamoto have won a steadfast following among women readers because the world of their fiction overlaps to some degree with their own actual experience.

Authors whose specialty are the "girls grown into women" (an admittedly vague description) category include Ekuni Kaori and Kawakami Hiromi. Their works take the form of realistic fiction, but the secret of their popularity is the sense of unreality that pervades them.

There was much ado over Kawakami Hiromi's 2001 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize-winning *Sensei no kaban* (Heibonsha, 2001; see JBN, No. 37, p. 18) as being a love story between a woman in her thirties and a man in his seventies. The rarefied atmosphere of the story as far as realism goes, however, hardly supports describing the relationship between the two as one of love. Kawakami has a cluster of works that feature curious creatures, including *Monogatari ga, hajimaru* [The Story Begins] (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1996) and *Ryūgū* [The Sea Deity's Palace] (Bungei Shunjū, 2002). The characters in *Sensei no kaban*, too, have the quality, not so much of flesh-and-blood human beings, but of creatures out of a fairy tale; this novel can be read, therefore, as a parody of a love story. The female characters in works by Ekuni Kaori, who won the 2002 Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize for *Oyogu no ni, anzen de mo tekisetsu de mo arimasen* (Unsafe and Unfit for Swimming; Home Sha, 2002), are grown-up women who act like girls or girls who act like adults, in which the details come across as lacking in reality. These unrealistic aspects, in fact, are part of the attraction of her fiction.

The theme of these works, put very simply, is the search for self. *Jibun sagashi* (searching for self) was a buzzword of the 1990s among young women, and it is

best understood as a slight case of identity crisis. With traditional values regarding marriage and work breaking down, young women found they did not know what to expect from either love or a career and suffered from vague apprehensions about the future. Anything that might provide some comfort in this anguish was in vogue (healing, or *iyashi*, was another fad of the 1990s), and the women's literature of today seems to have had a healing effect on readers of this category.

Beyond Girls' Fiction

Three factors contributed, I believe, to the new women's literature of today. One is the body of fiction for girls consisting mainly of translations into Japanese done in the 1950s and 1960s of stories appealing to girl readers—what is known in the history of Western literature as domestic fiction. Prominent among them are *Anne of Green Gables*, by Lucy Maud Montgomery (1908; translated into Japanese 1952), *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott (1868; translated 1934), *Heidi*, by Johanna Spyri (1881; 1952), *A Little Princess* (1905; 1910) and *The Secret Garden* (1909; 1918), both by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and *Daddy Long-Legs*, by Jean Webster (1912; 1950). The proportion of the first postwar generation of girls born between 1945 and the 1960s—women now in their thirties to fifties—who grew up reading these stories is very large. The women writers in their thirties and forties who contribute to this genre also belong to the generations brought up reading this translated girls' literature. Girls in their teens from the 1980s onward grew up reading the domestically produced girls' fiction known as Cobalt Bunko, including works by leading women writers like Himuro Saeko and Arai Motoko, which are the book editions of girls' comics or the original stories upon which they are based. Works of translated girls' literature and the homegrown Cobalt Bunko series have a number of features in common, including their exuberant adolescent protagonists grappling with the process of growing up. Categorized as works “for girls,” the Cobalt Bunko works are rarely the subject of attention in literary criticism and have been practically ignored in the history of literature. The new genre of women's literature and girls' fiction are the same in the sense that they feature protagonists whose concerns and actions readers can readily identify with and are told in a way that serve both an energizing and healing function for readers.

The women's liberation movement, which swept Japan in the early 1970s, is a second factor behind this literature. The movement did not lead straightforwardly to equal opportunity for women in Japanese society, but it spoke to women somewhat later on by breaking down the ideology of romantic love that had gained sway since the end of World War II. Until the early 1970s, or the end of the rapid-economic growth era, women had placed their absolute faith in the ideal of the happy marriage to someone they loved. Their illusions now removed, their search for self began. The new women's literature, therefore, is a product of the post-women's liberation era.

The third factor is the close relationship of this literature to other non-literary, narrative genres like manga, television drama, and popular music. One category of Japan's rich manga culture is “ladies comics” targeted at adult

women. It is a genre that emerged in the 1980s for women who had graduated from the girls' manga (*shōjo manga*) they devoured as adolescents. The new women's literature is readily accessible to women with an attachment to such non-literary genres. It may even be described as a big-sister version of fiction made up of girls' fiction served up with a measure (often a large measure) of angst for the women who have outgrown the fluffier teenager version.

If the new women's literature is the distant descendant of girls' fiction supported by female readers who have inherited the sensibilities of the women's liberation era, it can be said that the trend had already begun with women writers who broke onto the literary scene in the 1980s, including Hayashi Mariko, Yamada Eimi, and Yoshimoto Banana. What I described earlier as the achievements of women writers from the 1990s onward seems to me simply the more visible manifestation of this trend.

It is curious that just at the turn of the new century this genre of literature should suddenly be recognized as part of mainstream literature and come to be read by adult men as well as women. It may reflect the increase in the number of men less bound by traditional gender roles who are capable of understanding the viewpoint of women and thinking flexibly, or it may be the result of the breakdown of Japan's much vaunted corporate society, forcing men to set off on their own search for self. Whatever inspired their interest, I should like to remind them that what they have “discovered” is really nothing new: it draws from a long history of women's literature going back to the *Anne of Green Gables* era. What I have called “L literature” has been there for the reading for a long time; it was just not read by men. (*Saitō Minako is a literary critic.*)

Women Writers Who Got Their Start in Girls' Fiction

Many of successful women writers today in various genres, who are now in their thirties, forties, and fifties, got their start writing girls' fiction. The following are some of the best known.

Iwai Shimako (b. 1964)

In 1982 Iwai won the “Excellence Prize” of the 3rd Shōsetsu-Junior Prize for New Writers of Short Works of Fiction. In 1999, she was awarded the 13th Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize and the Japan Horror Novel Grand Prix for *Bokkē kyōtē* [Really Scary].

Kakuta Mitsuyo (b. 1967)

A Cobalt Novel Grand Prix winner in 1988, in 1990 Kakuta won the 18th Noma Literary Prize for New Writers for *Kōfuku na yūgi* [Happy Game].

Kirino Natsuo (b. 1951)

Originally a writer of romances as well as original stories for manga, Kirino now writes contemporary fiction, including suspense. In 1999, she won the 121st Naoki Prize for *Yawaraka na hoho* [Soft Cheeks].

Yamamoto Fumio (b. 1962)

Making her debut as a girls' fiction writer in 1987, Yamamoto won the “Excellence Prize” of the 10th Cobalt Novel Grand Prix for *Puremiamu pūru no hibi* [Days of Premium Pool]. She won the 124th Naoki Prize for *Puranaria* [Planaria] in 2001.

Yuikawa Kei (b. 1955)

In 1984 Yuikawa won the 3rd Cobalt Novel Grand Prix for *Umūiro no gogo* [Sea-colored Afternoon], and in 2002 the 126th Naoki Prize for *Katagoshi no koibito* [Lovers over the Shoulder].

The Passing of a Unique Editorial Culture

Kogawa Tetsuo

Once there was a brand of editor—*henshūsha*—peculiar to Japan that represented an important force in its publishing culture. These editors cultivated special relationships with writers that were inseparably linked to Japan's social structure and history and were distinct from the relationships between authors and editors known in the West.

Today, these *henshūsha* are becoming an outmoded and vanishing breed. Many people once quite famous for their role as editors are finding it expedient to move on—to writing in their own right, to university professorships, or to the television personality circuit. The territory over which they once presided and exercised their talents is rapidly disappearing, new types of writers who do not require the kind of editorial support they provided are emerging, and new writing venues (e.g., websites) are evolving. Their fate is closely related to changes taking place in Japan's publishing environment and provides an important perspective on conditions in the industry today.

What was so special about these editors? Even before taking up editorial work they were people who had always loved books, and they were usually devoted bookworms. Singling out certain writers they especially respected, they would read everything by these authors. Aspiring one day to be able to shepherd the work by a chosen author to publication, they would seek jobs as editors in Tokyo publishing houses. If they were lucky enough to find such a job, that was the goal toward which they worked. If their efforts were not rewarded (and in the large publishing houses, few projects proposed by newly hired editors were ever taken up), they were likely to move on, roving from one publisher to another. In any case, these editors considered themselves planners and conceivers of publishing projects.

The legends of the *henshūsha* profession are legion. One story tells of an editor who pays his first call on a freelance writer who turns out pieces for a wide variety of publications. Typically, the editor confesses, with great courtesy and lavish honorific language, that he is a devoted fan of the writer. After an interlude of the usual small talk (it being the time-tested Japanese custom not to speak too soon or too directly of the topic at hand), the editor broaches the subject foremost on his mind—using language of the utmost deference, of course—saying how much he would like to put out a book by the writer, whom he honors with title “Sensei.” The writer is enjoying a growing popularity but is by no means displeased by this unexpected proposal. So what sort of book does the editor propose? The editor rummages in his bag and pulls forth a bundle of papers. It is a “manuscript,” consisting of miscellaneous pieces by the author previously written for a variety of publications, all tidily pasted on uniform sheets and placed in orderly fashion under specific titles. Leafing through the bundle, the writer notices how skillfully the editor has organized

the essays of various lengths originally written on a wide variety of commissions, and realizes that they have been restructured under a single theme, forming quite a presentable book. With unerring timing, the editor offers, “If you would be so kind as to give permission for this manuscript, I would suggest as a title . . .” To the writer's amazement the title mentioned fits perfectly the theme he had been thinking rather vaguely about but had yet to formulate clearly—and it is an excellent book title as well.

An example like this might lead one to think that Japanese authors were being led by the hand by their editors and took no initiative or independent action on their own. There were, indeed, cases when editors performed a function quite close to ghost writer, and there were plenty of editors who were very talented in the role. Say, for example, an editor desires a manuscript from writer A, but that person is already swamped with deadlines and unable to complete it in time. The editor then proposes an “oral original.” For a top-notch editor, it was little trouble to create a fresh manuscript by taking down on paper an orally dictated text and adding finishing touches in the writing style peculiar to that author.

Unobtrusive Shapers of Publishing Culture

Even overconfident and egotistical writers rarely achieved anything without the contribution of an editor. Collecting reference material was one of the editor's basic tasks. No matter how an author might deny needing anything as an aid to inspiration, the materials the editor might casually come by to drop off almost invariably proved useful.

For every writer, of course, no matter how spoiled by success, the first reader of any work was the editor, and it was often, for the time being, expressly the editor for whom a writer wrote. For a new writer, the editor would provide valuable advice, sometimes issuing specific demands, and occasionally delivering a strategically timed threat. Between author and editor there was a sort of love-hate relationship of the kind that would no doubt yield interesting data for psychoanalytic research. As the number of times they worked together in creating books increased, they might become quite close, and at times the editor would end up tending to the author's needs in ways not directly related to the work itself. And as with the case of the wife in the traditional household who unobtrusively managed things for her husband, the measure of the superlative editor was how skillfully he or she set the stage for success from behind the scenes. Even when the *henshūsha* were at their height, there were practically no cases in which they received formal credit in the colophon of the book, and editors who later found themselves disregarded by writers who had emerged to success shared a sense of bitterness. When editors would get together over drinks, one would hear the frequent

complaint that “I was the one that put so-and-so in the limelight, but recently he/she never even calls.”

In the case of prominent authors with often inextricable ties to their assigned editors, it was customary for the editor to pay a personal visit to the writer’s workplace or home to receive whatever manuscript the author would bestow. In the case of the ordinary writer in the days before faxes and e-mail, manuscripts were usually handed over to the editor in a bar or coffee shop. There was an established ritual. The editor would arrive at the meeting place slightly before the appointed hour. He or she would take a place at a table seated not against the wall, but near the aisle, leaving the superior, or more honored seat, for the respected writer—“Sakka-sensei.” Then along would come the author, somewhat after the appointed hour (in order to impress the editor with their superiority, some writers might come as much as thirty minutes late), and they would engage in some common banter before the writer would produce the manuscript. The editor would receive it respectfully, raising it with both hands over his or her head while bowing to the “honored” manuscript, but, murmuring excuses, would set immediately to perusing it. The author would be forced to wait, smoking or otherwise biding the time. Some thoughtful editors might look up from reading to ask if the author would like another cup of coffee or such, but for a new writer, the figure of a veteran editor reading his or her manuscript was a tension-filled, thoroughly intimidating experience. The editor’s expression might well betray his or her impatience with the weaknesses of the manuscript.

