



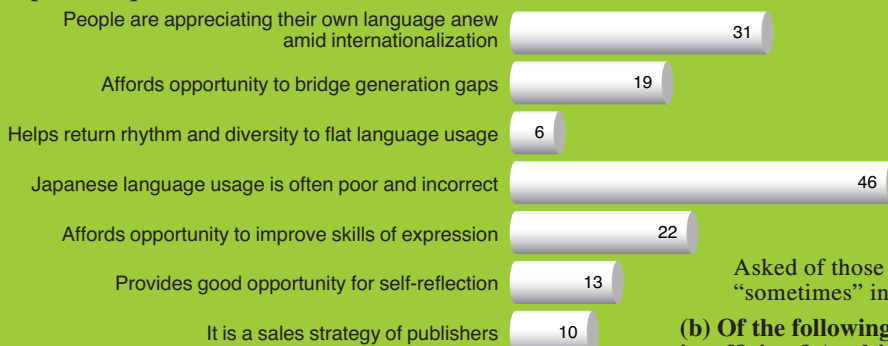
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Japanese Book News

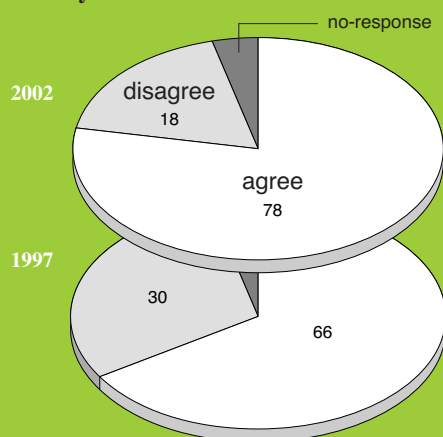
Japanese-language Booms and Nationalism
Period Fiction: Anchor of Identity
“I” and Politics

Why Japanese Are Reading Books about Their Own Language

What do you think the reasons are for the boom in Japanese-language books?
(up to 2 responses)



Some believe the tendency to read less is a major factor in the decline of people's facility with their own language, particularly among the young. What do you think of this view?

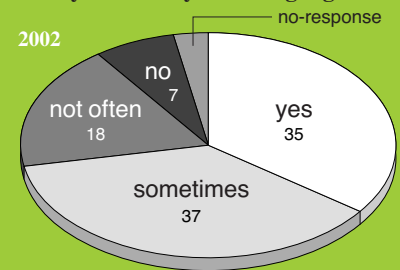


Source: *Mainichi shinbun*'s 51st (1997) and 56th (2002) national reading public opinion surveys

Survey Method:

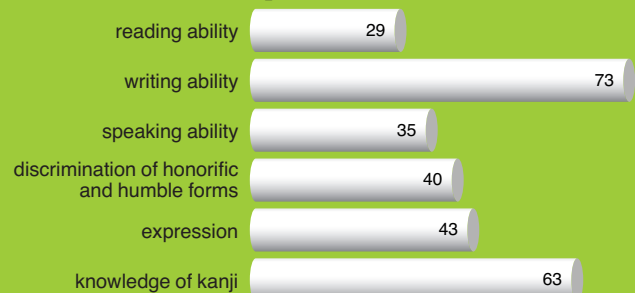
2002: Sample 4,800 men and women, age 16 and over; number of respondents, 3,079; response rate, 64 percent.
1997: Sample 4,760 men and women, age 16 and over; number of respondents, 3,169; response rate, 67 percent.
Figures are percentages. In some cases, due to rounding off, totals do not add up to 100 percent. In multiple response questions totals may exceed 100 percent, no-response and miscellaneous response figures excluded.

(a) Do you ever lack confidence in your facility with language?

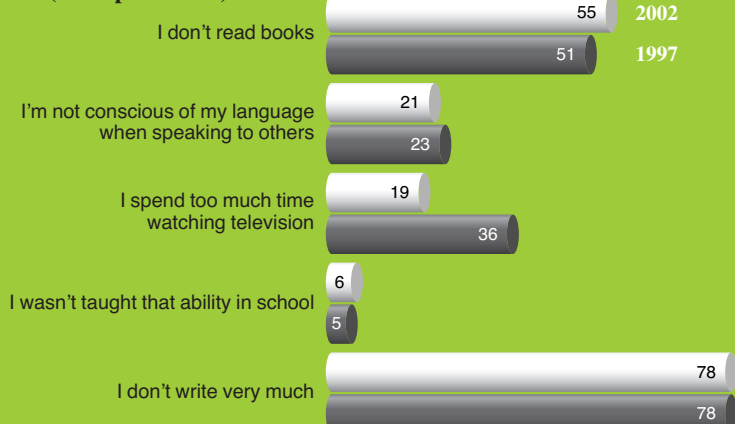


Asked of those who answered “yes” or “sometimes” in question (a)

(b) Of the following language skills, in which do you feel insufficient? (multiple choice)



(c) What reason or reasons would you give for that insufficiency? (multiple choice)



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

Sales of books relating to the Japanese language are booming. A number of compilations of famous or highly-regarded phrases passed down in literature or oral lore and guides to correct use of the language have sold more than million copies in the last few years. Apprehensions about the decline of the language are nothing new, but according to a survey of some 3,600 elementary, junior high, and high school students conducted in July 2002 by the publisher Ōbunsha, less than 10 percent replied that "I usually speak Japanese correctly," and indications are that people are increasingly motivated to want to improve their appreciation for and use of their own language. Reflecting on the ramifications of the Japanese-language boom as the recession drags on, University of Tokyo professor Komori Yōichi observes the backdrop to the succession of such booms, and issues a warning about where it might possibly lead.

Interest has been growing in historical or period themes not only in the genres of fiction and manga but also in film and theater. The winners of the Naoki Prize in both 2001 (Yamamoto Ichiriki's *Akane-zora* [Glowing Skies]) and in 2002 (Otokawa Yūzaburō's *Ikiru* [To Live]) are works of fiction set in the Edo period (1603–1867). Matsui Kesako, winner of the 8th Period Fiction Grand Prize in 1997 for *Nakazō kyōran* [Nakazō Frenzy] contributes an absorbing account of her own background and experience in writing period fiction based on thorough documentary research, including a number of specific episodes of interest.

This issue's selections of Children's Books are from among picture books.

Under From the Publishing Scene, Koyama Tetsurō gives a brief review of Murakami Haruki's most recently published novel and considers how it reflects certain social phenomena of today. Kiyota Yoshiaki introduces one of the recently most-talked about research source websites making available an array of dictionaries and encyclopedias online.

In Their Own Words for this issue is authored by writer Hoshino Tomoyuki, who discusses the revival in recent years of the *shishōsetsu* or "I-novel" genre, the reasons for the trend, its features, and the tension between literature and politics.

Japanese Book News address:

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

Japanese-language Booms and Nationalism

Komori Yōichi

Japan is in the midst of a boom in books focusing on the nation's own language—the first of the twenty-first century. The new boom was set off by the publication in September 2001 of *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo* [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud, Sōshisha; see JBN No. 38, p. 17], by scholar of education Saitō Takashi (b. 1960). Sales a year after publication of this title had gone beyond 1.4 million copies, and for its sequel, *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo II* (Sōshisha) a month after publication in 2002, beyond 200,000 copies, bringing the total for both books to 1.62 million copies.

Amid the seemingly endless recession in the publishing world, such figures are nothing if not extraordinary. Despite the warning of the old adage that “loaches will not always be caught under the same willow” (the loach, *dojō*, is a fresh-water delicacy) other publishers rushed to hook readers with similar titles related to Japanese language. Setting aside their most prominent floorspace for sections on “Japanese language,” many bookstores feature face-up stacks of more than twenty titles in the genre, including further titles by Saitō put out by publishers other than Sōshisha.

The last Japanese-language boom of the twentieth century was brought on by Gakushūin University professor emeritus Ōno Susumu's *Nihongo renshūchō* [A Handbook for Practicing Japanese] (Iwanami Shoten, 1999), which became a million seller. From what I have observed, these Japanese-language booms tend to well up in times of recession. When times are prosperous, in interesting contrast, economic growth adds momentum to discourses on the “uniqueness” of Japanese people and on the outstanding features of their culture (*Nihonjinron* and *Nihon bunkaron*). In the backdrop of the success of Ōno's book was the recession that had dragged on following the collapse of the bubble economy for ten years and even now shows little sign of abating.

When the economy was growing, people could indulge some pride in belonging to the nation-state that is Japan. They could seek the factors that nourish greater economic growth than other nations in the distinctive features of their culture or their past history. They could also identify the driving force for economic development in the diligence, manual dexterity, or other traits argued to be distinct from those of other peoples (quite apart from the validity of such claims). In other words, because they realized that all the things they could be proud of after World War II were the economic growth and higher standards of living that had been achieved on the model of the United States, they mobilized their own history and culture as a sort of value-added device for recovering some of the humanity they had lost in assuming the status of economic animal.

But with economic growth at a standstill and progress dogged by the triple anxieties of recession, financial crisis, and unemployment continuing for over a decade,

Japanese found there was little left that they could really be proud of. No doubt the Japanese booms derive their momentum from a sense that at least the language they speak, read, and write (or now, more often than not, type) offers a firm foothold for national self-confidence.

Ōno Susumu's *Nihongo renshūchō* was aimed at identifying certain rules and principles of spoken Japanese of which even native speakers are not ordinarily conscious. Behind the sales of over a million copies one might detect the vague fears many people entertained that they might not be using the language correctly on a day-to-day basis.

Behind these apprehensions was the fact that during the bubble economy of the 1980s people from abroad who used or studied the Japanese language appeared in the daily lives of Japanese as associates and neighbors, in numbers far beyond comparison with the past. People are quick to notice unnatural or odd usages of their language by non-native speakers they encounter in work and daily life. And even if they can declare that such usages are wrong and that the correct expression is such-and-such, when pressed for an explanation of why, they are often at a loss. The reason is that Japanese are not taught anything about the grammar of their spoken language in school; it is just not part of *kokugo* (national language) education.

In that sense, the Japanese-language booms have often taken aim at the blind spots and weaknesses of postwar *kokugo* education. Saitō Takashi's *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo*, which sparked the first twenty-first century boom, called for the revival of recitation. After the war reading aloud as well as memorizing texts and reciting them aloud have been slighted in language education in favor of what some now believe to be an over-emphasis on interpretation.

The texts included in Saitō's book are all very short and of great variety: famous lines from kabuki and popular plays, segments of *rōkyoku* (*naniwabushi*) ballads and street vendors' sales pitches, the opening lines of famous classical and modern works of literature, word play, poems from the *Hyakunin isshu* anthology, and lines from the *i-ro-ha* playing cards.

For a person born in the first half of the 1950s like myself, the texts collected in Saitō's book include many that we once heard in the course of our daily lives: the ballad an old man at the neighborhood public bath might croon, the aphorisms, famous lines, or adages our elders in the family or community were likely to quote on the appropriate occasion, etc. In the days before the spread of television, memorizing famous phrases like these was a common diversion in our daily lives.

What Saitō's book accomplished, in an era when the power of television had virtually overwhelmed such once-widespread oral traditions, was nothing less than their revival in the form of written texts to be read aloud.

For the middle-aged and older generations, these texts aroused tremendous nostalgia and many memories; for children and young people, they often represented the first opportunity to see and listen to Japanese endowed with rhythm and tempo.

The other Japanese-language publications that angled for readers with the same bait as Saitō's book are therefore made up mainly of well-known or highly regarded texts out the past, which could therefore be collected easily and at little cost. The monthly magazine *Da Capo* (No. 495, July 17, 2002 issue) showed the high proportion of quoted material in such books: a collection of texts from language textbooks used long ago in the postwar period, *Mō ichido yomitai kokugo kyōkasho* [Kokugo Textbooks We Want to Read Again] (Bunkasha, 2002) in first place with 90.4 percent; Saitō Takashi's collection including an interview with major league player Ichirō Suzuki and a report of a suicide, *Ningen gekijō* [Theater of Humanity] (Shinchōsha, 2002) with 74.7 percent; another Saitō collection of thirty-one famous texts including some translated from other languages, *Risō no kokugo kyōkasho* [The Ideal National Language Textbook] (Bungei Shunjū, 2002) with 65.7 percent, and his *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo*, with 49 percent.

Other books made up extensively of quotations include *Utsukushii Nihon no meibun, meishi, meika* [Beautiful Prose, Poetry, and Songs of Japan], edited under the supervision of Waseda University professor Ueno Kazuaki (Sanseidō, 2002), and sponsor of "poetry boxing" (JBN No. 39, p. 7) tournaments Kusunoki Katsunori's *Karada ga hazumu Nihongo* [Japanese That Makes Your Body Come Alive] (Takarajimasha, 2002).

What Saitō did was to market, to the readership yearning to use the Japanese language correctly that Ōno's *Nihongo renshūchō* had opened up, the very words and expressions that are "correct, beautiful, and pleasing to read aloud." Of course, books are also coming out that respond directly to the demand for help in using Japanese correctly. There is a continuing stream of books along these lines, bringing in even the dean of Japanese-language theory Shibata Takeshi, now 84, for books like *Jōshiki toshite shitte okitai Nihongo* [Practical Japanese You Should Know] (Gentōsha, 2002) and *Sono Nihongo, tsūjite imasuka?* [Is Your Japanese Being Understood?] (Kadokawa One Theme 21, 2002).

Saitō has long been an advocate of physical practice in the arena of education, and the idea of appreciating Japanese for its feel upon reading aloud goes along with that argument, yet the Japanese-language boom was an unexpected development, not something that he intentionally provoked.

