

JAPANESE BOOK NEWS

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Japan's Unique E-book Market

From Mobile Phone Manga to the Future of Literary Consumption

Utada Akihiro

In 2009, the market for digital books was bigger in Japan than the United States. The E-Book Marketing Report published by Impress R&D estimated the value of the Japanese market in 2009 at ¥57.4 billion (approximately \$692 million). The US market was worth around \$313 million over the same period, according to data provided by Management Practice, Inc., and published by the Association of American Publishers. These figures suggest a Japanese market more than twice the size of the US market.

But several factors need to be kept in mind. Firstly, fully 89% of digital book sales in Japan are to mobile telephones, with comics making up the bulk of the market. Particularly popular are genres such as “boy love,” dealing in crushes between adolescent males (these sell primarily to an audience of young women), and “teen love,” dealing with young romance. Among noncomic publications, collections of photos make up almost half of total sales. This makes the situation in Japan quite different from that prevailing in the United States, where a full-fledged market for digital editions of regular books has taken off in earnest over the last few years. In Japan, the market is essentially driven by young women downloading slightly risqué content that they prefer not to buy under the eyes of a bookstore clerk. Even allowing for the disproportionate position of manga in the Japanese book market as a whole, there is no getting away from the distorted shape of the market for e-books in Japan today.

One reason for the shape of the market is the limited availability of reader-friendly digital terminals, combined with the early uptake in Japan of mobile phones with advanced functionality and the popularity, especially among the younger generation, of fixed-rate subscription plans that allow unlimited data transmission for a monthly fee.

Another reason is that very few popular titles are made available digitally at the same time as they come out in print. Japanese publishers worry about the threat that digital books will destroy the print market. In their digitization efforts so far, they have therefore tended to emphasize the kinds of publications more likely to appeal to casual readers than the hardcore booklovers who make up the bulk of the conventional market.

Contracts differ slightly from case to case, but with a conventional print run a publishing company generally knows that it can expect payment of a certain amount of money, either immediately after publication or within the space of a few months at the latest once the books have been delivered to the wholesaler. With digital books, things are different: payment is based on sales, and the publisher cannot know how many copies a given title will sell, or when.

If digital books do indeed destroy the market for print, it is possible that specialist texts and other books with limited short-term sales potential will no longer be viable. Publishers have therefore been extremely wary of digital books and their potential to cannibalize print sales. In their view, the digital revolution not only endangers book-sellers, wholesalers, and other intermediary players in publishing, but also threatens to impose a highly unstable business model on publishers themselves. For this reason, publishers have been wary of digital books and have hesitated to throw themselves wholeheartedly behind digital publishing.

According to the E-Book Marketing Report, the Japanese market for digital books grew by 23.7% in fiscal 2009 to reach ¥57.4 billion. Despite this, sales of e-books intended for personal computers actually started to fall, dropping 11% from the previous year. The expansion of the market is slowing down. Sales to mobile devices continue to grow, but even there the growth is sluggish. Year-on-year growth was just 28% in fiscal 2009, compared to 153% in fiscal 2007 and 42% in fiscal 2008. Growth is coming to an end.

The E-Book Marketing Report predicts that future growth in the market will be concentrated on new platforms, such as smart phones and e-book readers. Sales of digital books intended for these new platforms were just ¥600 million in fiscal 2009. The report suggests, however, that “as content provision and the sales environment improve over the next two to three years, the market is likely to enter a period of major expansion from fiscal 2012. . . . As a result, the market for digital books in Japan is expected to reach a level of around ¥130 billion by fiscal 2014.” This would represent a growth of the market to two or three times its current size over the next several years. Of course, all this depends on future developments.



A shopper checks out the Sony Reader hardware. (© Jiji)



More people are doing their reading on device screens today.

A number of trends have been underway since the launch of Apple's iPad tablet in May 2010. There were several announcements of new companies and collaborations in the e-book market in the lead-up to the summer. The media took to calling 2010 "year one of the digital age," and we were treated to numerous predictions that the "Black Ships" of change—a reference to Commodore Matthew Perry's vessels that heralded the end of Japan's international isolation in 1854—had arrived on Japan's shores in the form of Amazon, Apple, and Google, which were about to bring sweeping shifts to the Japanese publishing industry.

Major changes have been slower than expected to arrive, however. Although Amazon took steps to ensure that its third-generation Kindle device was compatible with Japanese fonts when it went on sale in late August, the company has yet to start selling e-books in Japanese. The likeliest explanation is that Amazon has failed to obtain the cooperation of Japanese publishers, who remain apprehensive about the potentially destructive effect such sales could have on their pricing structure.

The same is true of Apple. Apple's e-book reader software is not compatible with many of the features of Japanese printing conventions, such as vertically aligned text, and Apple does not sell Japanese-language digital books via its retail channel, the iBooks software. (The only option for now is to turn a publication into a self-contained application for devices like the iPhone and iPad and sell it via Apple's store.)

Although 2010 was widely described as marking the start of a new digital era for books, for most of the year the only widely available large-screen terminal specifically intended for reading was the iPad. This situation continued until the end of November, when Docomo, Japan's largest mobile communications company, finally released the Galaxy Tab, made by South Korea's Samsung. Most of the major players in the market followed with reader-friendly mobile devices of their own.

In December, Sharp launched a liquid crystal tablet branded as the Galapagos. On the same day, Sony released the Reader, a specialized device that uses "e-ink" digital paper technology. Both companies also launched their own digital bookstores. Sharp, which had already been selling digital texts, linked up with Cultural Conven-

ience Club, which owns the Tsutaya chain of CD and DVD rental outlets, to establish a joint venture online store offering a range of entertainment content, including video and music as well as digital books. This move surprised many, but it was rooted in the company's previous experience and view that e-books alone would not be enough to sustain a viable business. Responding to this need, the company decided to provide digital newspapers and magazines, as well as audiovisual content.

Sony also launched a new digital book service in collaboration with KDDI, one of Docomo's major competitors, as well as Asahi Shimbun, the publisher of one of Japan's major dailies, and Toppan Printing, which competes with Dai Nippon Printing for the spot of Japan's top printer.

Major bookseller Kinokuniya also carried out a major overhaul of its online presence, and has launched a new hybrid electronic store selling both e-books and print books.

Google, which already sells e-books in the United States, is due to open a Japanese version of its site in 2011. The company has offered to help Japanese bookstores adjust to digital sales, and will provide digitized book data to bookstore sites. We can expect hybrid bookstores of this type to increase in the future.

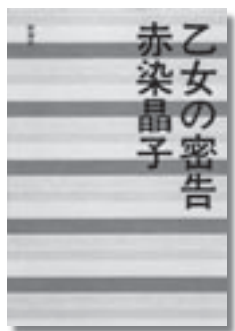
For the past decade or so, the pattern has been for novels and other popular books to appear first in hardback, and then in paperback, before finally being released in digital form. This model has not been enough to create a mass market for general-interest digital books, though. But there are signs that this is beginning to change. Since the second half of 2010, several new digital readers and digital bookstores have appeared, and popular writers like Murakami Ryū have gone beyond releasing digital versions of their latest works ahead of the print editions to launch ambitious new undertakings, such as their own digital publishers. Traditional publishers remain concerned, however, and it is unlikely that cheap digital versions of bestsellers and other popular books will be released in Japan at the same time as the print editions, as has begun to happen in the United States. It will take some time for the full effect of recent changes in the e-book market to become clear, but the likelihood is that the digital publishing market in Japan will continue to follow its own distinctive path for the foreseeable future at least.