These editors knew themselves how to write if they had wanted to, but they did not. By choosing not to write and publish their own work they maintained the distance between themselves and their authors. From the viewpoint of the writer, the editor was the reader, a professional reader, and the first reader of his or her work; the editor was feared and commanded respect. Put another way, it was thanks to the editor that the writer could be sure his or her work would be published; whether or not books sold or did not sell, the certainty that at least the editor understood and appreciated the work kept the writer going.

From Groupism to Individualism

The editor of this tradition survived until around the middle of the 1980s. One particularly famed editor named Tsuno Kaitarō began to write works of his own in the 1990s and later became a professor at Wakō University. In a book entitled *Dokusho-yoku, henshū-yoku* [Desire to Read; Urge to Edit] (Shōbunsha, 2001, see p. 8 for further details), he described the *henshūsha* as those who “looked after” writers, becoming deeply involved in their affairs, sometimes to the point of meddling. Today, not only writers but Japanese in general have an aversion to being looked after and having others pry into their affairs, and in that respect alone there is little room for the editor of the old stamp to exercise his or her talents.

The 1980s were a watershed in Japanese history, a time when the orientation to the group that had been the governing principle of society gave way to an upsurge of individualism. Best-selling new commodities since that time, from portable cassette players to mobile telephones,

have been oriented to the individual; they are not products used communally or in a group. In both corporations and universities, the field days and drinking parties that were important arenas of group solidarity and socialization are less popular. When individuals gather physically in one place, it is more likely to be at parties where they can maintain a flexible distance from one another. In the mid-1980s there was much fuss about people—known as *otaku*—who set themselves off from the crowd by their personal interests or tastes, but today not even *otaku* are considered out of the ordinary. Loners, egotists, and eccentrics are now a normal part of the social landscape. Japanese society is definitely changing.

The shift from printed mass media to Internet-centered media is an integral part of these changes. E-mail has transformed everyone into a writer. Websites have similarities to books and magazines, but in its actual usage the Internet differs significantly from printed media. Net-surfing is a form of editing. Not only are professional editors not needed on the Internet, the World Wide Web achieves its ultimate potential when each and every user becomes his or her own editor.

In such a world, the editor may be more out of place than ever, and yet makes the superior writer of the times. The tendency of former editors to become writers suggests how those who were writers until now have not kept up with the times. It is also related to the fact that books edited in a more professional, technically polished fashion are in increasing demand.

Once editors in the traditional sense withdraw from the scene, the kinds of books published thus far will eventually disappear. Indeed, far fewer books born out of the special coupling of talents between an author and editor are being published. The overall number of books sold is increasing and quite a few best-selling titles of more than one million copies have come out, a phenomenon not known until the 1970s, and the quality of books has not necessarily become worse. Books today tend to have the sort of Hollywood finish that showcases professional and technical skills, as opposed to the kind of literary refinement resulting from the collaboration between a well-matched author and editor. The new approach to bookmaking may be well suited to works in the practical arts and entertainment genres, but it spells doom as far as works of thought and literature are concerned.

In terms of the evolution of media, the decline of both the *henshūsha* and books as a medium is interrelated with the spread of the new media. In fields of writing other than literature, it became the general practice in the 1980s for writers to submit their manuscripts to magazines and journals by fax. The trend was begun at the initiative of editors themselves. To gather manuscripts for periodical publications whose reading life was short-spanned, there was no time to waste on meeting authors in coffee shops, and it cannot be denied that harried editors no longer had the psychological leeway to listen to the sage pronouncements of the writer “Sensei” each time they needed a manuscript. It was all part of the rationalization of publishing, the trend toward which has gone about as far as it can go since the mid-1990s through the dissemination of the Internet. Today, even writers of literary renown submit their manuscripts to the publisher by e-mail. It is

now extremely rare that an editor pays a visit to the home of an author just for the honor of obtaining a manuscript, and few writers still expect such treatment. In that sense, the "premodern" era in relationships between author and editor has come to an end.

Any form of culture, however, contains the hidden premodern elements that sustain its dynamism. In the modernizing process these energizing elements are gradually cast aside. Just as Broadway has both overtly and covertly nourished non-profit off-off-Broadway theater,

and just as mainstream cultures do not flourish without the subcultures that thrive on their fringes, Japan's publishing culture may soon find that its excessively unified turn toward modernization and rationalization has its costs. I believe that we are now entering an era in which books will eventually take their place alongside other media, but for the time being Japan is in the midst of a serious debate over whether books will in fact disappear. (*Kogawa Tetsuo is a media critic and professor of communications at Tokyo Keizai University.*)

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 and agencies.

Publishers

Bestsellers

2-29-7 Minami Otsuka
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Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8320
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Children's Books

Selection and summaries by the
Tokyo Children's Library, Nakano, Tokyo

Karasu no daiikenkyū: Tokai no warumono ka kamisama no tsukai ka [Everything You Should Know About Crows: City Troublemakers or Divine Messengers?]. Text by Kunimatsu Toshihide and illustrations by Sekiguchi Shun. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2000. 127 pp. ¥1,200. 220×155 mm. ISBN 4-569-68212-X. Damage and trouble caused by crows in the big cities have become a major problem and the focus of grave public concern. They rummage through and scatter trash left out for collection, have been known to attack humans, and are annoying and noisy.

What do we know about crows? This book looks at these birds from many different angles. Stones laid on train rails where they could easily

cause a train to derail were found to have been put there by crows. Demonstrating their considerable intelligence, the book describes how crows never forget where they hide the food they gather, and explains why they rifle through trash, cause electrical outages, and sometimes attack humans.

Crows today have a negative image, as illustrated by the familiar Japanese saying that “someone dies every time a crow calls,” but in antiquity, these birds were believed to be divine messengers or protectors against evil. Crows of legend often had three feet. The emblem of the Japan Football Association, in fact, is such a three-legged crow. According to the myth and legend of the early



inhabitants of North America and the ancient peoples of Siberia, crows were the gods of creation, the sources of the sun and fire. Drawing on records and historical sources East and West, past and present, this book is a fascinating account by a scholar of children's literature of the inextricable link between crows and human beings. (Grades three and above)

Kasabuta-kun [What Is a Scab?]. Text and illustrations by Yagyū Gen'ichirō. Fukuinkan Shoten, 2000. 260×230 mm. 28 pp. ¥838. ISBN 4-8340-1640-4.

When scabs form over a scrape or injury, it's hard to leave them alone. They itch, are rough to the touch, and you can hardly resist the impulse to pull them off. How do we get hurt and develop such scabs? When we fall and scrape a knee, brush an arm across a rough wall, get sores on our feet from wearing uncomfortable shoes . . .

What is a scab? It's a “lid” of hardened blood that forms over an



injury. Underneath the scab, which acts as a protective cover keeping out bacteria, new skin quickly begins to grow back into place. When the new skin has completely formed, the scab

falls off naturally. When it comes off, you actually miss it at first.

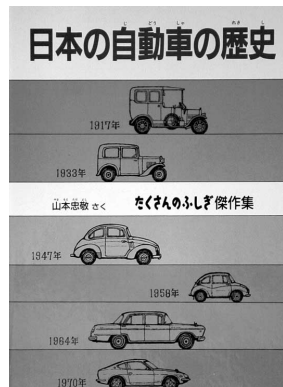
A picture book designed to teach science, this volume consists of printed text interspersed with hand-written spoken text of the children characters in the pictures that together explain the role of scabs and how they help heal injuries. The topic is one of curiosity and interest to just about anyone and the lively cartoon-style illustrations easily catch children's attention. The language is easy to understand and can be enjoyed by even preschoolers. (Preschool through grade two)

Nihon no jidōsha no rekishi [The History of Japanese Cars]. Yamamoto Tadayoshi. Fukuinkan Shoten, 1992. 48 pp. ¥1,300. 260×200 mm. ISBN 4-8340-1515-7.

Some 130 years after the world's first automobile, Nicolas Cugnot's three-wheeled steam-powered car, was invented in Paris in 1769, the first car appeared in Japan in 1898. Only nine years later, automobile production began in Japan. Generously illustrated with sketches of each type of car, from the first model, called the “Takuri” because of the engine's clattering sound

(*gatakuri, gatakuri* . . .), to recent solar-powered vehicles designed to protect the environment, this book traces the complete history of Japanese-made automobiles. The illustrations, by an illustrator with an established reputation in picture books on all kinds of vehicles, are finely detailed, making the features of each vehicle easy to grasp. Each car, like the “Entarō bus” manufactured hastily to provide transportation after the devastating Tokyo earthquake of 1923, and the first scooter in Japan, “Rabbit,” made after World War II from the tail-

wheel assembly of no-longer needed bombers, reveals the character of its times. (Grade three and above)



Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers and agencies listed on page 5.

The Readings Boom: Out of Isolation

Koyama Tetsurō

Readings of fiction and poetry are flourishing these days. On the evening of July 6, in a bar in Shinjuku, Tokyo, novelists Furui Yoshikichi and Tsushima Yūko held a reading. Featuring three pieces from Natsume Sōseki's short story anthology *Yume jūya* [Ten Nights of Dreams], Furui presented a splendid performance spiced with the distinctive intonation of old Tokyo *shitamachi* speech. Tsushima matched this with selections from her own work *Yume no kiroku* [Record of My Dreams] (Bungei Shunjū, 1989) reflecting the loss of her firstborn son in infancy in a powerful more-than-thirty-minute delivery. There was enthusiastic applause from the audience of about forty.

This reading session was the sixth in a series organized by Furui and presenting himself with other authors. In the audience were novelist Takahashi Gen'ichirō, scheduled to read at a subsequent event in the series, and novelist Shimada Masahiko (see JBN, No. 18, p. 22), who was among those who participated in past readings. Furui has plans to hold readings in November in France, Austria, and Italy.

In poetry circles, meanwhile, "poetry boxing" readings are gathering increasing attention. The readers—or "boxers"—enter a three-meter square ring and read out original poems, vying to capture the interest of the audience and the vote of the judges. At the second national poetry boxing tournament held on May 26 in Tokyo, six-

teen poets who had won in regional competitions competed in elimination-tournament style. The 700-person capacity hall where the meet was held was packed. The Japan Reading Boxing Association (led by Kusunoki Katsunori), which sponsored the contest, also holds a world lightweight poetry boxing championship featuring professional poets and fiction writers.

In the world of books as well, *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo* [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud] (Sōshisha, 2001; see JBN No. 38, p. 17) by Saitō Takashi, consisting of a wide variety of memorable passages from classical literature and kabuki plays to comic *rakugo* stories, is now a best-seller of more than 1.3 million copies. CD-ROM and audio recordings are being published in record numbers. Conspicuous among them are classics, such as twelve-disk sets of *Genji monogatari* [The Tale of Genji] and *Heike monogatari* [The Tale of Heike].

What does this boom in readings and oral forms of literature suggest? Poetry boxing highlights the opportunity to perform that affords pleasure quite different from the more serious pursuit of understanding through the silent, solitary act of reading. Indeed, through the reader's voice oral delivery transmits something other than meaning alone that listeners can physically feel.

Continued on p. 21

Difficult Times for Bookstores

Kiyota Yoshiaki

The current state of the bookstore business in Japan is detailed in this year's edition of *Shoten keiei shihyō 2002* [Business Indicators for Bookstores], published by the major book distributor Nippan. Sales volume has dropped off about 2 percent over the previous year (2000), falling below the figure for the previous year for five years in a row. Following are some of the figures cited:

- Compared with previous year, sales volume for books was 97.24 percent (previous year 97.06 percent); for rental videos, DVDs 102.88 percent (98.24 percent); for-sale videos, DVDs 98.71 percent (103.23 percent), and 97.91 percent for all categories together.
- Annual average working days: 280; average working hours per year for full-time employee: 2,338; for part-time employee annual average working hours: 1,193.
- Average monthly wage (national average) for 2001: ¥232,452 (¥3,710 decrease from previous year).
- Starting monthly salary: For graduates of high school, ¥151,373; junior college, ¥166,497; university ¥182,884.
- Sales per *tsubo* (3.3 sq. m.) floor space: National average ¥2.535 million (annual), decrease by ¥21,000 from previous year. Peak in 1995 was ¥3.331 million.
- Inventory per *tsubo*: Average ¥579,000.
- Merchandise turnover rate (i.e., how much a single book might sell throughout the year): Total 3.9 times (books 2.4; magazines 10.3; comics 5.1). For shops in railway stations and other buildings close to stations sales turnover was highest at 4.8 times; for magazines 12.8 times and for comics 8 times.

