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JAPANFOUNDATION 国際交流基金

Murakami Haruki's *1Q84*

Tapping into the Collective Unconscious

Ozaki Mariko

In a country known for gobbling up a million copies of the latest video game or cellphone novel and quickly moving on to the next one, who could have imagined that in the year 2009, a novel in the literary genre would sell more than two million copies (both volumes combined) less than two months after hitting the bookshelves? In this fragmented market, where the preferences of the young and middle-aged, the masses and high-brow critics, rarely intersect, who could have predicted the birth of a literary work on which all their interests converge?

The man behind this phenomenon is none other than Murakami Haruki, the same novelist whose 1987 work *Noruwei no mori* [trans. *Norwegian Wood*] triggered a three-year-long nationwide wave of enthusiasm more than 20 years ago. With *1Q84*—a title that plays on the Japanese homophony between the letter Q and *kyū,* or "nine," to suggest "1984"—Murakami has demonstrated brilliantly that lightning can indeed strike twice.

One factor behind the current boom was doubtless the anticipation. To begin with, fans have had to wait seven long years since the 2002 publication of *Umibe no Kafuka* [trans. *Kafka on the Shore*] for another full-length novel from Murakami. Widespread interest in the author was stoked by his recent selection for the Jerusalem Prize for Freedom of the Individual in Society and by the widely publicized acceptance speech he gave this past February, in which he memorably declared, "Between a high, solid wall and an egg that breaks against it, I will always stand on the side of the egg." The advance publicity, which skillfully piqued the public's curiosity by offering nothing more than the enigmatic title *1Q84,* played a part as well. Once the book appeared, predominantly positive reviews, which quickly spread from the literary journals to the popular weekly magazines and even daytime tabloid television shows, fanned the flames. This, at any rate, is something that could not have occurred 20 years ago. It is testimony to a fundamental change in the character of contemporary Japanese literature and literary criticism wrought by Murakami himself.

Murakami is now writing a third volume of his best-selling 2009 publication, to be published in summer 2010.

The story—of which I provide only the basic outline out of consideration for those who wish to read the forthcoming English translation—centers on a 30-year-old single woman, Aomame, a strong, independent woman living alone, utterly convinced that her destined soul mate is a former classmate, Tengo, with whom she held hands at the age of 10. Tengo, who makes a prosaic living as a cram school teacher, actually harbors the same feelings. However, both characters have dark sides: Aomame's covert activities involve her in assassinations, and Tengo, an aspiring writer, steps outside the bounds of literary ethics in an effort to publish the work of a beautiful, enigmatic teenage girl named Fukaeri. The leader of a religious cult lurks in the background. Suddenly both Aomame and Tengo find themselves in an alternative reality, one in which two moons are visible in the sky. They no longer exist in the year 1984 but in the parallel, slightly twisted year "1Q84."

The fictional world Murakami creates is a kind of nightmare landscape, leavened with humor, in which such simple dichotomies as good or bad, happy or unhappy, no longer apply. Yet for anyone who lived through the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and Aum Shinrikyō sarin gas attacks in Japan, or for anyone trying to grasp the reality of our post-9/11 world, this surreal, threatening, dreamlike state of suspension somehow rings very true. Surely this was Murakami's intention.

Having spent much of the last decade translating the novels of writers like Raymond Chandler and Truman Capote, Murakami has perfected a mode of expression that can convey the author's intent in any language, and he is more adept than ever at gradually accelerating the pace at which the story unfolds. Moreover, by subtly interweaving the music of Leoš Janáček and Johann Sebastian Bach, quotations from Anton Chekhov's *Sakhalin Island,* and such Japanese literary classics as *Heike monogatari* [trans. *The Tale of the Heike*], Murakami creates a story that is at once seamless, dense, and remarkably multidimensional, lending itself to a broad range of critical interpretations.

Reading Murakami's previous work of fiction, the 2004 novella *Afutā Dāku* [trans. *After Dark*], one sensed a totally new aspect emerging, almost as if the print were rising from the page in three-dimensional bas-relief. With

1Q84, Murakami has opened the door still more decisively to a new realm of possibility in twenty-first-century literature.

Katō Norihiro, one of the most penetrating critics of contemporary Japanese fiction, is lavish in his praise of *1Q84,* declaring it "on a completely different level, in a different realm, from the work of other contemporary Japanese novelists." Katō, a specialist in postwar Japanese philosophy, links Murakami to a current of thought represented by Yoshimoto Takaaki and Tsurumi Shunsuke, whose ideas have been "treated as strange, irrational fixations," and submits that "the works of Miyazaki and Murakami reveal the flowering of this postwar tendency" and open a channel by which those ideas can be transmitted to the West. Here he is referring, of course, to the director Miyazaki Hayao, whose 2001 film *Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi* [trans. *Spirited Away*] won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, and whose *Gake no ue no Ponyo* [trans. *Ponyo*] was released in US theaters this past summer.

Katō is not the only critic to discern a connection between Murakami and Miyazaki. In his book released in July 2009 titled *Monogatari ron de yomu Murakami Haruki to Miyazaki Hayao* [Story Structure in Murakami Haruki and Miyazaki Hayao], Ōtsuka Eiji, an observer of such "nerd" culture as animation and *manga,* argues that the "highly structured stories" that characterize Murakami's work, starting with *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* [trans. *A Wild Sheep Chase*] (1982), and Miyazaki's, beginning with *Mononoke hime* [trans. *Princess Mononoke*] (1997), have allowed both artists to gain acceptance worldwide. Ōtsuka speculates that Murakami has absorbed aspects of comparative mythology, as explored by Joseph Campbell in his *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), and he writes, "If we permit ourselves to view Murakami as writing fiction in the manner of Fitzgerald, it should not be such a stretch to say also that he narrates in the manner of *Star Wars*."

It seems to me, however, that a more important quality the world is seeking in today's writers and filmmakers is the ability to penetrate *beneath* the myths to the unconscious level and express the era's collective unconscious through story. Speaking at the University of California, Berkeley, this past summer, Miyazaki said that he received a great deal of inspiration from Japanese folk stories and children's picture books, but he also noted that it was not enough to build something from the conscious elements of such stories. "To penetrate beneath the conscious and even beneath the unconscious, I really have to smell the blood in my nose," he said.

Murakami Haruki spoke in similar terms during an interview about *1Q84* in June. "In my case, if I start out by thinking about the plot, things don't go well," he told me. "I have a few scattered images, like points, regarding things that are likely to happen, and so forth, but for the rest, I let the story take its own course." He also said that violence and sex had emerged as major issues for him in the course of his writing career. "I think you can say that these two themes are important doors for penetrating deep into the human soul" (*Yomiuri Shimbun,* June 17, 2009).

Precisely because they emerge unconsciously from deep within the human psyche, such stories have the power to heal. This, it seems to me, is the secret of the global popularity, transcending nationality and language, that Murakami and Miyazaki have both achieved in the present era.

