

# JAPANESE BOOK NEWS

# 73

FALL 2012

*Japanese Book News* is published quarterly by the Japan Foundation mainly to provide publishers, editors, translators, scholars, and librarians with up-to-date information about publishing trends in Japan and brief descriptions of the content of selected new books. The opinions and views expressed in the essays and new title summaries are not necessarily those of the Japan Foundation or the Advisory Board.

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# Postdisaster Japan and the Salon du Livre 2012

Ozaki Mariko

Where to begin? Even now that summer is here, I still remember vividly that sunny week we spent in Paris in the middle of March.

It was in a slightly somber mood that the twenty invited authors and accompanying editors and journalists embarked on our hectic schedule, shortly after the first anniversary of the Tōhoku earthquake. The genuine and enthusiastic welcome we received in France soon warmed our hearts. The event was a valuable opportunity for the invited authors to share their insights and perspectives on literature, humanity, and the world.

This year's Salon du Livre took place at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles from March 16 to 19. Publishers from some 40 countries were represented at over 1,000 booths. Unsurprisingly, the main focus of the event was French publishers; this is the largest book fair in Europe. At the back of the enormous venue was a special pavilion dedicated to Japan, which had been chosen this year as the guest of honor. Half of the pavilion was filled with Japanese books for sale: around 20,000 titles in all, including French translations of Japanese literature, manga, art, cookery books, and so on. The remaining space was used for interviews and discussions and author events. The walls of the pavilion were decorated with panels of photographs showing vivid images of the disaster areas in Tōhoku.

The authors invited from Japan were (in alphabetical order): Ekuni Kaori, Furukawa Hideo, Gomi Tarō, Hagio Moto, Hirano Keiichirō, Horie Toshiyuki, Kakuta Mitsuyo, Kamata Satoshi, Katō Kunio, Komagata Katsumi, Mayuzumi Madoka, J.P. Nishi, Ōe Kenzaburō, Sekiguchi Ryōko, Shimada Masahiko, Wataya Risa, Yamazaki Mari, and Yoshimasu Gōzō. The invited writers included manga artists and authors of children's books. In addition to those who traveled from Japan, Tawada Yōko made the trip from Germany. Tsuji Hitonari, who lives in Paris, also attended. A commemorative group portrait taken on



*The delegation of Japanese authors in Paris. (© Yomiuri Shimbunsha)*

March 15, on the eve of the fair, showed a remarkable coming together of some of the most exciting writers working in Japanese today. For so many writers from different backgrounds to assemble under one roof would have been a rarity even in Tokyo.

Over the four days of the book fair, more than 50 diverse functions were held around the venue, with friendly discussion continuing late into the night. The earthquake/tsunami disaster and the ensuing nuclear crisis were the dominant points of discussion everywhere. There can be no doubt who was the busiest member of the Japanese delegation: Ōe Kenzaburō, the omnipresent and overwhelmingly popular Nobel Prize-winner whose comments about the nuclear industry had a powerful impact on the audience. At 77 years of age, Ōe Kenzaburō was the oldest member of the delegation, but from the beginning of his speech on the sixteenth of March, he spoke with eloquent force and passion:

“Just before I departed for Paris, I took part in a large gathering in Fukushima. I spoke to a farmer in his fifties. The fields he had cultivated for decades—tens of thousands of square meters—were rendered utterly unusable by the tsunami and the nuclear accident. I talked to a fisherman's wife who had made lunch boxes for her husband with the fish that he caught. That was her life. She lost everything.

“Despite this, the people at the meeting were determined. They promised to keep working till the end of their lives, without losing hope. I think their attitude is absolutely right. Despite the difficult burden thrust unfairly upon them, they still believe they can rise above the challenges. In my own work, I want to write from a similar perspective, keeping the individual catastrophes of each of these people in mind as I write.”

Ōe participated in panel discussions, gave lectures, and appeared on French television. Wherever he spoke, he attracted standing-room-only audiences and delivered a powerful message on behalf of post-Fukushima Japan: “Whatever happens, we must make sure that we do not destroy the foundations upon which the next generation will build their lives—that should be the fundamental principle by which we live.”

The next day, some of the leading figures in Japanese literature took the stage for a two-hour panel discussion. The panelists were: Horie Toshiyuki, Ekuni Kaori, Wataya Risa, and Hirano Keiichirō. The discussion was chaired by Corinne Atlan, who has translated several of Murakami Haruki's novels into French. She probed the authors on the emotional changes they had undergone since the disaster.

Horie talked about the tremors that had affected even

his own quiet life, despite his distance from the earthquake: “Sometimes, the reverberations feel stronger the further you are from the epicenter. I’ve been more drawn to silence recently. I need time to think things through. One of the reasons I go on writing is to be able to perceive those tremors more clearly.”

Another interesting response came from Ekuni Kaori. “Part of a writer’s role is to avoid getting caught up in simplistic story-telling, which is one way of aiming toward consolation or hope,” she said. Wataya Risa, still in her twenties, said her biggest priority after the disaster was to express her sympathy for the people affected. After some hesitation, she had changed the ending of a novel being serialized at the time to convey a message of sympathy to the victims.