- Average purchase per customer: National average ¥1,132, which is ¥18 higher than the previous year, an increase for fourth consecutive year; trend for purchases to be higher the larger the scale of the bookstore.
- Monthly sales volume per employee: National average ¥2.169 million; increase of ¥0.12 million over previous year. National average sales floor space per employee is 11.6 *tsubo* (approx. 38 square meters).
- Working hours and wages of part-time employees: National average per day, approx. 5.2 hours; average national hourly wage, ¥725.
- Annual business days: National average 360 days.
- Business hours: National average 11 hours, 58 minutes.
- Proportion of in-store and out-store sales: National average in-store sales 96.1 percent; out-store sales 3.9 percent.

As these figures show, business in the bookstore industry today is becoming very hard. Of a total of approximately 20,000 bookstores each year some 1,200 stores have been forced to shift to other lines of merchandise or close down. Publishers are suffering the same hard times.

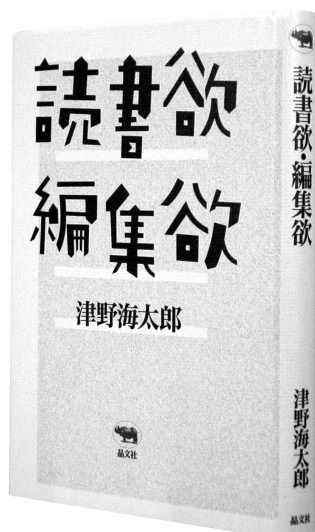
Managers are studying ways of overcoming the crisis, but no conclusive answers have yet to be found. Since the number of new titles published has increased by 7 percent over the previous year, obviously many publishers see new books as providing the means of raising sales volume. (Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of *Shuppan News Co.*)

New Titles

MEDIA/JOURNALISM

***Dokusho yoku henshū yoku* [Desire to Read; Urge to Edit]. Tsuno Kaitarō.** Shōbunsha, 2001. 192 × 131 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-7949-6514-1.

The spread of the electronic media has transformed the function and significance of books. Now a university professor, the author (b. 1938) of this work, based on his four-decade career as an editor, considers the future of books and how their relationship with readers is becoming ever more intertwined with computers.



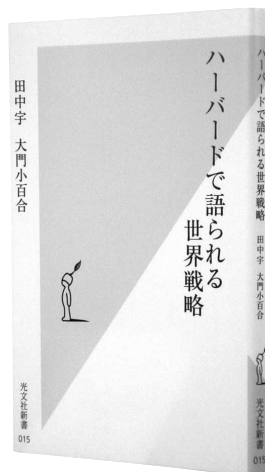
Cover design: Hirano Kōga

Arguing that Japan's publishing industry, which accepts only books that sell immediately, has only itself to blame for the current crisis, Tsuno observes that online bookstores treat all books equally and offer information impartially. If readers will go back to the practice of searching just for the books they desire, whether a new or old publication, he expects that authors and editors will produce works that endure.

This volume will convince readers that what today's editors need most is a flexible attitude, undiscouraged by the new realities in the industry, undaunted at the prospect of a new

publishing environment, and willing to pursue the potential for publishing from a variety of viewpoints. Its pages are filled with intriguing anecdotes and insightful observations, such as on the use of symbol “(笑)” (laughter) often found in roundtable discussion (*zadankai*) articles, a device used in Japanese journalism. At the discretion of an editor the symbol is inserted to indicate the atmosphere of the discussion or soften the sound of excessively frank comments.

***Hābādo de katarareru sekai sen-ryaku* [Global Strategy at Harvard]. Tanaka Sakai and Daimon Sayuri.** Kōbunsha, 2001. 172 × 107 mm. 244 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-334-03115-3. The authors are a couple who spent one year at Harvard University beginning in the summer of 2000. When Daimon received a Neiman Fellowship, granted to journalists of accomplishment and promise, to study abroad at Harvard, her husband, an Internet journalist, decided to accompany her.

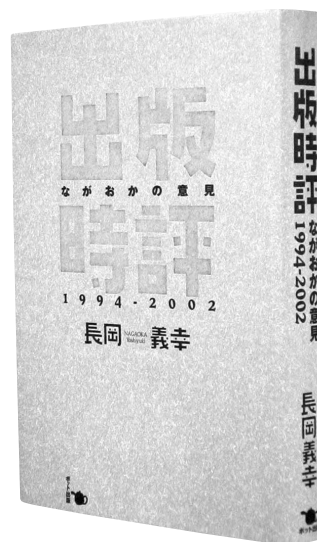


Cover design: Alan Chan

The reactions of the two to their experience at Harvard form a striking contrast. Daimon, through her courses taught by professors with a wealth of experience in politics and finance and seminars given by off-campus lecturers, came to view the university's connections with society at large, though deeper than generally known, in a positive light. Tanaka, on the other hand, is skeptical of the many educators who, he says, “reek of politics,” and overstep their role as researchers to support the government's international strategy.

The book also touches on Harvard's support, both direct and indirect, of the U.S. government's way of dealing with world strategy by creating a succession of enemies, and the university's strategy for the future, which includes inviting study-abroad students from China in large numbers. It vividly conveys the “ecology” of the U.S. educational elite.

***Shuppan jihyō Nagaoka no iken 1994–2002* [Publishing Today: The Views of Nagaoka Yoshiyuki 1994–2002]. Nagaoka Yoshiyuki.** Pot Shuppan, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 295 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-939015-39-4.



Cover design: Kokubo Yumi

This book is a collection of reports on the topic of publishing by the freelance-journalist author (b. 1962), published in magazines and other publications from 1994 to 2002.

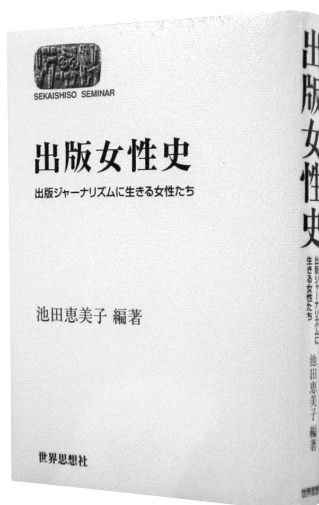
The content is organized under two main perspectives. One is publishing as an industry. The author calls for a review of the resale price maintenance system (according to which books must be sold at the price set by their publishers) and the consignment system (in which bookstores can return unsold books within a certain period), two mechanisms that have long supported the industry in Japan, detailing the problematic aspects of the resale system and the distribution system based on two central distribution agents. The second focuses on the realities of “freedom of the press (of distribution),” that provides the fundamental spirit behind the publishing industry.

Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers and agencies listed on page 5.

It takes up current issues concerning freedom of speech and of the press in the context of publishers' self-imposed controls and the regulation of so-called harmful books under the banner of the "healthy rearing of young people."

The book includes some valuable insights and information, such as on the issue of new-used bookstores (*shinkoshoten*) and on word-processing software that includes a checking function to flag discriminatory language.

***Shuppan josei shi: Shuppan jōnarizumu ni ikiru josei tachi* [A History of Women in Publishing: Women Devoted to Journalism]. Ikeda Emiko. Sekai Shisō Sha, 2001. 187 × 130 mm. 310 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-7907-0905-1.**



Cover design: Higashitani Takeshi

Women first began to work as journalists and editors in Japan when the country set out to modernize in earnest in the 1890s. An editor herself, the author (b. 1955) traces the lives of those who opened the publishing industry to women as one aspect of the history of the publishing world.

The introduction reviews the work of those who led women's magazine journalism during an era when freedom of speech was controlled by government censors. Collected here is the history of women who fought to "change society and the way women live," including Hani Motoko (1873–1957), Japan's first female newspaper reporter and founder of *Fujin no tomo* (Women's Friend) in 1903, and Hiratsuka Raichō (1886–1971), the feminist founder of *Seitō* (Blue-stocking) in 1911.

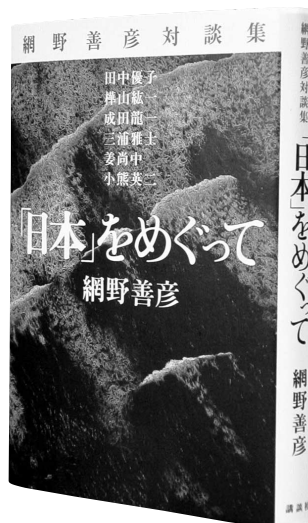
In the interviews that account for a majority of the book, thirty-one women—including editors, writers, photographers, a translator, a proof-reader, a book designer, and book distribution and copyright export agents—share their thoughts about and attitudes toward their professions. The book shows how their lives, devoted to improving working conditions, wages, and fringe benefits, contributed to opening up the path for women in publishing.

HISTORY

***Amino Yoshihiko taidan shū: "Nihon" o megutte* [On "Japan": Dialogues with Amino Yoshihiko]. Amino Yoshihiko. Kōdansha, 2002. 193 × 132 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-06-211023-7.**

This work consists of a series of discussions between the well-known historian Amino Yoshihiko (b. 1928), specialist in Japanese medieval history and the history of maritime peoples (*kaiminshi*), and six scholars and researchers.

Amino discusses his view of history, which argues that the Japanese archipelago, linked both at the north and at the south to the Asian continent, was open to the Korean peninsula, East Asia, and China, and that, through these links and the lively commerce that took place within the islands themselves, a diverse and distinctive regional society "that cannot easily be called homogeneous" took shape. Amino is best known for having overturned the



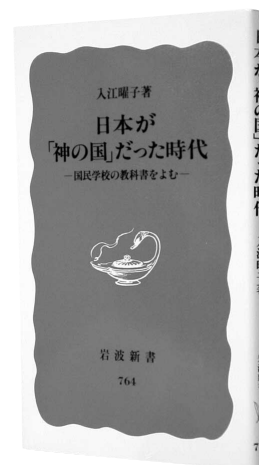
Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

previously dominant view of Japan as an isolated island country of primarily agrarian inhabitants with a homogeneous society centering around rice cultivation.

His discussions are with Tanaka Yūko (see JBN, No. 4, p. 8), a specialist in early modern literature; historian Kabayama Kōichi; early modern and modern Japanese historians Narita Ryūichi (see JBN, No. 36, p. 9) and Oguma Eiji (see JBN, No. 14, p. 14); literary critic Miura Masashi (see JBN, No. 38, p. 18); and political scientist Kan Sanjun (JBN, No. 17, p. 9).

***Nihon ga 'kami no kuni' datta jidai: Kokumin gakkō no kyōkasho o yomu* [When Japan Was the "Land of the Gods": Textbooks of the National People's Schools, 1941–47]. Iriye Yōko. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 173 × 104 mm. 232 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-00-430764-3.**

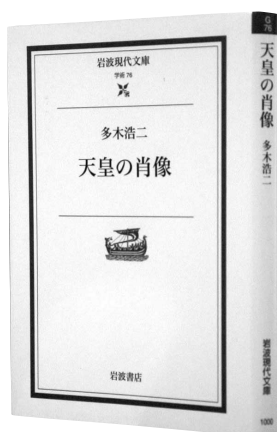
Ultrnationalist remarks by politicians have provoked criticism both at home and abroad. Probing the background of such remarks, the author (b. 1935) examines in detail the state-compiled textbooks for Japanese language, morals, music, and other subjects used at what were called national people's schools (*kokumin gakkō*), the public elementary schools of the 1941 to 1947 period.



The *kokumin gakkō*, the author points out, were designed to produce people faithful to the emperor, and the textbooks used there stressed the importance of the rising sun flag and played a crucial role in inculcating children with the meaning of self-sacrifice for their country. The textbooks told children of the myth of

the country's creation by the gods, and were tools for educating as Japanese citizens the peoples of Korea and Taiwan then under the nation's rule. At one point the textbooks ceased even to mention Europe and the United States as well as countries other than those under Japanese rule within the Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere. This education therefore gave children in those days a narrow perspective of the world. Illustrated with many photographs of pages from these textbooks, this work demonstrates the role such textbooks played in shaping young minds in the ultranationalist mold.