Utada Akihiro

Born in 1958. Joined Seidosha after graduating from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Letters. After a spell in the editorial department of Gendai Shisō, became editor-in-chief of Eureka. In addition to his freelance editorial and writing activities, he works as a university lecturer in media studies. His numerous works include Denshi shoseki no jidai wa hontō ni kuru no ka? [Is the Digital Book Age Really On Its Way?], Netto wa terebi o dō nomikomu no ka? [How Will the Internet Swallow Television?] and Intānetto wa mirai o kaeru no ka? Gendai shakai o yomitoku [Will the Internet Change the Future? Reading Contemporary Society].



FICTION



Akazome Akiko

Born in 1974. Her debut novel, the 2004 *Hatsuko-san*, won the 99th Bungakukai Prize for New Writers. Her 2010 *Otome no mikkoku* [*The Maiden's Anonymous Tip*] won the 143rd Akutagawa Prize. Her works also include *Utsutsu utsura* [*Wide Asleep*].

Otome no mikkoku [The Maiden's Anonymous Tip]

By Akazome Akiko

Shinchōsha, 2010. 197 x 135 mm. 126 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-10-327661-6.

The setting of this story is a foreign language university in Kyoto, where a German professor named Bachmann is preparing the female students in his seminar for a recital contest. He divides the students—whom he calls the Maidens—into the Violet group and the Black Rose group, and assigns them the task of reciting the April 9, 1944, entry of the *Diary of Anne Frank* in preparation for the contest.

Bachmann is an eccentric character who is always clutching a doll named Angelika. His voice can often be heard talking to someone else in his office. One day the professor's doll is kidnapped, and the rumor spreads that one of the Maidens is having a tryst with him. A student named Mikako breaks into his office in an attempt to figure out what is going on, but

she senses that someone has witnessed her act. Fearing that she might be expelled from the Maidens if the witness informs on her, Mikako does everything she can to protect herself. During the recital contest, she suddenly realizes the identity of the informer. This epiphany helps her remember a passage in the *Diary of Anne Frank* that had always tripped her up during recital practice.

While at first glance the plot may resemble that of a manga for teenage girls, in fact it skillfully incorporates a number of important themes, including the relation between oneself and others, the phenomenon of “group think,” and the exclusion of those who are perceived to be different. Readers will likely be captivated by the rhythm and eloquence of the narration and the many humorous passages. (ZJ)

Owarazaru natsu [The Unending Summer]

By Asada Jirō

Vol. 1: Shūeisha, 2010. 194 x 133 mm. 470 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-08-771346-6.

Vol. 2: Shūeisha, 2010. 194 x 133 mm. 462 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-08-771347-3.

This is a historical novel based on a hard-fought series of battles that broke out at the end of World War II. On August 15, 1945, the Emperor personally broadcast a message announcing the end of the war. In spite of this, late at night on August 17, a major division of Soviet troops launched an attack from the Kamchatka Peninsula on the nearby Shumushu Island in the Kuriles, then the northernmost part of Japanese territory. The Japanese continued to resist fiercely until a ceasefire on August 23. Some 3,000 Soviet troops and 600 Japanese are thought to have been killed or injured in the fighting.

Asada's novel centers on the fate of three Japanese men hurriedly called up to take part in this “unknown battle” against the Soviet Union: Kataoka, a middle-aged

man with excellent English and ambitions to translate the novels of Henry Miller; Kikuchi, an army doctor; and Tominaga, a veteran sergeant with a reputation for bravery. The novel also incorporates the stories of the men's wives, families, and friends, as well as a young soldier on the Soviet side. It concludes with a final glimpse of Kikuchi as he is taken prisoner and sent to a labor camp in Siberia.

Asada's main interest in this work lies not so much in the fighting itself, but in the intertwined lives of his characters, the conscription system that pulls them into the conflict whether they like it or not, and the absurdity of a conflict that breaks out after the end of the war. He has succeeded in painting a vivid and powerful historical panorama. (NM)



Asada Jirō

Born in 1951. Won the Yoshikawa Eiji Literary Award for new writers for his 1995 *Metoro ni notte* [*On the Subway*], the Naoki Prize for the 1997 *Poppoya* [*The Railway Worker*], the Shibata Renzaburō Award for the 2000 *Mibu gishi den* [*A Legend of the Righteous Samurai of Mibu*], the Chūō Kōron Literary Prize and Shiba Ryōtarō Prize for the 2006 *Ohara meshi mase* [*Cut Your Belly Open*], and the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for Literature for the 2008 *Chūgen no niji* [*Rainbow Over the Chinese Plains*]. A versatile writer who produces Japanese period fiction, essays, and novels based on Chinese history.



Shimada Masahiko

Born in 1961. Earned a degree in Russian from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Made his debut as a student with the 1983 Yasashii sayoku no tame no kiyūkyoku [Divertimento for Gentle Leftists]. Won the Noma Prize for New Writers for his 1984 Muyū ōkoku no tame no ongaku [Music for a Dream Kingdom], the Izumi Kyōka Prize for the 1992 Higan sensei [Professor Nirvana], and the Itō Sei Prize for Literature for the 2006 Taihai shimai [The Sister of Decadence].

Akka [Bad Money] By Shimada Masahiko

Kōdansha, 2010. 194 x 133 mm. 284 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-06-216248-7.

Shimada Masahiko's latest novel opens in a city park in contemporary Japan, where a destitute homeless man picks up a plastic shopping bag from a convenience store and finds it stuffed with a hundred ¥10,000 bills. It is a gift from the gods, the man thinks, and he promptly sets about spending his windfall. But the money brings nothing but disaster, and the man is driven to take his own life.

It turns out that the bills are remarkably skillful forgeries that even the most advanced technology cannot tell apart from the real thing. Forty billion yen in forged currency floods into circulation, wreaking havoc on the Japanese economy, triggering catastrophic hyperinflation and causing a national bankruptcy crisis. The narrative juxtaposes two parallel plotlines: on one hand, the fate of the Chinese man

who masterminds the plot from Shenyang, China, and his Japanese accomplices; and on the second, the story of the leader of the cult-like Other Shore Commune, who denies the legitimacy of the circulating currency and dreams of saving the world with a self-sufficient economy based on a new monetary system of his own invention. The fast-paced story revolves around the love that develops between the counterfeiter and the beautiful female police officer assigned to track him down. Although it takes the form of a highly entertaining crime novel, the book is built on acerbic criticism of the illusory nature of contemporary society and a clear-eyed exposé of the artificial nature of money itself. This is fitting subject matter indeed for a writer who once declared that "the artist is a kind of counterfeiter." (NM)

Ore ore [It's Me, It's Me!] By Hoshino Tomoyuki

Shinchōsha, 2010. 196 x 137 mm. 252 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-10-437203-4.

The title of this novel is not easy to translate. In Japanese, *ore* is a slightly gruff, familiar first-person pronoun normally used only by men. The title alludes to the "ore ore scams" that have become a serious social problem in Japan in recent years. These are perpetrated by young men who telephone elderly strangers and pretend to be a son in distress. The aim is to gull the victim into transferring "urgently needed funds" into the conman's bank account.