“For me the earthquake and the nuclear accident proved to be a true departure point in terms of thinking seriously about a fundamental question: What contribution can a writer make in an age like this, in which we are subjected to a constant barrage of information?” said the young novelist Hirano Keiichirō. “Until recently, people only had to consider the future within the terms of their own lifespans. Now, we are suddenly required to imagine a future thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of years from now. This requires a fundamental shift in human thinking,” Hirano said, remaining focused on the future despite the difficulties involved.

One publication that attracted a lot of attention at the fair was *Shinsai no rettō* [The Earthquake Archipelago] a collection of some 30 essays written by Japanese writers in response to the disaster. The collection was translated into French [*L’Archipel des séismes*] by Corinne Quentin, who runs a French copyright office in Tokyo. Quentin has made a major contribution to Japanese literature in France over the years, introducing Japan’s leading authors to readers in her home country almost as soon as they become known in Japan. She was personally affected by the tragedy, when her mother-in-law was lost in the tsunami that hit Rikuzentakata in Iwate Prefecture.

Author and critic Philippe Forest, who has visited Japan many times, spoke of the experience of meeting the authors in France and talking to them in person after reading this anthology and similar works: “I hope that those of us in Europe will continue to keep a close eye on the work of these authors and learn what we can from their words.”

Many prominent researchers, translators, and interpreters were at the book fair, including Cécile Sakai, well known as the translator of Ōe’s works into French, and Anne Bayard-Sakai, who has translated novels by Ogawa Yōko. The contributions of these scholars and a team of hard-working Japanese interpreters resident in France were crucial to the success of the event.

One publisher that has played a particularly important role in promoting Japanese literature in France is Éditions Philippe Picquier, which has published over 300 Japanese novels in translation since the 1980s and has a high regard for the rich narrative and expressive qualities of Japanese literature. With novels still making up half of all book sales in France, the company president Philippe Picquier believes there is still room to grow: “There is still plenty of scope for making French readers more familiar with Japanese novels. I hope that Japanese writers and their

publishers will have the confidence to be proactive about bringing their works to readers in France.”

There is certainly evidence to support Picquier’s assertions: since last year, major French literary magazines and newspapers have run special features on Japanese culture to coincide with the book fair. The Japan pavilion attracted some 40,000 visitors, and sales of Japan-related books apparently outstripped all previous records. And the number of young people eager to study Japanese shows no sign of declining. I met several students who said they would jump at the chance to study in Tokyo or Kyoto. They certainly didn’t seem to be unduly concerned about radiation or any other dangers.

This enthusiasm for Japan and its culture represents an unprecedented opportunity for Japan’s writers and publishers. Until this recent visit to France, I was under the impression that the “Cool Japan” slogan referred to characters and goods that were already well established in the global market, like Hello Kitty and several prominent manga series. I now realize that I underestimated the popularity of Japan abroad.

Before the book fair, I attended a two-day seminar on French and Japanese publishing, held at Le Centre National du Livre. I was impressed by how many people expressed an interest in translating Japanese books into French—not just novels but instructional volumes and practical guides to academic subjects and the natural sciences. Japanese publishers should look to develop catalogues for overseas markets as a matter of priority, in English at least.

At the same time, the Japanese visitors were often struck by the impressive levels of public support for the arts in France—from the low levels of tax on books to the wide array of literary prizes and impressive public libraries. Elementary school students and high school students from the Parisian suburbs attended the book fair with special tickets distributed by the government and snapped up the latest books.

I remember a remark Shimada Masahiko made to me as we took a walk near the Louvre the day before our return to Japan: “The French people really understand the ability that culture has to support a country when the economy is struggling.” I couldn’t agree more. Ever since the Meiji era, Japan has looked to emulate the French spirit. With difficult times looming again, we should once more learn from the traditions of this country.

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Ozaki Mariko



Born in 1959. Senior writer at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, where she writes about literature and contemporary society. Published works include *Jakuchō bungaku shi* [The Literature of Setouchi Jakuchō], *Ōe Kenzaburō: Sakka jishin o kataru* [Ōe Kenzaburō: The Author on Himself], and *Gendai Nihon no shōsetsu* [Contemporary Japanese Fiction], which was published in French translation [Écrire au Japon: le roman japonais depuis les années 1980] by Éditions Philippe Picquier in 2012.



## FICTION



Isaka Kōtarō

Born in 1971. Graduated from Tōhoku University with a degree in law. Debuted as a novelist with *Ōdyubon no inori* [Audubon's Prayer], which won the Fifth Shinchō Mystery Club Award in 2000. Awarded the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for New Writers for *Ahiru to kamo no koinrokkā* [The Foreign Duck, the Native Duck and God in a Coin Locker] and the Mystery Writers of Japan Award for Shinigami no seido [Accuracy of Death] (see JBN No. 47) in 2004. He received the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize and the Hon'ya [Bookseller] Prize in 2008 for *Gōruden suranbā* [Golden Slumbers] (see JBN No. 57).

## PK [Penalty Shootout]

By Isaka Kōtarō

Kōdansha, 2012. 194 x 136 mm. 221 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-06-217496-1.