Tennō no shōzō [Portrait of the Emperor]. Taki Kōji. Iwanami Shoten. 2002. 148 × 105 mm. 234 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-00-600076-6. During the early phase of the Meiji era (1868–1912), when the emperor was still not a popularly familiar figure, a major challenge facing the new government was to give power visible form; that is, to present an image of the emperor in the eyes of the people that would facilitate the establishment of a modern state. The tactics adopted were imperial tours around the country and distribution of copies of an imperial portrait, a photograph taken in 1888 of the Meiji emperor.

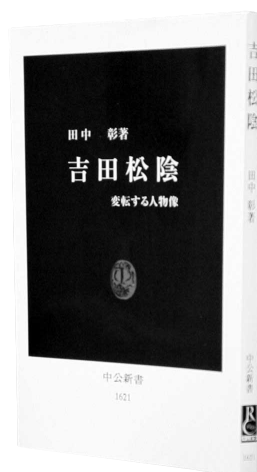


This book approaches the topic roughly under two themes: first, how the ideal portrait of a monarch evolved (i.e., the heretofore little-examined tradition of imperial portraits, called *goshin'ei*) and second, how the emperor-centered state was built by distributing copies of the Emperor Meiji's portrait to elementary schools and other institutions

throughout the country and the new rituals inaugurated to honor it.

The book chronicles an unusual aspect of history, featuring the creation and use of a photograph that “exerted political power of greater magnitude than any other photograph in the world.” This is the revised and enlarged edition of a book that had a strong impact on research in modern Japanese history when it first came out in 1988.

Yoshida Shōin: Henten suru jinbutsu zō [Yoshida Shōin: His Changing Image]. Tanaka Akira. Chūō Kōron Shinsha. 2001. 172 × 108 mm. 196 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-12-101621-1. On the eve of the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, Yoshida Shōin (1830–59) was an instructor of military science at the domain school in Chōshū (now Yamaguchi prefecture). He attempted to stow away on Commodore Matthew Perry's flagship, intending to go and see conditions in the West, but was arrested for violating the still-current ban on travel abroad. Placed under house arrest and prohibited from engaging in political activities, he absorbed himself in reading and writing. In 1856 he opened a private academy called Shōka Sonjuku, which was attended by many young samurai. His continued opposition to the policies of the Tokugawa regime, however, resulted in his second arrest, and he was tried and executed in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1859.



Many of Yoshida Shōin's students later played key roles in the toppling of the shogunate and the restoration of imperial rule in 1868. Yoshida's ideas remained influential for decades after his death and many biographies

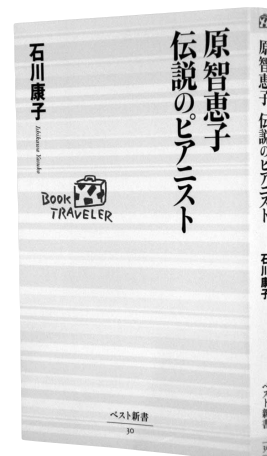
of him have been published. The present book traces the transformation of images of Yoshida from the Meiji, through the Taishō and Shōwa eras, and how his portrayal—as a revolutionary, as the fervently patriotic and loyal samurai, as the ideal educator, and so forth—has changed with shifting values, as served the purposes of writers in each respective era.

This compact *shinsho* edition is the result of thirty years of research by a respected scholar (b. 1928) of modern Japanese history. Valuable source materials, documents, a chronology, and a bibliography are appended.

BIOGRAPHY

Hara Chieko densetsu no pianisuto [Legendary Pianist Hara Chieko]. Ishikawa Yasuko. Bestsellers, 2001. 174 × 107 mm. 318 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-584-12030-7.

Born in Kobe, Hara Chieko (1914–2001) began playing piano at an early age. She went abroad to study when she was thirteen, and later graduated from the Paris Conservatory of Music at the top of her class. At the third Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in 1937, Hara distinguished herself not only as the first Japanese to enter the competition but also by winning a special audience award. Around the time of the outbreak of World War II, she captivated Japanese audiences and took the world of classical music by storm. Later, after a 1953 concert in Paris, she was acclaimed “the miracle of the East” and “the first world-class Japanese pianist.”



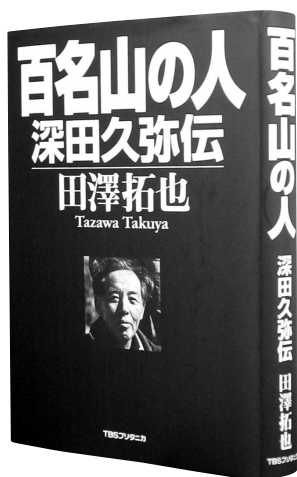
Cover design: Sakagawa Eiji and Fujita Tomoko

After marrying cellist Gaspar Cassado (1897–1966), her second husband, Hara remained based overseas. Her activities earned her continued celebrity in the West, but in Japan her name was gradually forgotten. After Cassado's death, she contributed to the international music scene for twenty years by hosting the Gaspar Cassado International Cello Competition.

The author, who became acquainted with Hara in Florence, presents the results of scrupulous research in a vivid portrait of the pianist's "demoniac" temperament and extraordinary life.

***Hyakumeizan no hito: Fukada Kyūya den* [Man of One Hundred Famous Mountains: The Biography of Fukada Kyūya].** Tazawa Takuya. TBS Britannica, 2002. 192 × 135 mm. 314 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-484-02203-6.

This biography, by an author of non-fiction (b. 1952), traces the life of Fukada Kyūya (1903–71), the "mountain novelist" known for writings like *Nihon hyaku meizan* [One Hundred Mountains of Japan].



Cover design: Mimura Jun

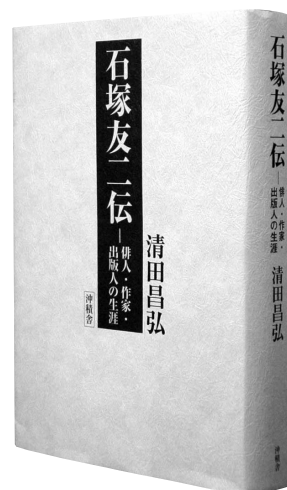
After specializing in German literature, Fukada, who had loved mountains since childhood, married Kitabatake Yaho, who had entered a literary competition sponsored by the publishing house where he was working. Later Fukada made his debut in literature, associating with the authors and critics known as "the Kamakura literati," including Kobayashi Hideo and Kawabata Yasunari, and became a popular writer. Following a reunion and romance with a previous love and his

subsequent divorce from Kitabatake, it was revealed that his earlier lyrical fiction had been the products of joint work with Kitabatake. After discharge from military duty after World War II, Fukada cut his ties with literary society and secluded himself with the family of his second marriage in his native Ishikawa. He continued to climb mountains, and sparked a mountain-climbing boom when he eventually reappeared as the mountain novelist, trekking in the Himalayas, along the ancient Silk Road, and on other expeditions.

***Ishizuka Tomoji den: Haijin, sakka, shuppanjin no shōgai* [A Biography of Ishizuka Tomoji, Haiku Poet, Writer, and Publisher].** Seita Masahiro. Chūsekisha. 2001. 194 × 131 mm. 364 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-8060-4670-1.

Ishizuka Tomoji (1906–86), poet, "I-novel" writer, and publisher, was born to a farming family in Niigata prefecture. In 1924, after graduating from eighth grade in the prewar system, he moved to Tokyo, where through the introduction of a student of Kikuchi Kan, founder of the literary journal *Bungei shunjū*, he was employed at the major book distributor Tōkyōdō, marking his first step in the world of literature and publishing. Under the tutelage of Yokomitsu Riichi, upcoming novelist of the time, he began writing fiction. Ishizuka also founded a small press called Sara Shoten, at one time worked at the Patriotic Association for Japanese Literature (a wartime organization) and also worked at the Kamakura Bunko publishing house.

Carefully situating Ishizuka's multifaceted life against his family back-



drop and in relations to literary and publishing circles, this biography vividly portrays his serious, conscientious character. Author Seita (b. 1931) personally studied haiku under Ishizuka and is also involved in the publishing business.

***Koide Narashige: Hikari no yūtsu* [Koide Narashige: The Melancholy of Light].** Koide Ryūtarō. Shunpūsha, 2001. 194 × 132 mm. 194 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-921146-34-9.



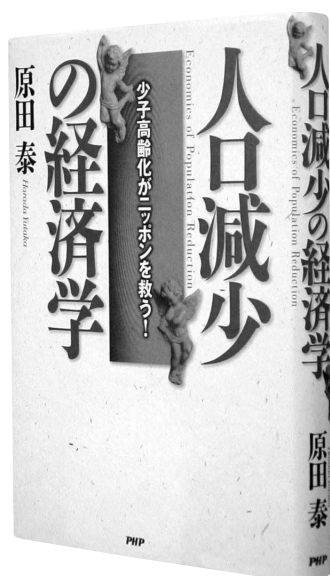
Cover design: Wada Makoto

This biography of Koide Narashige (1887–1931), a Western-style painter, is written by his grandson. Born in 1952 and raised by his grandmother Shigeko, Koide's widow, the author grew up surrounded by his grandfather's artistic legacy and memories.

After reaching the age at which his grandfather died (44), the scholar of French literature author finally felt he had sufficient knowledge and experience to discuss and critically analyze his grandfather's life and work. In his view, the themes of Narashige's art mixed the orthodox and eccentric and the objective and subjective, a curiously well-blended cocktail of health and malaise as well as realism and fantasy. From a psychoanalytical point of view, the book approaches the dichotomies and structural dilemmas that haunted Koide.

Pieced together from insights on the distinctive Osaka milieu where Koide was reared and from accounts that could only be told by a family member, this book unravels many intriguing questions about the artist's life and work.

Jinkō genshō no keizaigaku: Shōshi kōreika ga Nippon o sukuu! [The Economics of Population Reduction: The Decreasing Birthrate and the Aging Society Will Save Japan!]. Harada Yutaka. PHP Kenkyūsho, 2001. 195 × 132 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-569-61695-X. After reaching 127,050,000 in 2004, Japan's population will begin to decrease, falling to 50,880,000 by 2100, according to a survey introduced in this book. Some consider Japan's decreasing birthrate and its aging society tantamount to a national crisis.



Cover design: Art of Noise

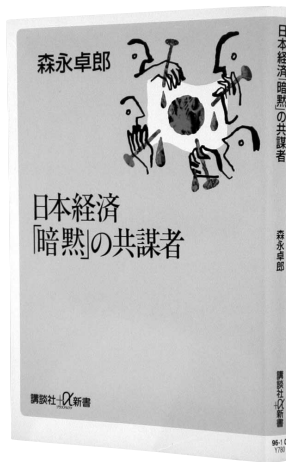
A Ministry of Finance economist, the author (b. 1950) claims that these phenomena present not a crisis but a prime opportunity for reviving Japan. He explains with abundant diagrams and charts the kind of measures that can be taken to realize a prosperous and vigorous society, even with a low birthrate and an aging population. Social institutions premised on ever-increasing population will have to be revamped. Arguing that economic growth is still possible with a shrinking labor force as long as productivity increases, the author advocates creating work environments more open to women and the elderly, revising the pension system, fleshing out the system of caregiving for the elderly, and increasing the efficiency of medical care.

Harada urges people to change their thinking, emphasizing that

declining population need not mean a society of shadow and gloom. Adopting such reforms, he declares, would create a society capable of looking after each and every one of its members.

Nihon keizai "anmoku" no kyōbōsha [The Japanese Economy's Silent Conspirators]. Morinaga Takurō. Kōdansha, 2001. 173 × 115 mm. 234 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-06-272101-5. Despite Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō's platform of "no recovery without structural reform," the Japanese economy continues to languish in recession with little sign of reviving.

According to the author (b. 1957), who is engaged in research at a financial think tank, Japan's economy at the time of publication (December 2001) was suffering from deflation because certain groups in the economy wanted deflation. What he calls the "silent conspirators" are the government, the Bank of Japan, corporate leaders, and some of the nation's wealthy, as well as the scholars and major media organizations sharing their viewpoints. The aim of these groups, the author argues, is to support an American-style society of free competition driven by market principles, where the rich get richer.