A sort of Japanese-language nationalism has arisen out of this development, however. Specialist on modern Japanese poetry Tsuboi Hideto feels that behind Saitō's emphasis on "sportsman-like cheerfulness and robust health" is a tendency worrisomely similar to the patriotic poetry readings that were used to further the national mobilization campaign during World War II (see the "Watashi no shiten" [How I See It] column in the newspaper *Asahi shinbun*, July 21, 2002). Nonfiction writer Yoshida Tsukasa, too, warns of the new nationalistic

trend: "Saitō argues that command of the Japanese language is the fundamental power behind the country's economy and culture. He is speaking of Japanese as an expression of the pride of the people. Where once people considered being global the source of the power for growth, now they are seeking that source in closed national space" (*Da Capo*, No. 495, July 17, 2002).

In *Puchi nashonarizumu shōkōgun* [The Petit Nationalism Syndrome] (Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002), psychiatrist Kayama Rika evokes the scene of young people who paint their faces with Japanese flags innocently cheering Japan's team at the FIFA World Cup matches, idol singers singing the national anthem "Kimi ga yo" at sports events, and young audiences waving rising-sun flags at international games. She expresses her misgivings about the Japanese-language boom:

Though neither the authors nor their young readers may intend it to be such or be aware of what is happening, there will be among readers those who take this kind of book—as they may while waving rising-sun flags at sports events—as a message that "we should bring back our own particularistic Japanese culture and make the nation a strong power." Authors—and their readers—who chose the text for reading out loud from the *Gorin no sho* [The Book of Five Rings], rather than from an Italian opera, may unconsciously, if not intentionally, be aspiring to see "Japan as a strong nation."

The *Gorin no sho* is the classic on swordsmanship by Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645), that paragon of the samurai spirit who was made into a national hero by Yoshikawa Eiji's novel *Miyamoto Musashi* (1935–39; English translation, *Musashi*, 1981). Given that the boy's manga in which Miyamoto Musashi is revived has become a million-seller, there is no telling when the "petit nationalism" and "patriotism games" of which Kayama Rika warns might turn in ultranationalist directions. Given the history of our nation, we should keep in mind that language nationalism could transform the Japanese language from a medium for communication to a weapon for excluding others. (*Komori Yōichi is professor of the University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.*)

2002 Japan Foundation Awards

The Japan Foundation Awards are presented annually to individuals (or organizations) who have made outstanding contributions to and are expected to continue to do so in the area of international cultural exchange by either deepening the understanding of Japan overseas or understanding of other countries in Japan, thereby facilitating international mutual appreciation and friendship. The winners of the awards for fiscal 2002 are Ōoka Makoto for his extensive literary activities as a poet, critic, and historian (see "In Their Own Words," JBN, No. 28) and Gerald Curtis, Columbia University professor of political science, for his insightful and accurate analyses of Japanese politics.

Period Fiction: Anchor of Identity

Matsui Kesako

Where until recently mysteries held sway, today historical and period fiction has once again entered the limelight in Japan's publishing world. I myself cannot explain why this genre, once thought to have gone hopelessly into decline, is suddenly regaining popularity, but a young newspaper reporter who recently interviewed me offered a cogent perspective.

She had never given the period-fiction shelves in bookstores a second glance, she remarked, and little dreamed that she would one day be an avid reader of the genre. But young people like herself are now beginning to read period fiction, and the reason, she believes, derives from feelings of insecurity. Human beings have a past, present, and future; they supposedly embody the link between the past and the future. With the rise of the nuclear family and the dramatic changes taking place in our living environments, she observed, the past is rapidly being cast aside and forgotten in every aspect of our daily lives. No longer certain of exactly who they are, people are realizing that it helps to know something about the past—even if only through the world of fiction—in order to confirm where they stand in history.

Intent on advancement and development during the rapid economic growth period of the early 1960s–1970s, Japan did indeed shed the past left and right as it plummeted along. Few had any time or interest in period fiction. This situation began to change, to my knowledge, around the end of the 1980s.

At that time, I had yet to begin my career as a writer of fiction and was engaged exclusively in work relating to kabuki. After studying kabuki in graduate school in the late 1970s, I took a job at the kabuki production company Shōchiku. Later, I went freelance and wrote scripts for kabuki plays and books designed to introduce and popularize this traditional genre of the performing arts.

Then, toward the end of 1989, an editor from *Pia*, an entertainment information magazine focusing on young people's culture, came asking me to write a series of articles on kabuki targeting young readers. I still remember my surprise to learn that kabuki could be a topic of interest to a magazine for young readers. *Pia* had no doubt singled me out because of *Manga kabuki nyūmon* [A Manga Guide to Kabuki], my book introducing the world of kabuki in plain language through a manga format, published 1987–88.

After I had written the kabuki series for *Pia* for about one year, they decided to reprint the articles in book form with extensive amplification of the text, supplementing it fully with practical information such as explanations of the interior of a kabuki theater. Photographs of kabuki actors were also to be included. According to the editor, who negotiated the reproduction rights for the photographs with the Japan Actors' Association, the fee for use of one photograph was then very high for kabuki actors. Most books with such photographs came out in

printings of at most 5,000 copies. The editor had a difficult time persuading the Association to reduce the rate, arguing that the book would *start* with 20,000 copies. (*Manga kabuki nyūmon*, incidently, had a first edition of 20,000 copies, and was later reprinted several times.)

The anthology of articles, entitled *Pia kabuki wandā-rando* [Pia's Kabuki Wonderland], was published in February 1991, and ultimately sold over 200,000 copies, revealing the large latent demand among young people for kabuki-related books. It seemed to me that the success of the *Pia* book as well as *Manga kabuki nyūmon* was not necessarily due to the popularity of kabuki actors themselves but rather was supported by the desire of young readers to learn by way of kabuki about life in old Japan.

From Kabuki to Period Fiction

For some time after that, too, I was engaged in kabuki-related projects, including the editing/writing of a CD-ROM kabuki guide. Around the time I turned forty, I developed a sudden impulse to write fiction and have been producing works in this genre ever since. My career as a writer of fiction is thus rather short, and I am not well-versed in period fiction overall, but some description of my peculiar experience deriving from the background described above may shed some light on the nature of this genre.

My fiction is set in the Edo period (1603–1867), the natural extension of my familiarity with kabuki, the traditional theater that began and flourished during that age. My stories tend to derive primarily from kabuki scripts or from the *bunraku* puppet theater (*jōruri*), another major performing art of Edo times. Among my works so far, only two, *Nakazō kyōran* [Nakazō Frenzy; see JBN No. 24, p. 15] and *Hidō gyōzu bekarazu* [Do Not Diverge from the Way of the Art] (see p. 19 this issue), deal directly with the world of kabuki and its actors. All my other fiction portray the social and cultural conditions of ordinary people as depicted in the world of kabuki.

I might call attention here to the distinction that ought to be drawn between what we term historical fiction (*reki-shi shōsetsu*) and period fiction (*jidai shōsetsu*). The former are generally fictionalized accounts, based on historical documents, of the exploits of great historical figures, such as Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867) and Sakamoto Ryōma, one of the “men of high principles” who contributed to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The latter depict the lives of ordinary people, set rather more ambiguously within the framework of the Edo period, and are not so strictly concerned with faithfulness to historical events. However, just as Japan has not remained the same over the past sixty years since the end of World War II, so the three-century Edo period was by no means all one homogenous epoch. A close look at the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries reveals how vastly different they were in the way people used the language and in everything

else, as the content of kabuki plays dating from those times demonstrates. In my writing of period fiction, I make it more or less a rule to respect these historical distinctions.

The historical documents I draw from include the diaries of commoners, travelogues and essays by poets and writers as well as kabuki scripts and *jōruri* texts. These documents reveal many aspects of society, such as prices, and show the tremendous variety within Edo culture, both by epoch and region. We find, for example, that people's thinking differed markedly depending on whether they lived in or around the city of Edo (now Tokyo) or in the Kamigata area (around present-day Kyoto and Osaka), the two greatest spheres of urban culture at that time. There is a tendency to view Edo-period culture as if it had been dominated everywhere by the *bushi*, or samurai. In fact, whereas *bushi* and their families and servants made up about half of Edo's population of one million, in Osaka they numbered only about two thousand among its population of 400,000. No wonder the way people thought and behaved was very different between the two cities.

A good example of the kind of fiction I have written is *Yakko no Koman to yobareta onna* [The Woman Known as Handsome Koman]. Koman, who figures in *ningyō jōruri* (puppet drama) and kabuki scripts written during the Edo period, is an extraordinary woman known for her ability to overpower the roughest of villains and who, though beautiful, never marries. In his journal recording a trip to the Kamigata area, the Edo-born novelist Taki-zawa Bakin (1767–1848), author of *Nansō Satomi hak-kenden* [Satomi and the Eight “Dogs”], writes that he met Koman and records his impressions of her still-youthful beauty, despite being in her seventies, as well as her extensive erudition. Apparently she composed poetry in

both traditional and Chinese style and also excelled in painting and calligraphy. When she was young, she did not marry but kept a lover—a freedom she could probably afford because she was wealthy. Discovering that such an amazing woman had lived in Osaka of that time, I decided to make her the protagonist of a novel. In the course of reading documents of the period, I also uncovered her association with many intriguing figures besides Bakin, including some who were considered eccentrics by the standards of their time, such as Kimura Kenkadō, a pioneer in Japanese natural history, and Yanagisawa Rikyō, a local official whom one would be tempted to describe as an Edo renaissance intellectual. I included episodes featuring figures like these in my novel in part because I wanted to remind young people that Japanese are quite a diverse lot, and that, in fact, there were many unique individuals, even if they were not among the more heroic figures of history.

I am currently writing a serial novel for the monthly literary magazine, *Chikuma*, entitled “Tatsumiya gigoku” [The Tatsumiya Scandal]. Generally little known today, this scandal came to my attention in *ningyō jōruri* and kabuki plays written at the time of the incident. Perusing records of the trials held at the time and other old documents, I realized that it was a major social scandal with great dramatic potential for a novel.

The affair began with an inheritance dispute that erupted in a merchant house in Osaka and escalated into a great pay-off scandal involving officials of the shogunal government. Succession disputes and power struggles within the great daimyo houses are more or less well-known and were often large in scale, whereas there is a tendency to think that such conflicts within merchant families during the Edo period must have been minor by comparison, and therefore not warranting of much interest. The Tatsumiya merchant house where the scandal occurred, however, had assets worth two million *ryō* and some 460 people in its employ, which represents a far stronger and larger organization than many of the daimyo houses in the provinces. The owner of the Tatsumiya died and trouble ensued over who would succeed him, his adopted son or his younger brother. The employees fell into two cleanly divided camps, and the affair was brought before the court in Osaka. Bribes were supplied by both sides seeking to win the case, and it all ended with the execution of two police officials and punishment of a number of high-ranking government officials. In order to bring to readers' attention the fact that the structure of corruption arising from collusion between government officials and private enterprise in Japanese society today took a similar form long ago in the Edo period, I frequently use the modern Japanese vernacular in this work, in place of the old-style forms I preserve in most of my other works.

Tempering Faithfulness to the Past

In writing period fiction, I am perhaps more sensitive than some other writers about the vernacular of the dialogue. This comes partly from my years of reading and writing mainly kabuki and *jōruri* scripts before I began to write fiction. Writing scripts made me think of dialogue as representing the actual speech of real characters, and

Best-sellers, Dec. 2001–Nov. 2002

1. *Hari Pottā to honoo no goburetto* (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire), *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), and *Hari Pottā to azukaban no shūjin* (Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban), by J. K. Rowling. Translated by Matsuoka Yūko (Seizansha).
2. *Biggu fatto kyatto no sekai-ichi kantan na Eigo no hon* [The World's Easiest English Book by Big Fat Cats], by Mukōyama Atsuko, Mukōyama Takahiko, and illustrated by Nakashima Tetsuo (Gentōsha).
3. *Ikikata jōzu* [How to Live Well], by Hinohara Shigeaki (U-Leag).
4. *Koe ni dashite yomitai Nihongo* [Japanese Texts Worth Reading Aloud], by Saitō Takashi (Sōshisha).
5. *Sekai ga moshi hyakunin no mura dattara* [If the World Were a Village of One Hundred People], by Ikeda Kayoko, with an English translation by Douglas Lummis (Magazine House).
6. *Berabera bukku* [English Fluency Book] (Pia).
7. *Shin ningen kakumei 11* [The New Human Revolution, vol. 11], by Ikeda Daisaku (Seikyō Shinbunsha).
8. *Jōshō no hō* [The Law of Winning], by Ōkawa Ryūhō (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku Shuppan).
9. *Oite koso jinsei* [Life Really Starts with Old Age], by Ishihara Shintarō (Gentōsha).
10. *Jōshiki toshite shitte okitai Nihongo* [Practical Japanese You Should Know], Shibata Takeshi (Gentōsha).

(Based on book distributor Tōhan lists.)

thus made me uncomfortable if I did not remain faithful to the vernacular of people of the time.

For instance, the language used by playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon, who was active in Kyoto and Osaka from the end of the seventeenth century to the early part of the eighteenth century, is totally different from that used by Kawatake Mokuami, a kabuki dramatist of Edo in the late nineteenth century. Most writers of period fiction are not that attentive to the distinction and simply have their characters speak in such a way that it evokes the overall atmosphere of the Edo period. In some extreme cases, they may even adopt modern vernacular throughout. As far as the reader is concerned, that may be preferable, because it makes the story easier to read. For my works, however, I try as much as I can to have the characters speak more or less, if not exactly, the way they really did, depending on where and when they lived. My purpose in doing so is to keep alive as much as possible the good old richness of the Japanese language. Language, if not used, after all, can face extinction.

Excessive faithfulness to old usage, of course, can make a novel arduous to read, so one has to be careful. Recently I have been making a conscious effort to write in such a way that the modern reader can move through the story with ease, even if it means the language used by

the characters is a bit incongruous to the period and locale. If I go too far in this, however, it would be better to write a modern novel from the outset, rather than a period novel. Striking a balance between the old and the new is a very delicate process.