The clinical psychotherapist Iwamiya Keiko carefully explores and illuminates this aspect of Murakami's work in her book *Shishunki o meguru bōken: Shinri ryōhō to Murakami Haruki no sekai* [Adventures in Adolescence: Psychotherapy and the World of Murakami Haruki] (2004). She observes that *Nejimaki-dori kuronikuru* [trans. *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*] (1995), *Dansu dansu dansu* [trans. *Dance Dance Dance*] (1988), and *Sekai no owari to hādo boirudo wandārando* [trans. *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*] (1985) all feature preternaturally sensitive teenage girls (16-year-old Mei, 13-year-old Yuki, and an unnamed 17-year-old, respectively) who sense imminent death and are therefore unable to fit into a normal school or family setting. In all three cases the role of the listener is played by a passive, low-key male protagonist in his thirties, typified by Tōru in *Nejimaki-dori kuronikuru*. These male characters, without playing a flashy role, "simply serve as 'vessels' that connect and integrate 'the other side' [the invisible body] with 'this side' [the visible body]. That is precisely why they have perfect therapeutic powers, and even when sex enters into the story as a symbol of union with 'the other side,' it does not threaten the [adolescent] client." Although Iwamiya did not address Murakami's latest work in her book, the analysis clearly applies to the relationship between the protagonist Tengo and the 17-year-old Fukaeri in *1Q84*.

In the real world, 2009 is taking its place in history as the year Japan experienced a change of government. But many Japanese readers of *1Q84* seem to have begun breathing the subtly altered air of "200Q." Murakami is currently working on a third volume of this novel to follow the first two, and in 2010 readers will learn more of the fates of Aomame and the other characters. Who is Tengo's real father? What will become of Aomame? And where are we all headed? I know more than a few people who are pondering these questions even now as they willingly give themselves up to the novel's power to present the world we know in a new and thought-provoking light.

Ozaki Mariko

Born in 1959. Associate director of the Yomiuri Shimbun Culture Department. Has covered literature for the newspaper since 1992, writing its "Bungei jihyō" [Literary Comment) column, among others. Works include Gendai Nihon no shōsetsu *[Contemporary Japanese Fiction],* Jakuchō bungaku shi *[History of the Literature of Setouchi Jakuchō], and* Ōe Kenzaburō: Sakka jishin o kataru *[Ōe Kenzaburō: The Author on Himself] (in collaboration with Ōe Kenzaburō).*

FICTION

Murata Kiyoko

Born in 1945. Received the Akutagawa Prize in 1987 for Nabe no naka *[In the Pot], the basis for director Kurosawa Akira's 1991 film* Hachigatsu no rapusodi *[trans.* Rhapsody in August*]. Her other works include a collection of short stories titled* Shiroi yama *[White Mountain], which won the Women's Literature Prize in 1990, and the novel* Ryūhi gyotenka *[Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven], which received the Education Minister's Art Encouragement Prize in 1999.*

Anata to tomo ni yukimashō
[Dying with You]
By Murata Kiyoko

Asahi Shimbun Shuppan, 2009. 195 x 136 mm. 256 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-02-250439-5.

This novel tells the story of a modern Japanese couple just entering old age. Narrator Kasumi, 62, works at a local fashion college; her husband Yoshio, 64, previously worked at a steelmaker and now owns a machinery-design business. They raised a daughter while working, but she has long since left the nest. Both in good health, they do not think of themselves as "elderly" and have no wish to retire.

One day, a hospital examination reveals that Yoshio has a potentially fatal aortic aneurysm. Thus begins the couple's struggle to overcome his condition. The author incisively portrays their relationship of over 30 years as Kasumi cares for Yoshio, even as she comes to think of her increasingly moody and abusive husband as an entirely different person from the man she knew before. Though Yoshio's surgery is successful, Kasumi ends up falling into a state of profound depression and losing her will to live.

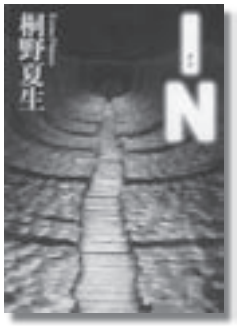
This novel poses solemn questions against the backdrop of modern Japan's aging society: what is the meaning of marriage, of serious illness, of living well into old age? But the author's fictional world has such appeal, combining a perception of humanity rich in irony and wit with a solid literary style, that it emerges as surprisingly devoid of melancholy. *(NM)*

IN
[In]
Kirino Natsuo

Shūeisha, 2009. 195 x 138 mm. 336 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-08-771298-8.

Kirino Natsuo made her debut with romance novels and fiction for younger readers before going on to become a best-selling mystery writer. Her books have been well received overseas—her best-known novel, *Out* [trans. *Out*], was nominated for an Edgar Award in the United States. In recent years her books have dealt with social issues based on real events, and her writing has moved from popular fiction to a "purer" literary style.

One of the dominant genres of "pure" Japanese literature in the twentieth century was the *shishōsetsu* (I-novel), which presented the author's private life in graphic detail. One of the most famous of these is *Shi no toge* [trans. *The Sting of Death*] by Shimao Toshio, in which the wife of the author-protagonist goes insane with jealousy after discovering he has been having an affair. In Kirino's new book, a woman novelist conducts interviews to find out more about the sketchily described lover in a story that bears a close resemblance to *Shi no toge*. Intersecting this plot is an account of the novelist's own infidelity and separation. The relationship between the real and unreal blurs as the novel probes the difference between male and female views of love and the gulf that exists between reality and fiction. At times you will almost want to look away as the characters slip further into the quicksand. But as you read on, a strange light glimmers from the bottom of the morass, and you become possessed by a need to look further into the depths. The book presents an almost painfully precise evocation of what makes both love and fiction so irresistible and so dangerous. *(MT)*



Kirino Natsuo

Born in 1951. In 1993, won the Edogawa Ranpo Prize for Kao ni furikakaru ame *[Rain Falling on My Face]. In 1998, her novel* Out *[trans.* Out*] (see* JBN *No. 21) received the Mystery Writers of Japan Award. In 2004, the English translation was nominated in the Best Novel category for an Edgar Award by the Mystery Writers of America. Her other publications include* Yawarakana hoho *[Soft Cheeks], which won the Naoki Prize in 1999 (see* JBN *No. 28), and* Tōkyō-jima *[Tokyo Island] (see* JBN *No. 58), which took the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize in 2008.*

Nishikawa Miwa

Born in 1974. Made her directorial debut in 2002 with the film Hebi ichigo *[trans.* Wild Berries*], for which she also wrote the screenplay. Her 2006 film* Yureru *[trans.* Sway*] received numerous awards, and her novel by the same title (see* JBN *No. 53) was a candidate for the Mishima Yukio Prize.* Kinō no kamisama *was nominated for the 2009 Naoki Prize.*

Kinō no kamisama [Yesterday's God]

By Nishikawa Miwa

Poplar, 2009. 195 x 135 mm. 223 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 978-4-591-10923-6.

Nishikawa Miwa is regarded as one of the "great hopes" of young female Japanese directors. Her 2006 film *Yureru* [trans. *Sway*] won numerous prizes in Japan and international critical acclaim. Her latest film, *Dia dokutā* [Dear Doctor], was released in 2009, also to favorable reviews. In addition to her cinematic achievements, Nishikawa received the Yomiuri Literature Prize in the category of dramatization and scenarios for her *Yureru* screenplay, and her literary adaptation of the film was a candidate for the Mishima Yukio Prize, awarded to works of "pure literature." *Kinō no kamisama*, featuring characters from her film *Dia dokutā,* is another literary outing; it has been nominated for the Naoki Prize.