The novel opens with a series of random events that lead the protagonist to acquire a stranger's mobile phone. He uses the phone to con an easy ¥900,000 out of the stranger's mother. At this stage, the reader expects a contemporary crime story depicting the mores and values of modern society. Instead, the novel takes a bizarre

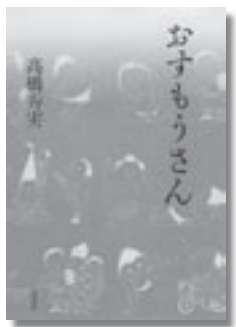
and unpredictable twist and enters the realm of absurdist fantasy. For some reason, the mother remains convinced that the protagonist is her son, even after meeting him face to face. When the narrator returns to his parents' home, he is startled to find another *ore* living there and to learn that his mother no longer recognizes him. The number of these *ore* characters increases steadily, until society is overrun with people claiming the same identity. The competing egos wind up killing and eating one another. This blackly humorous work satirizes the modern identity crisis and the erosion of family and community ties in contemporary society. (NM)



Hoshino Tomoyuki

Born in 1965. After graduating from Waseda University's first Faculty of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, worked as a newspaper reporter and then went to study in Mexico. Won the Bungei Prize for the 1997 Saigo no toiki [The Last Sigh], the Mishima Yukio Prize for the 2000 Mezameyo to ningyo wa utau [Wake Up, Says the Singing Mermaid], and the Noma Prize for New Writers for the 2003 Fantajisuta [Fantasista].

ESSAY



Takahashi Hidemine

Born in 1961. After earning a degree in Mongolian from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, worked at a TV production company before becoming a nonfiction writer. His works include *Karakuri minshushugi* [*The Realities of Democracy*], *Torauma no kuni* [*Trauma Nation*], and *Senchimentaru daietto* [*Sentimental Diet*].

Osumōsan [Sumo Wrestlers] By Takahashi Hidemine

Sōshisha, 2010. 195 x 137 mm. 254 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-7942-1774-5.

When a magazine asked Takahashi to introduce sumo to non-Japanese readers, he realized that the Japanese themselves are not that knowledgeable about the sport. This led him to begin investigating sumo.

To get a better idea of what the wrestlers truly think, Takahashi donned a *mawashi* belt and walked around in the Kokugikan, the Tokyo arena where sumo tournaments are held. But the more he investigated the sport, the more he became aware of what he didn't know. The author wondered why, for instance, wrestlers' *mawashi* are never washed. He asked the heads of sumo stables that question, receiving only the answer, "Because this is the way it's always been done."

Sumo is a world with almost no reliance on written documents to hand down its traditions. Everything is conveyed to

wrestlers through *mōshiai*, a form of oral communication. Takahashi also discovered that sumo is considered to be Japan's national sport for a rather arbitrary reason. The Meiji era (1868–1912) saw the construction of a sporting arena to host sumo tournaments. One person called sumo "Japan's national sport," or *kokugi*, in a description of the arena, and the name stuck.

The author categorizes the history of sumo using the term *inasu*, the sumo technique of ducking to one side to avoid a blow. The term also characterizes Japan and the Japanese people, who often laugh for mysterious reasons or offer ambiguous replies. This humorous work of light nonfiction gives readers a fresh look at Japan through the lens of sumo. (SH)

LITERARY ESSAY

Akutagawa Shō wa naze Murakami Haruki ni ataerarenakatta ka [Why Wasn't Murakami Haruki Awarded the Akutagawa Prize?]

By Ichikawa Makoto

Gentōsha, 2010. 173 x 110 mm. 311 pp. ¥880. ISBN 978-4-344-98174-4.

This outstanding work of literary criticism closely examines the mentality seen throughout postwar Japanese literature through its consideration of why Murakami Haruki never won the Akutagawa Prize. Ichikawa casts a doubtful eye on the idea that Murakami's early works were passed over by the award committee because they featured too many American-style elements. He points out that other works written in an American style around the same time received the prize.

Two reasons account for why Murakami's works never won the Akutagawa Prize, according to Ichikawa. First of all, from the late 1970s to early 1980s, Japanese literature was searching for a yard-

stick to measure itself in terms of its un-Americanness, and a certain distance separated Murakami's early works from that definition. The second reason is that Murakami's early works did not depict father characters. Japan could be said to have lost an important father figure at the end of World War II, when Emperor Shōwa declared he was not a divinity. The question of the existence or absence of a father figure became a major postwar literary theme. However, Murakami declined to depict fathers in his own novels. The author concludes that this reflected Murakami's sense of morality as a writer and was also the primary reason he never won the Akutagawa Prize. (ZJ)



Ichikawa Makoto

Born in 1971. After graduating from Waseda University, worked at a department store before earning a degree in writing and criticism from Kinki University's Graduate School of Literature and Cultural Studies. Now a planner/director for the journal *Waseda bungaku* [*Waseda Literature*] and a lecturer at his alma mater. Has published works of criticism like *Kami no hon ga horobiru toki?* [*A Time for Paper Books to Die Out?*] and *Shōsetsu no mekanikusu* [*The Mechanics of the Novel*] under the name Maeda Louis.



Kawanishi Masaaki

Born in 1941. Literary critic. Editor of Haniya Yutaka sakuhinshū [*Collected Works of Haniya Yutaka*] and Takahashi Kazumi sakuhinshū [*Collected Works of Takahashi Kazumi*]. As an author, won the 1997 Hirabayashi Taiko Literary Prize for Waga maboroshi no kuni [*My Illusory Nation*] and the 2006 Itō Sei Prize for Literature for Takeda Taijun den [*A Record of Takeda Taijun*].

***Shin: Nihon bundan shi* [A New History of Japan's Literary World, vols. 1–4]**

By Kawanishi Masaaki

Iwanami Shoten, 2010. 193 x 134 mm. 254 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-00-028362-5 (vol. 2).

The renowned writer and literary critic Itō Sei spent the last 17 years of his life working on a massive chronicle of Japanese literature, *Nihon bundan shi* [History of Japan's Literary World], completing a total of 18 volumes before his death. Another six volumes in the series were later completed by the literary critic Senuma Shigeki. Kawanishi, based on the wishes of both Itō and Senuma, is now creating a sequel to their project, expected to comprise 10 volumes in total. The first volume, *Sōseki no shi* [Death of Sōseki], was published in January 2010, followed by *Taishō no sakkatachi* [Writers of the Taishō Era] and *Shōwa bundan no keisei* [Formation of the Shōwa Literary World]. The fourth volume, *Puroretaria bungaku no hitobito* [Figures in Proletarian Literature], was published at the end of 2010.

The 1916 death of Natsume Sōseki was the culminating point of the original volumes written by Itō and Senuma. The new series begins with a depiction of the group of writers active in the period after Sōseki's death. It adopts the same approach of the original opus, focusing on writers' lives rather than literary events. This includes vivid sketches of personal and romantic relations between writers, as well as details about various incidents and scandals.

The series will be a valuable resource—particularly for understanding the first-person “I novels”—because it covers the realms not dealt with in literary histories or author biographies. The volumes will offer a bird's-eye view of the literary landscape of the Taishō (1912–26) and Shōwa (1926–89) eras. (ZJ)

CINEMA

***Senji Nit-Chū eiga kōshō shi* [History of Japan-China Film Negotiations During Wartime]**

By Yan Ni

Iwanami Shoten, 2010. 216 x 152 mm. 312 pp. ¥7,400. ISBN 978-4-00-023694-2.