*PK* is a collection comprising three interconnected short stories: the title piece, “*Chōjin*” [Superhuman], and “*Misshi*” [The Confidential Agent]. Skillfully plotted and written in a crisp contemporary style, the stories switch with ease between alternating perspectives as the stories unfold. With themes that range from supernatural clairvoyance to contemporary politics and science fiction elements like time travel and alternative worlds, this is a highly entertaining collection. But more than the technical aspects of the book, it is the ethical questions it raises about courage and cowardice that are likely to make the biggest impression on readers. Is it ever acceptable to sacrifice the interests of the few for the benefit of the many? Again and again, characters are put to the test and forced to make important ethical deci-

sions in the face of mysterious and apparently overwhelming forces beyond their understanding. In “*PK*,” a soccer player is told to deliberately miss a penalty, a novelist is pressed to make major changes to his work, and a politician is subject to blackmail threats to expose details of a scandal unless he agrees to bear false witness. It is tempting to read this book as the author's message to the people of Japan in the wake of the March 2011 disasters, urging them to have the courage to correct their moral failings before it is too late. (Numano)

## Hyōzan no minami [Iceberg South]

By Ikezawa Natsuki

Bungei Shunjū, 2012. 192 x 133 mm. 551 pp. ¥2,100. ISBN 978-4-16-380790-4.

This is a science fiction adventure set in the near future of 2016. The protagonist is 18-year-old Jin Kaizawa, who left Japan at the age of 15 to attend high school in New Zealand. When he leaves school, he decides he has had enough of classroom study and travels to an Australian port, where he embarks on an epic adventure as a stowaway aboard the *Sindibaad*. The ship is about to undertake a stupendous voyage to the Antarctic, where the plan is to find a suitable iceberg that can be towed back to Australia. This marks the first stage in a desperate attempt to use icebergs to resolve the world's crippling water crisis. Over the course of the journey, the young protagonist faces challenges, falls in love, and marks his initiation into adult life. But the novel ranges far beyond the life of the individual pro-

tagonist and has the whole of modern civilization in its sights, along with an international setting and a cosmopolitan cast of characters that includes Arabs, Greeks, a Chinese-American, a Finn, and a Pole. With an espionage thriller of plot involving a religious cult of ice-worshipping “icists” determined to sabotage the iceberg project, the novel is an original take on the questions of human greed and environmental conservation that are among the major issues facing humankind today. (Numano)



Ikezawa Natsuki

Born in 1945. Began career as a translator and poet. Awarded the Akutagawa Prize in 1988 for “*Sutiru raifu*” [trans. “Still Lives”]. Has won numerous awards, including the Yomiuri Prize for Literature for *Haha naru shizen no oppai* [Mother Nature's Breasts] and the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize for *Mashiasu Giri no shikkyaku* [The Fall of Macias Guili] (see JBN No. 5) in 1993. Edited the 30-volume *Sekai bungaku zenshū* [Collections of World Literature] from 2007 to 2011.



**Tanaka Shinya**

Born in 1972. Was awarded the 37th Shinchō Newcomer's Award for *Tsumetai mizu no hitsuji* [Coldwater Sheep] in 2005 and the Mishima Yukio Prize in 2008 for the short story collection "Kireta kusari" [Broken Chains]. Won the Akutagawa Prize for *Tomogui* in 2012.

## **Tomogui [Cannibalism]**

**By Tanaka Shinya**

Shūeisha, 2012. 193 x 135 mm. 143 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 978-4-08-771447-0.

Seventeen-year-old Shinogaki Tōma lives with his father, Madoka, and his father's common-law wife, Kotoko. His father's sexual proclivities include choking and beating women, to the point of drawing blood. Tōma's mother, Jinko, aborted her second pregnancy and left Madoka, unable to stand his brutality.

Now living alone, Jinko works as a fishmonger not far from Tōma's home. Having lost her right hand in a wartime air raid, she uses an artificial hand to cut and clean fish. On his frequent visits to his mother, who provides him with fish and meals, Tōma has often heard about his father. Although he detests the man, Tōma is also afraid that he may have inherited his violent and sadistic tendencies. His fears come true when, during sex with his girlfriend, Chigusa, he impulsively strikes her in the face.

Consumed by self-disgust, Tōma sinks into depression. Meanwhile, Kotoko, who is now pregnant, makes up her mind to break free from Madoka. The violent father goes on a rampage, in the course of which he rapes Chigusa in the grounds of a Shintō shrine. Tōma resolves to kill his father, but Jinko stops him and takes matters into her own hands.

Summarized like this, the plot may sound gratuitous. But the richly stylized prose and numerous descriptive passages that straddle the borderline between realism and fantasy combine to give the work a distinctive atmosphere and artistic flair. The young man's spiritual turmoil as he confronts his biological inheritance is depicted with freshness and vigor. This novel was awarded the 146th Akutagawa Prize in February 2012. (Chō)

## **Haha no isan [Mother's Legacy]**

**By Mizumura Minae**

Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2012. 196 x 134 mm. 527 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-12-004347-5.

