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# Looking Back at a Japanese Musical Giant

Konuma Jun'ichi

What sort of image develops of a creator during the decade following his death? It goes without saying that this has much to do with the individual in question and the body of work left behind. In the case of the composer Takemitsu Tōru (1930–96), a significant number of people have endeavored to keep alive the memory of his work and his character—a most fortunate thing for future generations.

The most remarkable such effort is the *Takemitsu Tōru zenshū* [Complete Works of Takemitsu Tōru] issued by Shōgakukan. Released in five volumes, this is a multidimensional compilation that includes recordings of nearly all of his major compositions on 58 compact discs. The collection also includes a wealth of data about the premieres of the pieces, notes by the composer, and critiques of his works written both in Japan and overseas. Takemitsu was also known as a writer, and a five-volume collection of previously published writings, *Takemitsu Tōru chosakushū* [Collected Writings of Takemitsu Tōru], has been issued by Shinchōsha. But the former is distinct in that very few comprehensive collections exist of recordings by any modern composer. Chances are slim that similar collections focusing on a Japanese composer will be produced in the future, regardless of the artist's caliber.

It is also worth noting that two of the five volumes in the complete works are devoted to Takemitsu's music for films, and a substantial part of another volume focuses on his compositions for theater and television. Clearly his interest lay not only in stand-alone musical works for concert performance; film and television, in which music exists alongside visual images and words, had great meaning for him as well. The post–World War II situation in Japan and the composer's personal affinity for film must have affected his career, but perhaps Takemitsu foresaw the advent of a society centered on audiovisual media.

How has Takemitsu Tōru been written about over the past 10 years? The first exploration of the composer to appear after he passed away came from France, not Japan. *Toru Takemitsu* (Michel de Maule, 1997) by Alain Poirier, who currently directs the Paris Conservatoire, was issued in the year following Takemitsu's death. The book was written in a very short period, as its author has admitted, and here and there one can glimpse clichéd images of Japan as seen by Westerners. Though it may not be appropriate to sum it all up as Orientalism, Poirier seems to lack a properly nuanced understanding of Japan or Asia. In this way the work serves as a reminder that despite the high opinions of Takemitsu's work held by the French, and the composer's own love for their nation, the French editions of his albums often came in stereotyped “Fujiyama, geisha” type packages, at which he could only smile sourly.

In Japan Funayama Takashi's *Takemitsu Tōru: Hibiki*

*no umi e* [Takemitsu Tōru: Toward a Sea of Sound] (On-gaku no Tomo Sha, 1998) hit store shelves two years after Takemitsu's death, and my own *Takemitsu Tōru: Oto, kotoba, imēji* [Takemitsu Tōru: Sound, Words, Images] (Seidosha, 1999) followed the next year. Funayama, who teaches musicology at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, published his first collection of critical essays, *Oto to poeji* [Sound and Poesy], in 1973. The book included a review of Takemitsu, and Funayama con-



The prolific composer left behind a wide range of works.

tinued to follow the composer's work over the next quarter century. *Hibiki no umi e* goes about exploring specific works rather than giving an overview of the artist's career. But whereas in his first book Funayama sought to frame his critiques in easily understandable language, his more recent writing is more technical and therefore may not be for every reader.

My book, true to the subtitle, attempts to unravel the composer's life and work—as well as link the two—through sound, words, and images. I did not set out to write a critical biography or scholarly study, but rather to define an intellectual realm around the composer. As I produced this retrospective of sorts not long after Takemitsu's death, I intentionally avoided delving into his music written for film and television. There are plans for an expanded edition, however, which will include numerous essays written subsequently. Six years later I wrote a book titled *Takemitsu Tōru: Sono ongaku chizu* [Takemitsu Tōru: A Geography of His Music] (PHP Kenkyūsho, 2005). This time I sought to create a primer, a simple guide befitting the work's pocketbook format. The book starts by introducing readers to his songs for film and television and the accessible “Family Tree,” which was written expressly for young listeners, then gradually takes them deeper into Takemitsu's music. Many people who are familiar with his name are bewil-

dered when they hear the avant-garde sound of the famous “November Steps,” lacking as it does a clear melody to hum along with, and distance themselves from his music. While it is not a biographical study, the book does examine Takemitsu’s life from the perspective of its coincidence with the duration of the Shōwa era (1926–89)—he was born in 1930, the third year of the era, and died in 1996, seven years after its end. His activities paralleled the period of Japan’s dramatic changes following World War II. Several musicians overseas who knew Takemitsu have asked for a translation of this work.

*Takemitsu Tōru: Oto no kawa no yukue* [Takemitsu Tōru: Where the River of Sound Leads] (Heibonsha, 2000), edited by Chōki Seiji and Higuchi Ryūichi, is a critical anthology that, like Funayama’s book and mine, was published at a time when a sense of mourning over the composer’s death still hung in the air. Several titles, including essays by his friends and acquaintances about the man or his works, had already been produced both before and after his death, one example being *Takemitsu Tōru no sekai* [The World of Takemitsu Tōru] (Shūeisha, 1997), edited by Saitō Shinji and Takemitsu Maki. The book by Chōki and Higuchi was the first, however, in which musicologists and composers discussed the composer at arm’s length.

Books on Takemitsu began to appear in the English-speaking world after the turn of the century. *Creative Sources for the Music of Toru Takemitsu* (Ashgate, 1993) by pianist Ohtake Noriko had been around for some time, but it was written while Takemitsu was still alive, and it was too focused on piano alone to be an in-depth critical foray into his body of work. It was the works by James Siddons and Peter Burt that turned the tide. *Toru Takemitsu: A Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood Publishing, 2001) by Siddons, an American musicologist and composer, presents an overview of Takemitsu’s pieces and literature on him for those who wish to study the composer. As well as offering a biography, as the title suggests, the book is a fundamental catalog for English readers of works by and about Takemitsu. Burt’s magnum opus, *The Music of Toru Takemitsu* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), is probably the most comprehensive study of Takemitsu to date anywhere in the world. It is now available to Japanese readers as well, since a translation was published this year under the title *Takemitsu Tōru no ongaku*. Burt expanded



The Shōgakukan collection is the definitive compilation of his works.

on what started out as a doctoral thesis and recast it for the lay reader. The book contains an abundance of score excerpts that may seem intimidating at first glance, but it is actually designed so that the logic of the writing comes through even if the reader skips through these references. In other words, the excerpts are not for analyzing the details of the passages themselves but are intended as aids for understanding the textual content. *The Music of Toru Takemitsu* is also valuable in its clear presentation of a uniquely European research perspective. The significance of the book lies in that it neither blindly frames Takemitsu in the context of Japanese culture nor treats him exotically, but is written with an eye that looks on music in global terms.