This marvelous work of scholarship details the complexity of the interrelations of the Japanese and Chinese film industries. The book begins with the late 1930s, when Japanese intellectuals began to discuss Chinese films. The author traces the rise in production of Japanese films set on the Chinese continent against the backdrop of this increased interest. The author also describes in detail the activities of the Japanese companies set up in Beijing and Shanghai to produce *kokusaku* (“national policy”) films reflecting the outlook of the Japanese government.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the book is the detailed analysis of the Shanghai-based *kokusaku* film company Chūka Den'ei. The author looks at the ambiguous position of Kawakita Naga-

masa, the company's leading producer, who engaged sincerely with the Chinese filmmakers who worked under him and continued to create films tinged with a spirit of resistance against Japanese colonial rule. The Shanghai filmmakers encountered Japan in the form of its occupying army, and later became involved in creating *kokusaku* films through their relationship with figures like Kawakita. The resistance films were once viewed as an extension of the *kokusaku* films, but the situation was more multifaceted and complex. Readers will be impressed by the book's painstaking explanation of the contradictory process involving the production, distribution, and consumption of films at the time. (YS)



Yan Ni

Came to Japan after graduating from Tsinghua University and working for a time at the China Film Association. Earned a doctorate in sociology from Hitotsubashi University. The focuses of her studies were Sino-Japanese comparative film history and image science. Coauthor of *Otokotachi no kizuna, Ajia eiga: Homosōsharu na yokubō* [*Ties Between Men and Asian Film: Homosocial Desires*], Joyū Yamaguchi Momoe [*Yamaguchi Momoe as an Actress*], and other works.

SOCIETY



Ōi Kōichi

Born in 1962. After graduating from Waseda University's School of Political Science and Economics, entered the Mainichi Newspapers. His works include Media wa chishikijin o dō tsukatta ka [How the Media Used Intellectuals].

Rokujū-nen anpo: Media ni arawareta imēji tōsō [Security Treaty Crisis, 1960: The Media Image Conflict]

By Ōi Kōichi

Keisō Shobō, 2010. 193 x 133 mm. 348 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 978-4-326-35149-7.

The 1960 student-led popular movement against the Japan-US Security Treaty was a major watershed in postwar Japanese history, but there have been surprisingly few serious studies on the period. This book assesses the crisis by looking at shifting patterns of language use in contemporary media discourse and makes clear the connection between politics and images of violence.

The study takes a unique approach: Ōi looks at how the conflict was treated in the media, focusing particularly on images of violence. In the struggle between the conservative government and the anti-treaty movement, both sides sought support from the masses by criticizing the “violence” of the other side. This led to further radicalization of the conflict.

This new perspective casts fresh light on the issues, establishing the events of 1960 in a broader context. The study shows the extent to which mass consciousness during Japan’s period of rapid economic growth tried to cover up any sign of violence, and how the tension that built up as a result burst periodically to the surface of society. If we accept the premise that postwar Japan was a society obsessed with eliminating the memory of the war, these images of violence in the media become the biggest key to understanding our recent past. Ōi’s study contains an exhaustive survey of media discourse concerning the events, and will surely revolutionize the way historians interpret the Security Treaty crisis of 1960. (YS)

Fūkei no sakeme: Okinawa senryō no ima [Ruptured Scenery: The Occupation of Okinawa Today]

By Tanaka Yasuhiro

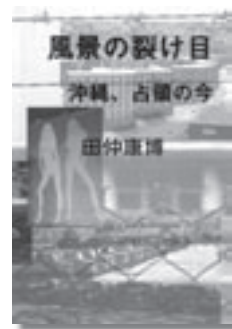
Serica Shobō, 2010. 193 x 133 mm. 300 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 978-4-7967-0295-9.

The occupation of Okinawa did not end when the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect. Instead, starting in the late 1950s, many military bases were transferred to Okinawa from elsewhere in Japan to lessen the anti-American sentiment on the main islands. The result was Okinawa’s status as the biggest “island of military bases” in East Asia.

The author is an Okinawan native who entered the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa in 1972, the year the prefecture was returned to Japan. He later studied in the United States, returning to Okinawa in 1995, when the prefecture was in an uproar over the rape of a local girl by a US soldier. In this book he interweaves accounts of incidents that impacted him personally with examinations of Okinawa’s

relations with the United States and Japan, the remnants of the cultural policies and bases from the occupation period, and how the rest of Japan views Okinawa.

Particularly absorbing is the author’s analysis of how the United States, in order to divorce Okinawa’s cultural memory from the Japanese mainland, referred to it as Ryūkyū and promoted indigenous customs and cultural traditions. The author also considers how this revival of traditional culture is related to Japanese people’s colonialistic view of Okinawa prior to World War II and to the image of the prefecture as a faraway “tropical land” in the years since it reverted to Japanese control. The book skillfully evokes the complexity of Okinawan history. (YS)



Tanaka Yasuhiro

Born in 1954. Earned his PhD in sociology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Associate professor in the International Christian University Division of Arts and Sciences. Specializes in sociology and media-cultural studies. Coauthor of works including Media bunka no kenryoku sayō [The Use of Power in the Media Culture] and Koeru bunka, kōsaku suru kyōkai [Going Beyond Culture, Blending Boundaries].



Yamaguchi Makoto

Born in 1973. Completed the doctoral course at the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology. Now an associate professor in the Kansai University Faculty of Sociology. Specializes in communications and media history. Author of works including *Eigo kōza no tanjō* [*The Birth of English Courses*] and *Guamu to Nihonjin: Sensō o umetataka rakuen* [*Guam and the Japanese: A Paradise Built on War*] and coauthor of *Karuchuraru sutadīzu* [*Cultural Studies*].

***Nippon no kaigai ryokō* [Japanese Overseas Travel]**

By Yamaguchi Makoto

Chikuma Shobō, 2010. 173 x 105 mm. 254 pp. ¥780. ISBN 978-4-480-06559-9.

These days fewer young Japanese are taking trips overseas. Statistics from the Ministry of Justice show that the high point for overseas trips among people in their twenties was 1996, when the number reached 4.63 million. By 2008, that number had shrunk to 2.62 million. What can account for the dwindling interest in foreign countries among young people starting around the mid-1990s? The author examines the changing trends for overseas travel among the Japanese since the 1960s.

The book focuses on the relation between the Japanese media and overseas travel. The author examines how travel patterns have been influenced by newspapers and television programs as well as travel books and magazines and materials published by travel agencies.

Yamaguchi identifies the change in the

types of packaged tours offered by agencies as one cause of the diminished interest in travel abroad. Since around 2000, the number of “skeleton tours” consisting of just plane tickets and hotel reservations has increased rapidly—to the point where such tours are now the main travel package. Skeleton tours concentrate on culinary treats or shopping, instead of offering travelers the chance to engage with the everyday life of people in foreign countries or come into contact with the local culture and history. This tendency for travelers to have the same sorts of experiences regardless of destination is cited by young people as a reason for their disinterest in overseas travel. More than just an examination of travel, however, this book sheds light—from a unique angle—on the contemporary Japanese mindset. (ZJ)

MEDIA

***CIA to sengo Nihon* [The CIA and Postwar Japan]**

By Arima Tetsuo

Heibonsha, 2010. 172 x 104 mm. 226 pp. ¥760. ISBN 978-4-582-85530-2.

Japan differs considerably from the United States when it comes to its system for preserving, organizing, and making public the official records of government agencies. In the United States, whenever an agency or committee is created, a section is always created within it to maintain its records, which are carefully preserved. This approach is the best mechanism for the public to monitor those in power. It might be said that history itself is keeping an eye on power.

The author has frequently visited the National Archives, the center for American governmental documents, and since the time of writing *Nihon terebi to CIA* [*Japanese Television and the CIA*] he has repeatedly examined CIA-related files to shed light on Japanese politics during the US occupation of Japan.