Period fiction is enjoying considerable popularity today, but with the rapid changes taking place in our environment and lifestyles, it may become increasingly difficult to write in this genre, and not only with regard to the question of vernacular. Period fiction is likely to become more of a challenge for both writer and reader. For example, household items once familiar to all, such as *hibachi* (braziers) and *kaya* (mosquito nets), as well as features of traditional architecture such as the *engawa* (veranda), *en-no-shita* (space under the floor), *kōshido* (lattice door), and so forth, all of which were part of our daily lives when I was a child, are rarely seen in households today. Period fiction will not necessarily be a source of nostalgia for young readers. They are more apt to read it as something far out of the ordinary, almost like science fiction, enjoying it as long as there are compelling characters and stories. My writing is aimed partly at giving such readers some familiarity with both the good and bad aspects of old Japan. (*Matsui Kesako is a fiction writer and specialist on kabuki.*)

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.

Bungei Shunjū
3-23 Kioicho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8008
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Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8320
Tel: 03-3563-1431 Fax: 03-3561-5922

Dōshinsha
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Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0072
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Heibonsha
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Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0001
Tel: 03-3818-0874 Fax: 03-3818-0674

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

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

Kinema Junpōsha
Koishikawa Yoshida Bldg., 2 Fl.
1-21-14 Koishikawa
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8502
Tel: 03-3815-7131 Fax: 03-3815-7139

Kōdansha
2-12-21 Otowa
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8001
Tel: 03-5395-3676 Fax: 03-3943-2459

Kogumasha
1-43-5 Sekiguchi
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8666
Tel: 03-3202-9438 Fax: 03-3204-4388

Kōseisha
Sakae Bldg.
1-14-5 Asagaya Minami
Suginami-ku, Tokyo 166-0004
Tel: 03-5306-2088 Fax: 03-5306-4125

Magazine House
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Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8003
Tel: 03-3545-7175 Fax: 03-3546-6561

Misuzu Shobō
5-32-21 Hongo
Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0033
Tel: 03-3814-0131 Fax: 03-3818-6435

Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha
Inquiries from overseas should be addressed to: Nihon IPS Sokatsu-ka
3-11-6 Iidabashi
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0072
Tel: 03-3238-0700 Fax: 03-3238-0707

Ōmura Shoten
Igarashi Bldg.
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Tel: 03-3262-5111 Fax: 03-3221-6843

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Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 101-0051
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Sōshisha
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Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0051
Tel: 03-3470-6565 Fax: 03-3470-2640

Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha
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Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-8345
Tel: 03-3246-5466 Fax: 03-3270-4127

Ushio Shuppansha
Ushio Bldg.
3-1-3 Iidabashi
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8110
Tel: 03-3230-0741 Fax: 03-3230-1332

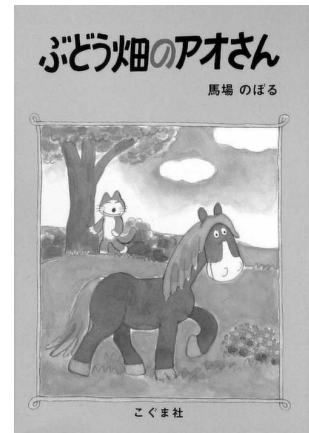
Yasaka Shobō
1-4-11 Sarugakucho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0064
Tel: 03-3293-7975 Fax: 03-3293-7977

Picture Books

Budōbatake no Ao-san [Horse and the Field of Grapes]. Text and illustrations by Baba Noboru. Kogumasha, 2001. 260×190 mm. 32 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-7721-0159-4. There lives a blue horse in the forest. He has a dream of finding a field full of grapes. Waking up, he sets off in the direction he followed in his dream and discovers it actually leads to a large field of grapes. He meets Cat along the way and they go together. The grapes are not quite ripe, they decide to come back the next day and they promise to keep the grapes a secret between just the two of them. The next day when they

set off to eat the grapes, the good-natured Horse cannot keep the secret and ends up inviting all their animal friends to come along. When they get to the field, however, the rough-neck Wolf has encircled the grapes with a barbed wire fence.

The innocent, happy way Horse and his animal friends talk to each other is amusing and the combination of the manga-like illustrations with the story has a light-hearted, humorous touch. The author and illustrator, extremely popular among children for his *Jūippiki no neko* [Eleven Naughty Cats] picturebook series, is a recipient of the education



minister prize of the Japan Cartoonists Association Award in 1993 and other awards. This work was published posthumously. (Preschool through grade two.)

Kitsune no Bon odori [The Foxes' O-Bon Dance]. Text by Yamashita Haruo; illustrations by Uno Akira. Kaihō Shuppansha, 2000. 267×210 mm. 40 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-7592-2220-0.

The main character of this story is a boy who learns to fish while visiting his grandfather in the country during summer vacation. He has been told that since O-Bon is the time of year when the spirits of the dead come back to visit the world of the living, he should



not take the life of any living thing, but he goes to the river to fish anyway. Taking shelter from a cloudburst in a small boat at the water's edge, he finds the boat

suddenly being rowed across the water by a boatman to the other side of the river, a place his grandfather told him never to go near because it is believed to be under a curse.

There he finds a crowd of figures in the midst of an O-Bon dance. Invited to join in

and given a fox mask to wear, the boy joins the circle of dancing figures. Then he notices that the shadows of the dancing figures go back and forth from the shape of humans to the shape of foxes . . .

Transporting the reader into a world of spirits and fantasy, this book combines the sad legend of a fox maiden married off to a human with images of the customs of O-Bon observed as part of popular culture since antiquity. The watercolor illustrations, with touches of *sumie* (ink-painting) technique, further enhance the sense of mystery of the story as seen through the boy's eyes. (Grade one and above.)

Urapan, okosa: Kazu asobi [Urapan, Okosa: Playing with Numbers]. Text and illustrations by Tanikawa Kōichi. Dōshinsha, 1999. 266×191 mm. 32 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-494-00885-0. Putting aside our usual way of counting, 1, 2, 3, 4, this book counts things with just two words for 1 and 2. One is urapan; two is okosa; three is okosa-urapan, and so on, combining the two words.

The book opens on simple, engaging, and colorful pictures that cover the entire spread of facing pages, a design that makes it easy to draw small children into playing with numbers.

"One monkey is urapan; two bananas is okosa," it gently instructs.



"There is urapan dog; okosa fish, okosa turtles, and as the numbers increase, you precede with okosa . . . Look! There are okosa-urapan (three) zebras!"

"There come the okosa-okosa (four) elephants."

The book is structured very simply, and the number of various animals increases with each turn of each page, and children soon lean forward to join in the counting, fascinated by the process of counting before they know it. A good book for reading-aloud hours for youngsters. (Preschool to lower elementary grades.)

Murakami Haruki's New Novel and the Battle Against Evil

Koyama Tetsurō

Murakami Haruki's latest novel, *Umibe no Kafuka* [Kafka on the Shore] (Shinchōsha, 2002) has been published. Murakami is currently the only pure literature (*junbungaku*) author to produce a bestseller with each new title that comes out, and this newest two-volume work sold some 600,000 copies in its first month.

Since its release, as many as 8,000 readers, evidently even some from South Korea and Taiwan, have sent e-mail describing their impressions to the publisher's special website devoted to the novel (the site was closed January 2003).

Umibe no Kafuka is a novel that develops, in alternating chapters, around two characters—one a young boy, Tamura Kafka, and the other the old man Nakata. As an elementary school student during the Pacific War, Nakata and some of his classmates experience an accident in the mountains and lose consciousness, afterwards recalling nothing of what happened. The experience echoes Murakami's close familiarity with the 1995 sarin poison gas attacks by the Aum Shinrikyō religious cult on the Tokyo subways, which was the subject of his 1997 book *Andāguraundo* [Underground] (Kōdansha; see JBN, No. 20, p. 13) based on interviews of sixty people, including survivors and members of the families of those killed.

In 1997, the year *Andāguraundo* was published, another appalling incident occurred—the murder of an elementary school student by a fourteen-year-old boy who left the victim's head at his school's front gatepost. (Kobe, the city where the incident took place, is not far from the town where Murakami was raised and is a frequent setting of his works.) There was an alarming

increase around this time of serious crimes committed by young boys in their mid-teens.

Those incidents illustrate the sudden violence that can erupt out of the isolation and loneliness felt by many young girls and boys today. The title-character of *Umibe no Kafuka*, Tamura Kafka, who leaves home on his fifteenth birthday at the story's beginning, is a reflection of the author's concern for today's youth and their inability to form healthy relationships with family and others. As the novel proceeds, the lives of the boy and the old man cross paths; they confront the unknown evil forces that are part of every human being, and overcome them. The story ends as Tamura is beginning to recover his will to live.

Umibe no Kafuka was published, coincidentally perhaps, on the day following the one-year anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. One of Murakami Haruki's earlier works, *Kami no kodomotachi wa mina odoru* [All God's Children Can Dance] (Shinchōsha, 2000; see JBN, No. 31, p. 19)—a collection of short stories thematically linked to the 1995 Kobe earthquake in which 6,400 people died—has reportedly been read widely in the United States as a work of healing and solace following the terrorist attacks.

Umibe no Kafuka is a story about grappling with and overcoming the "evil" that exists in manifold forms, and will undoubtedly be read as a novel of the battle against "evil" in today's world. It is an accomplished work that impressively fulfills the lofty purpose to which it aspires. (*Koyama Tetsurō is senior writer, Kyodo News.*)

The "JapanKnowledge" Website

Kiyota Yoshiaki

Increasing use of the Internet has had a great impact on how publications are read. Use of dictionaries and encyclopedias via the Internet in particular has rapidly increased, and among the new online resources now available is "JapanKnowledge" (www.japanknowledge.com), a website operated by Net Advance, a corporation of the Shōgakukan Group. The site provides a system for handy online access to several dictionaries and encyclopedias, and its subscribership has been expanding. Eighteen types of data are stored there, including *Nihon daihyakka zensho* [Great Japanese Encyclopedia] and *Daijisen* [Daijisen Dictionary] (both published by Shōgakukan), *Encyclopedia of Japan* (Kōdansha), *Gendai yōgo no kiso chishiki* [Basic Knowledge of Contemporary Terms] (Jiyū Kokumin Sha), and *Nikkei BP dejitaru daijiten* [Nikkei BP's Digital Dictionary] (Nikkei BP Sha). All the data are interlinked. Depending on the subject, a search may yield several hundred or several thousand results.

The user can go to relevant entries and also pursue links to related entries in order to close in on the exact

information required. The JapanKnowledge website not only emphasizes dictionaries and encyclopedias but also features links to topical websites, such as that of well-known critic Inose Naoki, and taps the views of persons well acquainted with libraries, allowing the user to learn about current political and cultural trends.

Plans are underway to link the website to general-interest journals (*sōgō zasshi*) and specialist magazines and to incorporate map information so as to extend the scope of the website. In the latter case, for instance, the user will be able to superimpose a 100-year-old map of Tokyo over today's map in order to see how the city has changed.

The links made possible via the Internet are limitless. Taking advantage of this, JapanKnowledge aims to afford access to all manner of informational resources. It naturally plans to establish links to overseas websites. The JapanKnowledge site charges a 2,000 yen admission fee and 1,500 yen per month for membership. (*Kiyota Yoshiaki is managing director of Shuppan News Co.*)

New Titles

MEDIA/JOURNALISM

Chihōshi no kenkyū [A Study of Local Newspapers]. Kamata Satoshi. Ushio Shuppansha, 2002. 194×131 mm. 526 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-267-01635-6.

Newspapers in Japan are divided into three types by the size of their respective sales areas. National newspapers are sold in all forty-seven of Japan's prefectures, block or regional newspapers in a number of prefectures, and local newspapers primarily within one prefecture. More than seventy local newspapers are currently published in Japan, most with circulations of around 200,000 to 300,000. This book describes the unique history, local flavor, and news policies of forty local newspapers, based on the author's interviews with reporters and editors.

The distinguishing feature of local newspapers is information and views closely connected to and reflecting the lives of readers in the area. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki papers, for example, present perspectives on such issues as the nuclear-free and anti-nuclear movements, and peace education in a different light than may be found in the national papers. A journalist himself, the author (b. 1938) describes how the special

stamp of each paper is sustained by the commitment of local journalists to their respective locales. The combined accounts make an informative guide to the state of local newspapers throughout Japan today.

Papirusu ga tsutaeta bunmei: Girishia Rōma no hon'ya tachi [The Civilization Passed Down on Papyrus: Booksellers of Ancient Greece and Rome]. Minowa Shigeo. Shuppan News Sha, 2002. 210×140 mm. 232 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-7852-0103-7.

The library of ancient Alexandria, the center of Hellenic culture, is thought to have held some 700,000 volumes, and that of Pergamon some 200,000. Not much is yet known, however, about the circumstances surrounding written texts around that time. This author (b. 1926), president of the International Association of Scholarly Publishing and a researcher specializing in the history of publishing, also has extensive practical knowledge in the field. In this book, he reconstructs the world of texts and publishing of ancient Greece and Rome.

types of people who read them, how expensive they were, whether or not there was borrowing and lending of books, whether or not there were zealous "book collectors," and how slave labor was involved with publishing activities.

Without publishing, the author declares, there can be no civilization. At a time of wide-ranging discourse on the future of publishing as a vehicle of civilization, this book provides an excellent overview of the ancient origins of this industry.

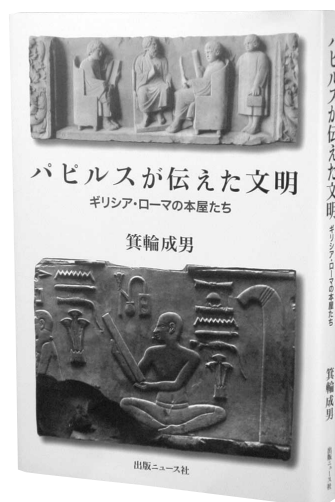
Rajio dorama no ōgon jidai [The Golden Age of Radio Drama]. Nishizawa Minoru. Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2002. 193×132 mm. 278 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-309-01450-X.