A more compact exploration, Narazaki Yōko’s *Takemitsu Tōru* (Ongaku no Tomo Sha, 2005), has been published in Japan as part of a series of concise critical biographies of “classical” composers based on the latest sources. Thus far Takemitsu is the only Japanese in a series dealing almost exclusively with European composers. As a researcher and critic who obtained her doctoral degree with a dissertation analyzing the musical styles of Takemitsu and Miyoshi Akira—later published as *Takemitsu Tōru to Miyoshi Akira no sakkuyoku yōshiki: Muchōsei to ongusahō o megutte* [The Musical Styles of Takemitsu Tōru and Miyoshi Akira: Atonality and Tone Clusters] (Ongaku no Tomo Sha, 1994)—Narazaki draws a clear line between the composer’s life and his works, and she does her best to avoid viewpoints that intermingle the two. Which biography readers choose will depend on what they wish to know and what draws them to the composer, but in Narazaki’s biography the author’s expression of empathy with Takemitsu may be even more subdued than in Burt’s.

Narazaki has also coedited *A Way a Lone: Writings on Toru Takemitsu* (Academia Music, 2002) with Hugh de Ferranti. The volume is organized around three perspectives: history, analysis, and critical and personal examinations of the composer. It includes a dialogue between Satō Sōmei and Nishimura Akira, two composers who were born in the two decades that followed Takemitsu’s birth, an interview with Takemitsu, and an overview of discussion that took place at the Takemitsu Symposium held at Sydney University in 1998. *A Way a Lone* is a solid English-language reference that looks at Takemitsu from multiple perspectives. Contributors to the book include researchers versed in contemporary works, such as Richard Toop, Luciana Galliano, and Peter Burt; Yuasa Jōji, who collaborated with Takemitsu for years; and Kawaguchi Yoshiharu, a record producer who recorded many of Takemitsu’s works.

Finally, there is *Sakkuyokuka Takemitsu Tōru to no hibi o kataru* [My Days with Composer Takemitsu Tōru] (Shōgakukan, 2006), which is neither a critical investigation nor a simple biography but an account by Takemitsu’s wife, who shared her life with the composer. As it is based on interviews by the editor of *Takemitsu Tōru zenshū* and is not written by Mrs. Takemitsu herself, the book reveals numerous fascinating episodes, only occasionally going off track. Her recollections reveal what sort of balances existed in the artist’s life between the act of composing,

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## FICTION



li Naoyuki

Born in 1953. Won the Noma Literary Prize for New Writers in 1989 for *Sashite jūyō de nai ichinichi* [A Not Very Important Day] and the Yomiuri Literary Prize in 2001 for *Nigotta gekiryū ni kakaru hashi* [Bridge Over a Churning Torrent].

## *Aoneko kazoku tenten roku* [Twists and Turns of the Blue Cat Family]

By li Naoyuki

Shinchōsha, 2006. 195x135 mm. 253 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-10-377104-6.

This novel is the story of a family told from the perspective of a 51-year-old man who appears to be the author's alter ego. The work reveals in vivid relief the problems faced by urban families in modern Japan. The line spoken by the protagonist at the conclusion of the story neatly encapsulates li's views and stance as a writer: "I've lived half a century, but this is not the end. This is not yet the end." The protagonist, who runs a small company he founded years ago, reminisces about his past, including the unforgivable betrayal at the hands of a friend and the death by accident of his bachelor uncle some 20 years earlier. In the present, meanwhile, he is troubled by the nightlife of his daughter, a first-year high school student. The daughter eventually gives birth to the child of a boy just one year

older than herself, and the protagonist and his wife end up raising their grandchild themselves.

Many younger writers in Japan in recent years have had a tendency to cut themselves off from family and society and delve into the narrow world of individual sensitivities. li, by contrast, places the human relations found in family and society at the center of his novels, where he thoughtfully examines such concepts as love and fairness. With its combination of the author's seriousness and narrative flexibility, this wonderful book is at once modern and nostalgic, humorous and wistful.

## *Mahoro ekimae Tada Benri-ken* [The Tada Handyman's Shop in Front of Mahoro Station]

By Miura Shion

Bungei Shunjū, 2006. 195x135 mm. 334 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-16-324670-3.

Tada Keisuke is a handyman with a shop in front of the train station in Mahoro, a fictional city on the outskirts of Tokyo. He takes on any work that comes his way. One day early in the new year a work request brings him to a neighborhood where he runs into Gyōten Haruhiko, a classmate from high school. During the three years they spent together in school they had never exchanged so much as a single word, but now they fall in together. Gyōten's wife has divorced him and he has no place to live; he ends up living in Tada's home.

Tada soon finds himself at the mercy of Gyōten's bizarre behavior, but the two men nevertheless begin working together to complete the various tasks customers ask them to do. Tada hopes to see Gyōten leave his home, but cannot bring himself to kick him out, and the pair work their

way through all kinds of jobs—taking care of people's pets, accompanying children to and from their cram-school lessons, and even pretending to be a customer's lover. Through this work they come into contact with many facets of human existence. Both of these men bear emotional scars from their past, which at first they try to keep bottled up inside. As they work together, though, a strange friendship blossoms between them, and eventually they feel free to bare their difficulties to one another.

This work, a pleasing read due to its energetic tempo and its interesting view of the qualities of humans sketched through the tasks the characters perform, shared the 135th Naoki Prize with Mori Eto's *Kaze ni maiagaru binīru shīto* [Plastic Sheet Flying in the Wind].



Miura Shion

Born in 1976. Graduated from Waseda University with a degree in literature. Is gaining popularity for writing other than her novels, particularly "Shion no shiori" [Bookmarks from Shion], a serial work presented in the web-based publication Boiled Eggs Online (viewable at <[www.boiledeggs.com](http://www.boiledeggs.com)>).



Ogawa Yōko

Born in 1962. A selection from her short story collection *Ninshin karendā* [trans. Pregnancy Diary], whose title story won the Akutagawa Prize, appears in the December 2005 issue of *The New Yorker*. A film version based on the French translation of her novel *Kusuriyubi no hyōhon* [The Ring-Finger Specimen] was released in 2005. Her novel *Hakase no aishita sūshiki* [trans. The Gift of Numbers] is available in English.

## **Mīna no kōshin** **[Mīna's March]**

By Ogawa Yōko

Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2006. 195x135 mm. 330 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-12-003721-5.

All people have happy memories they would like to freeze in time for eternity. This novel depicts one such memory. For 12-year-old Tomoko, the year she spent living with her aunt's family in Ashiya, Hyōgo Prefecture, beginning in spring 1972 was a blissful one. This novel, which won the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize, finds her some 30 years later, reminiscing about that year at her aunt's house.

It is the spring of 1972. The new Shinkansen line between Okayama and Kobe has just opened, and the world awaits the Summer Olympic Games in Munich. Tomoko's aunt is married to a half-German man, and the family resides in a Spanish-style villa. Pochiko, a pygmy hippopotamus that the family has kept as a pet since before the war, can be found bathing in a pond in the large backyard.

Tomoko's cousin, Mīna, is a beautiful 11-year-old with chestnut-brown hair and eyes. Since Mīna is physically weak, she gets to ride to school on Pochiko's back. The 160-kilogram hippo has a giant body but extremely short legs. Whenever Pochiko makes an appearance, the story grows more interesting. Mīna loves to light matches and creates stories inspired by the pictures on matchbox labels. These stories remain in Tomoko's memory even into the present.

## **Tsuki to arumajiro** **[The Moon and the Armadillo]**

By Higuchi Naoya

Kōdansha, 2006. 195x135 mm. 197 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-06-213316-4.