This book tells a hidden story of postwar Japan, including the diplomatic negotiations between Japan and the Soviet Union in the 1950s, the establishment of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, and the investigative department set up for the prime minister's office. Of particular note is the fact that the CIA quite accurately grasped the political situation in Japan and that Japanese politicians were continually in danger of being overthrown. The United States at the time had deeply infiltrated the circles of politicians, financiers, and former military figures, and steered the course of postwar Japanese history to a greater extent than has been thought up to now. Even if we shun the conspiracy-theory view of history, there is still a need to fundamentally rethink the totality of postwar Japanese history. (YS)



Arima Tetsuo

Born in 1953. Completed doctoral coursework at Tōhoku University's Graduate School of Arts and Letters. Now a professor of media theory at Waseda University's undergraduate and graduate schools of social science. Major works include *Genpatsu, Shōriki, CIA: Kimitsu bunsho de yomu Shōwa rimen shi* [*Nuclear Power, Shōriki Matsutarō, and the CIA: The Secret History of the Shōwa Era as Seen in Classified Documents*] and *Shōwa shi o ugokashita Amerika jōhō kikan* [*The American Intelligence Organs That Moved Shōwa Era History*].



Itō Ruri

Professor at Hitotsubashi University. Does research on international sociology, international migrants, and gender issues.

Sakamoto Hiroko

Born in 1950. Professor at Hitotsubashi University. Specializes in China's early modern and modern intellectual and cultural history.

Tani E. Barlow

Director of the Chao Center for Asian Studies and professor at Rice University. Focuses on early modern Chinese intellectual history and feminist studies.

Modan gāru to shokuminchiteki kindai **[The "Modern Girl" and Colonialistic Modernity]**

Edited by Itō Ruri, Sakamoto Hiroko, and Tani E. Barlow

Iwanami Shoten, 2010. 199 x 148 mm. 330 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 978-4-00-025306-2.

The main urban centers on the rim of East Asia increasingly share a common awareness of being at the cutting edge of globalization. In fact, though, these cities had already shown a noticeable urban modernity during the period following World War I. Women symbolized this shift toward modernity, particularly the type that came to be described as *modan gāru* (modern girl). This book depicts the transnational emergence of the *modan gāru* type during the interwar period from a three-pronged perspective: the social basis for this new lifestyle, related symbols and discourse, and social operations that determined images of women.

One of the authors considers what relation the *modan gāru* type had to the daily consumption of less affluent consumers. In the 1920s and 1930s, women across the

board—from housewives struggling with limited household budgets to those working as maids, cleaning women, and so on—paid special attention to the articles that appeared in the women's magazines that they eagerly read, reflecting their yearning for modern goods. The *modan gāru* was not the only female social type that embodied modernity: there were also the *atarashii onna* (new woman) and *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife and wise mother).

The essays in this book are the product of an ambitious joint research effort that examined a wide spectrum of modernity and gender relations in East Asian urban centers, drawing on everything from depictions of women in advertisements and cartoons to fashion trends and the views of intellectuals at the time. (YS)

Genbaku to ken'etsu **[The Atomic Bomb and Censorship]**

By Shigesawa Atsuko

Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010. 173 x 112 mm. 216 pp. ¥760. ISBN 978-4-12-102060-4.

Immediately after World War II, journalists attached to the Allied forces occupying Japan visited the atomic-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The reporters scrambled to file reports on the misery they witnessed there, but most of those stories never saw the light of day, or were only published after extensive deletions. This book considers why the journalists' reports were censored.

The author examines the US Army's censorship, drawing on materials from the US National Archives and other sources inside and outside Japan, as well as the memoirs of the journalists involved. The correspondents were shocked initially by the misery they encountered in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but eventually adopted the military officials' viewpoint and engaged in a sort of self-censorship. Newspaper re-

porters whitewashed the residual radioactivity and warned readers that Japan's propaganda had exaggerated the extent of damage. The correspondents were obliged to not draw attention to war crimes committed by their own countries nor impede their nuclear development in any way. There is no doubt that this journalistic stance had an impact on American public opinion.

The author discovered that almost all of the correspondents up to their last days defended the dropping of the atomic bombs. She concludes that the men defined themselves primarily as Americans, not journalists. The strongest censor they encountered was the one within their own hearts. The book takes a profound look at this sort of additional tragedy that arises from war. (SH)



Shigesawa Atsuko

Born in 1967. Worked as a reporter for the Yomiuri Shimbun and an editor at Hiroshima City University's Hiroshima Peace Institute before becoming a freelance journalist in 2000. Helped produce "Hiroshima's Survivors: The Last Generation," a 2005 series aired on PRI's The World that won a Dart Award in 2006. Was a joint producer for the 2007 White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which won an Emmy in 2008. Translated No Substitute for Victory into Japanese.

HISTORY



Watanabe Hiroshi

Born in 1946. Graduated from the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Law. Was a professor at his alma mater; is now a professor at Hōsei University. His major works include Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku [Early Modern Japanese Society and Neo-Confucianism] and Tokuviru to demokurashī no genzai [De Tocqueville and Democracy Today].

Nihon seiji shisō-shi 17-19 seiki **[A History of Japanese Political Thought from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century]**

By Watanabe Hiroshi

Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010. 193 x 133 mm. 484 pp. ¥3,600. ISBN 978-4-13-033100-5.

This book provides a concise history of political thought in Japan, concentrating on developments during the Edo period (1603–1868), when Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa shogunate, and the years following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, when a new political system was built on the European model. It is a highly readable and entertaining account of the period, vividly evoking the thinking, customs, and mores of the people of the times.

Because Japan was in seclusion from the outside world for most of the Edo period, Japanese political philosophy was unknown abroad and had no influence on the development of political thought in the West. Nevertheless, Japan developed an advanced political philosophy of its own, albeit one built on the foundations

of Confucianism, in particular the neo-Confucian philosophy of Zhu Xi. As well as providing a clear root-and-branch account of the philosophy of important intellectual figures, the book also depicts the living conditions and values of the various groups in society, including samurai and peasant farmers, and argues persuasively that there was a profound connection between political thought and Japan's distinctive sexual morality. The study is also useful in clarifying the position of "Japan" and the "West" in the Japanese worldview of the period. This book is an ideal introduction for anyone wanting to understand how Japanese thinking developed in the Edo period and the origins of the Japanese view of the world. (NM)

SCIENCE

Shōwakusei tansaki Hayabusa no daibōken **[The Great Adventure of the Asteroid Probe Hayabusa]**

By Yamane Kazuma

Magazine House, 2010. 188 x 131 mm. 295 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 978-4-8387-2103-0.

The spacecraft *Hayabusa* landed on the Itokawa asteroid, located some 6 billion kilometers from Earth, and achieved the remarkable, unprecedented feat of collecting samples from the asteroid and bringing them back to Earth. The author is a journalist who covered everything from the launch of the *Hayabusa* in 2003 to its return in June 2010, conducting interviews with scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The result is a highly readable profile of this amazing spacecraft.

The *Hayabusa* mission was aimed at better understanding the origin of the solar system. The spacecraft brought together ultra-sophisticated Japanese technologies, including a world-leading ion engine. Yet many problems still arose dur-

ing the mission, such as damage to the solar panels from solar flares as well as malfunctions of the ion engine and reaction control system. Other problems included losing contact with the microprobe robot and a fuel leak during landing on the asteroid that resulted in a failure of all vital functions. Despite such challenges, the JAXA scientists devised backup plans that brought *Hayabusa* safely back to Earth.