Cover design: Shibukawa Ikuyoshi

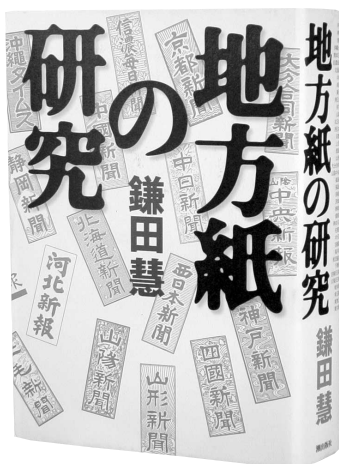
With television now the dominant media, radio drama broadcasts are rarely heard in Japan. In this book, Nishizawa (b. 1918), a scriptwriter of NHK radio plays and other works for more than fifty years, looks back at the history of the genre from 1925, the year the country's first radio broadcast went on air, to the 1960s, the decade in which he was most active.

The author developed a passion for broadcast drama after reading a collection of radio plays lent to him by an American serviceman he came to know during the Allied Occupation following World War II. Vividly recounting his memories of broadcasting in those days, he recalls the struggles involved in getting play scripts and other content past the Occupation censors, as well as the broadcasting professionals who



Cover design: Michiyoshi Gow

Because they were written on papyrus sheets and parchment, few of the actual books of the classical age have survived. Drawing on the work of previous researchers in this field and other sources, and employing many photographs, the author exercises skillful detective work in exploring various questions about the ancient world of writing—the kinds of works produced, the



Cover design: Tada Kazuhiro

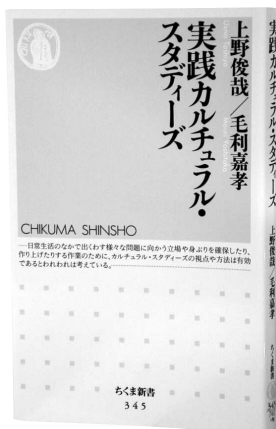
Further information about the books listed in this section may be obtained by contacting the publishers listed on page 5.

devoted themselves to program production as announcers, sound effects technicians, and in various other ways. He laments how NHK reportedly discarded all the prewar play scripts and other materials that had been preserved there, and emphasizes the cultural importance of such materials.

With immediacy and color as only can be evoked by an eyewitness, the accounts compiled represent one of the few primary documents available on the history of radio drama in Japan.

THOUGHT

Jissen karuchuraru sutadizu [Cultural Studies in Practice]. Ueno Toshiya and Mōri Yoshitaka. Chikuma Shobō, 2002. 173 × 105 mm. 254 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-480-05945-8.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

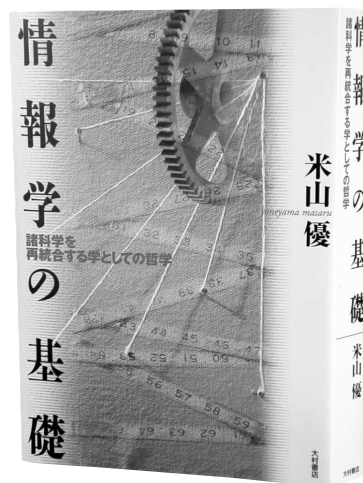
Cultural studies, which can be characterized as discourse on a logic of resistance through an examination of the relationship between culture and politics in everyday life, has been a subject of growing interest in Japan as elsewhere since the latter half of the 1990s. The authors of this book describing the theoretical and practical sides of cultural studies critique the tendency in Japan for the discipline to be dominated almost completely by scholars. Referring to post-Marxist research and studies of subcultures and the media, they also look at movements that might be considered inappropriate for study from the academic point of view.

One example concerns a movement, begun in Tokyo's Shinjuku district in the late 1990s, to decorate

the cardboard dwellings of the homeless with pop art illustrations. The movement later clashed with various parties, including the Tokyo metropolitan government, which sought to rid the streets of homeless people. The authors point to this as one of the most important cultural movements of the 1990s in that it championed art as a political activity. Also thought-provoking is the fresh approach they offer through cultural studies to the issue of Japan's war responsibility.

Jōhōgaku no kiso: Sho-kagaku o saitōgō suru gaku toshite no tetsugaku [The Foundations of Information Studies: Philosophy as a Science for the Reintegration of Learning]. Yoneyama Masaru. Ōmura Shoten, 2002. 210 × 148 mm. 462 pp. ¥4,500. ISBN 4-7563-2028-7. The ill-effects of increasing specialization of scholarly research today are beginning to show. One approach to overcoming the problem has been interdisciplinary studies, but although that type of scholarship also flourishes, it has not been as successful as expected. This book explores the possibilities for reorganizing the current system of learning and reintegrating the many overspecialized scholarly disciplines from the standpoint of philosophy, exercising the fresh perspective offered by information studies.

Information studies is described as a kind of philosophy that, referring to all sciences and building around the concept of information common to all of them, elucidates how information affects goods, life, the human spirit, and society. The author (b.

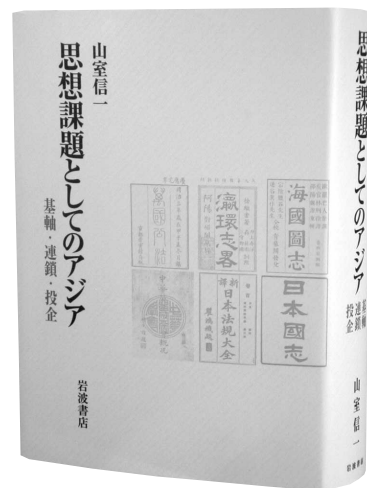


Cover design: Yamada Eishun

1952), a philosopher, has spent some twenty years studying the ideas of Émile-Auguste Alain. Drawing extensively from the French philosopher's work, he underscores the significance of information studies as a means of "recovering, elucidating, and resuscitating human beings" through the connections that tie information to diverse kinds of discourse, from body studies, immunology, brain science, and semiotics to computers and textual studies.

Shisō kadai toshite no Ajia: Kijiku, rensa, tōki [Asia as an Intellectual Challenge: Axes, Links, and Projects]. Yamamuro Shin'ichi. Iwanami Shoten, 2002. 216 × 150 mm. 832 pp. ¥8,000. ISBN 4-00-023349-1.

What was Asia to Japan? How did Japan get involved in Asian modernization? This intellectually stimulating book takes a fresh look at modern Japan's attitude toward Asia—how it has perceived and interacted with its Asian neighbors, and how projects have been conceived—in the perspective of intellectual history.



The author (b. 1951), a specialist in the field of comparative legal and political thought, makes a detailed analysis of the role Japan played as a conduit of thought between the West and Asia. Many people from other Asian countries came to study in Japan, for example, and Japanese-language renderings of such Western concepts as "independence," "freedom" and "public speaking" had a strong impact on other Asian cultures. The author extends his

purview to Southeast Asian countries, Afghanistan, and even Turkey, and draws from vast source material to delineate the intellectual context in which Japan managed to modernize ahead of other Asian countries, then became involved in colonization of its Asian neighbors, and was finally isolated among them.

This is a book that offers a new perspective on Japan and Asia of interest not only to Japanese but readers of other countries as well.

BIOGRAPHY

Meiji no kenchikuka: Tsumaki Yorinaka no shōgai [Meiji Architect: The Life of Tsumaki Yorinaka]. Kitahara Ryōzaburō. Gendai Shokan, 2002. 194 × 132 mm. 254 pp. ¥2,200. ISBN 4-7684-6829-2.



Cover design: Nakayama Gin'ō

Few would think of Tsumaki Yorinaka (1859–1916) as holding a place among leading architects of the Meiji era (1868–1912). Enrolling in the Imperial College of Engineering (Kōbu Daigakkō; later the department of engineering of Tokyo University) in 1878, he later went to the United States to study and received a degree in architecture from Cornell University. After returning to Japan he was put mainly in charge of the construction of government buildings. Tsumaki dreamed of designing the Diet Building of Japan, but in this endeavor he faced a formidable rival, his senior at the Imperial College, Tatsuno Kingo (1854–1918). Tatsuno designed the Bank of Japan building, Tokyo Station, and other well-known buildings extant today.

Tsumaki designed the former Yokohama Shōkin Bank (now the building of Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History), the decoration for the Nihonbashi Bridge in Tokyo, and the building of the Nippon Kangyō Bank main office in Tokyo (later removed and reconstructed in Chiba prefecture), employing a variety of styles from Japanese-style modern architecture to Western-style masonry. Other than those mentioned here, few of his works remain standing today.

This book reminds us that Tsumaki was very much present among the architects who devoted themselves to the modernization of Japanese architecture.

Yukaryūsha: Kiseki no fukkatsu o hatashita barerina [Yukaryūsha: A Ballerina Who Made a Miraculous Comeback]. Saitō Yukari. Sekai Bunkasha, 2002. 194 × 132 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-418-02510-3.



Cover design: Nakasone Takayoshi

This is a memoir by Saitō Yukari, one of Japan's leading ballet dancers. Born in Yokohama in 1967, Saitō began studying ballet under her mother at the age of six. At sixteen she made the first of several short visits to Russia to study ballet, and there formed a partnership with her future husband, Bolshoi Theatre dancer Nicolai Fedorov. At twenty, Saitō joined the Tokyo Ballet. She was chosen to dance the role of Kaoyo Gozen (Lady Kaoyo) in a production of *The Kabuki* in Europe in 1988, and thereafter went on to demonstrate her blossoming talents. In 1990 she married Fedorov ("Yukaryūsha" was his pet name for her). In 1992, Saitō won acclaim for

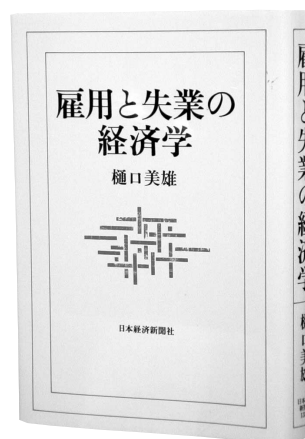
her performance in a production of *La Sylphide* in Russia. After her son was born two years later, she returned to the stage, but tore a ligament while performing in 1996. Despite medical advice that her injury would never fully heal, two years later Saitō succeeded in returning to the stage in a production of *Giselle*, and today remains active as a prima ballerina both in Japan and abroad.

Saitō recounts the thirty-five whirlwind years of her life with a deep sense of gratitude, supplementing her story with twenty photographs and, in the appendix, excerpts from the reviews of her performances.

ECONOMY

Koyō to shitsugyō no keizaigaku [The Economics of Employment and Unemployment]. Higuchi Yoshio. Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2001. 194 × 129 mm. 472 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-532-13221-5.

Japan's prolonged business slump has pushed the unemployment rate to over 5 percent. With unemployment thus becoming a serious social issue, Japan's entire labor market and employment system is at a turning point.



Cover design: Yamazaki Noboru

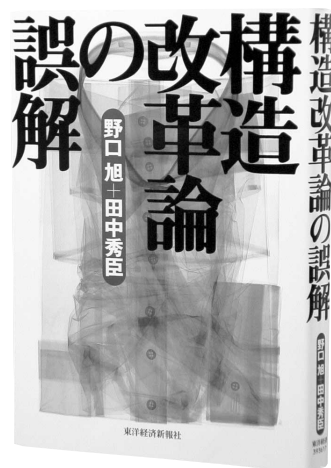
From a wealth of statistics, this book presents a micro-level analysis of the realities of the labor environment in Japan today. The analysis covers various topics, including how jobs are created and lost in Japan, the impact of corporate "restructuring" on household finances, and the effects on employment of such factors as globalization of the economy,

advances in information technology, and the declining birth rate. A key feature of the book is the breadth of its perspective on Japan's labor predicament, frequently informed by international comparisons.

The author (b. 1952) sees the urgent need to devise a social infrastructure that rewards individual effort. To that end, he urges the corporate sector to step up information disclosure, raise retirement pay, and provide reemployment support, and calls on the government to implement policies to create jobs, eliminate job-jobholder mismatches, and improve the employment safety net.

Presenting a comprehensive survey of the current state of Japan's labor market, this book can be considered a basic text in the field.

Kōzō kaikaku-ron no gokai [Misunderstandings about the Structural Reform Debate]. Noguchi Asahi and Tanaka Hidetomi. Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 2001. 194 × 133 mm. 206 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-492-39361-7.



Cover design: Tokyo Zukan

Even now, more than ten years since the collapse of the bubble economy, Japan's economy is still in disarray, and the debate between either structural reform or stimulus measures is ineffective. Are the advocates of "no economic recovery without structural reform" correct? Pointing out that macroeconomic policy is completely different in both its goals and methods from measures designed to improve supply-side efficiency (i.e., structural reform), the authors, Noguchi (b. 1958) and Tanaka (b. 1961), refute the idea that macroeconomics is meaningless and that only structural reform matters.

By distinguishing clearly between the roles of macroeconomic policy and structural reform, the authors demonstrate, with abundant diagrams, four misunderstandings about structural reform—one, that no economic recovery can occur without structural reform; two, that the (bureaucracy-led) Japanese system is the principal structural problem; three, that structural reform can be equated with disposal of non-performing loans; and four, that Japanese employment practices are at the root of the recession. As to the claim that clearing bad loans is the key to economic recovery, they consider these loans as just another result of the deflationary recession, and emphasize the need for aggregate demand expansion. This work helps explain some of the reasons why Japan's economy is unable to pull itself out of protracted stagnation.

Nihon no chika keizai: Datsuzei, wairo, baishun, mayaku [Japan's Underground Economy: Tax Evasion, Graft, Prostitution, Drugs]. Kadokura Takashi. Kōdansha, 2002. 173 × 115 mm. 222 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-06-272116-3.