This novel relates the story of a reclusive, idle young man whose life suddenly changes after he becomes the temporary caretaker of an armadillo. One day, the protagonist is contacted by a somewhat distant acquaintance from his university days, who asks him to look after an armadillo. When these creatures sense danger they roll up into a ball to protect their bodies, leaving only the hard, bony-plated back exposed. Armadillos sleep through most of the day, living alone rather than forming groups. In these senses, the protagonist resembles one of these animals.

For some reason, after the armadillo arrives the man's cellphone is always out of range. Although this makes him normally unable to talk on the phone, he discovers that if he dials his own number at a certain time in the evening, an unknown

woman will answer. The appearance of the armadillo initiates a series of connections—the mysteries of the man's past, such as the question of whether he killed his father, and the existence of the "cell-phone woman," who seems to symbolize his own future.

The armadillo thus teaches this solitary young man that his existence is connected to both a past and a future, resulting in his decision to live a more resolute life.



Higuchi Naoya

Born in 1981. Worked at a French restaurant, eventually becoming a caterer. His debut novel *Sayonara Amerika* [Goodbye, America] won the 2005 *Gunzō Prize for New Writers*. The same work was selected as a candidate for the Akutagawa Prize.



Ishii Shinji

Born in 1966. Graduated from the Faculty of French Literature at Kyoto University. Writer and illustrator. Often includes illustrations in his own novels. Was nominated for the Mishima Yukio Prize for his novels *Puranetariumu no futago* [The Planetarium Twins] and *Pō no hanashi* [The Story of Pō].

## ***Yukiya no Rossu-san*** **[Rossu, the Snow Man]**

By Ishii Shinji

Media Factory, 2006. 195x135 mm. 189 pp. ¥1,100. ISBN 4-8401-1493-5.

This multitalented author, who is also an illustrator, originally created works that were classified as children's books. Now, however, his ability as a writer has been widely acknowledged, and his books are enjoyed by numerous readers as fantasy for adults. *Yukiya no Rossu-san*, a collection of 30 fairy-tale-like short stories, is steeped in the unique flavor of Ishii's writing.

In the title story, a character named Rossu rides a tractor-like machine known as a "snowmaker" all around town, taking and filling customers' orders for snow. In "Kokku no Miyakawa-san" [Miyakawa the Cook], the protagonist climbs into a refrigerator and talks with the vegetables and meats, an important part of the cook's job. In "Tōryō no Kubota Gen'ei shi" [Kubota Gen'ei the Chief Carpenter], most

of the carpenters in the story are alien beings from a planet outside our solar system. When they hammer nails, they are actually sending signals to their home world. While some of the protagonists in this collection are Japanese, others have foreign-sounding names. Some of the central characters are not even human at all, including a plastic bucket that holds garbage and an old country road. With its whimsical tales told in detailed and precise prose, this heartwarming book is one that readers will not soon forget.

## ESSAY

### ***Onna to iu keiken*** **[The Experience of Womanhood]**

By Tsushima Yūko

Heibonsha, 2006. 195x135 mm. 214 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 4-582-83310-1.

This is a collection of essays by one of the most prominent woman writers in Japan today. In it she discusses such issues as the shamanistic power of women, sacrificial offerings, the Western concept of virginity, and the filth and holiness of menstruation.

In the late nineteenth century, when the Edo period came to an end and Western modernization swept Japan, a number of new religions based on Shinto emerged. The largest among these was Ōmoto, which was founded by Deguchi Nao. Although uneducated and illiterate, she spent decades transcribing divine revelations she received from God after suddenly experiencing a miracle. The author of this book examines the work of Deguchi and finds similarities with the declaration of her contemporary, Hiratsuka

Raichō, on the occasion of the launch of the women's literary magazine *Seitō*, a publication aimed at the elite women who were the nation's first to graduate from college. Were there some mythical imaginative powers behind the cosmological rhetoric used? What did Deguchi Nao have in common with Joan of Arc in terms of their advocacy of exclusionist nationalism? The images of goddesses from the Ainu, Mongolians, Tibetans, and ancient Sumerians are introduced in panoramic style. This is the first collection of essays by a novelist who has long addressed the archaism emerging in Japanese society in the contemporary era.



Tsushima Yūko

Born in 1947. Novelist and daughter of famed writer Dazai Osamu, who died when she was one year old. Her works in English are *Child of Fortune*, *Woman Running in the Mountains*, and *The Shooting Gallery and Other Stories*. Won the Murasaki Shikibu Prize in 2005 for *Nara repōto* [Nara Report], a novel centered on a young man's memories of his dead mother (see Japanese Book News No. 44, p. 7).

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



### Ogata Sadako

Born in 1927. Was a professor at Sophia University and Japan's envoy to the United Nations before becoming UN high commissioner for refugees in 1991. Named the special representative of Japan's prime minister for Afghan reconstruction in 2001; since 2003 has headed the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

## ***Funsō to nanmin: Ogata Sadako no kaisō*** [trans. from *The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s*]

By Ogata Sadako

Shūeisha, 2006. 215x150 mm. 459 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-08-781329-0.

For nearly 10 years Ogata Sadako served as the United Nations high commissioner for refugees. This book contains her recollections of her work for the aid and protection of refugees around the world. Ogata's time in office coincided with the end of the Cold War, an event that caused waves of displaced people to return home and seek to create new states. The dwindling global influence of the great powers also sparked new conflicts as ethnic and tribal groups took up arms against each other, causing streams of refugees to flow across borders to escape the violence.

Ogata led international efforts to help these refugees, internally displaced persons, and disaster victims. In this book, originally published in English, she focuses on four groups of refugees targeted

for relief: the Kurds, people in the Balkan states, residents of the African Great Lakes region, and Afghans.

These examples provide valuable food for thought, whether in the scale of the crises being faced, the level of danger threatening the refugees, the complicated webs of interests involved, or the diversity of the partners who came together to aid the victims. The United Nations is generally seen as a centralized arena for global debate, but this work makes it clear that the body plays an active role around the world through its humanitarian organs, the international cooperation it organizes, and the activities of its member states and various nongovernmental groups.

## CRITICISM

### ***Ajia wa "Ajiateki" ka*** [Is Asia "Asian"?)]

By Uemura Kunihiko

Nakanishiya Shuppan, 2006. 195x135 mm. 294 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-7795-0031-1.

This volume presents a collection of essays that examine changing images of Asia as well as the history of the term *Asia* itself. "Asian stagnation," "Asian despotism," and "Asian mode of production" are all examples of the numerous stereotyped phrases that have been employed to describe the region's political and economic systems. These are generally used in contrast with "progressive Europe" or the "modern West," and are nothing more than images of "backward" Asia.

In this work, the author traces the creation and development of these perceptions of Asia back to Montesquieu and Hegel. He then considers the history of modern Japan through an analysis of Fukuzawa Yukichi's treatise on the nation's need to pursue *datsu-A* (extrication from

Asia) and Uchida Ryōhei's *kō-A* (development of Asia), two opposing concepts espoused by thinkers who had internalized this European-produced image of Asia.