In her novelization of *Yureru,* Nishikawa—who has garnered high praise for her artistic expression in both writing and film—departed from the movie to conjure up an original literary world while using essentially the same story. Her talent lies in her thorough understanding of the differences between the two mediums. The author puts this talent to use in *Kinō no kamisama,* too, skillfully weaving a story from various elements—such as descriptions of scenery and the emotional state of the protagonist—that cannot be portrayed on screen. Readers, though, will still experience the sensation of vivid imagery being projected before their minds' eye. In this sense, one might say that Nishikawa is that rare sort of novelist capable of evoking powerful imagery among her readers. *(MT)*

Kiriko ni tsuite [Regarding Kiriko]

By Nishi Kanako

Kadokawa Shoten, 2009. 195 x 135 mm. 215 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 978-4-04-873931-3.

Novelist Nishi Kanako made her debut in 2004 with *Aoi*, which she followed up the next year with the bestselling *Sakura*. Authors in Japan often acquire their fan base by winning a literary prize for newcomers and grabbing the attention of editors and critics. Nishi, however, made her literary debut by submitting a manuscript to a publisher; in another unusual development, bibliophile bookstore staff became drawn to her works and helped popularize them with readers. Her latest work, *Kiriko ni tsuite,* is an offbeat modern fairy tale.

Though homely, the main character, Kiriko, was raised with love and affection by her parents and leads a princess-like existence in complete unawareness of her plainness. Ramses II, a small black cat she discovered behind her elementary school gymnasium, is so extraordinarily intelligent that he has even learned to speak the language of humans.

One day something happens that causes Kiriko to shut herself away from others. Thanks to the encouragement of Ramses II, however, she resolves to venture outside again in order to help another girl whose screams she hears in her dreams. A series of difficulties arise that, if taken realistically, would constitute momentous hardships. But the humorous, lively narration, combined with the appearance of unique and captivating characters, has the power to instill both happiness and the feeling of having slipped into a fairytale world. *(MT)*

Nishi Kanako

Born in 1977. Worked as a freelance writer before her debut novel Aoi *was published in 2004. Received the Oda Sakunosuke Prize in 2008 for* Tsūtenkaku *[The Tsūtenkaku Tower]. Other works include* Kiiroi zō *[Yellow Elephant] and* Shizuku *[Droplet].*

Kakuta Mitsuyo

Born in 1967. Won the Naoki Prize in 2005 for Taigan no kanojo *[trans.* Woman on the Other Shore*], and the Chūō Kōron Bungei Prize in 2007 for* Yōkame no semi *[trans.* The Eighth Day*] (see* JBN *No. 55).*

Kuma-chan
[Mr. Bear]

By Kakuta Mitsuyo

Shinchōsha, 2009. 197 x 135 mm. 288 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-10-434604-2.

In 2005 Kakuta Mitsuyo won the Naoki Prize, Japan's major award for popular fiction, for her novel *Taigan no kanojo* [trans. *Woman on the Other Shore*]. Since then she has continued to publish prolifically, making a name for herself as one of Japan's major writers. Many of her stories deal with themes of love and family, though she has also written suspenseful crime novels like *Yōkame no semi* [trans. *The Eighth Day*] and *Mori ni nemuru sakana* [Fish that Sleep in Forests]. Marked by vivid characterization and deft psychological insight, her works have a warmth that lingers long after the last page has been turned.

Kuma-chan is a collection of delicately written love stories linked by a common theme. Throughout the first five of the book's seven stories, a character breaks up with a lover, only to be abandoned in turn by someone else in the following story. This structure gives the stories a freshness that makes them a pleasure to read. People's personalities and attitudes to life vary slightly depending on who they are with, and there is much enjoyment to be had from Kakuta's subtle depiction of these little changes. The book then takes an unexpected turn in the final two stories. Why do people fall in love, and what do they learn when they have loved and lost? The book is at its most thought-provoking when it moves beyond love affairs to examine deeper questions of how people can and should relate to one another. Despite its light, conversational tone, this fine collection has considerable depth. *(MT)*

Nani mo ka mo yūutsu na yoru ni
[On a Night When All Is Misery]

By Nakamura Fuminori

Shūeisha, 2009. 195 x 137 mm. 144 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-08-771287-2.

Since his debut, Nakamura Fuminori has staked out unusual ground for a young writer by exploring crime, murder, suicide, child abuse and neglect, and other problems plaguing modern Japanese society. His latest work is no exception. The main character, a young man working as a guard in a rural prison, spends his days dealing with the convicts there.

The protagonist was raised in an orphanage and has his own dark past, including an attempt on his own life. Thanks to the influence of the good-hearted orphanage director, he found the will to live and was able to reach adulthood, but a friend was not so fortunate: written on his suicide note were the words "On a night when all is misery."

The protagonist finds himself troubled by the case of a convicted murderer incarcerated at the prison. Still a minor, the convict merely waits resignedly for his death sentence to be carried out. Why does he not fight his conviction? Does he deserve to die? Is the death penalty justifiable in the first place? The main character confronts such questions, to which there are no easy answers.

The publication of this work is timely: Japan has just recently introduced a lay judge system in which citizens serve as de facto jurors, and there is heightened consciousness of how trials are conducted and culpability assessed. Debate on capital punishment has also grown heated. In the context of these social developments, this novel takes on a significance reaching beyond that of a mere work of fiction. *(NM)*

Nakamura Fuminori

Born in 1977. His debut novel Jū *[The Gun] won the Shinchō New Author Prize in 2002. His other works include* Tsuchi no naka no kodomo *[Child in the Ground] (introduced in* JBN *No. 47), winner of the Akutagawa Prize in 2005, and a collection of stories titled* Sekai no hate *[The Far End of the World].*

Tsujihara Noboru

Born in 1945. Won the Akutagawa Prize in 1990 for his novella Mura no namae *[The Name of a Village], the Yomiuri Literary Prize in 1999 for his epic novel* Tobe kirin *[Fly, Qilin!], and the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize in 2000 for* Yūdōtei Enboku *[The* Rakugo *Storyteller Yūdōtei Enboku].*

Yurusarezaru mono [The Unforgiven]

By Tsujihara Noboru

Vol. 1: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2009. 195 x 136 mm. 432 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-620-10735-6.
Vol. 2: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2009. 195 x 136 mm. 415 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-620-10736-3.

This historical novel is set in Japan in the early years of the twentieth century. Following victory in the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War, Japan has continued to modernize at breakneck speed, and is rushing headlong toward a military confrontation with Russia as the novel begins in 1903. The story unfolds in the town of Shingū on the Kii Peninsula, where a young doctor named Maki returns from overseas and sets about selflessly providing the poor townspeople with medical care. He has also brought back a collection of socialist literature, and an extremist group known as the Five-Man Revolutionary Band of Kumano soon grows around him. Complex relationships develop among the people of the town, where Doctor Maki and his beautiful niece live. Although Shingū is a fictional setting, it is modeled on a real town in Wakayama Prefecture. The historical background also reflects Japan's situation at the time, and many of the characters are based on real people. But Tsujihara creates a fictional world of his own that moves in parallel with historical fact. By mixing his characters with real-life figures he creates a world that successfully combines reality and fiction. The disparate strands of the narrative mesh neatly, and the story incorporates everything from small-town gossip and clandestine love affairs to the latest news from the front, the menace of the burgeoning revolutionary movement, and the surging tides of major political and economic change. The book might well be described as Tsujihara's *War and Peace*. *(NM)*

BIOGRAPHY

Jojō to tōsō: Tsujii Takashi + Tsutsumi Seiji kaikoroku [Lyricism and Conflict: The Memoirs of Tsujii Takashi (Tsutsumi Seiji)]

By Tsujii Takashi

Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2009. 197 x 137 mm. 355 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-12-004033-7.