This novel focuses on the life of Mitsuki, a fifty-something woman who works part-time as a university lecturer. There are two main strands to the plot: the prolonged strains the family undergoes as they care for Mitsuki's elderly mother and the story of her husband's affair with another woman. Mitsuki's mother, the daughter of a geisha, remains her freewheeling, selfish, and extravagant self to the end, pushing the two daughters who look after her—Mitsuki and her older sister, Natsuki—to their limits. The novel traces the frenzied final days of the mother's life, as she is hospitalized for a fracture and then admitted to a nursing home, where she eventually dies. In parallel with these events, the novel depicts Mitsuki's shock when she discovers her husband's affair, and follows her as she uses her inheri-

tance to achieve independence and divorce her husband. Despite these weighty subjects, the novel is saved from becoming grim reading by the invigorating clarity of the prose and skillful realism with which Mizumura depicts the lives of the comfortably well-off. The tone of the novel's strategy is set from the outset, when the story begins *in medias res* with a discussion of money in the course of which the death of the mother is revealed. The book's subtitle, *Shimbun shōsetsu* [A Newspaper Novel], makes it clear that this is an homage of sorts to a whole literary genre. The novel was originally serialized in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, appearing in weekly installments for over a year. The novel therefore illustrates the continuing significance of novel serialization for literature in Japan. (Numano)



**Mizumura Minae**

Studied French literature at undergraduate and graduate level at Yale. Won the Minister of Education Award for New Artists for *Zoku meian* [Light and Darkness Continued] in 1990, the Noma Prize for New Writers for *Shishōsetsu* from left to right [A Personal Story: from left to right] (see JBN No. 14) in 1995, the Yomiuri Prize for Literature for *Honkaku shōsetsu* [A Real Novel] (see JBN No. 42) in 2002, and the Kobayashi Hideo Prize for Nihongo ga horobiru toki [The Fall of the Japanese Language in the Age of English] (see JBN No. 60) in 2009.



### Wataya Risa

Born in 1984. Debuted as a novelist with *Insutōru* [Install], which won the Bungei Prize in 2001. Won the 130th Akutagawa Prize for *Keritai senaka* [A Back You Want to Kick] in 2004. Other works include *Yume o ataeru* [A Gift of Dreams] and *Katte ni furuetero* [Go Tremble as You Wish] (see JBN No. 67). Awarded the Sixth Ōe Kenzaburō Prize for *Kawaisō da ne?* in 2012.

## ***Kawaisō da ne?* [Poor Thing?]**

By Wataya Risa

Bungei Shunjū, 2011. 193 x 132 mm. 239 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 978-4-16-380950-2.

Wataya Risa, who became a media celebrity following the runaway success of her debut, written while she was still in high school, now has more than a decade of experience under her belt and is on her way to breaking new ground. Her latest hardback makes clear how she has honed her talent over the years since her debut. The book comprises two novellas: the title story and “*Ami-chan wa bijin*” [Ami the Beautiful]. The title story introduces Jurie, a 28-year-old woman who works in a department store. One day her boyfriend, Ryūdai, declares his intention to let his homeless ex-girlfriend move into his apartment until she finds a new job and a place of her own. Jurie is naturally taken aback, but desperate to keep the relationship alive, she does her best to sympathize with the plight of her rival. Eventually,

however, she can take it no longer and explodes in anger. The second story features a beautiful woman named Ami and her hopeless romance with an unsuitable man, as seen from the perspective of a friend who acts as her foil. Despite dealing with youthful romance, both these stories are much more than mere sugary genre fiction. The author’s sharp observations and incisive humor make this a collection that is sure to provoke smiles at the absurdity of life. (Numano)

## ESSAY

## ***Edo Tokyo no shitamachi kara* [From the Shitamachi: The Ancient Heart of Edo/Tokyo]**

By Kawada Junzō

Iwanami Shoten, 2011. 193 x 132 mm. 342 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-00-022286-0.

Kawada Junzō has published prolifically as a cultural anthropologist and carried out extensive ethnographical fieldwork in Africa. A former student of Claude Lévi-Strauss, he is the Japanese translator of *Tristes Tropiques* and other works. In addition to his academic achievements, he also enjoys a reputation as an outstanding essayist, widely praised for his polished style.

He was born into a traditional rice merchant’s family in Fukagawa, in the old-fashioned “*shitamachi*” of Tokyo. The author ascribes the area’s distinctive atmosphere to the spirit of the place, distilled over the generations from the unique intermingling of cultures brought by the people who settled here from all over Japan during the Edo period.

Kawada described the qualities of this

dynamic, relaxed neighborhood, mixing his personal memories with the numerous interviews he has carried out with local residents. These first-person narratives convey a remarkably vivid sense of local speech patterns—something possible only for someone who grew up in the area.

In comparing Tokyo with Paris, where he studied as a young man, Kawada ponders the significance of the river, which plays a vital role in the lives of both cities. Delicately interweaving personal history with anthropological observations, the book examines the autonomy of the merchant class and the nature of civil society in the *shitamachi*. This book subtly points to the continuities between Edo and modern Tokyo. (Yonahara)



### Kawada Junzō

Born in 1934. Graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tokyo, with a degree in cultural anthropology. Received his doctorate in African studies from the René Descartes University Paris V. Currently special visiting professor at Kanagawa University. Main works include *Kōya kara—Afurika de kangaeru* [From the Plain—Thinking In Africa], *Mumoji shakai no reki-shi* [History in Oral Societies], and *Nihon o toinaosu* [Reconsidering Japan].



### Funakoshi Katsura

*Born in 1951. Sculptor. After graduating from Tokyo Zokei University, studied sculpture at the graduate school of Tokyo University of the Arts. Currently guest professor at Tokyo Zokei University. Works mostly in camphorwood. Exhibited at the 43rd Venice Biennial in 1988 and the 20th Sao Paulo Biennial in 1989. He received the Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts in 2009.*

## **Kojin wa mina zetsumetsu kigushu to iu sonzai** **[Every Individual Is an Endangered Species]**

**By Funakoshi Katsura**

Shūeisha, 2011. 215 x 151 mm. 159 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-08-780604-5.