The author's real interest lies in discovering the Asia conceived by figures who overcame the European image of Asia, such as Sun Yat-sen, Lu Xun, and Takeuchi Yoshimi. His conclusion, however, does not go far beyond the assertion made by Takeuchi: that there is actually no such thing that could be described as an "Asian entity."



### Uemura Kunihiko

Born in 1952. Graduated from Nagoya University with a degree in economics and is now a professor in the Faculty of Economics at Kansai University, where he teaches the history of social thought. Has written *Marukusu o yomu* [Reading Marx], among other works.



Tsuboi Hideto

*Born in 1959. A professor at Nagoya University. In addition to analyzing the poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō and Kitahara Hakushū, as well as the novels of such writers as Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, has addressed the correlation between voice and writing in the history of modern Japanese poetry and the relationship between war and literary symbolism.*

## ***Kankaku no kindai*** **[The Modern Age of Senses]**

**By Tsuboi Hideto**

Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006. 215x155 mm. 519 pp. ¥5,400. ISBN 4-8158-0533-4.

In research on modern Japanese literature, the senses have always taken a back seat to reason and ideology. Even among the senses themselves, in comparison with the auditory and visual senses, smell and touch are almost never mentioned. Relying mainly on literary works, this excellent book sheds light on how the elements of color, sound, smell, taste, and rhythm affected the formation of the group identity of twentieth-century Japanese.

How enamored was the author Lafcadio Hearn with cries of street vendors in Japan? How nostalgic was the poet Hagiwara Sakutarō, who has been called Japan's Baudelaire, about photographs? How deeply did folklorist Yanagita Kunio lament the fact that modernization had dulled the Japanese sense of smell? To what extent were the folk songs of Korea,

Taiwan, Okinawa, and the Ainu people integrated into a "voice of the people" in the age of colonialism? Why was there a sharp distinction between dance and physical education in the school system during wartime? This book takes questions that have rarely been debated as a connected whole, examining them from the standpoint of the politics that shaped concepts of the body and its senses in the modern period. At present, research on Japanese literature is moving away from a focus on linguistics, with sociology coming to the fore. This book shines among the many works of varying quality available today.

## ***Shijō ni wa kokoro ga nai*** **[The Market Has No Heart]**

**By Tsuru Shigeto**

Iwanami Shoten, 2006. 187x135 mm. 185 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-00-023418-8.

For much of his life the economist Tsuru Shigeto wrote one book every five years, filling it with his take on the issues of the day. This is his final such book, completed just before he died this year at the age of 93. The text comprises sections on three themes: a critique of the policies carried out by former Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō, changes in the social environment brought about by technological innovation, and the pursuit of a brighter future.

On the first topic, the Koizumi administration's policies, Tsuru examines the problems brought about by privatization efforts in various fields—Japan's postal services, the organization controlling its expressways, and so on. In his investigation of these problems he quotes Paul Samuelson's famous phrase, "The market

has no heart," and the American economist's belief that so long as there is a referee of some sort to control the excesses of that market, it will adjust itself with extraordinary efficiency.

Sometimes, however, notes Tsuru, the participants in a market will act in malicious ways, leading to a situation where the public and private sectors act against each other's interests. When these stresses can no longer be concealed, this leads to an eruption of "casino capitalism" that can bring economic ruin to all. Koizumi's pronouncement that "there can be no economic growth without reform," and his privatization moves rooted in this belief, carry this very danger within them. In his final work Tsuru stresses that truly needed reforms must be carried out even when the economy is not growing.



Tsuru Shigeto

*Born in 1912. Earned his degree in economics from Harvard University. In 1947 authored Japan's first official White Paper on the Economy. Served as the president of Hitotsubashi University and as editorial advisor for the Asahi Shimbun. Died in February 2006.*





**Kakehashi Kumiko**  
 Born in 1961. After graduating from Hokkaido University's Faculty of Literature, worked at a publishing company. Later became a freelance magazine and book editor. Began concentrating on writing in 2001, contributing to newspapers and weekly magazines as a reporter and interviewer. *Chiru zo kanashiki* is her first book-length work.

## ***Chiru zo kanashiki*** **[How Sad It Is to Die]**

**By Kakehashi Kumiko**

Shinchōsha, 2005. 197x140 mm. 244 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-10-477401-4.

This work attempts a nonfictional portrait of Kuribayashi Tadamichi, the lieutenant general who led the Imperial Japanese Army during the Battle of Iōjima (Iwo Jima) near the end of World War II. It was said that the battle would last 5 days, but the fierce fighting wore on for a total of 36 days, during which time Kuribayashi led 22,000 men into battle and died a warrior's death. The persistent, bloody fighting left 20,000 Japanese dead, while 7,000 Americans perished and another 19,000 were wounded. Some believe that the heavy losses suffered at Iōjima were a factor in the United States' decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan.

The book begins with an investigation of the facts surrounding Kuribayashi's final dispatch to Imperial General Headquarters. The transcript of this communi-

qué was altered significantly when it appeared in newspapers on March 22, 1945. The author indicates that the lieutenant general's words, which praised the fighting of his officers and men, were reworked to emphasize victory and peace for the empire and idealize the sacrifice of one's life in a final attack.

Kuribayashi's parting words, included at the end of the dispatch, were also modified, the line *chiru zo kanashiki* (how sad it is to die) having been changed to *chiru zo kuchioshi*, or "how frustrating." Kuribayashi believed that the true feelings of a soldier preparing to die for his country should be expressed as sadness.

## ***Gakutohei no seishinshi*** **[trans. *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers*]**

**By Ohnuki Emiko**

Iwanami Shoten, 2006. 195x135 mm. 332 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-00-022462-X.

When the 9/11 terrorist attacks took place in 2001, media around the world immediately began using the word "kamikaze" to describe them. Only in Japan was this term not heard, as the Kamikaze Special Attack Force formed by the Japanese military as a last resort toward the end of World War II differed considerably from the "suicide bombings" of al Qaeda.

This book, written by a Japanese anthropologist living in the United States, documents the last words, prayers, and fears of seven student soldiers who perished during the war. The heartbreaking collection of diaries and letters seeks to mend current misconceptions about kamikaze pilots, clarifying that the boys were forced to volunteer for these doomed mission. While they innocently loved their

country, the systemized violence within the military was counterproductive, causing many of these young men to become skeptical of patriotism.

What we can see from each of these diaries is a detailed portrait of the intellectual interior of the writers, not a single one of whom was a fanatic. By demonstrating the difference between the images of kamikaze pilots fabricated by the military for propaganda purposes and the actual reality of the young men involved, this book represents an important step in better understanding how the Japanese dealt with extreme circumstances.



**Ohnuki Emiko**

Born in 1934. William F. Vilas Research Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An expert in the social, cultural, and symbolic anthropology of Japan. Has been awarded Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Japan Foundation fellowships, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



**Tsurumi Shunsuke**  
 Born in 1922. Philosopher. Graduated from Harvard University. Went to the United States as a teenager and returned to Japan by exchange ship in 1942.