Although useful as an index of a country's economic activity, gross domestic product (GDP) does not reflect that activity in its entirety. Japan's GDP figures do not include the hard-to-find data on the "underground economy," that is, illegal economic activities such as tax evasion, graft, prostitution, and crime syndicate drug dealing.

Written by a researcher at a private economics think-tank, this book is a valuable report on the realities of Japan's underground economy.

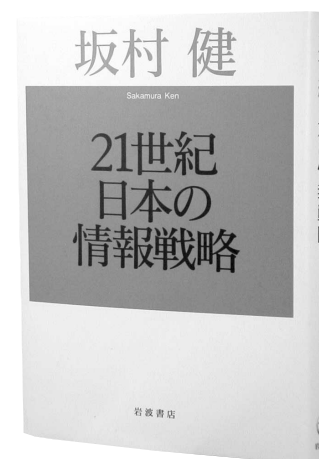


Cover design: Suzuki Sei'ichi Design Shitsu

By tallying up components of the underground economy from micro-statistics, the author estimates its scale in fiscal 1999 as between 9.6 and 17.1 trillion yen, or 1.9 to 3.3 percent of the nominal GDP. Some 81 percent of that amount is accounted for by individual and corporate tax evasion, and the remaining 19 percent is attributable to the illegal income garnered by organized crime groups and other criminal activity.

The author (b. 1971) points out that, in order to make more exact assessments of business conditions, Japan must establish an accurate method for estimating the scale of its underground economy and incorporate such estimates into its GDP statistics. He also calls for further legislative and other measures to prevent the underground economy from expanding under the effects of globalization.

Nijūisseiki Nihon no jōhō senryaku [Japan's Information Strategy for the Twenty-first Century]. Sakamura Ken. Iwanami Shoten, 2002. 187 × 130 mm. 248 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-00-024212-1.



Cover design: Mamura Toshikazu

The author (b. 1951) is known as a leader of the "TRON project" (The Real-time Operating system Nucleus), internationally the most widely used computer operating system for microchips embedded in devices such as cellular phones and automobile engine control systems. This book critiques Japan's information technology (IT) strategy in comparison to that of the United States and proposes specific objectives for the future. The essence of today's

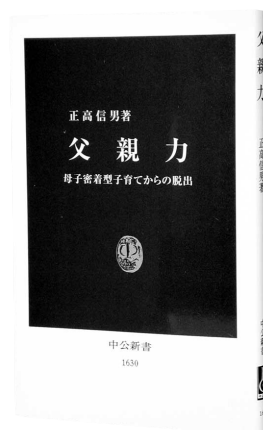
world is diversity, and, the book argues, globalization for Japan need not mean following the U.S. example but should rather pursue cooperative diversification based on its own culture.

Based on this realization, the author argues that ubiquitous computing—the environment in which computers are integrated into objects like household appliances and clothing—should be the mainstay of Japan's IT strategy. Japan should also, he cautions, prevent itself from becoming dependent on foreign information-based technologies like character encoding and operating systems.

In order for Japan to make an independent IT strategy work, this book suggests applying teamwork to solve problems—a method it has already refined—and emphasizes the necessity for a strategic mindset that strives to nurture human resources with the ability to communicate and to understand accurately that which is different or other.

SOCIETY

Chichioya ryoku: Boshi mitchakugata kosodate kara no dasshutsu [Father Power: Escape from the Close Mother-Child Rearing Model]. Masataka Nobuo. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002. 173 × 109 mm. 170 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-101630-0.



Japan's young fathers have begun to change. "Ideal daddies" who help out with childrearing and household chores are on the rise. This book examines whether such changes in fathers are really ideal in terms of raising children, citing literary

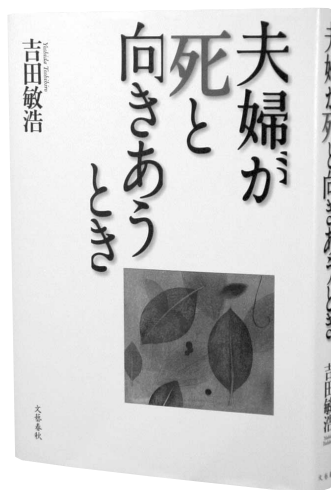
works, survey results, and other materials to clarify the role fathers should play in childrearing.

In Japan, where mother-centric child raising goes largely unchallenged, specialist in comparative behavior Masataka (b. 1954) charges that the greatest paternal task is "to look out for children, extending a helping hand as necessary and giving them the support they need to move forward, so that one day they can face adversity on their own." To become adults, children must become aware of the fear of death and the dangers of nature and the wild, says the author, and they must equip themselves with the strength to cope with stress. It is the father's job, he claims, to teach them how to do that.

This work warns of the dangers of mother-dominant childrearing where children have a relatively weak relationship with their fathers, to which he attributes many of the problems involving Japanese children that have recently become the subject of widespread concern.

Fūfu ga shi to mukiau toki [When Married Couples Face Death]. Yoshida Toshihiro. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 193 × 133 mm. 270 pp. ¥1,524. ISBN 4-16-358650-4.

This work reports on conditions surrounding the lives and deaths of married couples. Every man and woman who meet by chance and make their way through life together as husband and wife inevitably face the death of their companion. This work offers a true picture of several married couples in a variety of circumstances at the time of their encounter with death.

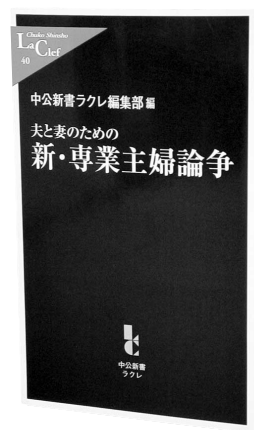


Cover design: Sakata Masanori

The book relates a variety of episodes: the woman looking after her comatose husband at home; the man attending group counseling to recover from the grief of losing his wife; the crusade of a woman whose husband died from overwork; the woman looking after her husband as he battled against terminal cancer, setting out to travel around Japan on foot in search of natural remedies; the woman who held an unconventional funeral for her husband, who had died suddenly, scattering his cremated ashes in the ocean; and so on.

The deceased companion lives on in the mind of the one left behind. The author (b. 1957) traces the paths married couples tread together, depicting the shared "inner space" where their time, experience, and feelings join together in complete harmony. The author feels he can detect the true resonances of life that emerge from the depths of the life-long bond between husband and wife.

Otto to tsuma no tame no shin sengyō shufu ronsō [The New Debate about the Fulltime Housewife: A Book for Husbands and Wives]. Chūō Shinsho Rakure Henshūbu, ed. Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002. 173 × 109 mm. 252 pp. ¥720. ISBN 4-12-150040-7.



Cover design: Chūō Kōron Shinsha

Images of the fulltime housewife (*sengyō shufu*) change with the times—she is the object of envy in some times, and, at others, reviled for taking advantage of a life with "three square meals and a nap."

Today, as the status of women in society is finally beginning to change since the enactment of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986, the role of the career house-

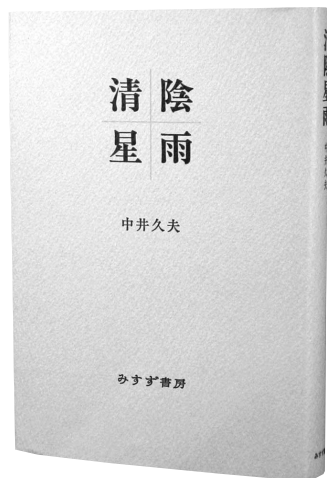
wife is again the focus of intense debate in the context of the current drawn-out recession. This volume collects essays and discussions among twenty people (including some men) regarding such topics as what defines a career housewife, women's lifestyles today, and harmonious coexistence with men.

The broad range of information contained in this book—from views urging housewives to reappraise the value of family and housework and regain their self-confidence, to critiques of the fulltime housewife; actual accounts of housewives troubled by their inability to establish an identity of their own—vividly portrays the dilemmas facing Japan's housewives.

This is an anthology that impresses upon us again the need to build a society where women can choose any path from a full range of options, and where often-derogatorily used terms like *senkyō shufu* can be relegated to history.

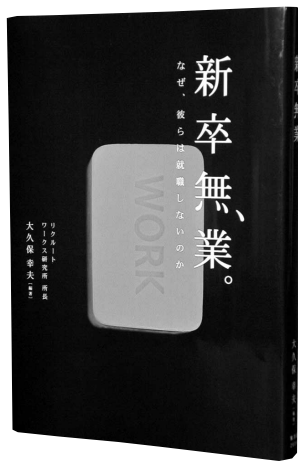
Seiin seiu [Cool Shadows and Meteor Showers]. Nakai Hisao. Misuzu Shobō, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 270 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-622-04819-1.

This is a collection of forty-seven essays by a well-known psychiatrist (b. 1934) written four times a year for a column of the same title in the *Kobe shinbun* newspaper from June 1990 to December 2001. The topics discussed range widely from personal matters, such as ordinary encounters with people in daily life and memories of his youth, to national and world affairs, including the end of the Cold War, the Kobe earthquake, and U.S. troops' actual use of firearms.



Following the massive earthquake that hit Kobe and its vicinity in January 1995, the author became deeply involved with patients suffering psychologically from the impact of the quake. He is also known for his leading role in setting up the relief organization called the Mental Care Center. After the earthquake, he notes, he ceased to write about his personal affairs in the newspaper column. At the time of the book's publication he attached a subtext to each essay expressing his current thinking on the subject. While some of these additions came out longer than the original essay, they expand the main text in depth and breadth of time frame. Supported by the author's extensive knowledge and sensitive insights, the volume gives a penetrating glimpse of 1990s Japan through the eyes of a psychiatrist.

Shinsotsu mugyō: Naze karera wa shūshoku shinai no ka [Newly Graduated and Unemployed: Why They Don't Settle Down on a Job]. Ōkubo Yukio. Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, 2002. 188 × 130 mm. 234 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 4-492-26064-1.



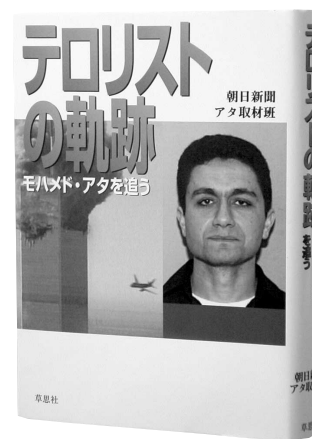
Cover design: Kashimoto Satoshi & Moriya Takehisa

According to an education ministry survey, 21.3 percent of the university students who graduated in March 2001—more than one in five—remained unemployed after graduation, neither finding fulltime employment nor going on for further study.

This book reports on the employment climate surrounding university and high school students and their schools and prospective employers. Because of the safety net provided by parental support as well as ample

income available on the temporary and casual job market in Japan, the gravity of unemployment among youth has not attracted as much attention as among middle-aged and older workers, but it is expected to have a greater impact on the nation's future. The author (1961) analyzes various aspects of the situation, among them a job placement system out of touch with the times, the information "blockade" young people encounter about career options at each juncture in their lives, the immature understanding of employment this lack of information engenders in them, and the demise of the former structure of values and employment practices that guided people from graduation to lifetime employment to secure retirement. Against this background, he offers suggestions on what the government, employers, schools, and individuals should do to overcome the current difficulties.

Terorisuto no kiseki: Mohamedo Ata o ou [The Path of a Terrorist: Retracing the Steps of Mohammed Atta]. Asahi Shinbun Ata Shuzaihan. Sōshisha, 2002. 193 × 134 mm. 270 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-7942-1137-6.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

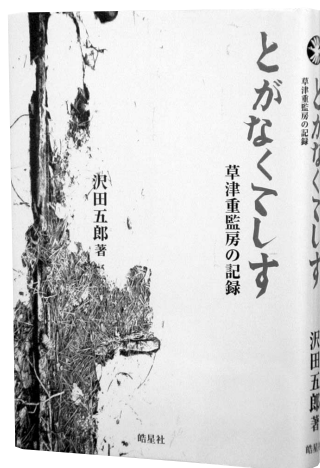
Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, people all over the world have developed a fear that the twenty-first century will be an age of terrorism. This book presents a series of fifty-two articles published serially in the newspaper *Asahi shinbun* that trace the background to the attacks, supplemented by additional information not published in the series.

The reporting team visited eight countries, retracing the activities of

the terrorist group that carried out the attacks from its formation to its final shocking act. The account focuses on suspected ringleader Mohammed Atta, painstakingly and engrossingly piecing together a picture of the man—the kind of student he was, the nature of his flight training in the United States, and so on—from scraps of information provided by people who knew him personally. At the same time, many questions about Atta remain unanswered, such as how he became involved with the Al Qaeda organization while in Hamburg.

The book puts forward the view that, to prevent the twenty-first century becoming a century of terrorism, the international community must take up the challenge of creating a world in which young people can have hope for the future. The appendices contain descriptions of Atta by people who knew him, his will, and the written instructions the group followed in carrying out the attacks.

Toga nakute shisu: Kusatsu jūkanbō no kiroku [They Did Not Deserve to Die: A Record of the Kusatsu Special Care Unit]. Sawada Gorō. Kōseisha, 2002. 194 × 131 mm. 220 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-7744-0290-7.



Cover design: Fujimaki Ryōichi

Until the abolishment of the Leprosy Prevention Law in 1996, for ninety years leprosy patients had been subjected to a policy of isolation and their human rights completely ignored. At the Hansen's disease (leprosy) sanatorium Kuryū Rakusen-en in the Kusatsu hot-spring resort of Gunma prefecture

where the author was admitted at the age of twelve, there was once a "special care unit" which was in fact a disciplinary cell for patients of the sanatorium. Determined to record for posterity the story of what he calls the "Auschwitz of Hansen's disease patients," Sawada recorded in this book what he saw and heard about the special care unit.