Cover design: Suzuki Seichi Dezain Shitsu

The Bank of Japan, for example, wants to prevent provincial banks holding government bonds from going broke when the value of those bonds nosedives due to rising interest rates. Corporate leaders, meanwhile, support it because deflation gives them a free hand in laying off workers and cutting wages. Warning of the dangers involved, the author demon-

strates why each of these "conspirator" groups hopes to keep the deflationary trend alive for the time being.

Nihon ni dekiru koto wa nani ka: Higashi Ajia Kyōdōtai o teian suru [What Is It That Japan Can Do: Collaborative Development in Northeast Asia]. Morishima Michio. Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 193 × 132 mm. 222 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-00-024205-9.

Economist and professor emeritus at the University of London, the author (b. 1923) reproduces in this book his proposal for an "East Asian Community" (EAC) from lectures given in 1997 at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. A translation into Japanese of *Collaborative Development in Northeast Asia*, it was originally published in English by Macmillan Press Ltd., London in 2000.



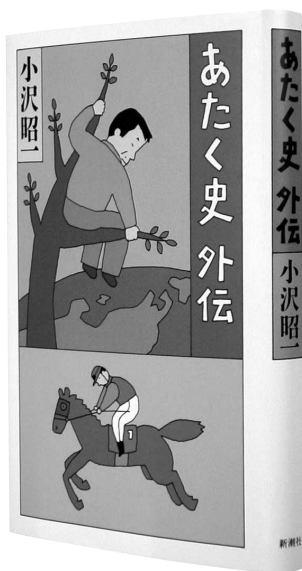
Cover design: Kurata Akinori

In order for East Asia to prosper in peace, Morishima proposes the establishment of an East Asian economic community consisting of China, Japan, the two Koreas, and Taiwan. This region forms a cultural sphere that shares Chinese ideographs, Confucianism, and Mahayana Buddhism. The author argues that if these countries were to collaborate to make the most of their unevenly distributed resources, technology, labor, and capital, it would be possible to develop even the inner reaches of China.

Following the traces of historical and cultural exchange in the region and calling for the development of Asia by Asians, the author presents a clear-cut plan for an Asian community.

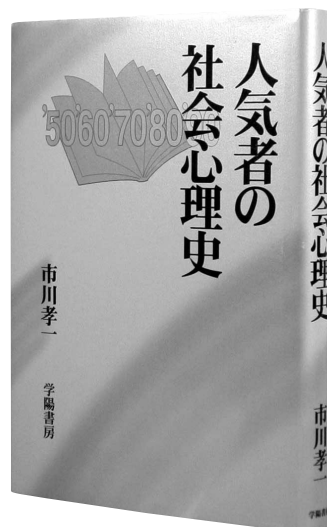
Atakushi gaiden [A History of Me]. Ozawa Shōichi. Shinchōsha, 2002. 197 × 122 mm. 206 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-10-408804-8.

Ozawa Shōichi is active in a wide range of genres, including film, theater, folk performing arts, and writing. This volume is the compilation of a series of autobiographical essays published over three years in two monthly magazines.



Cover design: Wada Makoto

The son of a photographer who ran a stylish photo studio in Tokyo's old *shitamachi* quarter, Ozawa (b. 1929) was a product of the modern era. He enjoyed both the then-new-fangled hot dogs and the old-style vaudeville theater (*yose*). He describes working in a factory as a middle school student during the war and the poverty he suffered while studying French literature at university in the burned-out ruins of Tokyo. While working at numerous part-time jobs, he attended actor training school. He recounts behind-the-scenes stories from the golden age of cinema and about the actors and writers who were his friends, reviews his seventeen-year tour of Japan performing one-man skits by Inoue Hisashi, and includes miscellaneous thoughts on his life today as a nondrinker and cat lover with a taste for writing haiku and leading a quiet life with his wife. The account offers a pleasant mixture of memories of the past and musings on the future.



Cover design: Ōta Yukio

Ninkimono no shakai shinri shi [A History of the Social Psychology of Popular Culture Figures]. Ichikawa Kōichi. Gakuyō Shobō, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 252 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-313-81310-1.

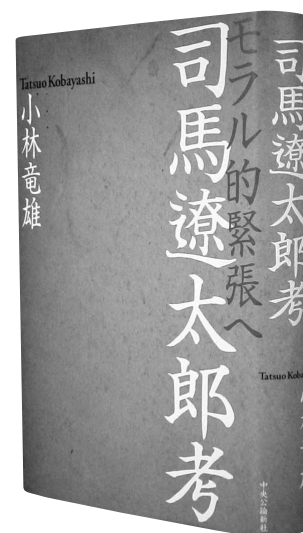
Popular people are symbols of the spirit of their times and a reflection of the values of people of those times. Specializing in social psychology and media culture theory, the author (b. 1947) traces the shifts in Japanese social psychology from the 1950s through the 1980s through the lives of four singers and actresses who became national stars.

Ishikawa classifies the queen of *enka* singers, Misora Hibari (1937–1989) as the “hard-working idol” of the early postwar period of reconstruction in the 1950s; the movie actress Yoshinaga Sayuri (b. 1945) as the cheerful and forward-looking “proactive idol” who symbolized the rapid economic growth period of the 1960s; Yamaguchi Momoe (b. 1959), the teenage singer and movie star, as the “somber idol” of the slow growth period following the oil crises of the 1970s; and Matsuda Seiko (b. 1962), the racy, independent songstress the media loved to hate, as the “greedy idol” of the 1980s economic bubble era.

Rather than simply a documentary of these famous figures, the work considers what was written and said about these women, based on magazine articles and other documents, and analyzes the social psychology that lay behind them.

Shiba Ryōtarō kō: Moraru teki kinchō e [A Study of Shiba Ryōtarō: His Pursuit of Moralism]. Kobayashi Tatsuo. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002. 196 × 134 mm. 326 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-12-003228-0.

The works of historical novelist and critic Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96) continue to be widely read in Japan today, years after his death. While most of the numerous books published about Shiba have been written by people of his own generation, the playwright and literary critic author (b. 1952) belongs to a younger generation. Kobayashi rediscovers the links between Shiba's life and works by “reliving” the development of Shiba's thought.



Cover design: Suzuki Masamichi

Noting that the protagonists of all of Shiba's major novels were either *bushi* (samurai) or people who aspired to the *bushi* ethos, the author surmises that the question of what exactly makes a *bushi* was Shiba's chief concern throughout his entire life. Shiba viewed the *bushi* as possessing a spirit devoted to the common good rather than to private interests, and believed that only such a “moral tension” could change society. Each chapter supports the author's conviction that the so-called Shiba view of history was a *bushi*-centered historical perspective offering universal insights still relevant in today's world.

Ikikata jōzu [How to Live Well]. Hinohara Shigeaki. U-Leag, 2001. 188 × 128 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-946491-26-0. Founded in 1902 by Rudolph B. Teusler, a U.S. Episcopalian missionary doctor, St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo is widely known for its forward-looking management philosophy and medical practice. Currently chair of the hospital board and honorary hospital head at the age of ninety-one, the author (b. 1911) of this book continues as a practicing internist at St. Luke's. Hinohara was among the earliest in his profession to point out the importance of preventative medicine and devoted himself to the dissemination of medical care for terminal patients and lifelong learning for medical practitioners.



Cover design: Niwa Tomoko

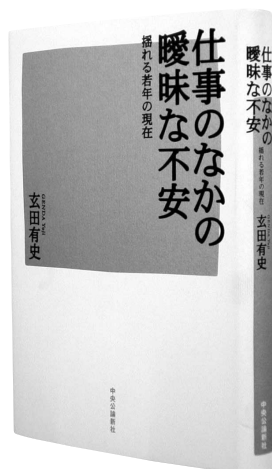
Aimed at readers aged fifty and up, the current volume shows how, given the unprecedented aging of Japan's society, it is important to identify new value in the process of growing old.

Although Hinohara delivers stern rebukes of Japan's medical, social, family, and other institutions, his deep insights about what should be done to improve the situation reveal his deep love of people. Readers can draw much strength from the numerous words of wisdom, backed by years of experience in clinical medicine and extensive reading since his youth.

Shigoto no naka no aimai na fuan: Yureru jakunen no genzai [A Vague Unease on the Job: Uncertainty and Today's Youth]. Genda Yūji. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2001. 197 × 134 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-12-003217-5. Japan's unemployment rate exceeds 5 percent. The unemployment issue is more serious with the younger generation of unemployed—those from about age twenty to their early thirties—than with the middle and older generations, claims the author (b. 1964), a specialist in labor economics.

The unemployment rate for men between fifteen and twenty-four has exceeded 10 percent monthly since 1999, and the rate of its increase, moreover, has been higher than that for men of middle-age and older. Businesses struggling to adjust their personnel costs are drastically reducing the number of new graduates they hire rather than cut back on middle-aged and older employees. This snatches opportunities for work from young people, points out the author. The result, according to Genda's analysis, is that the younger generation can no longer find challenging jobs that offer a sense of pride and satisfaction.

The author emphasizes that revising the way the middle and older generations work and securing opportunities for the younger generation to find work are indispensable from the standpoint of social justice as well. He reminds young people, furthermore, of the importance of having a strategy for being their own boss and of forming friendships in which they can open up despite infrequent contact. Skillfully manipulating a wealth of data, this single volume is invaluable



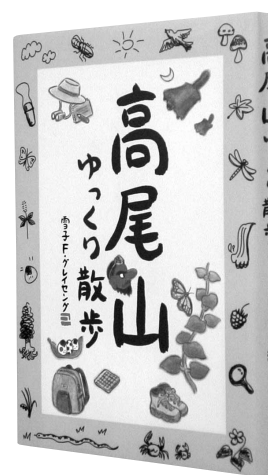
Cover design: Perfect Vacuum

able for the light it sheds on the heretofore overlooked issue of unemployment among the young.

Takaosan yukkuri sanpo [Leisurely Walks on Mt. Takao]. Yukiko F. Grasing. Keyaki Shuppan, 2000. 182 × 128 mm. 159 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-87751-115-6.

With hand-drawn jacket illustrations of a knapsack, mountain-climbing boots, *musasabi* (flying squirrels), and so forth, this book was written by an author who is a book designer, illustrator, and photographer living in the hilly Takao area of western Tokyo. A 599-meter-high mountain, Takao is known for its rich diversity of flora and fauna and is a designated "quasi-national" park.

Including many detailed and humorous illustrations and photographs capturing beautiful landscapes of the area, accompanied by concise explanations, the book consists of two parts. The first part expresses the author's fresh sense of surprise at the things and events she encounters on her daily strolls on Mt. Takao, presenting each topic on a spread of facing pages. The second part is a guide to fifteen selected walking routes with detailed maps.

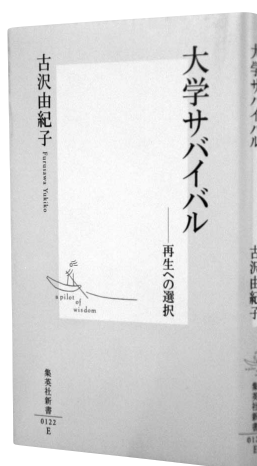


Cover design: Yukiko F. Grasing

The author's deep affection for the Takao hills fills each page, making all the more powerful her quiet protest against the planned Ken'ōdō Expressway. First announced in 1984 and currently under construction, the expressway is to run through part of Takao, including tunnels to be bored and a junction built that could cause large-scale environmental damage in the area. A local movement is seeking to deflect the new route.

EDUCATION

***Daigaku sabaibaru: Saisei e no sentaku* [University Survival: Options for Regeneration]. Furusawa Yukiko.** Shūeisha, 2001. 173×106 mm. 230 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-08-720122-8. Universities and colleges are among Japanese institutions feverishly searching for ways to catch up with the times and secure their survival. This book presents a newspaper journalist's (b. 1965) report on the current state of universities and their efforts to revitalize.



Cover design: Hara Ken'ya

Higher education faces serious realities: reflecting the effects of the declining birth rate, enrollments at some junior colleges and private universities have dropped below required quotas; an increasing number of institutions are accepting students on the basis of self-recommendation reports and interviews—the so-called admission office examination system—in an effort to secure sufficient student numbers; students' scholastic abilities have markedly declined; errors and other problems with the grading of entrance examination results have increased. The book also describes the plight of national universities facing the unavoidable prospect of reorganization—whether as independent corporations or through mergers with other institutions—under the Koizumi Jun'ichirō cabinet's sweeping policies of structural reform.