The sculptor Funakoshi Katsura is one of Japan's leading artists, whose work has been widely collected by art museums around the world. Using hardwood, he started out carving realistic human forms with glass eyes that seem to glint with a melancholy light. He says that he is "drawn to the fragility inherent in human beings." The style of his work has undergone a major shift in recent years. Recent work includes sculptures of people with two heads, male figures with female breasts, and a woman with a flying insect caught in her mouth. Despite the surrealistic originality of these works, Funakoshi's work continues to extol the virtues of stillness, creating a distinctive world of beauty and harmony.

The walls of Funakoshi's studio are plastered with countless pieces of paper

on which he has jotted down the ideas that come to him while he is working. Many of them resemble miniature poems: "Art does not advance. It only expands its boundaries." "I am weak in the face of beauty, which reduces me to tears too easily." "God speaks with a lisp, and the various peoples of the world attribute different meanings to his words."

Along with his sculptures, these fragmentary writings give us a glimpse into the creative thought processes of the artist. (Yonahara)

## **CRITICISM**

### **Ongaku ga orite kuru** **[Music Comes On Down]**

**By Yuasa Manabu**

Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2011. 194 x 131 mm. 356 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-309-27279-5.

Yuasa Manabu is one of Japan's most respected music critics, with a knack for being able to grasp the essential heart of a piece of music and convey it in fresh, vibrant language. Over the course of his long career, Yuasa has written about a wide range of genres, from rock, pop, and jazz to Japanese folk music and *enka*. With a flexible and open-minded approach to music, he refuses to differentiate between "major" and "minor" artists and has built up an impressive collection of self-produced work by amateur musicians. For years he has spoken out against the passive, consumer-driven approach to music today, urging people to "find new music in the past." Yuasa has maintained his faith in the power of music and words even as new technology has brought dramatic changes to the way people listen to music.

This first comprehensive collection of Yuasa's criticism conveys a sense of the richness of the world of Japanese music. The first half of the book introduces Japanese avant-garde bands and singers such as Les Rallizes Dénudés (Hadaka no Rarīzu) and Jagatara and traces their influence. He provides an astute assessment of what made Misora Hibari such an outstanding *enka* singer, when he writes: "She does not force the Japanese lyrics to fit the rhythm of the music, but rather adapts the music to the rhythms of the Japanese language." The second half of the book discusses Western musicians such as Neil Young, James Brown, and Pink Floyd. The writing is marked throughout by an enjoyable, almost musical sense of rhythm. (Yonahara)



### Yuasa Manabu

*Born in 1957. Music critic and leader of the band Yuasawan. Works include Ana no kanata ni [Beyond the Abyss] and Ongaku o mukae ni yuku [Encounters with Music].*



## CULTURE



Isobe Akira

Born in 1950. Holds a PhD in literature from the Graduate School of Arts and Letters, Tōhoku University. Specializes in Chinese literature and East Asian cultural history. Currently professor at the Center for North-east Asian Studies, Tōhoku University.

## **Tabiyuku Son Gokū** **[The Travels of the Monkey King]**

By Isobe Akira

Hanawa Shobō, 2011. 215 x 151 mm. 265 pp. ¥3,600. ISBN 978-4-8273-1243-0.

The classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West* (known in Japanese as *Saiyūki* and famous to English readers in Arthur Waley's version, published as *Monkey* in 1942) has been popular in Japan since the Edo period (1603–1868). Although several previous studies have looked at the reception of the novel in Japan, Isobe Akira's book is much wider in scope, examining the novel's impact on the cultures and peoples of East Asia—including Japan, Korea, the Ryūkyū Islands, Tibet, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Thailand.

The *Journey to the West* is based on legends that grew out of the exploits of Xuanzang, a Tang Dynasty (619–907) monk who traveled to India in pursuit of Buddhist sutras. Even today, the journey would not be easy; in Xuanzang's day, it was a miracle that he survived. Upon his

return to Chang'an (modern Xi'an) at the end of his sixteen-year journey, Xuanzang was greeted as a hero. His adventures were eventually transformed into the legends that provided the basis for the novel.

This book examines how the legends of Xuanzang spread through East Asia and explores how the novel was received in various cultures, shedding fascinating light on cultural differences around the region. (Chō)

## **Edo ishōzukan** **[Illustrated Encyclopedia of Edo Clothing]**

By Kikuchi Hitomi

Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2011. 224 x 155 mm. 339 pp. ¥3,400. ISBN 978-4-490-10798-2.

Most previous books on the clothing of the Edo period (1603–1868) are made up almost entirely of expository text, supplemented by black and white illustrations. In this book, almost all the pictures are in color.

The author is a clothes designer and painter who has held solo exhibitions in Japan and overseas. Her deep knowledge of fashion and her artist's touch are on prominent display throughout this book. Using clear language and vivid illustrations, she has done a splendid job of reproducing an important aspect of Edo culture for modern readers.

In the Edo period people's clothing reflected their position in the social hierarchy. There was also a good deal of change over the course of time. This book covers all the important social classes and pe-

riods, with sections devoted to topics such as the court nobility, the samurai and merchant classes, and men's and women's clothing. Different chapters introduce the characteristic clothing of each social group and the changes that took place over time.