**Katō Norihiro**  
 Born in 1948. Literary critic. Professor of international education at Waseda University.

**Kurokawa Sō**  
 Born in 1961. Writer. Graduated from Doshisha University's Faculty of Letters.

## ***Nichi-Bei kōkan sen*** **[Japan-US Exchange Ship]**

**By Tsurumi Shunsuke, Katō Norihiro, and Kurokawa Sō**

Shinchōsha, 2006. 197x135 mm. 483 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-10-301851-8.

The United States and Japan were already at war in June 1942 when a ship carrying some 1,500 Japanese passengers, including diplomats, traders, scholars, students, and artists, left from New York. At around the same time, ships carrying scores of Americans departed from Yokohama and Shanghai. The Japanese and American ships met off of Lourenço Marques in neutral Portuguese-controlled Africa, where the passengers had a chance to intermingle. This book examines the “Japan-US ship exchange,” a historical event of critical importance that has been the subject of almost no research.

In this work, Tsurumi Shunsuke, a renowned Japanese philosopher who was onboard the ship that left from New York for Japan when he was just 20, is interviewed by two critics, who succeed in tap-

ping his “sealed” memories and drawing out his fascinating and detailed recollections of the event. The memory of Tsurumi, who is now 82, is phenomenal. Additionally, the interviewer Kurokawa Sō provides an overview of the history of the event after perusing a vast amount of materials in the Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. What emerges is that this “ship exchange” was, in the words of interviewer Katō Norihiro, a “spiritual event” that had a much broader sweep than expected. In this sense, this book will be extremely valuable for readers with an interest in the cultural history of Japan and the United States.

## **CULTURE**

### ***Yōkai bunka nyūmon*** **[Introduction to Specter Culture]**

**By Komatsu Kazuhiko**

Serica Shobō, 2006. 195x135 mm. 325 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-7967-0271-7.

Though many specters (monsters, ghosts, and other supernatural beings and phenomena) appear in Japanese folklore, there are surprisingly few specialists doing serious research in this area. Komatsu Kazuhiko has spent many years researching specters as an important element of culture, making him one of the few folklorists to do so and a leading authority in the field. This book is based on Komatsu's years of study, and it includes essays and articles written during different periods of his career. It serves as a splendid introduction to Japan's unique culture of specters.

In the first part of this book, Komatsu points out the presence of specters deep within various realms of Japanese culture, arguing that they should more than anything be taken as a social phenomenon.

His position is quite clear: “Research on specters is cultural research, which cannot help but become human research.” In the second part of the book, he analyzes the various specters found in such modern genres as manga (the works of Mizuki Shigeru), movies (the animated films of Miyazaki Hayao), and novels (the writings of Kyōgoku Natsuhiko). In the book's third section, he gives an overview of the history of research on specific Japanese apparitions, such as *kappa*, *oni*, and *tengu*. There is no question that this work will allow the foreign reader to gain a good understanding of Japan's unique specters and the large role they have played in Japanese culture.



**Komatsu Kazuhiko**  
 Born in 1947. Anthropologist and folklorist. Has researched such topics as specters, shamanism, and ethnicity and religion. Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.



Shirayama Mari

*Born in 1958. Member of the managing board at the JCI Camera Museum and part-time lecturer at Tokyo Zokei University. Planner of exhibitions on Natori Yonosuke and the Nippon Studio, among other subjects.*

Hori Yoshio

*Born in 1963. Senior curator at the Fukushima Prefectural Museum of Art.*

## ***Natori Yonosuke to Nippon Kōbō*** **[Natori Yonosuke and the Nippon Studio]**

**Edited by Shirayama Mari and Hori Yoshio**

Iwanami Shoten, 2006. 295x225 mm. 174 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-00-024156-7.

Natori Yonosuke (1910–62), who studied design and photography in Germany, is known as one of the pioneers who brought Western concepts of photojournalism to Japan. After returning to Japan in the early 1930s he gathered young, talented Japanese photographers and designers to found the Nippon Studio, and in 1934 he launched the illustrated journal *Nippon*. This multilingual magazine brought information on Japan's culture to a broad international audience, winning high praise for its sense of design that made it stand out among Japanese publications of the day.

This book was published in conjunction with an exhibition on Natori and the Nippon Studio, held in various cities in Japan during 2006. Through color prints and a detailed timeline, it illustrates the work undertaken by this gathering of

creators, focusing mainly on the journal *Nippon*. Also introduced in the text are some of the other publications produced by Natori and his companions to share information on Japan with the world, such as *Canton*, the Chinese-language edition of *Nippon*, and a Thai-language monthly journal.

Shirayama Mari, a longtime scholar of Natori, provides a detailed overview of the man and his work in her introduction to this book—a piece that paints a picture of the multitasking designer as not just a man brimming with creative ideas, but a first-rate organizer and team leader as well. This book is a valuable window onto the “bright young days” of design and photography in Japan and a presentation of works that seem impossibly fresh for creations of 70 years ago.

## CINEMA

### ***Kurosawa Akira vs. Hariuddo*** **[Kurosawa Akira vs. Hollywood]**

**By Tasogawa Hiroshi**

Bungei Shunjū, 2006. 195x135 mm. 486 pp. ¥2,476. ISBN 4-16-367790-9.

As the centenary of the birth of the director Kurosawa Akira (1910–98) nears, researchers of Japanese cinema around the world are zealously studying his films. There exists, however, a part of Kurosawa's career trajectory that has seldom been addressed—the period between 1965 and 1970, during which he made no films at all. This is a mysterious gap, since a film director in his late fifties should have intense energy. The reason given in this work is Kurosawa's mental exhaustion after he gave up trying to make the movie *Tora! Tora! Tora!* which he had signed on to jointly create with Hollywood filmmakers. Drawing on materials collected in the United States, this elaborate book examines an aspect considered untouchable in Japanese film history.

Kurosawa had aimed to portray the

tragedy of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, who had vigorously opposed the Japanese military's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. By contrast, 20th Century Fox had hoped for a simple war movie. There was from the beginning a major conceptual difference between the perfectionist auteur and Hollywood, which placed producers above directors. There were also critical flaws in the contract and the script translations. The author carefully and empirically unravels the mystery surrounding the defeat of this film giant. This book reveals Kurosawa as the hero of a tragedy, much like Admiral Yamamoto.



Tasogawa Hiroshi

*Born in 1934. Graduated from Waseda University's Department of English Literature. After working as a reporter for NHK and AP and a professor at Tokai University, became a freelance journalist. Has researched Ed Murrow, who is known as the father of broadcast journalism.*

## No. 5: Japanese Manga and Anime

Quite some time has passed since the words *manga* and *anime* first gained broad currency outside Japan. In recent years this country has seen fresh efforts to foster new creators, such as the establishment of courses in manga and animation at universities. There has also been a wealth of research on these artistic fields from such perspectives as culture, expression, sociology and industry, and thought. This article showcases notable titles on manga and anime.