The author presents specific proposals for university reform and for diversification of learning methods.

***Ima gakkō ga omoshiroi* [Now School Is Interesting]. Satō Tadao.** Iwanami Shoten, 2001. 172×105 mm. 218 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-00-500387-7.

The Japan Academy of Moving Images was founded by internationally recognized movie director Imamura Shōhei and associates in 1975 to foster Japanese filmmakers for tomorrow. Admittance to the academy is determined by interviews with prospective students designed to test the applicant's commitment to filmmaking. Those who are accepted receive instruction designed to foster human as well as professional growth by learning together in an environment where they can debate among themselves and test their own potential. The school has drawn attention for the high quality of students' works that have received awards at international film festivals. Among its graduates is the novelist and film critic Abe Kazushige (see JBN, No. 35, p. 22).



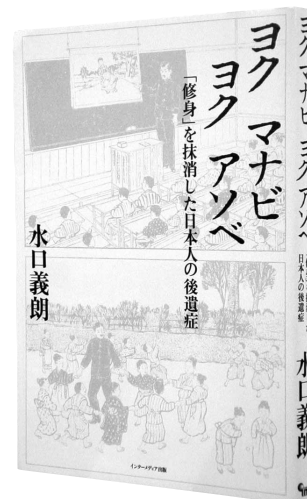
The author (b. 1930) is a film critic who currently heads the academy. Reflecting his warmth toward the academy's students—a group diverse in age, background, as well as nationality brought together by their shared devotion to filmmaking—this account introduces works they produce during their three years of study. At a time when Japan is debating the nature of education and what is missing in today's schools, this author's faith in his students is revealing.

***Yoku manabi yoku asobe: "Shūshin" o masshō shita Nihonjin no kōishō* [Study Hard, Play Hard: The After-effects of Abandoning the "Moral Training" Primer]. Mizuguchi Yoshirō.** Intermedia Shuppan, 2001. 210×148 mm. 167 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-901350-10-2.

Incidences of bullying, refusal to attend school, in-school violence, breakdown of order in the classroom, and atrocious crimes among youth continue to haunt Japanese schools.

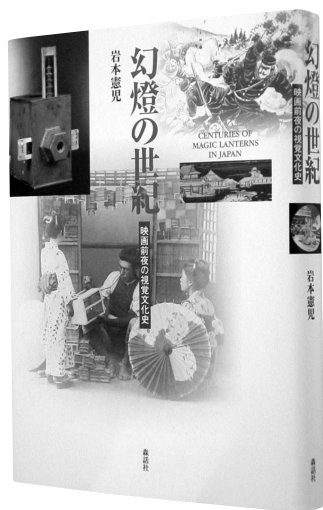
Currently a TV newscaster and commentator who previously worked in the publishing industry, the author (b. 1934) claims that education for character building is not possible in Japan today because of the lack of widely shared mores. He attributes this lack to the removal of the *Jinjō Shōgaku shūshinsho* [Moral Training for Elementary School], the textbook that provided the foundations of Japanese ethics during the prewar era. Along with the emperor-centered principles of education, he laments, all instruction in the basic precepts of daily life before the end of World War II—rules like "study hard, play hard," "be punctual," and "be responsible for yourself" that even today's children need to be taught—was eliminated. Although clearly opposed to any sort of simplistic reintroduction of the old morals primer, Mizoguchi maintains that some sort of guide to moral conduct needs to be adopted.

The *Moral Training* primer used in prewar schools is reproduced at the bottom of each page.



Cover design: Okusada Yasuyuki

***Gentō no seiki: Eiga zen'ya no shikaku bunka shi* [Centuries of Magic Lanterns in Japan: A History of Visual Culture on the Eve of Motion Pictures]. Iwamoto Kenji.** Shinwasha, 2002. 216×152 mm. 270 pp. ¥3,600. ISBN 4-916087-25-9. A researcher of film history and visual images, the author (b. 1943) seeks to present the “history of light and shadow” unfolding from the introduction of a multitude of visual and optical devices, including the magic lantern (or stereopticon), shadowgraphs (shadow lamp images), phantasmagoria, and camera obscura (darkened rooms installed with periscope lenses).



After a brief outline of the stereopticon's history in the West, quite a number of pages are devoted to developments in Japanese history tracing “the history of visual culture on the eve of motion pictures.” Iwamoto focuses his attention on the “shadowgraphs” that emerged in the latter half of the Edo period (1603–1867). He traces the role of the “magic lantern” in Japan from its introduction in the Meiji era (1868–1912) onward, examining the effects of the Western technological revolution then going on in the visual media.

Against the backdrop of our modern world flooded with artificial light, especially in Japan, the author reconsiders the imagination aroused by shadows and the experience of total darkness.

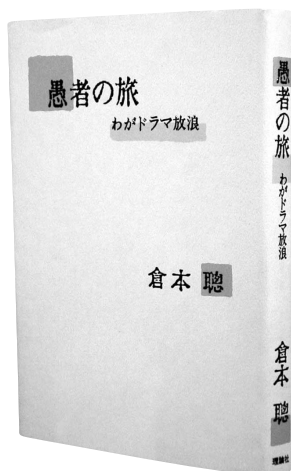
This is an impressive book displaying the author's encyclopedic

knowledge of the history of Japan's visual culture since early modern times.

***Gusha no tabi: Waga dorama hōrō* [A Fool's Journey: My Dramatic Driftings]. Kuramoto Sō.** Rironsha, 2002. 194×131 mm. 292 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-652-07709-2. Kuramoto Sō (b. 1935) is a screenwriter known for the long-running TV drama series *Kita no kuni kara* [From a Land in the North], the saga of a family living amid the harsh but beautiful natural environment of Hokkaido that he has been writing about for twenty years. In this memoir, he looks back on his own postwar experience and life as a screenwriter.

Kuramoto relates how he got a job at Nippon Broadcasting System in the early days of Japanese television, and began writing scenarios, but left the company four years later. At the age of forty-two he moved to the city of Furano in Hokkaido, and three years later started writing the *Kita no kuni kara* script. Later, while earning a living as a farmer, he founded the acting school Furano Juku as a venue for producing plays.

Particularly memorable parts of the book are the descriptions of the final days of such screen stars as Tanaka Kinuyo, Ishihara Yūjirō, and Katsu Shintarō, and the author's scathing criticism of the ever worsening quality of television today. Recounting his efforts to live honestly and sincerely, without calculating profit or giving up what he believed in, and with the courage to determine his own values, he repeatedly made, he admits, what might have seemed to others like foolish choices.



Cover design: Negoro Yumi



Cover design: Wada Makoto

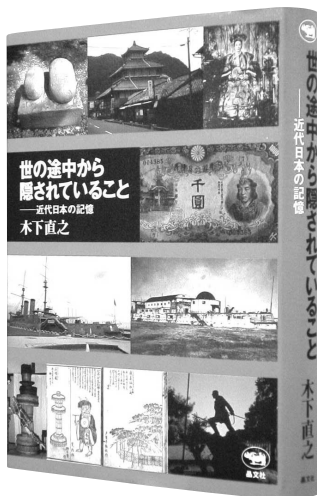
***Ōkesutora no shokunin tachi* [The Technicians Behind the Orchestra]. Iwaki Hiroyuki.** Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 191×130 mm. 263 pp. ¥1,524. ISBN 4-16-358100-6. Stage managers, freight companies specializing in transport of pianos, harps, and other musical instruments, doctors who accompany orchestras, score copyists, piano tuners, concert ticket takers, agencies that pass out concert promotion leaflets at the entrances of concert halls—this book introduces all the people who work behind the scenes to make an orchestra a viable concern.

The author (b. 1932), a conductor who, when not leading major Japanese symphony orchestras, frequently serves as guest conductor for the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and other leading orchestras of Europe and the United States, has long held a keen interest in the activities of the technicians and specialists who work behind the scenes to support an orchestra. It is taken for granted that these people will execute their jobs to perfection, but they never appear in the spotlight, despite the vital role they play in making concerts happen.

Written in an enjoyable essay style, this book draws fully on the author's associations with behind-the-scenes professionals, which he cultivated over the many years of his career. The insider anecdotes about the union activities of musical performers, how the “encore” began, as well as about well-known musical performers make for engrossing reading.

Yo no tochū kara kakusarete iru koto: Kindai Nihon no kioku [What Got Concealed along the Way: Modern Japan's Memory]. Kino-shita Naoyuki. Shōbunsha, 2002. 215 × 152 mm. 380 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 4-7949-6521-4.

How has Japan's modern history since the Meiji era (1868–1912) been remembered by ordinary people? Some clues can be found in what happened to the battleship *Mikasa*, which saw active duty during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. Although slated to be destroyed following the 1922 Washington Conference on naval limitations, a campaign to preserve the ship resulted in its transformation into a war museum relating to the Russo-Japanese conflict. For a brief period after World War II, it featured an aquarium and a dance hall. Today it continues to attract many people as a historic site.



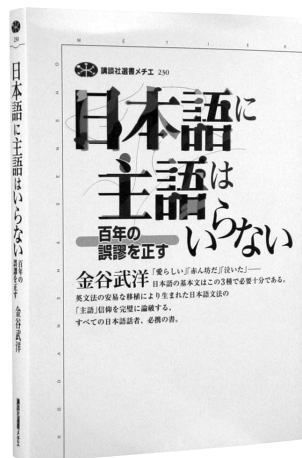
Cover design: Sakagawa Eiji and Fujita Tomoko

This book is a critical study of a careful selection of artifacts related to Japan's modern past, including public exhibits, replicas, bronze statues, monuments, photographs, and portraits. The art historian author (b. 1954) traces their history beginning with their original forms and purposes and following their transformation, through efforts to conceal or alter them with changing times, to the extent that Japanese today unwittingly perceive them as completely different from what they were originally. The book also offers a general cultural study of images and their evolution in Japanese perceptions.

LANGUAGE

Nihongo ni shugo wa iranai: Hyakunen no gobyū o tadasu [Japanese Doesn't Require a Subject: Correcting a One-Hundred-year-old Fallacy]. Kanaya Takehiro. Kōdansha, 2002. 188 × 128 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-258230-9. Even now, most Japanese-language textbooks, whether for domestic or overseas use, are founded on the "school grammar" of lexicographer Ōtsuki Fumihiko that has been in use since the Ministry of Education officially endorsed it in the Meiji era. In the course of teaching Japanese overseas for many years, however, the author (b. 1951), currently a Japanese language instructor at Montreal University in Canada, came to suspect that school grammar—based on Western-oriented ideas about the subject and predicate—is seriously flawed with regard to the core features of the Japanese language.

The reason this fallacy has continued for over 100 years, he explains, is that school grammar, at the time of its adoption, was not designed to reflect the original grammar, nuance, or sensibility of Japanese, but was transplanted into the framework of English grammar at the time of the country's rush toward modernization (westernization). Building upon the theory that personal pronouns and the concept of a subject are unnecessary in Japanese grammar, the author gives a detailed explanation of his reasoning, offering specific examples. Appealing for a basic review of school grammar, he calls for a new grammar rooted in the actual traits of the Japanese language.



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

LITERATURE

Chūgokugo de nokosareta Nihon bungaku: Nit-Chū sensō no naka de [Japanese Literature in the Chinese Language: A Legacy of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945]. Lu Yuan Ming, Japanese translation by Nishida Masaru. Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2001. 194 × 131 mm. 354 pp. ¥4,000. ISBN 4-588-46008-0.



Cover design: K. Akita

This is a complete Japanese translation of *Beiyiwangde zai Hua Riben fanzhan wenxue* [Japanese Antiwar Literature Left in China] written by a Chinese scholar of Japanese literature (b. 1925; professor at Northeast Normal University, China). With the rise of fascism in Japan during the war of 1937–45 on the continent, many Japanese writers had to submit to ideological conversion or cooperate with the war effort. Some willingly let themselves serve the purposes of the militarist regime. In various places in China at that time, whether Japanese-occupied or not, Japanese writers were active, producing works dealing with such topics as Japanese troops' retreat, the damage caused by Japanese air raids, and the war-inflicted sufferings and antiwar resistance among Japanese themselves.