In this memoir, corporate leader and literary figure Tsutsumi Seiji (who adopted the pen name Tsujii Takashi) offers an account of his life.

The memoirist is the eldest son of Tsutsumi Yasujirō (1889–1964), founder of Seibu Railway Co., Ltd. and a member of Japan's House of Representatives. Although he went through a period of communist activism, the younger Tsutsumi went on to become president of Seibu Department Stores, Ltd. In his heart, though, he longed for the life of a man of words. In this work he explains his attempt to overcome his emotional conflict in this regard.

Tsutsumi's account begins in 1959, when he traveled to the United States with his father, then speaker of the lower house, and met with Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) and President Dwight Eisenhower (1890–1969); it ends in 1997. The book also details his dealings with political and financial leaders, as well as with such artists as Mishima Yukio (1925–70) and Takemitsu Tōru (1930–96).

This book is more than a record of the author's high-profile acquaintances, though. The intellectual Tsutsumi, who for a time belonged to the Japanese Communist Party, calmly analyzes the state of the Japanese left, noting that "those who carried out their activism through the prism of historical sociology had a high rate of ideological conversion." He also states his belief that one cannot be both an artist and a successful politician, as "the result is inevitably dictatorship." *(MK)*

Tsujii Takashi

Born in 1927; his real name is Tsutsumi Seiji. A poet and author as well as a leading businessman who served as head of the Saison group before its dissolution. Has won numerous awards for his poetry and novels. Co-authored Posuto shōhi shakai no yukue *[Whither Post-Consumer Society?] with Ueno Chizuko (see* JBN *No. 59).*

POETRY

Kawano Yūko

Born in 1946. Tanka poet. Started writing tanka in high school and won the Kadokawa Tanka Prize as a college student. She soon earned a reputation for poems that expressed women's feelings in supple and fresh language. She has since been awarded numerous prizes. Currently works as tanka editor for the Mainichi Shimbun *and NHK.*

Bokei
[The Maternal Line]

By Kawano Yūko

Seijisha, 2008. 218 x 156 mm. 185 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 978-4-86198-107-4.

Human beings—and women in particular—live with nature, and eventually return to it themselves. This collection of tanka is a heartfelt and moving reflection on this fact. Having lost her mother to cancer, the poet Kawano Yūko now finds herself diagnosed with breast cancer. She reflects on her life as follows: "I have toiled / Given birth to some children / And soon I shall die. / How utterly ordinary / It has been, this life of mine."

Decades have passed since the poet left the village where she was born. The house in which she grew up no longer stands—all that is left is a lonely line of desolate-looking chestnut trees. But memories of the old home and those who lived there float like shadows from the fields: "Long gone now, / The house where I was born. / Chestnut trees / Withered by winter / Stand thin and tall against the cold." And again: "Fifty years gone, / And down the distance of the years / I see them still: / Soot-black roof beams and cousins / In the old family home."

Of course, the village itself is still there, largely unchanged. The generations return to the land: the poet's dead mother, the poet, now stricken by cancer herself, and her young daughter Kō. This is the natural way of all human life—especially for women. She writes: "The great owl / That crouches by my pillow / Speaks to me: / A young woman you were / Once, but now . . ." There is also the verse that gave this collection its title: "The descendents / Of countless generations / Straight down the maternal line: / Today my daughter Kō and I / Carry the same hair on our heads." *(MK)*

Toromuso korāju
[Tromsø Collage]

By Tanikawa Shuntarō

Shinchōsha, 2009. 198 x 135 mm. 111 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-10-401805-5.

This collection marks something of a departure for Japan's most prominent living poet, most of whose work until now has consisted of short, lyrical poems. This book is Tanikawa's first to consist entirely of longer compositions, all of them with a strong narrative element.

The title poem, written in the Norwegian city of Tromsø, opens with a hurrying, almost impatient declaration of intent: "I don't stand still." Another poem, "Rinshisen" [Boat to the Afterlife], describes a man who lies near death; as his wife calls to him from the world of the living, he hears the voice of a young girl who used to live next door until she passed over to the other side. The poem reads like a first-hand report from someone who has come close to death. The meeting of narrative and poetry creates a vivid, tangible sense of the words passing back and forth before the poet.

"I'm not interested in making a story out of my own life," Tanikawa has said. "Scattered fragments are enough for me." But in a recent interview Tanikawa admitted that his new collection represents "an attempt to take all the different slices of life and put them together as something new." What does this new synthesis mean: a settling up, an urge to return to a world without language, or some kind of final testament? The poet himself dismisses such speculation. "I used to push down so hard with my pen that I never felt like writing anything longer than a few lines. But since I switched over to a computer my poems have been getting longer and longer." How typical of Tanikawa to refuse simplistic interpretations. *(SH)*

Tanikawa Shuntarō

Born in 1931. Poet. Published his debut collection, Nijūoku kōnen no kodoku *[trans.* Two Billion Light-Years of Solitude*], in 1952. Since then, he has published a huge number of books, including poetry, essays, picture books, and children's stories. As well as translations of the* Peanuts *comic strip and Mother Goose rhymes, he has also tried his hand at scripts, songwriting, photography, and video. His work has been well received overseas, and his poems have been translated into some 20 languages. (See "In Their Own Words,"* JBN *No. 60.)*

Tanigawa Ken'ichi

Born in 1921. Folklorist and tanka poet. After working as a magazine editor, began a prolific career as a writer. In 1973 he won the Mainichi Culture Prize for Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei *[Documents on Ordinary Lives in Japan], and in 1991 his work* Nantō bungaku hasseiron *[On the Emergence of Literature in the Southern Islands] received both the Education Minister's Art Encouragement Prize and the Minakata Kumagusu Prize. In 2007 he was elected a Person of Cultural Merit.*

Haha no kuni e no tabi [Journeys to the Land of My Late Mother]

By Tanigawa Ken'ichi

Nihon Keizai Shimbun Shuppansha, 2009. 194 x 138 mm. 312 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 978-4-532-16680-9.

This autobiography traces the intellectual and scholarly life of one of Japan's leading folklorists. Tanigawa Ken'ichi has followed in the footsteps of Yanagita Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu by carving out a new area of study and making it his own.

The core of the book is a series of columns originally published in the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in which Tanigawa looks back in detail over his life, from his birth in 1921 to the present. But the book also covers the background to his published works. There are also discussions of such topics as the origins and characteristics of the Japanese people and their culture.

Tanigawa was born in the remote town of Minamata in Kyushu. He spent much of his childhood indoors, reading books and losing himself in daydreams, due to sickness. After moving to Tokyo, he became an editor at Heibonsha Limited, Publishers, where he contributed to the success of series like *Fudoki Nihon* [Local Histories of Japan] and *Nihon zankoku monogatari* [Cruel Tales from Japan], released during the boom years of rapid economic growth after the war.