The unit consisted of eight rooms, none with electric lights or heating. The size of each was about nine feet square including the toilet. During the approximately ten years from the time it was built in 1938 until it was closed, some ninety patients had been held there, around twenty of whom died while incarcerated.

The author, now in his early seventies, decries the harsh treatment Hansen's disease patients endured under Japan's militarist regime and in the course of its wars of aggression, and points out the abnormality of a society that denies the presence of its weak members. The book contains photographs of the special care unit and includes a section on laws relating to Hansen's disease.

CULTURE

Haikyo no aruki-kata: Tansaku hen [Exploring Deserted Buildings: Reconnaissance]. Kurihara Tōru, ed. East Press, 2002. 210 × 148 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-87257-289-0.

A growing number of people in Japan are enjoying the unusual but quietly flourishing pastime of visiting deserted houses and buildings and investigating their histories. This author (b. 1966) claims to have

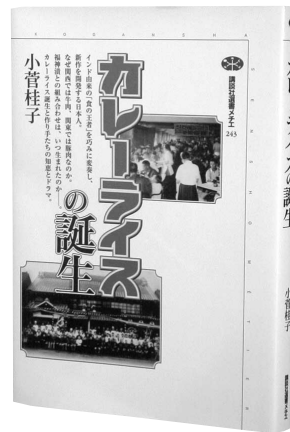


Cover design: Sakagawa Office

explored over three hundred such sites. With the help of ten fellow lobbyists, in this book he reports on forty-five deserted buildings in various parts of the country.

Ranging in age since abandonment from one to almost fifty years, the sites, including disused coal mines, hospitals, schools, houses, and hotels, are presented along with a wealth of photographs. The book conveys the poignant beauty of structures that, while left to decay, still bear traces of their former life—a CT scanner left in an old hospital, strips of film on the floor of a closed-down cinema. The author also considers the problems involved in exploring deserted sites, pointing out that such activity may violate the law, warning that the buildings may be structurally dangerous, and stressing the need for careful preparation and precautions.

Karē raisu no tanjō [The Birth of "Curry Rice"]. Kosuge Keiko. Kōdansha, 2002. 188 × 128 mm. 236 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-258243-0.



Cover design: Yamagishi Yoshiaki

Karē raisu (curry and rice) is one of Japan's most popular dishes, served in homes, hotels, and local restaurants all over the country and loved by people of all ages and backgrounds. The dish is a thoroughly Japanized version, however, with a flavor and style quite different from the "authentic" curries of India.

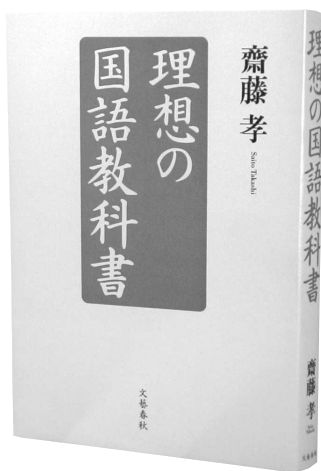
This information-packed book recounts the process by which Japanese made Indian curry their own. Curry powder was introduced to Japan by the English during the so-called Meiji Enlightenment, when the government actively promoted the influx of Western civilization.

Thereafter, *karē raisu* steadily took root, its spread aided by the lifting of a ban on meat-eating and the incorporation into the dish of potatoes, onions, and carrots, a triad of nutritious vegetables that began to be produced domestically around that time. With the development after World War II of block-type curry roux, the success of *karē raisu* was assured.

The rise of *karē raisu* to the status of national dish paralleled the process of Japan's modernization itself, and the book tells the story of people who devoted themselves to its development from one period to the next. The author is a university professor of food culture.

***Risō no kokugo kyōkasho* [The Ideal Japanese-language Textbook]. Saitō Takashi.** Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 188 × 131 mm. 334 pp. ¥1,238. ISBN 4-16-358480-3.

Believing that a recession-slowed Japan can reinvigorate itself by enhancing people's language skills and physical fitness, this author (b. 1960) has compiled and published what he calls the "ideal" textbook, rigorously selecting exemplary writings accessible to students from the mid-elementary school level up.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

Whereas government-approved Japanese-language textbooks consist mainly of easy-to-read material, the author maintains that—in addition to repetitive drills for learning kanji characters and grammar—exposure to numerous examples of outstanding Japanese prose is essential for improving students' overall native-language skills. The author bases this approach on his experience in teaching Japanese language

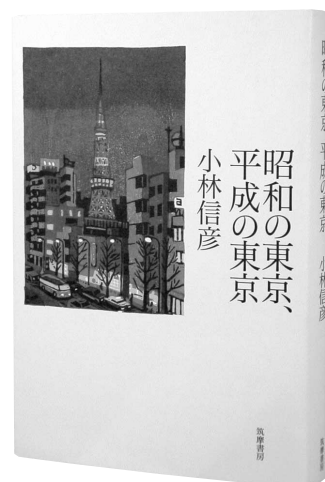
to elementary school students at his private tutoring school. Even though works of the literary canon are generally too dense and sophisticated for students at that level to absorb fully, he has found that they do gain an appreciation for the power and beauty of such writing, and because of its weighty content as well, they learn all the more from it.

With the aim of deeply—even physically—instilling the power of language, the book introduces passages by such great modern Japanese writers as Natsume Sōseki and Mori Ōgai, as well as translations of works by literary giants of other countries, including Shakespeare and Tolstoy. The selection covers a wide range of writing forms, including plays and letters.

***Shōwa no Tōkyō, Heisei no Tōkyō* [Shōwa-era Tokyo, Heisei-era Tokyo]. Kobayashi Nobuhiko.** Chikuma Shobō, 2002. 194 × 133 mm. 252 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-480-81440-X.

Author of *Shisetsu Tōkyō hanjōki* [My Story of the Heyday of Tokyo] and *Shisetsu Tōkyō hōrōki* [My Story of Wandering Around Tokyo], Kobayashi completes a trilogy of works about Tokyo with this collection of essays, the culmination of his essay writing about the city published in newspapers and magazines over nearly four decades from 1964 to 2001.

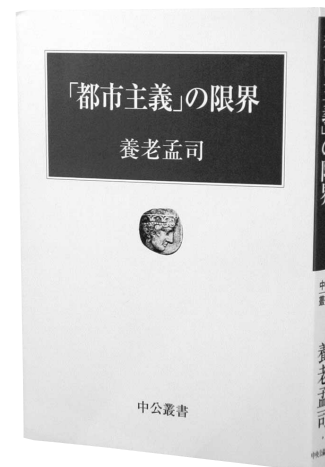
Kobayashi was born in the old *shitamachi* district of Ryōgoku in 1932. His family ran a long-established *wagashi* (Japanese confectionery) shop. From around the time he began to attend an elite



Cover design: Kusaka Jun'ichi

school in the *yamanote* area on the heights above the older part of the city, he developed a distaste for the old plebeian quarter. In 1992, he wrote "in today's Tokyo it is difficult to imagine that *yamanote* and *shitamachi* were practically like different countries, but until about thirty years ago, they really were." He still lives in his beloved *yamanote* area. "I have packed this book with all my feelings for Tokyo," he writes, "my prejudices and preferences, the things I grieve for, put up with, hate, enjoy, and laugh at—everything." The essays bring back to life the author's thoughts about the ever-changing face of Tokyo at each stage over the thirty-seven years from the time of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics until today.

***"Toshi shugi" no genkai* [The Limits of "Urbanism"]. Yōrō Takeshi.** Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2002. 191 × 131 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-12-003240-X.



This is an anthology of essays on current events by leading anatomist Yōrō Takeshi (b. 1937). The lives of human beings were once constrained by nature, he writes, but today, especially in those places that are called cities, societies have evolved that are unconstrained by nature, and in fact seemingly dominate nature. Our society today, he asserts, is designed in such a way as to make life pleasant; it is the consciously contrived product of the human brain. The city, then, is a society consciously shaped by the brain. Modern society is the scene of artificial spaces and of the virtual space of the bureaucratic or household systems, which exclude nature.

No longer threatened by nature in such spaces, people are instead, bound by their own brains, or consciousness.

The essays in this book range over a wide spectrum of topics: the information society, the low birthrate, education, urban crime and suicide, aging and respect for human dignity, fundamentalism, and terrorism. The limits of urbanism are to be found, he observes, in the malaises and dilemmas caused by the natural (the unconscious) that is supposed to have been removed, as a result of the urbanization of the entire country of Japan through the various reforms and changes of the postwar era.

ANIMALS

Haru no kazoe-kata [Ways of Reckoning Spring]. Hidaka Toshitaka. Shinchōsha, 2001. 190×130 mm. 198 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-10-451001-7.

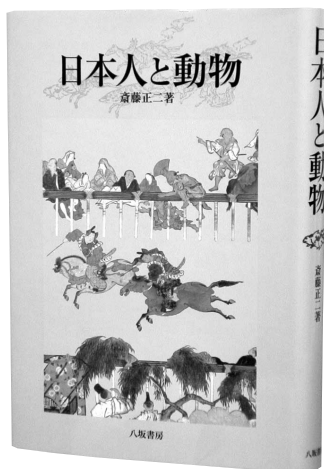


Cover design: Shinchōsha

Written by an animal behaviorist (b. 1930), the thirty-six essays collected in this volume were favorably received when published serially in a magazine. The author begins the title essay by considering how animals sense the advent of spring from fluctuations in temperature. He explains that, whereas birds measure the seasons by the duration of daylight in each day, many insects in Japan apparently keep tally of the number of days in which the temperature rises above a certain point (the minimum required for growth of their young), and know that spring has arrived when the appropriate total of such days is reached.

Sprinkling his essays with engaging gems of knowledge, the author proposes the creation of a “human village” (*hitozato*) where the domain of human habitation and the natural world would be allowed to come into contact. The natural world is one of incessant competition lacking any preestablished harmony. Human logic and the logic of nature are therefore at odds. In the *hitozato*, human beings would not attempt to impose harmony, instead allowing the logic of nature to unfold undisturbed. Only in this way, he maintains, can we truly care for and coexist with the natural environment.

Nihonjin to dōbutsu [Japanese and Their Animals]. Saitō Shōji. Yasaka Shobō, 2002. 194×132 mm. 190 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-89694-496-8.



Featuring twenty-two animals and fish familiar to Japanese, including horses, cows, wild boars, dogs, bush warblers, pheasants, copper pheasants (*yamadori*), frogs, sardines, and salmon, the book presents a detailed cultural history perspective of Japanese relations to them in the past. The accounts draw on a wealth of sources, from haiku poetry and fairy tales, to classics such as *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters, completed in 712), *Nihon shoki* (Chronicle of Japan; 720), the early poetry anthologies *Man'yōshū* (770) and *Kokin wakashū* (905), *Makura no sōshi* (The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon; 996–1012), Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji; early eleventh century), *Heike monogatari* (Tale of the Heike, early thirteenth century), and Yoshida Kenkō's *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in Idleness; ca. 1330).

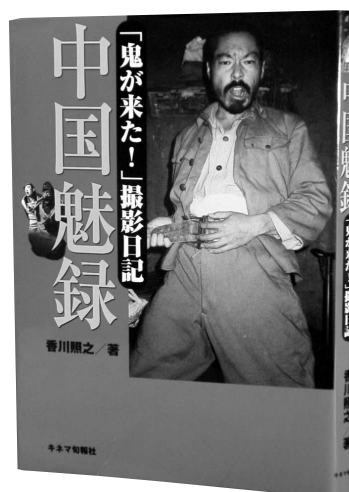
The author (b. 1925) is concerned about the impact of advances in modern science and technology on the rich fauna of Japan. Behind the publication of this book is his desire to encourage Japanese to face squarely the on-going destruction of the environment by reflecting on how animals were traditionally viewed and how humans related to animals before the onset of modernization in the mid-nineteenth century.

ARTS

Chūgoku miroku: “Oni ga kita!” satsuei nikki [A Fiendish Account of China: A Diary of the Shooting of Devils on the Doorstep]. Kagawa Teruyuki. Kinema Junpōsha, 2002. 209×147 mm. 263 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-87376-241-3.

In 2000, the film *Devils on the Doorstep*, directed by top Chinese actor Wen Jiang, won the Grand Prix award at the Cannes International Film Festival. The present book is an account of the shooting of the film based on a diary kept daily on location for four months from August 1998 by Kagawa (b. 1965), the Japanese actor who played the supporting role as a Japanese soldier.

Set in a poor village in northern China under Japan's occupation toward the end of World War II, the film depicts the dark side of human nature during wartime in the relationship between a Japanese soldier held prisoner and the villagers. The filming staff and the actors included many amateurs, and problems were constantly occurring. Preparations



Cover design: Umezu Yoshiko

for the shooting involved demanding military drills, and actors were required to thoroughly become the characters they were assigned to perform. On top of that, director Wen rewrote the script again and again and often shot the same scene over and over. A total of ninety hours of film was shot. The merciless schedule, perhaps demanding more than of actual soldiers during war, pushed Kagawa into an abnormal mental state. He found vent in keeping the diary, which gives a detailed account of the almost unimaginably rigorous way a Chinese film is made.

Senzaki Manabu no uitari shizundari [Senzaki Manabu's Ups and Downs]. Senzaki Manabu. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 194 × 133 mm. 238 pp. ¥1,333. ISBN 4-16-358640-7. The Japanese game of *shōgi* is a chess-like board game. It is played by both professionals and amateurs and by people of all ages, from elementary school students to the elderly.

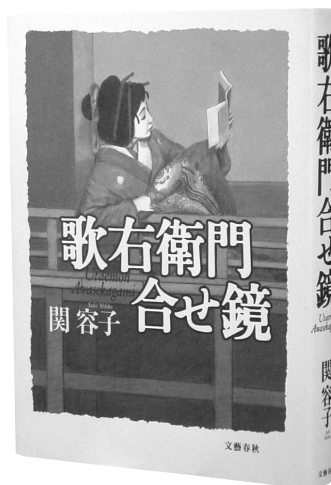
The author (b. 1970) became a professional *shōgi* player at the age of seventeen and is now among top-class players. Professional players (*gishi*) tend to be extraordinary in various ways, especially so in the eyes of those unfamiliar with such people. This book vividly portrays in a light and easy style the eccentric and talented qualities of players, including the author himself.