In addition to clothing, the author discusses men's, women's, and children's hairstyles, multifarious forms of headgear, and accessories such as tobacco pouches, purses, hairpins, and cosmetics. An explanation of obi-tying, accompanied by illustrations, is easy to follow. An index enables the reader to look up items of clothing by name. This is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in Edo culture. (Chō)



Kikuchi Hitomi

Born in 1955. After working as a designer, studied at Waseda University and began to create illustrations and text for books on Edo. Works include *Edo no kodomo*—gyōji to asobi *jūnikagetsu* [*The Children of Edo: Events and Games Throughout the Year*], *Oedo no kekkon* [*Marriage in Edo*], and *E de miru ofuro no rekishi* [*Illustrated History of Baths*]. She is also a painter in the Japanese style.





### Kon Wajirō

*Born in 1888. After graduating from Tokyo University of the Arts with a degree in design, taught at the Department of Architecture, Waseda University. Responsible for a thorough study of traditional housing and well known for advocating “modernology,” a study of modern social phenomena conducted during the reconstruction following the Great Kantō Earthquake. Published numerous works on architecture, clothing, and domestic life. Died in 1973.*

## **Kon Wajirō saishū kōgi** **[Kon Wajirō Retrospective]**

**By Kon Wajirō**

Seigensha, 2011. 209 x 148 mm. 288 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 978-4-86152-322-9.

Kon Wajirō (1888–1973) was the progenitor of the discipline he referred to as “modernology” (*kōgengaku*), a neologism coined on the pattern of the Japanese word for archaeology (*kōkogaku*). The aim of modernology was “to create a clear record of the modern customs and lifestyles of the people living all around us today.” This book was produced as the catalogue for an exhibition surveying Kon’s multidisciplinary accomplishments as a designer, painter, and architect. Kon’s work has attracted renewed attention in recent years, as criticism has mounted of the fixation of modern society with “development” and “progress.”

Starting in the late 1910s, Kon carried out an exhaustive study of traditional houses that took him all over Japan and Korea, taking detailed notes on everything

from facades and layout to details of design and the way people hung their laundry. The major turning point in Kon’s life came with the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, when the innumerable barrack buildings that sprung up throughout the charred remains of Tokyo inspired him to found the “Barracks Decoration Company.” His light, creative designs helped to relieve the bleak functionalism of these spare structures.

In the years that followed, Kon pursued his “modernology” project, sketching and cataloguing city-dwellers according to a diverse range of themes, using the Ginza district of Tokyo as his point of departure. His drawings are distinguished by a light, humorous touch and a keenly felt sympathy for the idea that life is there to be enjoyed. (Yonahara)

## **Tabi to kankō no nenpyō** **[Chronology of Travel and Tourism]**

**Edited by Tabi no Bunka Kenkyūjo**

Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2011. 216 x 152 mm. 539 pp. ¥9,500. ISBN 978-4-309-22552-4.

Travel and tourism became a part of life for many people in postwar Japan. The history of travel and tourism, along with the history of migration, is a subject of vital importance, in making it possible to view human history from the perspective of people on the move, rather than from a sedentary standpoint.

In Japan, nationwide travel networks have developed during the years of relative peace since the beginning of the Edo period (1603–1868), encouraging the development and propagation of culture and folkways throughout the country. The modern reputation of the Japanese as keen travelers results from this long history of travel as an integral part of Japanese life.

In spite of the central role played by travel in Japan’s modernization, until now

no thorough chronology was available that traced developments in travel since the early modern period. This book is therefore the first to compile a coherent history of travel and tourism from the beginning of the seventeenth century until the modern era. The book also covers the growth of travel and emigration to the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria during the period of Japanese colonial expansion, the role of the Japan Tourist Bureau, and postwar phenomena such as honeymoons, company retreats, and international travel. This volume will prove a highly useful resource for anyone studying Japan from an international perspective. (Yoshimi)



### Tabi no Bunka Kenkyūjo

*The Institute for the Culture of Travel. Research center that works on issues relating to migration, travel, and tourism. In addition to its research, publishing, and educational activities, the institute also awards an annual prize for contributions to the culture of travel.*

## SOCIETY



Machimura Takashi

*Born in 1956. Completed a master's at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo. Specializes in sociology, urban studies, development, and globalization. Currently professor at Hitotsubashi University. Works include Sekai toshi—Tokyo no kōzō tenkan [World City: Tokyo's Structural Transition] and Ekkyōshatachi no Rosuanjerusu [Los Angeles: City of Border Crossers]. Editor of Shimin sankagata shakai to wa [What Is a Participatory Society?].*

## ***Kaihatsu shugi no kōzō to shinsei*** **[The Structure and Mentality of Developmentalism]**

By Machimura Takashi

Ochanomizu Shobō, 2011. 215 x 151 mm. 468 pp. ¥7,400. ISBN 978-4-275-00951-7.