Tanigawa also worked as founding editor of the magazine *Taiyō* before turning his attention to Okinawa and other islands to the south of the Japanese mainland. His chief interest as a folklorist has always been the humble and the voiceless, and he has fought against the disappearance of local place names. Throughout his career, he has been a proudly independent thinker. This book gives the reader a clear understanding of his life and the development of his scholarship. *(MK)*

Onna san-nin no Shiberia tetsudō [Three Women on the Trans-Siberian Railroad]

By Mori Mayumi

Shūeisha, 2009. 193 x 140 mm. 352 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-08-771288-9.

In the years between the 1904–5 Russo-Japanese War and the outbreak of World War II, three women writers from Japan took the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Europe. They were the tanka poet Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) and two novelists, Miyamoto Yuriko (1899–1951) and Hayashi Fumiko (1903–51). Yosano traveled to Paris in 1912 to be with her husband, the poet Yosano Tekkan. Miyamoto set off for Moscow in 1927 to witness the birth of socialism with Yuasa Yoshiko, a scholar of Russian literature. In 1931, Hayashi abandoned her husband in Japan and went to meet her lover in Paris.

This is an account of a journey in the footsteps of these women and an attempt to delve into their lives through the books they wrote. As the author disembarks at various stations along the way, descriptions of the still visible scars of war and revolution mingle with excerpts from the novels, tanka, and diaries written by her famous predecessors. She also visits the graves of Japanese soldiers who died during their forced detention in Siberia. Skillfully interweaving past and present, the book brings the atmosphere of an era of war and global depression vividly into the here and now. Equally engaging are the conversations she has with the young, modern-minded Russians and Chinese who travel with her as interpreters.

With its reminders of a faded age when idealists looked to communism to save the world and intellectuals fell in love with the idea of Paris, the book has an attractive, sepia-toned beauty. The author's musical prose is powerfully evocative of the romance of travel and literature. *(SH)*

Mori Mayumi

Born in 1954. In 1984, founded a local arts and events magazine covering downtown Tokyo. In addition to her editing work, has published numerous essays and nonfiction books. In 1998, won the Education Minister's Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists for Ōgai no saka *[Ōgai's Hilly Streets], introduced in* JBN *No. 22, and in 2003 was awarded the JTB Grand Prize for Travel Writing for* Sokkyō Shijin no Itaria *[The Italy of the Improvisatore].*

FINE ARTS

Akita ranga no kindai: Odano Naotake Shinobazunoike-zu o yomu [A New Reading of Odano Naotake's *Shinobazunoike-zu*: The Akita Ranga School and Its Cultural Context in Tokugawa Japan]

By Imahashi Riko

Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009. 217 x 154 mm. 408 pp. ¥6,500. ISBN 978-4-13-080212-3.

Imahashi Riko

Born in 1964. Professor at Gakushūin Women's College. Her first book, a version of her PhD dissertation entitled Edo no kachō ga *[Bird and Flower Paintings of the Edo Period], won a Suntory Prize and the Education Minister's Art Encouragement Prize for New Artists in 1995. Her other publications include* Edo no dōbutsu ga *[Animal Pictures of Edo], introduced in* JBN *No. 45.*

During the Edo period (1603–1868), the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki was Japan's only window onto European arts and science. Employing modern techniques introduced from Holland, the *ranga,* or "Dutch-style pictures," school was the first to fuse Western and Japanese styles. Particularly famous are the paintings by artists from the Akita feudal domain, known as the Akita Ranga school. The masterpiece of the school is Odano Naotake's *Shinobazunoike-zu,* a vivid depiction of a pair of Chinese peonies set against the backdrop of the Shinobazu Pond in Ueno, central Edo (now Tokyo). In this book, Imahashi provides a wide-ranging discussion of the painting's cultural background. Her research leads to the hypothesis that this painting—so remarkable for its time—was produced with a secret approach to appreciation and interpretation in mind. In addition to the pleasures of art history, the book gives the reader the excitement of unraveling historical mysteries. Full of intellectual stimulation and the joys of scholarly detective work, this is a book that can be recommended not just to specialists but to anyone with an interest in the Edo period as a whole. The book also includes many color plates showing examples of Akita Ranga painting. *(NM)*

SOCIETY

Nippon no satsujin [Murder in Japan]

By Kawai Mikio

Chikuma Shobō, 2009. 173 x 107 mm. 272 pp. ¥780. ISBN 978-4-480-06488-2.

Kawai Mikio

Born in 1960. Professor at the Tōin University of Yokohama, where he specializes in the sociology of law. His previous publications include Anzen shinwa hōkai no paraddokusu—Chian no hōshakaigaku *[The Paradox of the Collapse of the Safety Myth: The Legal Sociology of Law and Order] and* Hō no rinkai II: Chitsujozō no tenkan *[The Law at a Limitation Point II: The Changing Image of Law and Order] (as coauthor).*

In recent years, media reports of indiscriminate killings and thrill-seeking murders by teenagers have led people to proclaim the end of the myth of Japanese safety. In this book, the author uses extensive data, including sentencing guidelines for judicial apprentices, to depict the true state of murder in Japan today.

Japan has a much lower murder rate than other developed countries, averaging around 800 cases a year. Half of these take place within the family. However, half of these killings of relatives are cases in which there are grounds for sympathy, involving people driven to exhaustion by the pressures of caring for an incapacitated family member. In many cases, the killer planned to commit suicide. The incidence of infanticide, relatively common in the past, has dropped dramatically since the legalization of abortion and the increasingly common practice of "shotgun" weddings. The data suggests that the safe society is still alive and well.

But the system in place for supporting prisoners after they are released is at breaking point. Probation officers are often private citizens, many of them elderly. The dilution of social connections in local communities means there are fewer people prepared to see to prisoners' needs after their release. The author's view is that a narrowing divide between released prisoners and regular society has had an adverse impact on people's sense of law and order and led to a perception that the safe society is no more.

This fine study offers new insights into what it means to take a person's life in a "safe" country like Japan today. *(SH)*

Matsumoto Ken'ichi

Born in 1946. Active in a wide range of fields, including criticism, biography, and fiction. Currently a professor at Reitaku University. Among his many works is the five-volume Hyōden Kita Ikki *[Kita Ikki: A Critical Biography], published in 2004, which won the Shiba Ryōtarō Prize and the Mainichi Culture Prize. He has been on the editorial committee of* Japanese Book News *since issue No. 43 (Spring 2005).*

Kaigansen no rekishi
[A History of the Japanese Coastline]

By Matsumoto Ken'ichi

Mishimasha, 2009. 195 x 135 mm. 260 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-903908-08-3.

The Japanese archipelago has a coastline 50% longer than that of the United States and twice the length of China's. This book uses this coastline as the starting point for a wide-ranging discussion of climate and scenery, national defense, literature, and the character of the Japanese.

As far back as the *Man'yōshū* (Japan's first collection of poetry, compiled in the eighth century), the sea was already revered as divine. All Shinto shrines built on the coast face the ocean.