He introduces, for example, a genius who plays the game with one hundred people at the same time, for four hours running. He also writes about himself, about how much he agonized over the loss of a game due

to one mistake as he thought back on every move he and his opponent made from the start of the game on his imaginary board. He describes his subjects with warmth, but without holding back.

The author expresses the intense humiliation he felt when he lost and was demoted in rank. "Even if you go down, some day you are sure to move up," he says. Even if one is not a *shōgi* player, we all want to believe that. The book is an essay collection that can be fully enjoyed even by those who know nothing about the game.

Utaemon awase kagami [Utaemon Self-Reflecting Mirror]. Seki Yōko. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 193 × 134 mm. 230 pp. ¥1,619. ISBN 4-16-358310-6.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

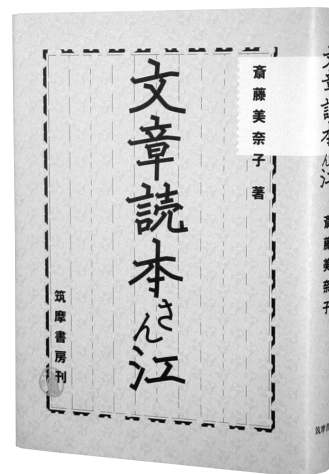
This is a collection of biographical essays mirroring the real life of Nakamura Utaemon VI (1917–2001), one of the greatest kabuki actors of the twentieth century, as well as one of the greatest *onnagata*, or performers of female roles. With the guild name (*yagō*) of Narikomaya, Utaemon was acclaimed as the "supreme *onnagata*," and designated a Living National Treasure in 1968. He won ardent admiration for his inborn gracefulness and beauty and the skill with which he expressed the delicate shades and depth of female psychology. While behaving in a quiet, refined manner, he had an unyielding and chivalrous spirit. From 1971 to 1999 he served as head of the Japan Actors' Association, and remained influential in the world of kabuki until he died at the age of eighty-four.

On friendly terms with Utaemon for many years, the author frequently heard the actor tell stories about his art. For this book she rewrote previously published essays, reproducing Utaemon's unique way of talking in her stories about kabuki and his memorable personality. It also recounts a number of unusual episodes, such as his encounters with Greta Garbo and Grace Kelly while on tour overseas.

LITERATURE

Bunshō dokuhon-san e [To Those Books on How to Write]. Saitō Minako. Chikuma Shobō, 2002. 194 × 134 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-480-81437-X.

Beginning with the *Bunshō dokuhon* [Reader on Writing; published in 1934] by the great novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965), countless books seeking to guide laymen in the principles of good writing—*bunshō dokuhon*—have been published. This book is a work of literary criticism aimed at shedding light on the entire genre.



Cover design: Sobue Shin

Saitō (b. 1956) first surveys the content and format of the standard works in the genre, which are generally produced by fiction writers, journalists, university professors, essayists, or instructors in the art of writing. She follows the various debates on writing that have unfolded in the past, such as whether a distinction should be made between practical and creative writing styles, whether writing should reflect the way it is spoken,



Cover design: Tachibana Hiroki

and whether writing is above all for transmitting information or a form of self-expression. She notes the prejudices against “poor writing” (*dabun*) that go hand in hand with the cult of “fine writing” (*meibun*) and lays bare the hierarchy of writing styles that governs the world of letters. She also analyzes the reasons for the sustained demand books of this genre enjoy.

Incisive and persuasive, this work was awarded the first Kobayashi Hideo Prize for literary criticism launched to replace the former Shinchō Literary Prize in 2002.

Kaku to iu koto [The Act of Writing]. Ishikawa Kyūyō. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 173 × 108 mm. 174 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-16-660246-2. Inputting of Japanese characters, unlike alphabetic or other characters of Western languages, involves a complex procedure of selection and conversion from available options to obtain the required ideographic, compound, or phonetic characters.



Cover design: Sakata Masanori

According to this author (b. 1945), a calligrapher, this halting method of writing Japanese using a computer hinders the operation of the “un-self-conscious mind” that “gives rise to history and culture,” and diminishes the writer’s capacity for expression. Regarding the act of writing as properly a “drama of language” unfolding through the sweep of brush (or pen) against paper, the author warns that Japanese word processing is bringing about the stagnation, degeneration, and destruction of culture.

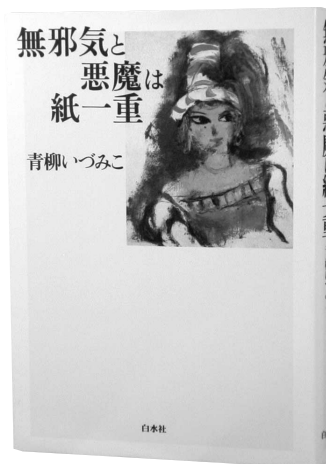
In the author’s view, whereas Western culture emphasizes the spoken word, the cultures of East Asia give primacy to written characters. The West, he says, should recognize

the history and aesthetic of written language in East Asia and, in that light, reappraise the history and beauty of writing of its own cultural sphere. Only in that way, he argues, can efforts in cross-cultural understanding be taken beyond the level of mere exoticism.

This is a thought-provoking cultural study of writing considered in global perspective.

Mujaki to akuma wa kami hitoe [The Fine Line between Innocence and Evil]. Aoyagi Izumiko. Haku-suishsha, 2002. 193 × 133 mm. 240 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-560-04945-9.

Though known by many names—siren, vamp, femme fatale—the figure of the dangerous woman who leads men to ruin has been portrayed in virtually all cultures and ages.



Cover design: Okamoto Yōhei

Written by a pianist and Debussy scholar, this book takes a comprehensive look at various manifestations of the femme fatale figure in myths, novels, operas, and other sources. The author classifies such women into four types according to their method of seduction: those who lay nets, those who go out to meet their prey, those who draw their victims in, and those who take no action at all. Examples include such classic Western femmes fatales as Carmen, Salome, and Manon Lescaut, as well as characters from Japanese literature, such as Madam Numa of the Izumi Kyōka (1873–1939) novel *Numa-fujin*.

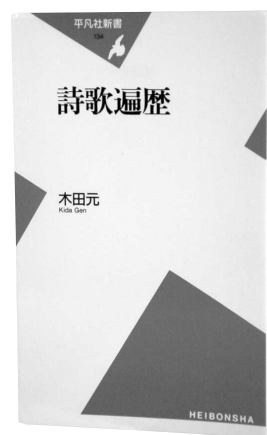
The book’s title, taken from the story collection *Otogi-zōshi* by Dazai Osamu (1909–48), is an allusion to a type of woman who, though beautiful, good-natured, and free of mali-

cious intent, nonetheless ends up trifling with men’s affections.

Shiika henreki [Experiences with Poetry]. Kida Gen. Heibonsha, 2002. 172 × 105 mm. 204 pp. ¥700. ISBN 4-582-85134-7.

This is an anthology of verse which the philosopher author, born in 1928, learned in his youth and still loves to read and recite.

Belonging to the generation of Japanese who, in the absence of computers or television, continued to prize traditional forms of cultural erudition, the author often read poetry as a young man. He would copy his favorite poems into a notebook, read them over and over until he had memorized them, and recite them to himself. The poems became so sharply etched in his mind that they still spring unexpectedly from his lips from time to time.



Cover design: Kikuchi Nobuyoshi

The selection covers a wide range of forms, including lyric, symbolic and prose poetry, old *waka*, modern *tanka*, *renga* (linked verse), haiku, Chinese poetry, nursery rhymes, translated verse, and French song lyrics. While all the examples are so well-known as to be almost commonplace, the author hopes that his “amateur” selection will make the anthology all the more accessible to novices. He offers the book to readers of his own generation as a reminder of former times, and to young readers as a gateway to the world of poetry.

FICTION

Abekobe [Topsy-turvy]. Kuze Teruhiko. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 193 × 133 mm. 262 pp. ¥1,571. ISBN 4-16-320830-5.



Cover design: Nakajima Kahoru

This is a collection of nine inter-linked short stories told by a first-person narrator who, an aging writer, resembles the author himself.

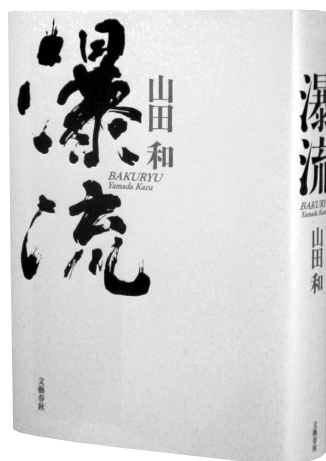
Living alone in a suburban apartment that is both his office and his refuge from the world, the narrator has reached the point where he begins to hold his fading life increasingly dear. Miroku, an actress in her fifties who says she “flits to and fro between this world and the next at least once a month,” suddenly appears on the scene and starts telephoning him to relay strange information—a message from a woman saying she sent him a notice of her own death, but suspects he won’t notice, so to be sure has asked Miroku to pass on the news, and a request from a widow he doesn’t know asking him to return an item she is sure “the bookbinder’s husband” lent him.

Prompted by these strange events suspended somewhere between fantasy and reality, the narrator begins to piece together fragments of old memories and details about a woman with whom he was once involved. Other rather eccentric characters include a critic who rates everything with numerical scores, and a reclusive curio dealer. Pervaded with a faintly titillating flavor, the stories are written in a style reminiscent of literature of the Taishō (1912–26) and early Shōwa (1926–89) eras.

Bakuryū [Raging River]. Yamada Kazu. Bungei Shunjū, 2002. 193 × 132 mm. 415 pp. ¥2,286. ISBN 4-16-320690-6.

The Shōgawa river flows north out of the Hida mountains of central Honshu into Toyama Bay. This novel is based on a real-life controversy which, arising more than seventy years ago over plans to build a dam on the river, became one of modern Japan’s very first instances of a dispute over protection of the environment.

Under the national policy of *fukoku kyōhei* (“enrich the country, strengthen the military”) the emerging electric power industry is intent on constructing a hydroelectric dam on the river. Checking the flow of the river with a dam, however, would be the deathknell to the local timber industry. As the electric power company concerned flexes its formidable financial muscle to push its plans forward, a courageous man takes up the cause of the foresters by initiating administrative and civil litigation against the dam.



Cover design: Ogata Shūichi

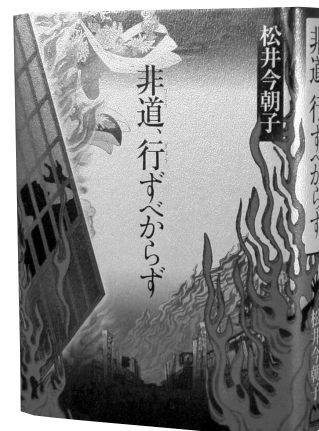
The novel’s protagonist is a former timber worker who has returned to his home town from China. Upon his return he had been employed as a subcontractor for the electric power company, but after getting caught up in the dam dispute he becomes a newspaper reporter following the case for the forestry side. Based on painstaking research in a massive quantity of historical records, this is a powerfully told and moving story of the man’s shifting fortunes both in love and amid the turmoil of the larger social struggle.

Hidō gyōzu bekarazu [Do Not Diverge from the Way of the Art]. Matsui Kesako. Magazine House, 2002. 194 × 134 mm. 431 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 4-8387-1367-3.

On New Year’s Day 1809, when the flowering of the culture of Japan’s old capital of Edo was in its increasingly decadent prime, the Nakamura-za, the city’s most popular theater, burned to the ground. In the ashes was found a costume chest containing the body of an aging shopkeeper apparently strangled to death. Just around that time, trouble begins to brew over the succession to prominent *onnagata* (performer of female roles) Ogino Sawanojō, and which of the sons by different mothers would prevail becomes the talk of the town. At the rebuilt theater, a play featuring a great fire, entitled “Yaoya O-Shichi,” is staged in the third month of the year, and according to the initial plan, is to star the two sons in the leading role on alternate nights. On the first day, however, an accident occurs again.

Who is “Shikunshi,” whose name is written in a mysterious letter found on the body of the victim? The discovery of the body eventually reveals that the actors have engaged in behavior that diverges from the way of their art, and all is intricately intertwined with the secret of the birth of the younger son.

This is a long period mystery unfolding on the stage of Edo kabuki and portraying the diverse characters of the day, from the popular stars and lower-ranking actors to the theater owners and sponsors, the accompanists, playhouse writers, gallery attendants, gatekeepers, and many others. (See essay by Matsui Kesako in this issue of JBN, pp. 3–5.)



Cover design: Milky Isobe

Events and Trends

Musashi Revived

Legendary master swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645) has been selected as the main character of the new Taiga Drama television series for 2003. Each Taiga Drama series, aired Sunday nights throughout the year by the public broadcaster NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), has enjoyed high viewer ratings since the program began in 1962. Musashi is currently the focus of intense popular interest in Japan. It is said that he traveled throughout the country and was undefeated through sixty sword fights. Numerous stories of his martial feats, such as the famous encounter with another great swordsman, Sasaki Kojirō, on the island of Ganryūjima, have become legendary. Musashi's book *Gorin no sho* (tr. *The Book of Five Rings*), read for centuries, is today a guide to strategy and self-cultivation for many businessmen.

Musashi is the principal character of numerous works of fiction, the most famous among them being *Miyamoto Musashi* (1935–39; 8 vols.; translated as *Musashi*, 1981) by Yoshikawa Eiji (1892–1962), writer of historical and period fiction. The 2003 NHK Taiga Drama series will be based on Yoshikawa's *Musashi*.