In 1956, the Sakuma Dam was completed on the Tenryūgawa, a turbulent river that runs through Central Honshū. The project has often been likened to the Hoover Dam built by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the United States. This book focuses on the construction of Sakuma Dam and brings into graphic relief the significance of regional development in postwar Japan. The first part deals with the construction of the dam itself. The author examines the significance of the dam in the wider context of postwar Japan from three angles: the developmental nationalism that took root following the loss of Japan's colonies; development politics at the prefectural level; and the enthusiastic embrace of development projects by local populations. The second part of the book looks in detail at contemporary films docu-

menting the construction process, analyzing what aspects of development the films emphasized, what aspects they left unseen, and how and where the films were screened. The book vividly describes how the example of the TVA was enthusiastically taken up in social studies texts and children's books, encouraging people in Japan to believe that following the TVA model of development would lead to the formation of a "civilized life as a peaceful nation." Interestingly, the film-makers chose not to show the significant role played in the project by American engineers and development companies, preferring to give the impression that the Sakuma Dam was being built by Japanese hands. This tour de force of scholarship delves deep into the developmental ideology of postwar Japan. (Yoshimi)

## BIOGRAPHY

## ***Umi no mukō ni hon o todokeru*** **[Sending Books Beyond the Seas]**

By Kurita Akiko

Shōbunsha, 2011. 191 x 130 mm. 392 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 978-4-7949-6770-1.

The author of this work, the founder of the Japan Foreign-Rights Center, has been a pioneer in the effort to make Japanese books better known overseas. This book retraces the course of her life as a bridge between Japan and the rest of the world.

Kurita Akiko's memoirs are a little different from a standard autobiography, since she does not merely tell her own personal story. From an early age she held clear goals for her life, and she has worked persistently to achieve them. There is much here to admire: Kurita's drive and enterprising spirit, her decisiveness at crucial moments, and, above all, her determination to achieve her goals.

But Kurita Akiko's efforts have not been devoted to self-fulfillment. From an early age she has looked to make a contribution to society. The frequency with

which she has happened to meet talented and well-placed individuals when embarking on a new project or traveling overseas cannot be the result of good luck alone. These people would never have offered their assistance so freely if they had not felt inspired by Kurita's character, judgment, and determination.

This book is highly recommended as a chronicle of one woman's lifelong mission to introduce Japan and its literature to the world. (Chō)



Kurita Akiko

*Has played a pioneering role in building a market for Japanese publications overseas since the 1970s. Currently works as an advisor at the Japan Foreign-Rights Center. Works include Yume no hōsekibako [The Jewel Box of Dreams].*



**Sakai Takashi**

Born in 1965. Associate professor at Osaka Prefecture University. Specializes in the history of social thought and sociology. Works include *Jiyūron [Theories of Liberty]* and *Bōryoku no tetsugaku [The Philosophy of Violence]*. Co-translator of *Negri and Hardt's Empire* and other works.

## **Tsūtenkaku** **[Tsūtenkaku Tower]**

**By Sakai Takashi**

Seidosha, 2011. 195 x 133 mm. 741 pp. ¥3,600. ISBN 978-4-7917-6628-4.

The Tsūtenkaku tower, constructed to a design combining elements of the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe, was the symbolic centerpiece of the Shinsekai (“New Century”) entertainment district built on the former site of the Fifth National Industrial Exhibition of 1903. Although billed as the “Tallest Building in the East” at the time of construction, its relatively unimpressive height of 75 meters perhaps reflected a degree of ambivalence toward modernization. The exhibition site itself came about as the result of a slum clearance, during which the government had to depend heavily on support from local underworld figures. Following the economic depression of the Taishō era (1912–26), the district was saved by its proximity to the Tobita red-light district, which allowed Shinsekai to transform it-

self into an entertainment and pleasure quarters. The area grew into Osaka’s “Deep South”—at once the city’s most squalid neighborhood and its staunchest protector of local working-class traditions. In this book, Sakai Takashi brings to life the poets, gangsters, activists, and *shōgi* players who once populated the Tsūtenkaku district. If the Tsūtenkaku was a symbol of half-hearted yearning for advancement, the characters form a class of people at the bottom of society, who find escape from regimented order in the shadow of the tower and lead lives that physically embody anarchism. Inspired by Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*, Sakai sets out to write the history of Osaka from below. This meticulously written book is eloquent testimony to the author’s passion for his subject. (Yoshimi)

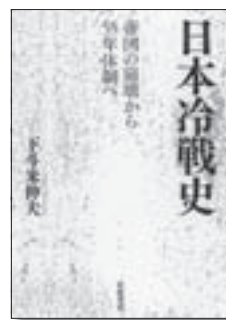
## **Nihon reisen-shi** **[Japan During the Cold War: A History]**

**By Shimotomai Nobuo**

Iwanami Shoten, 2011. 193 x 132 mm. 344 pp. ¥3,400. ISBN 978-4-00-024284-4.

This groundbreaking study fundamentally challenges the conventional wisdom regarding postwar Japanese history and the origins of the Cold War. Its chief claim is that the primary cause of the Cold War was not the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in Europe from 1947 or so. Instead, Shimotomai dates the origins of the conflict to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and the subsequent dismantling of the Japanese Empire in East Asia. The decisive role in this process was played by what we might call nuclear geopolitics. Hiroshima shocked Stalin into a realization that the specter of nuclear warfare would dominate the postwar world. For the Soviet Union, developing a bomb of its own was now the number one priority. But with no uranium

deposits yet discovered in Soviet territory, the Stalin government looked to bring areas like Bulgaria and Romania, where high-quality uranium could be mined, into its sphere of control. Accordingly, the Soviet Union allowed MacArthur free rein in Japan. As a result, postwar Japan managed to remain essentially outside the Soviet sphere of influence, while stark dividing lines between East and West were drawn in the power vacuums left behind by the departing Japanese Empire, especially on the Korean Peninsula. Drawing on recently declassified Soviet sources, this study represents a provocative challenge to conventional views of postwar Japanese history, which have tended to take the centrality of the Japan-US relationship too much for granted. (Yoshimi)



**Shimotomai Nobuo**

Born in 1948. Professor at the Faculty of Law, Hōsei University. Specializes in comparative politics, Soviet politics, the history of the Cold War in Asia, politics in Russia and the CIS, and Russo-Japanese relations. Works include *Mosukuwa to Kimuiruson [Moscow and Kim Il Sung]* and *Ajia reisen-shi [An Asian History of the Cold War]*.