The development of transport by sea encouraged the growth of Japanese cities. Over the two and a half centuries of the Edo period (1603–1868), coastal contact with foreign shipping stimulated people's interest in other countries at a time when Japan was officially closed to the outside world and led to the publication of books on the meaning of national defense and foreign relations.

With the arrival of an advanced industrial economy, the white sands and green pines that had previously marked Japan's coastline began to disappear. This had a profound effect on the national literature. In Murakami Haruki's novel *Umibe no Kafuka* [trans. *Kafka on the Shore*], the shoreline never makes an appearance. The author is interested exclusively in the inner lives of his characters.

The disappearance of the coastline is bound to change the way Japanese people think about life and death. This book serves as a warning and raises serious questions about the way Japanese people live their lives today. *(SH)*

Nomonhan sensō: Mongoru to Manshūkoku
[The Nomonhan War: Mongolia and Manchukuo]

By Tanaka Katsuhiko

Iwanami Shoten, 2009. 173 x 105 mm. 256 pp. ¥780. ISBN 978-4-00-431191-1.

In 1939, war broke out between Japanese and Soviet forces along the banks of the Halha River, close to the Mongolian border in what is now northeast China. Some 20,000 lives were lost on each side. Previous histories have tended to focus on military strategy, but this new study by Japan's leading Mongolia specialist uses recently declassified Soviet documents and a wealth of Mongolian sources to provide a definitive account of the conflict from a Mongolian perspective.

The book begins by explaining the significance to Mongolians of the Hulun Buir grasslands where the battle took place. It then moves on to a discussion of the 1935 Manchouli conference between Japan and the Soviet Union and the reasons why war broke out. Perhaps the book's most startling revelation is just how many Mongolians were executed for "espionage" after becoming involved in negotiations between the two sides. In the People's Republic of Mongolia, a Soviet puppet state at the time, at least 26,000 people were killed, including Buddhist lamas. Comintern was highly suspicious of any hint of moves seeking a unified homeland for all Mongolians.

Tanaka takes the Japanese army to task for incompetence (Japan had never fought a border war before) and comes down particularly hard on Tsuji Masanobu, the Kwantung Army staff officer who conspired to break off ceasefire negotiations and thus enlarged the scale of the conflict. The book is filled with a sense of mourning for the Mongolian leaders and the soldiers on both sides who lost their lives in the conflict. *(SH)*

Tanaka Katsuhiko

Born in 1934. Research interests include linguistics and Mongolian studies. Currently professor emeritus at Hitotsubashi University. Among his numerous publications are Kotoba to kokka *[Language and State] and* Gengo kara mita minzoku to kokka *[Nation and State: A Linguistic Perspective].*

No. 4: Bioethics

In the fourth and final installment of this series, Tateiwa Shin'ya, professor of sociology and social philosophy at Ritsumeikan University's Graduate School of Core Ethics and Frontier Sciences, traces the development of bioethics in Japan and recommends a number of works in the field that deserve to be translated for the benefit of readers in other countries.

The first books to introduce and comment on American and British developments in the field of bioethics began to appear in Japan in the mid-1980s. Since then, dozens of specialist studies by Western scholars have been published in Japanese translation, including the work of George J. Annas, Howard Brody, Hugo T. Engelhardt, Leon R. Kass, Helga Kuhse, James Rachels, Peter Singer, and Robert M. Veach. A Japanese translation of the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* came out in 2007. Numerous textbooks and reference guides for classroom use have appeared in recent years, in addition to books discussing practical ethical issues in the context of medical treatment.

In a sense, therefore, bioethics as an academic subject was imported into Japan, where it was embraced and practiced as a discipline in its own right. But to concentrate solely on this aspect would be to give a misleading impression of developments over the last several decades. Although there are areas of overlap with Western developments in the field, philosophical and practical approaches to thinking about life existed independently in Japan long before the arrival of bioethics from the West.

In particular, beginning in the 1960s there was growing criticism of the damage caused to human health and life by pollution and medical drugs, along with a growing public awareness of the issues affecting patients in mental hospitals and other facilities. In the early 1970s, in the context of reforms to the Eugenics Protection Law, there was lively academic debate about the status of women and people with disabilities, often focused on such issues as prenatal diagnosis and selective abortion. In the late 1970s there was a movement to legalize euthanasia, promptly matched by a corresponding movement opposing legalization. There was also debate about the acceptability of various kinds of new technology.

The number of texts on these subjects is not particularly large, although they do probably number in the hundreds. The majority, however, were written for a specialist academic audience and have not been published.

There is a need to review the history of the field in Japan, introducing these and other publications, to examine the significance of past trends, to develop our theoretical approach, and to introduce Japanese achievements to a wider audience around the world. A few books already serve this purpose to a certain extent. One recent publication is Katō Masae's *Women's Rights? The Politics of Eugenic Abortion in Modern Japan,* published in 2009 by Amsterdam University Press. The four essays included in *Dark Medicine: Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research,* edited by William R. Lafleur, Gernot Böhme, and Shimazono Susumu and published in 2007 by Indiana University Press, also provide a good introduction to recent trends in the field in Japan. But such books are still few and far between, and addressing this lack of suitable materials is a major issue for the future.

One difficulty will be the deep divide that exists between the approach taken in Japan and the focus typical of mainstream bioethics in the West. Broadly speaking, there are two major differences. One involves value judgments relating to quality of life; the other is the principle of autonomy. Of course the importance of a good quality of life and respect for the thoughts and feelings of the individual deserve to be acknowledged and respected to some extent in every society. Naturally Japan is no exception. But in mainstream Western bioethics, quality of life and autonomy have often been regarded as more important than a person's continued existence, and on occasion have even been seen as at odds with it. Japanese scholars have historically been skeptical of such an approach.

Of course it is only natural that differences should exist between one person and another or between one society and another. But in this case the differences seem to stem from fundamental causes located deep within the societies and individuals involved. Unexamined assumptions stand at the very foundations of our systems of scholarship—and not only in the field of bioethics. Without shared assumptions at a basic level, no debate is possible. I have experienced myself how difficult it can sometimes be to communicate across this divide.

But at the same time, perhaps this also suggests that what we say has real significance. We do not believe that an approach that differs from the mainstream of bioethics is something that is unique to Japan or East Asia. Such differences exist in every part of the world, regardless of whether they have cohered as a formal system of academic study. We believe that our claims are logically consistent and universal. We will continue to build a body of discourse and thought, making it available in a range of different languages. The Global COE Program of Ritsumeikan University, Ars Vivendi: Forms of Human Life and Survival <www.arsvi.com>, will continue to strive to become a center for this kind of activity.

(Tateiwa Shin'ya,
Professor, Graduate School of Core Ethics and
Frontier Sciences, Ritsumeikan University)

Recommended Works

Seimeigaku ni nani ga dekiru ka: Nōshi, feminizumu, yūsei shisō [Life Studies Approaches to Bioethics: A New Perspective on Brain Death, Feminism, and Disability]

By Morioka Masahiro

Keisō Shobō, 2001. 193 x 134 mm. 506 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 978-4-326-65261-7 (4-326-65261-6).

This study examines post-1970 feminism—including works by Tanaka Mitsu—and the disability movement to discuss what lies at the root of a denial of eugenics. Morioka is a leading proponent of life studies and administers the English-language website <www.lifestudies.org>.