The current Musashi boom got its impetus from the manga story *Bagabondo* [Vagabond] (Kōdansha) written by Inoue Takehiko, a popular comic-strip author known for the basketball manga *Slam Dunk*. In 2002, the sixth Tezuka Osamu Culture Prize awarded *Vagabond* the grand prize for manga. As the story continued in serial form in the weekly manga magazine *Morning*, the Musashi boom gained momentum among young people. Inoue's account of Musashi is also based on the Yoshikawa book, but Inoue depicts his protagonist not as the indomitable swordsman, but as a true-to-life young man, the anguish and adversity he suffers, and the personal growth he attains.

According to the Japanese website of the major online bookstore Amazon.com, some fifty titles dealing with Miyamoto Musashi were published between January and November 2002. The list ranges widely, from Dōmon Fuyūji's *Miyamoto Musashi* [Miyamoto Musashi] (Mikasa Shobō) and Kawamura Akira's *Miyamoto Musashi: Monogatari to shiseki o tazunete* [Miyamoto Musashi: Tales and Visits to Historic Sites] (Seibidō Shuppan), to Kawaguchi Sunao's *Miyamoto Musashi hyakuichi no nazo: Shussei no himitsu kara meishōbu no shinsō made* [One-Hundred-One Mysteries of Miyamoto Musashi: From the Secret of His Birth to the Truth about His Famous Sword Fights] (PHP Kenkyūsho) and commentary on and various new translations of Musashi's *Gorin no sho*, intended for businesspeople. *Musashi*, written by Nawata Kazuo and published in September 2002, offers a critical review of all the major books written about Musashi by a wide range of authors, including Yoshikawa Eiji, Yamamoto Shūgorō, Shiba Ryōtarō, Shibata Renzaburō, Fujisawa Shūhei, Tsumoto Yō, Sasazawa Saho, Sae Shūichi, and Mine Ryūichirō, as well as Inoue Takehiko's manga.

Books for Seniors a Hit

Bookstore shelves are full of books dealing with the topics of "aging" and "living." One of the most successful authors of such books is Hinohara Shigeaki, doctor of internal medicine still active at the age of 90. His *Ikikata jōzu* [How to Live Well] (U-Leag, 2001; see JBN No. 39, p. 14) began the current boom in books for people of advanced age. This collection of essays, written as a column for a seniors magazine, presents his positive approach to aging. Apparently having struck a responsive chord among readers in their fifties and over, the book has sold over a million copies. Hinohara is reported to be the oldest million seller writer in Japanese history. Hinohara's other books are also hits, including *Ikiru no ga tanoshiku naru jūgo no shūkan* [Fifteen Habits for Making Life Enjoyable] (Kōdansha), *Jinsei hyakunen watashi no kufū* [My

Secrets for Living to Be One Hundred] (Gentōsha), *Gojussai kara no "ikiru" gijutsu* [Techniques for "Living" after the Age of Fifty] (Asahi Shinbunsha), and *Inochi o tsukuru* [Creating Your Life] (Kōdansha).

Ishihara Shintarō, governor of Tokyo and Akutagawa Prize novelist known for *Taiyō no kisetsu* (tr. *Season of Violence*), also wrote *Oite koso jinsei* [Life Really Starts with Old Age] (Gentōsha), which continues to place high in the best-selling lists at major bookstores along with novelist Itsuki Hiroyuki's *Unmei no ashioto* [Footsteps of Fate] (Gentōsha). *Rokujussai no raburetā: Otto kara tsuma e, tsuma kara otto e* [Love Letters at Sixty: Husband to Wife, Wife to Husband] (Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai; JBN No. 38, p. 13), a collection of heart-warming episodes by married couples submitted from throughout the country at the invitation of a major bank, and its sequel, are also selling well. In the past, too, books that deal with aging in a positive light became best-sellers, such as *Dai-ōjō* [The Great Crossing] (Iwanami Shoten, 1994; JBN, No. 8, p. 12) by songwriter and commentator Ei Rokusuke and *Rōjinryoku* [Old-Age "Strengths"] (Chikuma Shobō, 1998; see JBN, No. 26, p. 16) by novelist and painter Akasegawa Genpei.

Obituaries

Novelist Hino Keizō died of colon cancer in October 2002, at age 73. After graduating from the University of Tokyo, he entered the employ of the *Yomiuri shinbun* newspaper. As an overseas correspondent he reported on the Vietnam War and other events and did not start writing fiction until he was in his mid-thirties. In 1975 he won the Akutagawa Prize for *Ano yūhi* [That Setting Sun] based mainly on experiences from his career as a correspondent. Other works won major prizes, including *Hōyō* [Embrace] (Izumi Kyōka Literary Prize), *Sakyū ga ugoku yōni* [Like a Dune Moving] (Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize), *Yume no shima* [Dream Island] (Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts), and *Taifu no me* [The Eye of the Typhoon] (Noma Literary Prize).

Novelist Sasazawa Saho died of liver cancer in October at age 71. Influenced by Matsumoto Seichō, he began writing mysteries, including *Manekazaru kyaku* [Uninvited Guests] and *Hito kui* [Man-Eater]. In 1971 he began writing the “Kogarashi Monjirō” series about a wandering outlaw set in the Edo period. The series continued for thirty years, and won great popularity when the story was made into a TV drama under the same title. His other major works include *Akuma no heya* [The Devil’s Room], a suspense story with a female protagonist, and the long novel *Miyamoto Musashi*. Over his entire career he produced some 377 works in book form.

Manga on the Internet

Manga are increasingly accessible on the Internet. More and more websites are appearing, making available the classic, now hard-to-obtain works as well as the latest popular series. This

provides easy access to manga for people living in remote places with few bookstores, and also frees them from the space taken up by printed editions of manga.

Many old masterpieces and out-of-print works can be accessed at the website “10daysbook” (<http://www.10daysbook.com>) operated by eBook Initiative Japan Co., Ltd. A total of 382 volumes by cartoonist Tezuka Osamu, who remains popular even after his death in 1989—among them *Phoenix*, *Astro Boy*, and *Black Jack*—are on its list of some 2,000 titles, which also include 500 general (non-manga) books from the “Iwanami bunko” series. Readers are asked to register as members and pay a fee, after which they may download manga stories as they choose and read them using a viewing software. One manga volume is priced at around 300 yen. The most popular item on this website is Tezuka’s *Black Jack*.

The website “Manga no kuni”

(<http://manga.accessticket.com>) is jointly operated by five publishing houses: Kōdansha, Shōgakukan, Hakusensha, Akita Shoten, and Gakushū Kenkyūsha. This site offers currently popular manga series and back issues published by these companies, and its lineup includes *Kindaichi shōnen no jikenbo* [Cases from the Files of Boy-detective Kindaichi], *GTO* [Great Teacher Onizuka], *Inuyasha* [Dog Demon], *Beruseruku* [Berserk], and *Meitantei Konan* [Famous Detective Conan]. The price is around 50 yen per story.

Lycos Japan’s website “Lycos Comic” (<http://comic.lycos.co.jp>) does not require downloading, allowing users to read comics upon accessing the site instead. The fee is 100 yen per volume. Among the volumes available are Ishinomori Shōtarō’s *Saibōgu 009* [Cyborg 009], and Ikeda Riyoko’s *Berusaikyū no bara* [The Rose of Versailles].

Japanese Book Publishing Resource Now Available

Shuppan nenkan + Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM 2002 [Publishing Yearbook and Books in Print in Japan CD-ROM, 2002] (Shuppan News Co.).

The Japan Book Publishers Association and Shuppan News Co. have produced a joint publication consisting of *Shuppan nenkan* [Publishing Yearbook] and *Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM* [Books in Print in Japan CD-ROM], under the title *Shuppan nenkan + Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM 2002*, distributed by Shuppan News Co.

Shuppan nenkan, published annually since 1951, contains current information, statistics, and other data concerning the publishing industry and libraries, a directory of publishers, etc., lists of publications put out over the last year (70,000 new titles), periodicals (4,500 titles for general readership), e-books (8,000 titles), CD-ROM publications (500 titles), on-demand publications (1,000 titles). It also includes a list

of 5,000 book reviews published in national newspapers. Among the statistical data are: tallies of new titles by publisher; bestsellers; corporate income of publishers; size of Japanese publishers; sales rankings of bookstores; and fluctuations in the number of magazines published. The directory provides profiles of individual publishers, distributors, publishing-related organizations, book home-delivery companies, bookstore unions, copyright agents, the National Diet Library, public

libraries, special libraries, major advertisement agents, and major newspaper companies.

Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM lists 610,000 titles in stock at Japanese publishers, that is, all the books that are available for purchase. It is equipped for “fuzzy searching,” and has links to 2,500 websites of publishers, allowing the user to enter those sites.

Shuppan nenkan + Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM 2002 not only shows the circumstances of publishing in Japan but categorizes publications for the convenience of researchers on Japan, overseas publishers, and translators.

The 3-volume set, in a B-5-size case, is priced at 35,000 yen (plus 5 percent consumption tax). *Shuppan nenkan* is approximately 4,000 pages, and *Nihon shoseki sōmokuroku CD-ROM* is a hybrid CD-ROM. ISBN 4-7852-0104-5. See also: Shuppan News Co.: <http://www.snews.net> Japan Book Publishers Association: <http://www.jbpa.or.jp>



“I” and Politics

The *shishōsetsu*, or “I-novel,” was once a major genre of Japanese literature. The authors of these novels made themselves the protagonists and related their actual experiences and emotions in elaborate detail. Fiction that takes its subject matter from actual experience is by no means unique to Japan, being quite common throughout the world, but what distinguished the genre here was that literary works were forged out of purely personal experiences that the authors were convinced were somehow “chosen,” touching upon universal truth.

Behind the evolution of the genre was the impulse of the authors, thwarted by political realities in their attempt to create an entirely new society as Japan began its modernizing drive a little over one-hundred years ago, to heal the sense of frustration that haunted them like a trauma. Turning their backs on the realities of an oppressive government, these writers focused their gaze inward upon their own individual lives, and sought—by making themselves the central characters of works of fiction—to score a victory over reality in the realm of the imagination.

The I-novel vividly expresses that which is peculiarly Japanese. Perhaps because that peculiarity was based on the arrogant complacency that did not assume a readership extending to people of different cultures or of different perspectives, it was neither much explained nor accepted outside Japan.

While the I-novel gradually went into decline following World War II as Japan went through the democratization process, today I believe we are seeing its reemergence in the work of younger novelists. These works portray the daily lives of the younger generation—so difficult to fathom in the context of the values that once prevailed—in a sophisticated writing style. Alternatively, they may depict extreme personal experiences, far removed from the everyday, in stark detail. In either case, the fundamental conviction that informs these works is that because the authors are writing in all candor they will win understanding and a sense of affinity among readers anywhere in Japan who have suffered in some way.

Unlike authors a century ago, today’s I-novelists do not suffer from frustration with politics. Indeed, they seem incapable of seeing politics critically. In a world that seems far too immense for anything they do to have any effect, they are from the outset haunted by a sense of impotence. Clashed by an enormous feeling of powerlessness, today’s young authors seem concerned only with their own personal lives.

In a certain way, this new introspective literature skillfully captures the reality of Japanese in their thirties or younger. As a novelist of the same generation, however, it is a trend that rather troubles me. Before I began writing fiction, I studied Latin American literature and tried my hand at translating some works

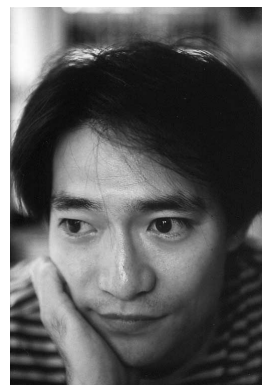
Hoshino Tomoyuki

written in Spanish into Japanese. In my debut work, *Saigo no toki* [The Last Sigh], I strove to conjoin the perceptivity I had developed for Spanish with my feel for Japanese, and, in the process, tried rewriting several passages in Spanish, just to see how they would come out. To me it was important to know whether my work could stand on its own even if translated into another language.

It is not surprising, then, that a writer like myself should be uncomfortable with the narrow ethos of the Japanese I-novel. The defining characteristic of the I-novel, as I mentioned above, is the author’s conviction, or illusion, that his or her own experience is a reflection of the universal. An I-novelist does not even try to see anything beyond the world he or she writes about, revealing what I believe to be such authors’ lack of awareness about and insensitivity to politics.

Literature can never escape politics. Take, for example, the word for the Japanese organization known in English as the “Self-Defense Forces,” which is called *jieitai*, or, literally, “self-defense group,” in Japanese. Although the English term refers to a military force, the Japanese term euphemistically conceals the meaning of “army” in deference to the stipulation in the postwar constitution stating that the country shall not maintain military forces. Politics are at work in the renderings of words for domestic and overseas consumption. Is not the function of literature to weave a fabric of critical discourse that will expose such political realities? To me, that is why literature, regardless of whether or not it deals with actual political content, cannot ignore politics.

Literature must go on confronting the political power of words, particularly in this era rife with rhetoric using terms such as “axis of evil.” Through the language of fiction, I am now trying to do what I can to cancel out the exclusionist forces that are in the process of permeating, in unseen ways, the very fabric of Japanese society.



Hoshino Tomoyuki was born in Los Angeles in 1965 and grew up mainly in Yokohama and Tokyo. A graduate of the Waseda University faculty of literature, he worked as a newspaper reporter for two years and later went to Mexico to study Latin American literature, once in 1991–92 and again in 1994–95. In 1997 he won the 34th Bungei Award for his debut work, *Saigo no toki* [The Last Sigh], and in 2000 the 13th Mishima Yukio Prize for *Mezameyo to ningyo wa utau* [Wake Up, Says the Singing Mermaid]. Other works include *Naburiai* [Playing Together]. Further information may be found on his website: <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/hoshino/tomoyuki/>