The word "miraculous" has been used to describe how *Hayabusa* successfully weathered so many problems. But the scientists involved prefer to not describe the success as a miracle, emphasizing instead that it was the result of everyone's hard work. This book reveals the passionate dedication of those scientists involved in space exploration. (SH)



Yamane Kazuma

Born in 1947. Nonfiction writer. Now a specially appointed professor at Dokkyō University's Faculty of Economics. Also works for Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and serves on a Cabinet Office advisory panel on lunar exploration and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries' biodiversity strategy commission. His many works include Kangyō kakumei [The Eco-Industrial Revolution] and Kenja no dejitaru [Digital Approaches of the Wise].

No. 5: Matsumoto Seichō

In this issue, “Literature in the Movies” looks at the versatile mystery writer Matsumoto Seichō (1909–92). His popular works broke the mold of the traditional crime-solving narrative, resonating with readers for their gritty realism—a quality that wins them fresh attention to this day.

Social Critiques in the Guise of Mysteries

Matsumoto Seichō was one of Japan’s most celebrated and popular writers in the second half of the twentieth century, producing a steady stream of outstanding works between 1953, when he won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for “Aru ‘Kokura nikki’ den” [A Legend of the Kokura Diary], and his death at age 82 in 1992. His works often blurred the distinction between serious and popular fiction, spanning such distinct genres as mystery, history, nonfiction, and even archeological research.

Indeed, prior to winning the Akutagawa Prize for serious literature, he was nominated for the Naoki Prize—awarded to works of popular fiction—for his 1950 historical piece “Saigō-satsu” [Saigō Army Scrip]. From the very start of his literary career, the serious-popular dichotomy never applied to Matsumoto.

The work that made him a household name was the 1958 mystery novel *Ten to sen* [trans. *Points and Lines*]. In the book, which became a major bestseller, efforts to solve a murder mystery revolved around an ingeniously constructed “four-minute blank” in the Tokyo Station timetable.

Ten to sen also broke new ground in the mystery novel genre in Japan. Until then, most works featured a Sherlock Holmes-type super sleuth who solved cases that baffled others. The protagonists in Matsumoto’s novel, by contrast, are two police detectives who identify the suspect by painstakingly gathering evidence. The plot was far more realistic than a whodunit, and the book struck a chord with many readers in Japan.

Matsumoto continued to write highly detailed police procedurals, the most prominent being *Suna no utsuwa* [trans. *Inspector Imanishi Investigates*] (1961). These stories have had a significant impact on mystery fiction in Japan.

The murder described in *Ten to sen* was motivated by a desire to cover up a scandal involving a powerful bureaucrat. The presence of such a socially relevant theme was a second characteristic of the novel, which came to be labeled a “social mystery.”

Until then the plots of mysteries centered on contrivances, and the stories were more like mental exercises. Matsumoto gave his characters motive and showed what prompted the crime. Digging deep into the psychology of his characters, he portrayed the darker side of postwar Japanese society. He always had an awareness of social issues, which eventually led him to publish *Nihon no kuroi kiri* [Black Fog Over Japan] (1962), an exposé of 11 enigmatic incidents that occurred during the US Occupation, and *Shōwa-shi hakkutsu* [Unearthing the Shōwa Era]

(1965–72), a serialized nonfiction account of the Japanese military from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s.

The third characteristic of *Ten to sen* was its frequent reference to railroads. The late 1950s, when the novel was written, was a time of rapid economic growth in Japan, as the country had overcome the trauma of defeat in World War II and was taking off economically. The movement of people was increasing dramatically as a result; most did not yet own automobiles, though, and so did most of their traveling by train.

Besides *Ten to sen*, other Matsumoto works to feature railroads include *Me no kabe* [The Walls Around the Eyes] (1958) and *Zero no shōten* [Zero Focus] (1959). These works have broadly influenced a genre of fiction called “railroad mysteries.” Incidentally, the reason the “four-minute blank” in *Ten to sen* works at all is because trains in Japan run with clocklike punctuality, unless there is a major breakdown or natural disaster. In countries where delays are common, a contrivance based on a timetable would be implausible.

Matsumoto was a late bloomer. He was 40 when first recognized with a Naoki Prize nomination for “Saigō-satsu”; until then he had worked in the advertising department of a newspaper. His education was limited to higher elementary school (equivalent to a modern-day middle school), and he never went to college. He worked his way up the ladder and paid his dues.

Perhaps for this reason, many of his characters are on the outer fringes of society. Out of a job and short of cash, they are pushed into crime, tinging the offenses they commit with sadness and pathos.

In his celebrated short story “Harikomi” [trans. “The Stakeout”], a single, 30-year-old man leaves his hometown for Tokyo and first finds a job as a live-in shop clerk. He is later employed at a construction site, but needing money he breaks into the home of a wealthy man and commits a murder-robbery. Such lives in the lower strata of society were no doubt quite common during the country’s high-growth years.

Many of Matsumoto’s characters have a dark past they would prefer to keep hidden. There were many such people in Japan as the country transitioned from the chaos of the immediate postwar years to an era of booming growth. In *Zero no shōten*, for instance, the wife of a local company president is moved to homicide to keep secret her past as a prostitute for Occupation soldiers. Similarly, a successful musician in *Suna no utsuwa* kills a man who had once saved his life out of fear that his assumed identity would come to light. Both crimes are emotionally painful because of the circumstances that led to them.

Matsumoto does not portray meaningless murders — sometimes seen in modern society — that are apparently committed simply for the thrill they provide. All the criminals in his novels have old-fashioned motives, such as a dark past, poverty, illicit romance, or involvement in a scandal. As the gaps between the haves and have-nots in

contemporary Japanese society widen, the world depicted by Matsumoto is attracting renewed attention for its sense of realism.

(Kawamoto Saburō,
literary and film critic)

An Introduction to the Films

***Harikomi* [The Chase] (1958)**

Directed by Nomura Yoshitarō

Adapted from the short story of the same title, this police procedural portrays two Tokyo detectives who travel to the southern city of Saga to solve a murder-robbery. From the second-floor window of a nearby inn, they stake out the house of a banker, whose second wife is the former lover of the murder suspect, believing he will come to see her. The film highlights the long train ride from Tokyo to Saga, the endless hours spent staking out the house, the intense midsummer heat, sudden thundershowers, and the beautiful woman (portrayed by Takamine Hideko, who died just last year) under the detectives' constant gaze. This is a masterpiece of Japanese cinema with which Matsumoto himself was very pleased.



Harikomi © 1958 Shochiku Co., Ltd.



Zero no shōten © 1961 Shochiku Co., Ltd.

***Zero no shōten* [Zero Focus] (1961)**

Directed by Nomura Yoshitarō

A just-married woman (Kuga Yoshiko) goes in search of her husband (Nanbara Kōji), who has suddenly disappeared. She travels to Kanazawa, where he had been working, and learns to her surprise that he had been leading a double life under a different name. Her husband knew a secret that a local company president's wife (Takachiho Hizuru) desperately wanted kept hidden — she had been forced by circumstance to work as a prostitute during the social upheaval in the years just after World War II. Shot during the winter on location in the Noto Peninsula, the film accentuates the chilly and tragic fate of many women during this period of Japanese history.

***Suna no utsuwa* [The Castle of Sand] (1974)**

Directed by Nomura Yoshitarō

This is the most popular screen adaptation of a Matsumoto Seichō novel. Two detectives (Tanba Tetsurō and Morita Kensaku) work together to solve a murder in Tokyo, traveling around the country to the Tōhoku, San'in, and Kansai regions. Indeed, this is in many ways also a travel film. Kamedake Station in Shimane Prefecture, which is central to the movie's plot, became a tourist destination owing to the box office success. Based on thoroughgoing research, the two detectives close in on the culprit, a renowned and promising young musician (Katō Gō) with a painful past.