### Manga, Anime, and Otaku Trends

At present, there are three different ways of writing the Japanese word *manga*: in kanji, in katakana, or using Roman letters. When it describes the genre typified by the long stories that were hugely popular after World War II, the word is usually written in katakana. Most recent critical examinations of manga look at this genre, and many of them base their discussions of manga on the works of Tezuka Osamu, who played a seminal role in the early postwar period. Manga began to draw critical attention in the 1990s with the arrival of explorations written by Natsume Fusanosuke, such as *Tezuka Osamu wa doko ni iru* [Where Is Tezuka Osamu?] (Chikuma Shobō, 1992) and *Tezuka Osamu no bōken—Sengo manga no kamigami* [Tezuka Osamu's Adventure: The Gods of Postwar Manga] (Chikuma Shobō, 1995). In these critical examinations, Natsume describes the first germinations of the modern ego through the eyes of the protagonists in Tezuka's works. Meanwhile, in *Manga de yomu "namida" no kōzō* [The Framework of "Tears" in Manga] (NHK Shuppan, 2004), Yonezawa Yoshihiro notes that tragedy was at the center of Tezuka's works. The creator's own experiences in World War II are examined in depth in Ōtsuka Eiji's *Atomu no meidai—Tezuka Osamu to sengo manga no shudai* [The Astro Boy Thesis: Tezuka Osamu and Themes in Postwar Manga] (Tokuma Shoten, 2003).

Even before these works appeared, it was noted that Tezuka's manga often contained dramatic visual elements lifted from movies, and Takeuchi Ichirō provides examples of specific borrowed camera shots in his recent work *Tezuka Osamu = Sutōrī manga no kigen* [Tezuka Osamu, Founder of Story Manga] (Kōdansha, 2006). Tezuka's visual innovations are a major focus of any number of books on expression in manga, including Yomota Inuhiko's *Manga genron [Principles of Manga]* (Chikuma Shobō, 1999), Natsume's *Manga wa naze omoshiroi no ka—Sono hyōgen to bunpō* [Why Are Manga Interesting? A Look at Their Expressions and Grammar] (NHK Shuppan, 1996), and *Manga hyōgengaku nyūmon* [An Introduction to Manga Expressions] (Chikuma Shobō, 2005) by Takeuchi Osamu.

Younger critics have recently shown a high level of interest in the connections between today's creations and the art of the "pre-Tezuka era." In particular, Itō Gō argues in *Tezuka izu deddo: Hirakareta manga hyōgenron e* [Tezuka Is Dead: Postmodernist and Modernist Approaches to Japanese Manga] (NTT Shuppan, 2005) that prewar readers of manga projected themselves onto the characters and sensed the realism of the stories, even if the graphics were not realistic. Meanwhile, in *Manga sangyōron [Manga Industry Theory]* (Chikuma Shobō,

2004), Nakano Haruyuki turns his attention to the peripheral publishing industry known as *akahon* ("red books") in which Tezuka's work first appeared, tracing its history up through its absorption into the publishing mainstream. And in *Tanjō! Tezuka Osamu—Manga no kamisama o sodateta bakkuguraundo* [Tezuka Osamu and the Background that Created the God of Manga] (Asahi Sonorama, 1998), edited by Shimotsuki Takanaka, the cultural environment in which Tezuka grew up is examined separately by genre, as various experts address such areas as science fiction novels and movies. The critic Miyamoto Hirohito places manga in the context of youth culture during the period of transition into the postwar era. Miyamoto's future research bears watching.

In recent years, manga and anime have made their way deep into not just neighboring Asian countries but also Europe and North America, where they are enjoyed by both children and young adults. There are limits, however, to how much information people in Japan's manga world can obtain about the situation overseas, and there have been practically no analytical surveys or research projects conducted on the question of exactly why Japanese manga and anime are so well received right now. For the time being, we will have to rely on reports from people in various countries. One such pioneering effort is Kiyotani Shin'ichi's *Ru Otaku—Furansu otaku jijō* [L'Otaku: Geeks in France] (Bestsellers, 1998), which examines how anime and manga have been received in that country. More recent books include Patrick Macias's *Otaku in USA: Ai to gokai no anime yunyūshi* [Otaku in USA: Love and Misunderstanding! The History of Adopted Anime in America] (Ōta Shuppan, 2006), an extremely interesting look at the anime boom in the United States today. As this area of study moves forward, it will be important to have a comparative perspective that takes into account not just what has come from Japan but also the traditional comic forms of the West, such as France's *bande dessinée*. In this sense, Ono Kōsei's *Amerikan komikkusu taizen* [Encyclopedia of American Comics] (Shōbunsha, 2005) is a must-read, as it contains the results of Ono's painstaking efforts to introduce foreign comics to Japan.

As manga and anime are closely linked, Akita Takahiro takes an empirical approach to the connections between the two genres in terms of expression in his work *"Koma" kara "firumu" e—Manga to manga eiga* [From Cell to Film: Manga and Manga Movies] (NTT Shuppan, 2005). Tsugata Nobuyuki, meanwhile, has continued to produce such works as *Animēshongaku nyūmon* [An Introduction to Animation] (Heibonsha, 2005), in which he studies the organic links between manga and the TV anime industry. There are high expectations for the future

research of these authors. Looking at the more general social phenomenon of *otaku* (geeks or “fanboys”), Azuma Hiroki works to grasp the complete picture in the form of a symposium report in *Mōjō genron F kai: Posutomodan, otaku, sekushuariti* [Network Debate F: The Postmodern, *Otaku*, and Sexuality] (Seidosha, 2003). An interesting report on the various *otaku*-related industries can be found

in Ōizumi Mitsunari’s *Moe no kenkyū* [Research on *Moe*] (Kōdansha, 2005), which takes its title from the exclamation “Moe!” (literally “bursting into bud”) commonly heard from excited *otaku*.

(Hosogaya Atsushi, manga researcher)

## **Manga genron [Principles of Manga]**

**By Yomota Inuhiko**

Chikuma Shobō, 1999. 150x105 mm. 390 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 4-480-08478-9.

Yomota is an insightful film critic and an author whose work ranges freely across sub-cultures from around the world in a style reminiscent of cultural anthropology. Drawing from his own broad experiences with manga, he attempts a comprehensive examination of the art form’s structures. Yomota’s

romantic approach to his subject matter and his playful writing style are evident in his explanation for why he produced this work: “Just about anyone could have written this book, but it’s a book that had to be written.”



## **Tezuka izu deddo: Hirakareta manga hyōgenron e [Tezuka Is Dead: Postmodernist and Modernist Approaches to Japanese Manga]**

**By Itō Gō**

NTT Shuppan, 2005. 210x148 mm. 309 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 4-7571-4129-7.

This is an ambitious work that points out the limits of the existing analyses of expression in Tezuka Osamu’s manga. The author examines the *kyara*, charming personages like Hello Kitty, whose superficial and symbolic expression itself provokes within the viewer images

of certain characteristics, such as warm feelings. These are contrasted with the characters in manga, which immerse the reader in a drama through self-projection. Itō argues that post-Tezuka works should be read and criticized in the context of this *kyara* concept.

## **Manga sangyōron [Manga Industry Theory]**

**By Nakano Haruyuki**

Chikuma Shobō, 2004. 189x128 mm. 259 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-480-87346-5.

This is a groundbreaking work that attempts to encapsulate manga publishing as a media industry, something that has heretofore rarely been the subject of objective study. Focusing on the escalating competition for young readers among major publishers in the postwar period, this book traces a continuing cycle of

unconventional manga appearing from the fringes, as well as the strategic development of anime and video games in recent years.