This book consists of writings selected from Chinese-language newspapers and magazines published in those days, including those by self-exiled writers who left Japan before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 and, upon the outbreak of the war, embarked on literary activities against their country's war of aggression as well as by

soldiers and women who, after the war broke out, were taken captive at the front lines or chose to live in China. The author also traces the history of their activities and offers his comments.

Almost all of the pieces are introduced here in Japanese for the first time. Including works written in China by the famed woman novelist Tamura Toshiko (1884–1945) in her later years, among others, this book helps to fill in gaps in the history of contemporary Japanese literature.

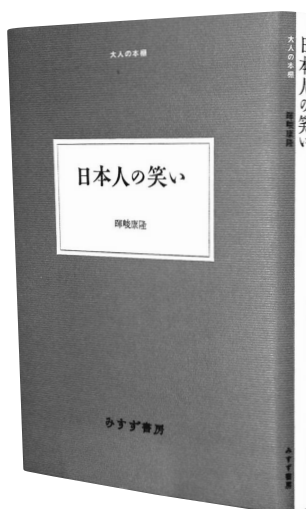
“Mishima Yukio” to wa nanimono datta no ka [Who Exactly Was Mishima Yukio?]. Hashimoto Osamu. Shinchōsha, 2002. 196 × 136 mm. 382 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-10-406104-2.

This work of literary criticism is a revised and expanded version of an essay published in a literary journal in autumn 2000. The original essay was part of a feature marking the thirtieth anniversary of the death of the prominent postwar novelist Mishima Yukio (1925–70; real name Hiraoka Kimitake).

The author, who was a student at the time of the writer’s sensational suicide, regards Mishima as an entity implying a “something” that does not lend itself to discourse within the frameworks of the twentieth century or the postwar period. His interest in Mishima, he declares, lies solely in this mysterious “something.” While celebrated in his day as Japan’s most brilliant writer, Mishima created his pseudonym as a kind of fiction. Beneath the “Mishima Yukio” mask was no specific persona but only his

works. Recognizing that the riddle of Mishima Yukio was the constant question “Why did he think that way?” the author unravels the riddles one by one and tries to identify Mishima more exactly in light of his oeuvre.

Nihonjin no warai [How Japanese Laugh]. Teruoka Yasutaka. Misuzu Shobō, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 234 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-622-04824-8. The author (1908–2001) was a scholar of Edo-period literature famous for his study of the poet and writer of popular fiction Ihara Saikaku (1642–93) and his research in *rakugo* (comic storytelling). He addresses in this book the literary form considered, even among Edo literature, “the most plebeian, and consequently, the most rich in humor and innuendo: the *senryū*, or comic haiku, byproduct of *haikai* or humorous linked verse.”



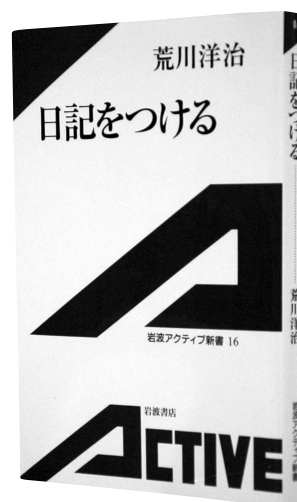
A *senryū* is a short poem with the same syllabic structure as haiku—the five-seven-five pattern familiar to Japanese ears—but it does not have many of the set conventions of haiku, such as the mandatory use of “seasonal word” (*kigo*). This allows poets (usually amateurs) to express their thoughts freely and informally. Through the composition of *senryū*, the common people of the Edo period caricatured their daily lives and social customs. The topic of sex was common, and indeed, most in these verses introduced in this volume are steeped in it. Such erotic verse was called *bareku*. Even these, however, rely less on the salacious than on a subtle sense of tact and wordplay to elicit smiles, smirks, and

uproarious laughter. *Senryū* paint a revealing picture of Japanese social manners, customs, and sex lives, and the author skillfully presents these humorous verses in the wider context of Edo period literature.

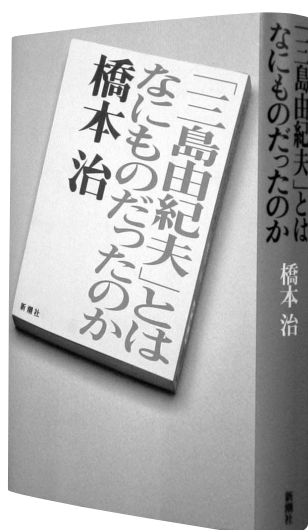
A reprint of the original 1961 edition, this book succeeds in introducing the timeless laughter of everyday Japanese, backed by the realization that now and in every age human beings are the same in their “birthday suit.”

Nikki o tsukeru [Keeping a Diary]. Arakawa Yōji. Iwanami Shoten, 2002. 173 × 115 mm. 170 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-00-700016-6.

People experience diaries in various forms in the course of their lives. Children draw picture diaries; friends and lovers write exchanged diaries. There are diaries of books one has read, travel journals, and diaries parents keep about their children. While some of these accounts are written for a specific or potential reader, essentially a diary can take shape as long as there is an “I” to keep it. All a diary needs then is a date; after that, anything goes. It is thus a world of boundless freedom.



This author (b. 1949), a contemporary poet, has been keeping diaries in various forms ever since starting a picture diary in his first year of elementary school. In this book, he introduces a wide variety of diaries, some by established literary figures and others by nameless writers, examining their diverse content and writing styles, exploring how some evolved into novels, poems, or essays. Conveying the sheer pleasure the author himself finds in updating

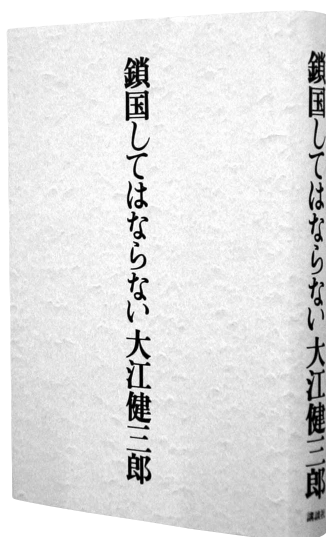


Cover design: Shinchōsha

his own diary in spare moments, this is an engaging invitation to the world of diary-keeping.

Sakoku shitewa naranai [We Must Not Isolate the Nation]. Ōe Kenzaburō. Kōdansha, 2001. 194 × 130 mm. 324 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-06-210779-1.

This is a collection of journal articles published and lectures delivered in Japan, China, and the United States by the Nobel laureate (b. 1935) since 1997. While ranging over topics from literature to nuclear arms reduction, the essays share the theme expressed in the book's preface, namely, that Japanese must not isolate their country from the rest of the world.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

Ōe fears that, with the rise in 1990s Japan of a form of neo-nationalism that could also be called new ideology of *sakoku* (referring to the national seclusion policy during the Tokugawa period [1603–1867]), Japan's democracy is in grave peril. Quoting from "*Bunmei ron no gai-ryaku*" o *yomu* [Reading Fukuzawa Yukichi's *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*] by political scientist Maruyama Masao (1914–96), Ōe reiterates Maruyama's point that contemporary Japan has yet to emerge from its psychological *sakoku*. Ōe appeals in particular to the younger generations to transcend the Japanese proclivity to swing back to nationalism and isolationism. Reminding the reader how precious Japan's postwar democracy is, he concludes the book with an exhortation on cultivating a mentality open to the outside world.

FICTION

Kantei [The Prime Minister's Official Residence]. 2 vols. Narita Norihiko. Kōdansha, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 422 pp.; 431pp. ¥2,000 each. ISBN 4-06-211051-2; 4-06-211052-0. In 1993, with the end of thirty-eight years of Liberal Democratic Party's single-party rule in Japanese politics, a coalition government of non-LDP parties led by Hosokawa Morihiro was formed. The author of this novel (b. 1946) served as chief secretary under Hosokawa. The novel is based on what he actually heard and saw during the 263-day-long Hosokawa administration.

While the real-life Hosokawa cabinet focused its efforts on political reform, this novel revolves around a dispute between the coalition government under "Prime Minister Munakata" and the opposition "Democratic Liberal Party" over a bill to increase the consumption tax. Internal strife within the coalition and the pressures from the still powerful opposition party create a deadlock. The Munakata administration is on the verge of disintegration when an agreement is reached at a top-level meeting between the prime minister and the president of the opposition party. In the meantime, both camps are maneuvering to win over members of the other side, paying little heed to public opinion and policy debate in their feverish struggle for power.

This political novel paints a vivid inside story of political power and the realities of politics.



Cover design: Tada Kazuhiro

Katagoshi no koibito [Lovers over the Shoulder]. Yuikawa Kei. Magazine House, 2001. 191 × 125 mm. 294 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-8387-1298-7. Although promoted by the publisher as a love story, many probably read this work as a tale of two women's friendship. The twenty-seven-year-old protagonists, Moe and Ruriko, are childhood friends who are different in almost every way. Moe is a levelheaded, independent working woman, while Ruriko is a full-time homemaker who makes use of her good looks to seek happiness. While recounting their relationships with a variety of men, including a high school student who has left home, a married lover, and an attractive gay man, this work addresses such current themes as what constitutes happiness and love, and what women really seek in marriage and a career. Particularly impressive is the portrayal of the interaction between the two women. Moe who thinks she is watching over Ruriko despite the latter's vanity and frivolity, ends up being influenced by Ruriko's open-hearted nature and gradually begins to liberate herself.



Cover design: Sugita Tatsuya

Born in 1955, the author entered the writing profession after ten years as an office worker. She has won strong support from women in their twenties and thirties for her realistic, true-to-life depictions of young working women. Yuikawa is recipient of the 126th Naoki Prize (see JBN, No. 37, p. 20).

Events and Trends

Literary Prizes

The winners of the prestigious 127th Akutagawa and Naoki prizes were announced on July 17. The Akutagawa Prize, intended mainly for works of pure literature, went to Yoshida Shūichi for “Pāku raifu” [Park Life] (*Bungakukai*, June 2002 issue). The Naoki Prize, mainly for works of entertainment (popular) fiction, was awarded to Otokawa Yūzaburō for *Ikiru* [To Live] (Bungei Shunjū).

Yoshida made his debut in literature in 1997 with a novel of youth entitled “Saigo no musuko” [The Last Son], which won the Bungakukai New Writers Award and was short-listed for the Akutagawa Prize that year. Later, his works, “Hahen” [Fragments], “Toppū” [Sudden Gust], and “Nettaigyo” [Tropical Fish] were also shortlist candidates for the Akutagawa Prize. With “Pāku raifu” Yoshida was nominated for the prize for the fifth time. In June 2002, he won the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize, established to encourage entertainment fiction, for *Parēdo* [Parade]. Yoshida is the first writer to receive both the Yamamoto Shūgorō and the Akutagawa prizes. This may reflect the disappearing borderline between pure literature and entertainment. The story of “Pāku raifu,” set in central Tokyo’s Hibiya Park, revolves around the relationship of a man working for a cosmetics company with a woman he happens to meet on the subway.

Starting out working in a hotel, Otokawa engaged in business translation for a time before he began to write historical fiction. In 1996 he won the All-Yomimono New Writers Award for *Yabu tsubame* [Bush Swallow] and the Historical Novel Prize for *Kiri no hashi* [Misty Bridge]. Like Yoshida, he was awarded the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize for *Gonen no ume* [The Five-Year Apricot Tree] in 2001. His Naoki Prize-winning work consists of three works of historical fiction published in the *All Yomimono*

magazine. The title story, “Ikiru,” describes a samurai, forbidden to follow his lord to the grave, and the reproaches and contempt he endures.

This year’s winners of the Mishima Yukio Prize and the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize were also announced, with the Mishima Prize awarded to Ono Masatsugu for *Nigiyakana wan ni seowasareta fune* [Mysterious Ship in a Busy Bay] (originally published in the autumn 2001 issue of the quarterly magazine *Shōsetsu Tripper*) and the Yamamoto Prize to the aforementioned Yoshida for *Parade* (Gentōsha) and Ekuni Kaori for *Oyogu no ni, anzen demo tekisetsu demo arimasen* [Unsafe and Unfit for Swimming] (Shūeisha).