Kazoku keikaku e no michi: Kindai Nihon no seishoku o meguru seiji [The Road to Family Planning: The Politics of Reproduction in Modern Japan]

By Ogino Miho

Iwanami Shoten, 2008. 195 x 138 mm. 380 pp. ¥3,400. ISBN 978-4-00-022488-8.

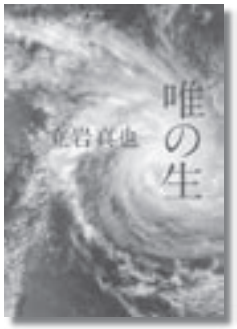
This is more a historical study than a work of bioethics. How did the idea that having children was an individual choice come to be taken for granted? This book examines the concept of reproductive rights while tracing the development of the related discourse from the Meiji era (1868–1912) to the present.

Inochi no onnatachi e: Torimidashi ūman riburon [For Women of Life: An Informal Theory of Women's Liberation]

By Tanaka Mitsu

Pandora, 2004. 194 x 134 mm. 400 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 978-4-7684-7823-3 (4-7684-7823-9).

This is not an academic work but a personal account by a leading figure in the Japanese women's liberation movement of the early 1970s. Both the philosophical approach and the nature of the writing are quite different from bioethics. In places it can appear illogical, and has been critiqued as such. If much of the apparent logical consistency of bioethics comes from a habit of not questioning our assumptions, however, then perhaps this book represents a more honest approach to thinking in the field.



Yoi shi [A Good Death] and *Tada no sei* [Sole Life]

By Tateiwa Shin'ya

Yoi shi: Chikuma Shobō, 2008. 210 x 148 mm. 376 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-480-86719-3.
Tada no sei: Chikuma Shobō, 2009. 210 x 148 mm. 424 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 978-4-480-86720-9.

The first of these publications, *Yoi shi*, considers euthanasia as an "autonomous, natural, and altruistic death" and demonstrates that approval of these values does not necessarily lead to an approval of euthanasia itself.

Tada no sei examines developments in the discourse regarding terminal care in Japan. Discussion focuses in particular on how an understanding of limited resources came to be common knowledge. The book also assays the debates between academics and others working in the field, beginning with a critique of the anti-anthropocentric arguments of Peter Singer and Helga Kuhse. It also examines arguments made by such Japanese scholars as Katō Shūichi, Komatsu Yoshihiko, Shimizu Tetsurō, and Koizumi Yoshiyuki.

Shiteki shoyūron [On Private Property]

By Tateiwa Shin'ya

Keisō Shobō, 1997. 217 x 156 mm. 530 pp. ¥6,000. ISBN 978-4-326-60117-2 (4-326-60117-5).

This work critiques the concept of property fundamental to the structure of modern society and emphasizes the alternative values and norms that exist within human beings. There are also discussions of such subjects as reproductive technology and eugenics. Work on an English translation is approaching completion, and the author is currently looking for a suitable publisher.

Events and Trends (October to November 2009)

Japan Foundation Awards

The Japan Foundation Award recipients have been announced for fiscal 2009; the awards ceremony took place on October 6. The Japan Foundation Award for Arts and Culture went to the Russian novelist, scholar of Japanese literature, critic, and translator Boris Akunin (real name Grigory Chkhartishvili). The American Alliance of Associations of Teachers of Japanese, or AATJ, won the Japan Foundation Award for Japanese Language. Finally, the Japan Foundation Award for Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange went to James Arthur Stockwin, formerly director of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford. The reasons for these selections are detailed below.

Boris Akunin was recognized for introducing Japanese literature to Russian readers and for his contributions to Russian access to Japanese culture through his diverse writing activities, which extend to mystery novel series. He has also made significant contributions to Japan-Russia cultural exchange as one of his nation's leading men of letters. The AATJ, meanwhile, was hailed for its coordination of the activities of organizations throughout the United States as a nationwide alliance focusing on Japanese language teaching, as well as for its considerable contributions to the development of Japanese language studies at the elementary, secondary, and higher education stages through its training and information-exchange activities. As a Japanologist, James Arthur Stockwin has built up an impressive body of work in the field of research on modern Japanese politics. He has advanced Japan studies in the United Kingdom and been a positive force for British understanding of Japan and Japan-UK academic exchange in his role as director of the University of Oxford's Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies.

From left: Japan Foundation President Ogoura Kazuo, prize recipients Boris Akunin, AATJ Executive Director Susan Schmidt, and James Arthur Stockwin, and Miyauchi Yoshihiko, chair of the award selection committee.

1Q84 Popularity Continues Growing

Murakami Haruki's latest literary outing, the two-volume *1Q84,* has been a sales and societal phenomenon in Japan since it hit shelves in May 2009 (see pp. 2–3). Now this *1Q84* boom has spread to South Korea. The Korean translation of book 1 went on sale on August 25, with book 2 following on September 8; the two volumes leapt right away to the top spot on the list of best-selling novels and general texts at major Seoul bookstores. Internet-based rankings, too, gave the work the number one spot just two weeks after publication. There had been a remarkable bidding war for the rights to publish the Korean translation, with the winning bid reaching an all-time record for South Korea of 1.5 billion won.

Publication of the Korean edition has sparked fresh attention on the novels and musical works Murakami references in *1Q84*; CDs of Leoš Janáček's *Sinfonietta,* for example, are selling briskly. Murakami's back catalogue is also enjoying a surge in popularity, another factor making this Korean phenomenon similar to the Japanese *1Q84* boom. The author has long enjoyed popularity among Korean readers, who have access to almost all his works in their native language. The nation had been the scene of a wave of interest in Murakami during the 1990s, and a foundation was in place for this year's boom. *1Q84* is expected to make similar splashes, to greater or lesser extents, in markets around the world as it is translated into different tongues.

The work's international popularity looks likely to continue into the next year. In recent interviews Murakami has mentioned his plan to release a third volume in summer 2010. If book 3, which he is currently writing, promises to clear up some of the mysteries remaining from the first two books, readers are certain to stay focused on the *1Q84* phenomenon for some time to come.

Shizuoka Translation Contest

The awards ceremony for the Seventh Shizuoka International Translation Competition took place in the city of Numazu, Shizuoka Prefecture, in November 2009. Contestants had from September 29, 2007, when the contest opened, to December 10, 2008, to translate the specified Japanese texts into one of the target languages, which for the seventh contest were English, German, and Korean. A total of 204 entries were received: 78 in English, 25 in German, and 101 in Korean. The Grand Prize winners, each of whom received ¥1 million and a one-year scholarship to study in Japan, were Blake M. Baguley of Australia (English), Anja Radegast of Germany (German), and Pak Eunjeong of South Korea (Korean).

The Shizuoka International Translation Competition had taken place over 15 years since its launch in 1995, but it comes to an end with the seventh and final contest.

Waseda University Literary Award

Tawada Yōko has received the second Waseda University Tsubouchi Shōyō Award Grand Prize. Tawada, who writes poetry and novels in both Japanese and German, has garnered high praise in Germany and Japan alike. (Her works have been introduced in *Japanese Book News* Nos. 45 and 52.) The writer Takai Yūichi, who chairs the selection committee for the award, noted Tawada's status as "a bilingual author of a different stripe, also active in live readings and performances all around the world." Winning the Incentive Prize, meanwhile, was the writer Kiuchi Nobori.