Suna no utsuwa © 1974 Shochiku Co., Ltd.

Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winners of the 144th Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes have been selected. The Akutagawa Prize went to two writers: Asabuki Mariko for *Kikotowa* [Kiko and Towako] and Nishimura Kenta for *Kueki ressha* [Train of Suffering], first published in the September and December 2010 issues of *Shinchō*, respectively. The Naoki Prize, meanwhile, went to Kiuchi Nobori for *Hyōsa no utau* [Song of Drifting Sand] (Shūeisha) and to Michio Shūsuke for *Tsuki to kani* [The Moon and the Crab] (Bungei Shunjū). This marks the first time in seven years for four writers in total to win the two prizes.

Asabuki, currently a graduate student at Keio University, has won high praise for her work, including the Bunkamura Deux Magots Literary Prize she won for her 2009 debut novel *Ryūseki* [The Stream's Meandering Course]. Her *Kikotowa* is an elegantly written story depicting the memories of two women who are reunited after 25 years. Nishimura, the other Akutagawa winner, worked a number of low-paying jobs after graduating from junior high school. His work depicts his own experiences as an impoverished 19-year-old dock worker.

Naoki Prize-winner Kiuchi now works as a freelance editor, after having worked for a publishing company. Her novel vividly depicts everyday life in the Tokyo red-light district of Nezu in the early Meiji era (1868–1912). Michio, meanwhile, finally won the Naoki after having been nominated five times in a row since 2008, when his *Karasu no oyayubi* [The Crow's Thumb] was published. His prizewinning work is a full-length novel portraying the gloomy everyday life of fifth-grade boys.

2010 Bestsellers

Japan's biggest book distributors—Tōhan Co., Ltd., Nippon Shuppan Hanbai Inc. (Nippan), and Oricon Inc.—have issued their lists of the bestselling books for 2010. The top-selling book according to all their lists was Iwasaki Natsumi's *Moshi kōkō yakyū no joshi manējā ga Dorakkā no*

“Manejimento” o yondara [What if the Female Manager of a High-School Baseball Team Read Peter Drucker's *Management?*], which has sold over a million copies. The book's protagonist is Minami, a girl who manages a high-school baseball team in line with tips she has learned from Drucker's famed business text. The book depicts her experiences with the team to clearly convey the essence of management principles. The popularity of the book has led many to read Drucker's original work, and an anime and a movie based on the book are in the works.

Health-related publications sold well: the number-two book on all three distributors' lists was Yamamoto Chihiro's *Bando ippon de yaseru! Maku dake daietto* [Slim Down with One Band: The Body Wrap Diet], and coming in fourth on the Nippan and Oricon lists was *Taishibōkei Tanita no shain shokudō* [From the Cafeteria of Tanita, Maker of Body Fat Scales]. This reflects the Japanese people's strong interest in healthy living these days. The well-known TV commentator Ikegami Akira has produced many hit texts clearly making sense of the global situation and current affairs. Two examples are *Tsutaeru chikara* [The Power of Conveyance] and *Shiranai to haji o kaku sekai no dai mon-dai* [Facts About the World It Would Be Shameful Not to Know], which were ranked first and second, respectively, among paperbacks in 2010.

One surprising bestseller, placing tenth on the Tōhan list, was 98-year-old Shibata Toyo's first collection of poems, *Kujikenai de* [Don't Be Discouraged], which has sold over a million copies.

New E-Book Company

The trend toward e-book sales within the Japanese publishing industry is accelerating, with writers, publishing firms, and mobile phone companies all getting involved. In the midst of these developments, the popular writer Murakami Ryū has launched a new e-book production and distribution company called G2010 in cooperation with the IT media content firm Griot Co., Ltd. In July 2010, Griot released an e-book version of Murakami's novel *Utau kujira* [Singing Whale] in

advance of the print version, pricing it at ¥1,500, half the paper book's price. The e-book has been downloaded over 10,000 times; 40% of the sales revenue will go to the author, after the company recoups ¥1.5 million to cover production costs.

Instead of teaming up with a publishing company, Murakami decided to form a new company in partnership with Griot, as he explained at G2010's inaugural press conference: “Publishing companies are professionals when it comes to printed books, but not when it comes to e-books. So it was more appropriate to team up with a media content firm like Griot.”

In addition to Murakami's works, the company is publishing novels by Setouchi Jakuchō and essays by Yoshimoto Banana that include music and anime footage.

Noma Literary Prize

Murata Kiyoko was selected as the winner of the 63rd Noma Literary Prize on November 5, 2010, for her *Kokyō no waga ya* [Childhood Home], published by Shinchōsha. The work depicts the dreams of a 65-year-old woman who travels from Tokyo to the highlands of Kyushu to clean out her childhood home.

The author, born in 1945, won the Akutagawa Prize in 1987 for her work *Nabe no naka* [Inside the Pot]. She also won the Women's Literature Prize for *Shiroi yama* [White Mountain] in 1999, the Hirabayashi Taiko Literary Prize for *Shin'ya no jitensha* [Bicycle in the Middle of the Night] in 1992, and the Kawabata Yasunari Literary Prize for *Shiomaneki* [Fiddler Crabs] in 1998.

Mainichi Publishing Culture Awards

The five winners of the 64th Mainichi Publishing Culture Awards have been selected. One winner was selected in each of four categories: literature/art, humanities/society, natural science, and projects (collected works, educational courses, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the like). Another winner received the special prize as a book that has attracted readers regardless of category. The literary and cultural awards,

established in 1947 by Mainichi Shimbun, recognize outstanding works that have contributed to enhancing the publishing culture of Japan.

The 2010 winners are as follows: for literature/art, Asada Jirō's *Owarazaru natsu* [The Unending Summer] (2 vols., Shūeisha); for humanities/society, Sone Eiji's *Genkai shūroku: Wa no mura nareba* [Marginal Villages: Because This Is My Village] (Nikkei Publishing Inc.); for natural science, Kimura Bin's *Seishin igaku kara rinshō tetsugaku e* [From Psychiatry to Clinical Philosophy] (Minerva Shobō); for projects, Ikezawa Natsuki's *Ikezawa Natsuki kojū henshū: Sekai bungaku zenshū* [Ikezawa Natsuki's Selection of Worldwide Literary Works] (Kawade Shobō Shinsha); and for the special prize, Itsuki Hiro-yuki's *Shinran* (2 vols., Kōdansha).

Suntory Prize Awarded

The winners of the 32nd Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities were announced on November 10, 2010. The prize, established in 1979, is awarded every year to books in four categories—politics/economics, art/literature, society/customs, and thought/history—that have made creative social and cultural contributions. The 2010 award recipients for each category are as follows.