Winners were also chosen for the sixth Tezuka Osamu Culture Prize, founded to commemorate the comic-strip author known for *Astro Boy*, *Phoenix*, *Black Jack*, and many other popular works. The “manga grand prize” went to Inoue Takehiko for *Bagabondo* [Vagabond] (Kōdansha), and the “manga excellence prize” to Miura Kentarō for *Beruseruku* [Berserk] (Hakusensha). Inoue is well-known as the author of the basketball story *Slam Dunk*. His winning work is based on the well-known historical novel by Yoshikawa Eiji about master swordsman Miyamoto Musashi.

Japanese Language Book Boom

According to data from the major book distributors Nippan and Tōhan, the top five best-sellers for the half-year period of December 2001 through May 2002 were: 1) J. K. Rowling, the Harry Potter series: *Hari Pottā to kenja no ishi* (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*), *Hari Pottā to himitsu no heya* (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), *Hari Pottā to azukaban no shūjin* (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*) (Seizansha); 2) Mukōyama Atsuko and Mukōyama Takahiko, *Biggu fatto kyatto no sekai-ichi kantan na Eigo no hon* [The World’s Easiest English Book by Big Fat Cats] (Gentōsha); 3) Ikeda Kayoko, *Sekai ga moshi hyakunin no mura dattara* [If the World Were a Village of One Hundred People] (Magazine House); 4) Saitō Takashi, *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo* [Japanese

Texts Worth Reading Aloud] (Sōshisha); and 5) Shibata Takeshi, *Jōshiki toshite shitte okitai Nihongo* [Practical Japanese You Should Know] (Gentōsha).

The marked feature of the recent book selling trend is titles on the Japanese language. The energy behind this boom is a series of books by Meiji University associate professor Saitō Takashi, author of the *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo*—ranking fourth in the above list—which contains many texts in a wide range of fields from the classics, fiction, poetry, and kabuki plays to street performances. This book was followed in a rapid succession by other language-related books by Saitō: *Sanshoku bōrupen de yomu Nihongo* [Japanese Language to Be Read with a Three-color Ballpoint Pen] (Kadokawa Shoten), *Risō no kokugo kyōkasho* [The Ideal Japanese-language Textbook] (Bungei Shunjū), *Ningen gekijō* [Human Drama] (Shinchōsha), and *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo 2* [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud 2] (Sōshisha).

The fifth-ranked *Jōshiki toshite shitte okitai Nihongo* introduces the origins and meanings of various Japanese expressions. Shibata is a University of Tokyo professor emeritus and well-known lexicographer. He, too, came up with two more titles on the heels of the above work: *Sono Nihongo, tsūjite imasuka?* [Is Your Japanese Being Understood?] and *Oboete okitai utsukushii Nihongo* [Beautiful Japanese Expressions Worth Remembering], both published by Kadokawa Shoten.

Among similar books also being widely read are: Takashima Toshio, *Kanji to Nihonjin* [Kanji and the Japanese] (Bungei Shunjū; see JBN, No. 38, p. 16); Inoue Hisashi, *Nihongo kansatsu nōto* [Notes on Observing the Japanese Language] (Chūō Kōron Shinsha), Peter Frankle, *Utsukushikute omoshiroi Nihongo* [The Beautiful and Interesting Japanese Language] (Takaramashima), and Iwanami Shoten Jiten Henshūbu [Iwanami Shoten Dictionary Compilation Office] ed., *Kotowaza no chie* [The Wisdom of Proverbs] (Iwanami Shoten).

Literature Export Program

The Agency for Cultural Affairs has embarked on a program to promote the export of contemporary works of Japanese literature. Providing support and coordination of the translation of selected works into foreign languages and promoting their publication from publishing houses overseas by buying up a certain proportion of copies, the program is aimed at making translations of Japanese literary works more readily available on the market. The purchased copies will be donated to libraries and universities overseas. The initial plan is to translate and publish twenty works during fiscal 2002 and 2003.

The program will focus on works published since the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912), mainly those from the post-World War II period. The initial list of works was chosen by a selection committee consisting of novelists Shimada Masahiko, Tanabe Seiko, and Hiraiwa Yumie, literary critic and Keio University associate professor Fukuda Kazuya, and specialist on Japanese literature and University of California professor John Nathan. The list includes works not only of pure literature but from the mystery, historical fiction, and other genres, that have an established reputation and are considered likely to be enjoyed by readers outside Japan.

Japanese Comics in the U.S.

The growing interest among Americans in Japanese manga and animation is reflected in the Pocket Monster boom and the recent decision to make *Dragon Ball* into a live-action film. Now plans are underway to publish American editions of Japanese popular comic magazines.

Raijin Comics is a U.S. edition of Shinchōsha's weekly manga magazine *Shūkan Comic Bunch*, which will include works popular in Japan such as Hara Tetsuo's "Fist of the North Star," Hōjō Tsukasa's "City Hunter," and Inoue Takehiko's "Slam Dunk." This will be the first full-fledged comic magazine from Japan to be published in the United States. The publisher hopes to have an initial circulation of 15,000 copies there. The magazine also has plans to publish in European countries such as Germany and Italy.

An American (monthly) edition of *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, a weekly magazine put out by Shūeisha, will also come out. It will include popular works, serialized in the past or currently in the magazine, such as Toriyama Akira's "Dragon Ball" and Takahashi Kazuki's "Yu-Gi-Oh." Shūeisha is reportedly aiming at a circulation of more than one million within three years.

Novels for Young Adults

Works of fiction targeted at "young adults," or teenagers who have graduated from reading children's books, are gaining popularity. Publishing companies are beginning to promote this genre, and a new group of younger generation writers is emerging. An increasing number of novelists in established literary circles also are producing works consciously targeting teenage readers.

One writer in the vanguard of this young adults literature is Mori Eto. Mori won the Kōdansha Children's Literature New Writer's Award in 1991 for her debut work, *Rizumu* [Rhythm]. Her long seller, *Karafuru* [Colorful], published in 1998, is a comedy about the soul of the protagonist—who supposedly died—that is

doing a "homestay" within the body of a boy who committed suicide. Her series, entitled *Dive!!*, the fourth and last volume of which was published in the summer of 2002, depicts a group of boys who have dedicated themselves to winning a diving competition.

Nonaka Hiiragi's *Daria* [Dahlia], originally written for the literary magazine *Shinchō* under the theme of teenage sex, has been published in a single volume aimed at young adults. Fujino Chiya, an Akutagawa Prize winning writer, brought out *Rūto 255* [Route 255]. Kaneshiro Kazuki, who was awarded the Naoki Prize in 2000 for *Go*, enjoys a wide following among junior and high school students for his convincing portrayals of high school students. His first work after winning the Naoki Prize, *Reborūshon No. 3* [Revolution No. 3], has a manga-style illustration on the book cover in the hope of attracting attention of young people, who do not read much these days.

Other writers receiving popularity in this genre are Uozumi Naoko, a winner of the Kōdansha Children's Literature New Writer's Award, for her *Hi-baransu* [Non-balance], Nagasaki Natsumi, author of *Natsu no kodō* [Pulsation of Summer], and Nashiki Kaho, author of *Haru ni nattara ichigo o tsumi ni* [Let's Go Strawberry-Picking When Spring Comes] and *Nishi no majo ga shinda* [The Death of the Witch of the West]. Numerous translations of overseas works for teen readers have been introduced and are receiving much favorable response, including works of such writers as Francesca Lia Block, known for *Girl Goddess #9* and the Weetzie Bat series, and Jerry Spinelli, author of *Stargirl* and *Wringer*.

Continued from p. 7

It seems to me, however, that this trend also reflects major changes in our society and in ourselves. Following the bitter experience of war brought on our society by forces of totalitarianism that people could not resist, there was a strong demand for Japanese to break out of the close-knit communal groupings going back to traditional village society and establish themselves as independent individuals. The overwhelming pattern was to seek this independent identity through solitary reading and meditation.

With the spread of computers and the Internet today,

however, we have entered an era when many aspects of human affairs can be carried out without ever meeting anyone face to face and without actually hearing the voice of another. Individuals are increasingly isolated by these new technologies.

Readings may offer an antidote to this trend. It has the power to bring together reader and listener, linking individuals, through the palpable reverberations of words. Perhaps the reading boom is an expression in Japanese society of the impulse to reinstate closer human relations. (*Koyama Tetsurō is senior writer, Kyodo News.*)

The Changing Face of Japanese Fiction

Takamura Kaoru

In modern times, the Japanese novel has defined itself in distinctive ways that do not necessarily conform to the English concept of “fiction.” It has been a sort of rimless vessel capable of incorporating anything—myth, history, lifestyles, adventure, fantasy, science, as well as ideology and politics; stylistically, it has been a genre constantly evolving with the times, beginning with romanticism, symbolism, naturalism, and the confessional “I-novel,” and moving on to the postwar school and post-modernism.

Japanese learned about the literary form of expression known as the modern novel in the process of translating Western literature into their own language some one hundred years ago. Under the strong stimulus of these translations, new linguistic rules and vocabulary were created and new forms of thought took shape, which writers greedily absorbed and digested, resulting in the birth of the modern Japanese novel. People willingly accepted the changing of their language through translation from completely different tongues that could not be rendered into Japanese by the word-for-word approach. The flexible structure of Japanese is said to have made it historically receptive to change, but I think that more responsible is the hyperactivity of Japanese themselves, who have continually pursued progress and development over the past one hundred years. Needless to say, evolution in language elicits changes in sensibilities and thinking, as well as in values and world views, in turn transforming the styles and expression of fiction. The distinctively Japanese features of the novel seem to be this great diversity and fluidity of form as well as the rather short “shelf-life” of individual works.

The ambition of the novel is supposedly to break down established values and to stand in the vanguard of the era, but the times tumbled rapidly onward, always one step ahead of the novel. Authors, while sensing the shame and abasement of being manipulated by the hyperactive mood of the times, nevertheless cultivated a heightened receptivity to change.

The expansion of the consumer economy from the 1980s has accelerated the transformation of the novel into a market commodity. We are now in an age when both fiction and authors are part of the mass-production, mass-consumption economy. I myself have been mobilized as a mass-production author. The only way a professional writer in these times can make a living is to turn out works that appeal to the sensibilities of the times and that will be consumed on the market. We are called upon constantly to explore fresh new themes and turn out at least one new work almost every year. When our energies have been exhausted, we will quickly be replaced by the next generation.

Most of the novels churned out in this fashion deal with the moods and feelings that reflect today’s society, packed with information bearing on people’s

lives, social phenomena, and popular culture. The era when a novel was defined by its style of writing is long gone, and yet even now style remains the current of sentiment in fiction, and consequently most of today’s novels share an affinity for short sentences, colloquial style, monologues, and a general garrulity. This is the result of the novel’s attempts to conform to the trends of the last decade.

Right now, however, the horizon of Japanese fiction, for one hundred years immensely diverse and capable of incorporating almost anything, appears dull and monotonous. Perhaps this stems from the times and society and people the novel has so faithfully sought to reflect. The language that expresses the monotonous is itself flat and undistinguished; the worlds spun from that language are extremely unremarkable ones. The novel simply mirrors the reality of its times, with its plethora of information that no matter how prolific is never anything more than information and its surfeit of feelings that can never be anything more than feelings.

Fiction that sought to keep up with the times by constantly changing was widely read. Indeed, the Japanese novel has never been anything more than a genre overtly and covertly dependent on the times. Has our novel ever given us language that tears away established assumptions? Given us language that surprises us and opens our eyes to something new? Has it given us language that raises great questions for contemporary people to challenge? Is that sort of language even possible in our time? If it were possible, would it emerge only as some sort of mutation or anomaly?

This is the sort of curious thought that weighs on my mind as I toil on in my profession as a contemporary fiction writer. My current tendency to distance myself from the mood of my times and to move in a direction that actually goes against those times, I realize, is partly the result of their very impact. I am personally convinced that the novel is about to change again.



Takamura Kaoru was born in the city of Osaka in 1953. She majored in French language and literature at International Christian University, Tokyo. After working briefly at a trading company she made her debut as a writer in 1990. Her main works include *Makusu no yama* [Marks’ Mountain; winner of the Naoki Prize in 1993], *Terigaki* [The Flaming Madder] (1994), *Redi Jōkū* [Lady Joker; winner of the Mainichi Publishing Culture Prize in 1998] (see JBN, No. 22, p. 19), and *Haruko jōka* [Our Sweet Haruko] (2002) as distinct from her mystery thrillers.