## **Otaku in USA: Ai to gokai no anime yunyūshi [Otaku in USA: Love and Misunderstanding! The History of Adopted Anime in America]**

**By Patrick Macias; edited and translated by Machiyama Tomohiro**

Ōta Shuppan, 2006. 189x128 mm. 272 pp. ¥1,480. ISBN 4-7783-1002-0.

Patrick Macias, a cool, analytical Hispanic writer, and Machiyama Tomohiro, a trendsetter in Japan’s subculture who presently works as a translator and editor in the United States, have come together to trace the history of the intriguing encounter that American fans have had with Japanese anime and manga. This

work follows their 2004 *Cruising the Anime City: An Otaku Guide to Neo Tokyo*, an introduction to key *otaku* sites in Japan’s capital. These two intellectuals remain cool even as they feverishly attempt to shed light on the boom.

(Continued from page 3)

his other work, and his day-to-day activities. The same theme jumped out in sharp relief in “Visions in Time,” a retrospective held at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery in 2006—not just from records of compositions in the form of his scores but also through such objects as notebooks, photographs taken by friends and acquaintances, visual works of art, and even images of sheet music piled up on Takemitsu’s piano. The catalog of the exhibition, *Takemitsu Tōru: Visions in Time*, was published in the same year by Esquire.

The legacy of a creator doubtlessly consists of his works. Perhaps a decade must pass, however, after his death for even a fraction of the full scope of his creative endeavors to be brought to public view. Beyond that time, there is the possibility that various aspects of the artist will recede into a fog of oblivion as friends, acquaint-

ances, and family forget or disappear from the scene. So while critical research will be continued and deepened, from the standpoint of personal artifacts and memories the tenth anniversary of his death may be an opportune moment to take a good look at a creator.

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Konuma Jun’ichi

*Born in 1959. Professor at Waseda University’s School of Letters, Arts, and Sciences; director of the Yokohama Arts Foundation. Also a music critic and a poet. Is active in writing about music, from classical music to pops, with a focus on contemporary works. Publications include Pari no Pūranku [Poulenc in Paris] and Saundo eshikkusu [Sound Ethics]. Has translated into Japanese works including L’homme assis dans le couloir by Marguerite Duras. Creates liner notes for music releases and plans, coordinates, and supervises numerous concerts and other events.*

## Events and Trends

(October to December 2006)

### New Literature Department at University of Tokyo

The University of Tokyo has announced it will launch a new Department of Contemporary Literary Studies at the beginning of the school year starting in April 2007. Two professors at the school—Numano Mitsuyoshi, a specialist in Slavic literature, and English literature specialist Shibata Motoyuki—will serve as the core members of this new department, to be part of the Faculty of Letters. The courses of study in this new department will focus on literature as a field of study going beyond boundaries of nationality and language, with classes offered in subjects like critical and translation theory and cross-border literature.

Foreign literature courses offered to date in the Faculty of Letters placed priority on just getting students to the level where they could read the works in the original languages. According to Professor Numano, however, there are reasons for this new department to focus on literature in a broader sense: “There are literary works out today that cannot be approached from within the confines of any one linguistic realm.” He points to the insuffi-

ciency of monolingual study of an author like Vladimir Nabokov, who was born in Russia, fled to Western Europe following the Russian Revolution, and wrote his famed *Lolita* in English; Numano also notes that research in just one language cannot let a student develop a polished critical theory with influences from a range of nations, such as Britain, France, and Russia.

One of the founders of the Nabokov Society of Japan, a gathering of literary scholars specializing in American, English, and Russian literature, Numano argues that to truly understand writers whose careers span multiple cultures it is essential to overcome the traditional walls that assign one literature to one country alone. Isaac Bashevis Singer, winner of the 1978 Nobel Prize in literature, is one example of the “cross-border writers” he has in mind: Singer was born in Poland, moved to America, and wrote in Yiddish, making it impossible to pigeonhole him as belonging to any single national literary tradition. And more of these cross-border writers appear each year.

Numano and Shibata have been tapped to serve as full-time professors in this program. University of Tokyo

instructors who teach Japanese and French literature will also take part in the department’s courses. The widely varied staff will include guest lecturers from other schools, too, such as Noya Fumiaki, a professor of Latin American literature at Waseda University.

The department’s new program will take as one of its key areas of focus modern Japanese literature, which has received little examination at the university level in Japan. In response to requests from foreign exchange students wishing to research Murakami Haruki’s works, for instance, one class will take as its theme Murakami’s position in global literary trends. In this way the department program will be built around two tracks, with foreign students coming to examine Japanese literature and Japanese students carrying out their research mainly on works from the West.

The Department of Contemporary Literary Studies derives its name not from a central focus on contemporary literature but from its goal of developing literary studies from a thoroughly modern perspective. “By taking a comprehensive look at the literature of the entire world, including Japanese

works,” says Numano, “we hope to accomplish something that has not been seen to date in the literature departments of other universities in Japan.” If this wide-ranging approach to literary studies takes off at the University of Tokyo, it can be expected to guide other schools’ research in new directions.

## More Books Hitting the Big Screen

Recent years have seen an increasing number of written works being made into movies. Two box-office hits came from Fujisawa Shūhei’s 1991 novel *Tasogare Seibei* [Seibei of the Twilight], which hit theaters in 2003 under the same title [released as *Twilight Samurai* in English], and Katayama Kyōichi’s 2001 work *Sekai no chūshin de, ai o sakebu* [Crying for Love in the Middle of the World], which was made into a film in 2004. In the year 2005 alone more than 60 books were transferred to the film format.

The trend continued in 2006. Ogawa Yōko’s *Hakase no aishita sūshiki* [trans. *The Gift of Numbers*], which won the first Hon’ya [Book-seller] Prize in 2004, hit the astounding bestseller mark of 2 million copies in October this year, largely on the strength of increased sales sparked by the work’s 2006 release in movie form.

Book-based films are proving attractive to movie studios and publishing companies alike. The studios get to work from already existing stories, freeing them from the need to hire storywriters to produce scripts from scratch. Publishers, meanwhile, enjoy the sales boost their works get in the period leading up to and immediately following a film version’s release. Both sides seem likely to continue viewing this trend as a positive one, and indeed, 2007 is already set to be another year filled with book-inspired movies. This winter will see the December 2006 release of *Bushi no ichibun* [A Warrior’s Honor], based on Fujisawa Shūhei’s short story “Mōmoku ken kodama-gaeshi” [The Blind Swordsman and the Returning Echo], to be followed in January 2007 by a movie version of *Tamamoe!* [A Soul in Bud] by Kirino Natsuo.

## Obituaries

*Yoshimura Akira, 79, author, July 31, 2006.*

Yoshimura built a name for himself as a consummate writer of historical novels, taking a thorough approach to his research of source materials and his on-site examinations of the locations appearing in his works. His *Senkan Musashi* [trans. *Battleship Musashi: The Making and Sinking of the World’s Biggest Battleship*] was a huge hit, establishing him as a master in the field. The writer was renowned for his attention to minute detail in his nonfiction writing: he once pored through the diary of an Edo-period (1603–1868) merchant to track down data on what the weather was like on a certain day in a certain part of Japan. He was also well known as a fast writer—a rarity in the world of Japanese letters. Yoshimura’s *Yami ni hirameku* [Glimmering in the Dark] was made into a movie by the director Imamura Shōhei; this work, *Unagi* [The Eel], won the Palme d’Or at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival. Yoshimura’s final work was a short piece titled “Shinigao” [Death Face], a description of his views on life and mortality.