- Politics/Economics
 - Kurata Tōru, *Chūgoku henkan go no Honkon: Chīsa na reisen to ikoku niseido no tenkai* [Hong Kong After Its Return to China: A Small Cold War and Development of "One-Nation-Two-Systems"]
 - Takii Kazuhiro, *Itō Hirobumi: Chi no seijika* [Itō Hirobumi: An Enlightened Politician]
- Art/Literature
 - Ishihara Aeka, *Kagaku suru shijin Gzte* [Goethe the Scientific Poet]
 - Kitagawa Daijirō, *Kindai toshi Pari no tanjō: Tetsudō/metoro jidai no nekkō* [Birth of Paris as a Modern City: The Frenzy During the Age of the Railway and Subway]
 - Furuta Ryō, *Tawaraya Sōtatsu: Rinpa no so no shinjitsu* [Tawaraya Sōtatsu: The Truth About the Founder of the Rinpa School]
- Society/Customs

- Yoneda Kōji, *Mosukuwa no kodoku: Yukidoke kara Pūchin jidai no interigentsia* [Moscow's Isolation: Intelligentsia from the Khrushchev Thaw to the Age of Putin]

- Thought/History
 - Tanaka Kumiko, *Kigō to saiki: Kigōron no keishiki, puroguramu no hitsuzen* [Symbols and Recursion: Forms of Semiotics and the Necessities of Programming]

"Cool Japan Tour"

From July 25 to August 5 this year, Meiji University will host the Cool Japan Summer Program 2011 for overseas students interested in Japanese pop culture. The program will include a series of lectures and workshops, as well as field trips to a number of spots in Tokyo and Kyoto, including Akihabara and several museums. The aim is for the participants to gain a clearer image of Japan and its place in today's world by exploring a variety of contemporary topics. Detailed information about the program is available on the university's website (<http://www.meiji.ac.jp/cip/english/cooljapan/>).

New Books on Outer Space

The return to Earth last year of the space probe *Hayabusa*, after it accomplished the world's first mission to an asteroid, sparked sales of related books. These include *Shōwakusei tansaki Hayabusa no dai bōken* [The Great Adventure of the Asteroid Probe *Hayabusa*] (Magazine House) and *Tansaki Hayabusa shichi-nen no zen kiseki* [The Entire Seven-Year Trajectory of the Space Probe *Hayabusa*] (Newton Press), as well as two books published in December 2010 in which the project manager of the *Hayabusa* mission, Professor Kawaguchi Jun'ichirō, offers his frank thoughts: *Hayabusa, sō made shite kimi wa* [Hayabusa, How Did You Manage to Complete Your Mission?] (Takarajimasha) and *Shōwakusei tansaki Hayabusa: Tamatebako wa hirakareta* [Asteroid Probe *Hayabusa*: The Pandora's Box Is Opened] (Chūkō Shinsho). One manga that has also ridden this booming interest in outer space is the series *Uchū kyōdai* [Space

Siblings], which appears in Kōdansha's magazine *Shūkan mōningu*. Twelve volumes of the hit manga have already been published.

JLPP Translation Contest

The Japanese Literature Publishing Project (JLPP), launched in 2002 by the Agency for Cultural Affairs to encourage the diffusion of modern Japanese literature around the world, is organizing a translation competition to discover and foster outstanding literary translators. The works in Japanese selected for the competition can be translated into either English or German. The application period is from September 1 to November 30, 2011. Further details are available on the JLPP website (<http://www.jlpp.go.jp/en/index.html>).

Since its establishment, the JLPP has been involved in the translation and publication of Japanese literary works written since the Meiji era (1868–1912). The works for translation are selected by a committee of literary experts. As of 2010, the project has resulted in the publication of 86 titles, and 16 more are in the pipeline now. Overseas publishers issue the translations of the selected works and the books are sold on the general market. The JLPP also donates copies to libraries and universities for use as research materials.

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A Slow but Steady Youthful Voice

When Wataya Risa became the youngest winner of the Akutagawa Prize, sharing the prestigious literary award with a 20-year-old Kanehara Hitomi in 2004, TV coverage presented two contrasting figures: Wataya, a demure, 19-year-old Waseda University student with long straight hair, and Kanehara, a high-school dropout with short, dyed hair and tinted contact lenses.

Inspired by the media frenzy over the two girls, the magazine that carried their novellas broke sales records, and their stories were dissected and analyzed in print and digital publications, with critics hailing the young authors as the voices of a new generation. Wataya's prizewinning *Keritai senaka* [A Back You Want to Kick], in which she conveys the self-consciousness and estrangement of adolescence, became the first Akutagawa winner to sell a million copies in almost three decades.

Despite all the initial hype, the interesting pair of emerging novelists have continued writing at their own pace. Kanehara, now 28, got married and became a mother, and has released eight books in the past seven years. Wataya, meanwhile, now 27, went back to her hometown of Kyoto after graduation and became a full-time novelist. She now lives with her parents and recently published her second post-Akutagawa novel, *Katte ni furuetero* [Go Tremble as You Wish].



Katte ni furuetero [Go Tremble as You Wish], 2010

"I know I'm a plodder," Wataya says with a coy look. "Dozens of stories I wrote in recent years were scrapped by my editors, so I finally came to realize that what I want to write is not necessarily equal to what I can write well."

Since she wrote her debut novel, the Bungei Prize-winning *Insutōru* [Install], at the age of 17, Wataya has won wide acclaim for the perfect pitch and well-defined literary tone of her prose. She puts her first-person narrative style to use in introspective examinations of memory and depictions of interpersonal dynamics. Unlike Kanehara, who comes across as more of an instinctive writer, Wataya evinces her charm in sardonic observations of people and society, tactfully using the first-person voice to convey the deeply internal, otherwise unspoken, thoughts of the narrator, a female her own age.

Wataya's desire, however, was to produce a full-length novel with lots of characters and complexities. She spent over three years after winning the Akutagawa Prize to produce a 308-page work about the rise and fall of a child model, who entered the limelight only to be suddenly cast out following a sex scandal. The 2007 novel *Yume o ataeru* [Giving You a Dream], her first composed in the third person, garnered the Kyoto Prefecture Cultural Encouragement Prize and proved that she could write a romance. But many people, including the author herself, miss her unique, first-person style of expressing the protagonist's outburst of emotion.

"I discovered that I could relate more to the protagonists when writing in the first-person voice," Wataya says of her latest work, the 2010 *Katte ni furuetero*. "I truly enjoyed crafting the heroine's abnormally obsessed, one-sided view of love."

The main character of her new book is a 26-year-old working woman with no sexual experience. She has a secret crush on a classmate from junior high school and imagines that he is her true and only love. As she wavers between pursuing her unrequited passion for him and accepting an unwelcome advance from a work colleague, she does irrational things, from reviving every single memory she possesses and using a false identity to organize a school reunion to announcing at her office that she is pregnant.

"The protagonist is sort of a withdrawn eccentric who constantly reminisces about her school days. But I'm much more eccentric than she is in glorifying the past and clinging onto it," Wataya confesses in her soft Kyoto accent. "Although my characters are all fictional, they may somehow reflect myself."

Wataya's works have yet to be translated into English, although some are available in Chinese, French, German, Italian, and Korean. Just like manga and anime, her books, which can easily be finished in three or four sittings, serve as an attractive gateway into Japanese literature.

The Akutagawa Prize put Wataya in the national spotlight, but she remains unaffected, going forward step by step to reach her goal, which she describes as writing stories that withstand the test of time—just like the finely crafted, convincing works of her favorite author, Dazai Osamu.

Wataya may not be prolific, but she is truly a representative voice of a new generation.

(Kawakatsu Miki, freelance writer)



Keritai senaka [A Back You Want to Kick], 2004



Wataya Risa

Born in 1984. Debuted as a novelist at the age of 17 with *Insutōru*, which won the Bungei Prize. Entered Waseda University's Department of Education after submitting the novel in lieu of entrance exams; it was also turned into a film and manga. Became the youngest recipient of the Akutagawa Prize with her second novella, *Keritai senaka*, which was also made into a TV drama. Her latest novel, *Katte ni furuetero*, is available also in a digital format including an audio interview.