Waseda University established the Tsubouchi Shōyō Award in 2007 to mark the 125th anniversary of its foundation. Prizes are given every other year to individuals and organizations making contributions in broad areas of literature and the arts. Murakami Haruki was the recipient of the first Grand Prize.

National Diet Library Goes Online

Japan's National Diet Library has announced plans for a fee-based Internet distribution scheme for digitized versions of works in its collection.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry is joining the NDL and other organizations to set up a committee to consider a business model for the venture, giving consideration to rights management and revenue distribution issues. The Japan Book Publishers Association has already decided to take part in the committee, and the Japan Writers' Association is expected to join to represent copyright holders' interests. If the scheme takes shape, it will be a new form of content distribution for books within Japan.

The library is moving ahead with the digitization of works from the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–26) eras whose copyrights have expired, and has already made some 150,000 works available online in its Kindai Digital Library at <kindai.ndl.go.jp>. Thanks to a June 2009 revision to the Copyright Law, the library is also now able to digitize other works for the purpose of preservation without obtaining permission from the copyright holders.

In the scheme now being considered, digitized works would be provided to a new organization established to handle rights issues and delivered to end users on a fee basis through a number of distributors, with the profits being returned to authors, publishers, and other eligible parties. This represents a domestic effort to build a Japanese book database, with one eye on US Internet giant Google, which continues its efforts to create a global digital storehouse of books.

Ogawa Ito Work to Hit the Big Screen

Shokudō katatsumuri [A Restaurant Called "Snail"], a 2008 novel by Ogawa Ito taking food as its theme as it details a mother-daughter relationship, is being made into a film to be released in February 2010. The book has sold 260,000 copies, an impressive figure for a relatively unknown writer. Tominaga Mai is directing the movie, her second full-length feature. The book was introduced in *JBN* No. 57 and has attracted international attention; an Italian translation is due out soon.

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
Susaki Masaru, Managing Director
Arts and Culture Department
The Japan Foundation
4-4-1 Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo 160-0004 Japan
Tel: +81-3-5369-6064; Fax: +81-3-5369-6038
E-mail: booknews@jpf.go.jp

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Dostoyevsky's Idiot Resurfaces in Modern Japan

Prince Myshkin, the protagonist of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot,* is a caring and loving Christ-like young man. His innocence, naiveté, and compassion lead people around him to consider him an idiot.

Yoshida Kazuya, the hero in Kashimada Maki's *Zero no ōkoku* [The Kingdom of Zero], has similar traits. He talks openly to a total stranger on a Tokyo train about his illness, his low-paid part-time job, and his shyness toward women, calling to mind the epileptic prince who tells his new acquaintances on a train en route to St. Petersburg of his malady and family background, without even considering whether they are trustworthy.

Yoshida continues to parallel Myshkin as he is thrust into a society more concerned with wealth, power, and sexual conquest than the ideals of Christianity. He soon finds himself at the center of a love triangle in which a notorious woman, in the pattern of Dostoyevsky's Nastasya Filippovna, and a beautiful young girl, not unlike Aglaya Yepanchina, become rivals for his affections.

"I intentionally created Yoshida in the image of Prince Myshkin," says Kashimada Maki of her monumental novel spanning over 600 pages. "Influenced by Dostoyevsky, I've been writing of a *yurodivy*—a 'fool for Christ' like the one the Russian writer portrayed."

Holy foolishness has been a motif in Kashimada's work since her 1998 debut. A devout Orthodox Church member married to a missionary, she is captivated by the church's aesthetic of humbleness, and has challenged herself by creating her ideal *yurodivy*—an archetypal trickster who acts in seemingly innocent ways while concealing a darker truth. Kashimada often takes ideas and styles from her favorite authors of Western classic literature, recasting the plots and placing her stories in Japan.

In her *6000 do no ai* [Love at 6,000 Degrees], the winner of the Mishima Yukio Prize (See *Japanese Book News* No. 46), for example, Kashimada introduces a young, half-Japanese, half-Russian Catholic in Nagasaki as her *yurodivy.* Depicting him as a saintly man who single-heartedly loves a housewife after she seduces him, the writer employs the techniques of Marguerite Duras to sketch a series of symbolic occurrences in a totally detached manner.

Her passionate interest in emulating great writers' genius is particularly evident in *Zero no ōkoku*. In addition to the flexibility and richness of Dostoyevsky's characterization, Kashimada also manages to assimilate the Russian novelist's powerful grasp of dialogue-based language, making her novel something like the script of a play, replete with the hero's inner dialogue and making use of various conversational techniques.

"Instead of directly using the protagonist's thoughts and narrative description to explain events, I wanted to draw out each character's personality through the medium of speech," Kashimada confesses. Though motivated by Dostoyevsky, the dialogues in her story remain utterly original and purposefully idiosyncratic (in the sense that most of the conversation is designed to read like a translation). "Yoshida and other characters kept talking in my head all the time, so I rushed to type up their constant chatter as fast as I could," she says. "I felt like a medium in which the spirit of the novel's God resides."

Still, the central theme of Dostoyevsky's masterpiece—the complications and various types of love—is reflected in *Zero no ōkoku*. Yoshida's soulful and disembodied love for two women never boils into lust, and although the young man becomes choked with emotion, it is invariably over predicaments in which he finds himself rather than due to carnal desire. While his purity and distance from the fray initially place Yoshida apart from humanity, when both women leave him, his utopia crashes to earth—the "point zero" hinted at in the title—and "he becomes human, suffering indignities in much the same way Christ did," Kashimada explains. "Yoshida's love is defined as neither God-like nor erotic. It's something of a mix between the two, which I call 'the third love.'"

Following her recent release of a story thus titled, "Dai-san no ai" [The Third Love], written out of fascination with Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and James Joyce's *Dubliners,* Kashimada says she is now working on a story inspired by Franz Kafka's *The Castle* that describes a labyrinthine world in simple language. "Kafka's skill in making the story unrealistic, ambiguous, and paradoxical while including exhaustive detail is most impressive," says Kashimada. "If you write in detail, your story should be realistic, but that's not the case for him. I'd love to make that technique mine."

Many of Kashimada's novels are influenced by classical writers. She appreciates the power of the artistic vision of the literary giants of the past and the universality of their creations. She assimilates their work, however, along with their social views, styles, and characterizations, through the prism of the twenty-first-century Japanese experience. She resists the temptation of simple imitation and presents her characters, including her Dostoyevskian *yurodivy,* as distinctively Japanese.

"The *yurodivy* is my lifelong theme," Kashimada declares. "I feel beauty in the holy fool who lives for the good of others and never boasts about it."

(Kawakatsu Miki, freelance writer)

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Kashimada Maki

Born in 1976. Graduated from Shirayuri College, a Catholic women's school, with a major in French literature. Wrote her thesis on Bulgarian-French literary theorist Julia Kristeva, whose theory of the "abject" applies to much of her own writing. Her debut work *Nihiki* [Two Animals] won the Bungei Prize in 1998, and her *6000 do no ai* won the Mishima Yukio Prize in 2005. She has been nominated twice, in 2006 and 2009, for the Akutagawa Prize.