*Kojima Nobuo, 91, author, October 26, 2006.*

Kojima’s short story “Amerikan sukūru” [trans. “The American School”], which portrayed a Japan under US occupation in the immediate postwar years, won him the 1954 Akutagawa Prize. He also won the first Tanizaki Jun’ichirō Prize for his novel *Hōyō kazoku* [trans. *Embracing Family*], a depiction of a family in collapse during Japan’s postwar period of rapid economic growth. These awards cemented his name as a writer. In *Wakareru riyū* [Reasons for Breaking Up], which was serialized in a magazine for 13 years running, he presented a more avant-garde face, mixing elements of humor and fantasy into his narrative. This long-running work won him a Noma Literary Prize. His writings had the flavor of *shishōsetsu*, or “I-novel” autobiography, and his introduction into them of characters with the same names as famous figures from the real world made it difficult at times to spot the

line where his fiction departed from fact. His final work, published after he turned 90, was *Zankō* [Remaining Light], a book difficult to categorize as either a novel or a collection of essays.

## Announcement

You can also enjoy the complete contents of *Japanese Book News* online. Point your web browser at the Japan Foundation’s website, <[www.jpf.go.jp/e/publish/jbn/index.html](http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/publish/jbn/index.html)>, to view all back issues of *Japanese Book News*. You can search the database of new titles introduced in our pages by title, author name, and book category; we have also made PDF versions of the issues available for download. A fresh layout for the website has been in place since November 1, 2006, so come give it a look.



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## A Manga Ambassador

Frédéric Boilet is the first non-Japanese artist to win a cartoon award in Japan. He is also a manga editor, a role in which he has helped a Japanese friend garner a comics prize in France—the first such prize received by a Japanese creator. Serving as a bridge and ambassador between the world’s largest and third-largest manga markets, Boilet has been fusing Japanese manga depicting everyday life with the artistic style of Francophone sequential art, and encouraging other artists to participate in what he calls the “Nouvelle Manga” movement.

Reminiscent of the *nouvelle vague* films produced in France during the 1960s, the Nouvelle Manga started by Boilet in 2001 uses a cinematic, panel-by-panel storytelling approach to portray day-to-day life. Inspired by this concept, 16 creators (7 Japanese, along with 9 French artists flown to Japan for two weeks to find inspiration) gladly answered the Tokyo-based Boilet’s call to join him in making a themed anthology, *Japon* [trans. *Japan as Viewed by 17 Creators*].

“Pieces like *Japon* are a perfect example of how strong friendship and trust can forge unity across different cultures,” said Boilet. “At first, I was worried that involving a variety of writers with different backgrounds would result in an incoherent book, but I was wrong.”

Not a single one of the 17 contributions in the collection falls flat. They all offer compelling individual accounts of the artists’ experiences in 12 cities along the length of the Japanese archipelago, giving readers a sense of the diverse culture, people, and landscapes of Japan.

Much of the success of *Japon*, which won the Japanese Cartoonists Association Special Award, is attributable to Boilet’s persistence and his personal network of talented people in the field. Publishers like France’s Casterman and the UK-based Fanfare/Ponent Mon are ardent supporters of Boilet’s Nouvelle Manga concept, and their collaboration made it possible to publish *Japon* in six languages for its global launch. In addition to Dutch, English, French, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish, *Japon* is now available in Chinese.

The 46-year-old Boilet first came to Japan in 1990, around three years before the Japanese manga boom hit his homeland, France. Thereafter, the majority of manga that were translated into French, though, were third-rate and marketed at the self-described *otaku* (“geek”) crowd. After discovering a broad selection of more sophisticated manga in Japan, Boilet felt obliged to present French readers with the best of the genre. He says he also felt “a strong sense of duty” to introduce the French style of comics—called BD, or *bande dessinée*—to Japanese, who he believes “could learn a lot from them.”

These tasks were not easy, notes Boilet. In France, he had a hard time finding companies to publish quality Japanese manga, as many were looking only for guaranteed commercial successes. He also had to overcome technical issues in the manga layout process.

The Japanese traditionally read from right to left, and open their books from what Westerners would normally think of as the back. This requires Boilet to reverse the

page order, and sometimes to flip the images. He also needs to resize word bubbles so all the translated words can fit, as Japanese writing is often vertical, not horizontal like French and English.

In fact, the whole process of the reproduction in French of Taniguchi Jirō’s 1998 *Haruka na machi e* [To a Distant Town] took Boilet over nine months to complete, much longer than the time the Japanese artist spent on the original. The Frenchman states he was moved to create a perfect Western version of the manga by Taniguchi’s assistance in 1994 for Boilet’s first original piece on Japan, *Tokyo est mon jardin* [Tokyo Is My Garden]. Taniguchi handled all the complicated screen-toning, adding a “Japanese touch” that Boilet wanted in his graphic novel.

“I used all my energy to reciprocate his devoted work,” says Boilet. His Japanese wife, the model for the heroine in *Tokyo est mon jardin*, also helped him translate Taniguchi’s manga into French, he adds.

Thanks to the couple’s endeavor, Taniguchi’s book reached a large readership in France and won the Alph’Art Award for best script and the Canal BD Award at the Angoulême International Comic Festival in 2003. Pleased with the results, the publisher, Casterman, launched a new Japanese manga collection called *Sakka* (Author). Boilet has been tapped to direct this new label, which is currently set to release about 30 new titles a year.

In Japan, meanwhile, where publishers target only local readers and have no intention of altering the traditional right-to-left formatting, Boilet has started asking his artist friends, such as Oda Hideji, to format their manga for left-to-right reading direction from the beginning, with a view to selling them at the same time in Japan and overseas. “Japanese authors should aspire to the global audience from the very start,” states Boilet. “Nouvelle Manga has universal appeal, so it’s a pity to make manga just for the sake of Japanese publishers.”

His grass-roots efforts have forged a partnership spanning the world, triggering a boomerang effect and prompting Japanese publisher Asukashinsha to produce *Japon*. The creative flow today travels in both directions. Cutting-edge Franco-Japanese creations by Nouvelle Manga creators seem set to influence the entire genre for years to come.

(Miki Kawakatsu, Japan Echo Inc.)



### Frédéric Boilet

Born in 1960. A resident of Tokyo since 1997. His comic strips, illustrations, and articles are published regularly in major Japanese newspapers. This year he releases *l’Apprenti Japonais* [The Japanese Apprentice], in which he recalls 12 years of discovery in Japan. His Nouvelle Manga manifesto has been posted on his website, <[www.boilet.net](http://www.boilet.net)>. His works available in English are *Yukiko’s Spinach* (2003), *Mariko Parade* (2004), and *Tokyo Is My Garden* (Winter 2006).