# Japanese Book News Salon:

## An Evening with Author Kawakami Hiromi

Elisabeth Suetsugu

### A Roundtable Discussion on Writing and Translation

The second edition of the Japanese Book News Salon was held on the evening of January 24, 2012, at the Japan Foundation's head office in Yotsuya, Tokyo. Organized by the Japan Foundation, the event was held with the support of the University of Tokyo's Department of Contemporary Literary Studies and the Shūeisha publishing company. The idea behind the JBN Salon is to provide an opportunity for authors, scholars of Japanese literature, and aspiring translators to get together to discuss the work of a given author. Around 30 people took part in the second salon. These included the invited author Kawakami Hiromi and Professor Numano Mitsuyoshi of the University of Tokyo, who acted as moderator, as well as translators, scholars, and students of Japanese literature. Japan Foundation President Andō Hiroyasu and several other members of the Japan Foundation staff were also in attendance.

The evening started with an interview-style dialogue between Professor Numano and Kawakami Hiromi, followed by a lively roundtable discussion of Kawakami's works that focused on translation issues in particular. Despite the intense nature of the discussion, conversation proceeded in a friendly manner perfectly befitting a "literary salon." With participants from many different countries, Japanese was used as the common language.

Professor Numano's interview focused on two topics: Kawakami's short story "*Kamisama 2011*" [trans. "God Bless You, 2011"] and the reception of her works in translation, particularly in French.

Kawakami wrote "*Kamisama 2011*" in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear disaster, during a time of crisis for her as a writer. The story is a rewrite, based on "*Kamisama*," her first published work, in which a young woman goes hiking with a bear who lives in the same apartment block. In the rewritten version, the walk takes place a year or two after a nuclear disaster. "*Kamisama*" is a short story of around 2,000 words in translation. On the surface, little happens. The narrator is invited on an excursion by her neighbor (who happens to be a bear). They have a picnic on the banks of a river and then go home. "*Kamisama 2011*" follows the same "plot" as the original version of the story, but several details have been altered. The characters wear protective gear, worry about radiation exposure, and hold off from eating the fish they catch because of concerns about contamination. It is remarkable how these subtle changes result in such a dramatically different ambience.

"*Kamisama*" takes place in an idyllic, fairytale-like set-

ting. The use of a fictional world in which human beings and animals live in harmony, and in which the distinction between them blurs, is a major element in Kawakami's fiction, seen in such notable works as "*Ryūgū*" ["Palace of the Dragon King"] and *Hebi o fumu* [Tread on a Snake].

From the interview and the discussion that followed, three factors emerged as formative influences on this imaginative world. The first was the fact that Kawakami studied science in college, where she was a biology major. Kawakami said she sometimes felt she could discern the influence of her scientific training in her writing.

When writing a novel, Kawakami said the questions on her mind are always the same: "What are human beings? What happens when there are so many people in the world? And what effect does this have on the relationships between them?" Kawakami said she tries to take a scientific approach to these questions. In the context of the wider universe, each individual human being is a mere speck, and the world moves on with no regard for the lives and concerns of individual people. But each of these insubstantial specks has its own unique perspective nonetheless; in this sense, the self is by no means insignificant. Kawakami prefers to see human beings not as tiny specks in the wider cosmos but as individuals with their own unique perspectives. Seen in this context, the self ceases to be the clearly defined entity it was in traditional Japanese literature. Its outline blurs, and we enter a science-fiction type of world in which the line between fantasy and reality melts.

The second factor was Kawakami's tastes in literature and the reading that shaped her aspiration to become an author. Despite harboring a secret ambition to write novels, she decided to study science in college because she was worried that she might not be able to complete the thesis for a literature course. Although she has read widely, she considers translated children's literature as well as writers such as Uchida Hyakken, Irokawa Takehiro, Fujieda Shizuo, and Fukazawa Shichirō to be the formative influences that led her toward a career in writing. All of these authors, none of whom would be considered part of the mainstream canon of modern Japanese literary history, produced works with strong elements of fantasy. By contrast, Kawakami said that reading Dostoyevsky or postwar Japanese authors like Ōoka Shōhei and Noma Hiroshi never made her think that she might become a novelist herself one day. If anything, she said, these authors' works made her think, "There's no way I could ever write anything like this."

The third factor, Kawakami said, was the time she spent living overseas. Because of her father's work,

Kawakami attended kindergarten and elementary school in the United States. “I haven’t spent a whole lot of time abroad since then, but when I do go somewhere, I often find I can relate better with non-Japanese people than I can with some Japanese. Maybe my identity as a Japanese person is still a little ill-defined in some ways,” Kawakami said.

After a short break, the proceedings were opened to the floor for a general discussion of translation, with a particular focus on Kawakami’s works. Participants looked at a passage taken from *Kazahana* [Whirling Snowflakes] and discussed translations into Korean, English, and Russian that had been prepared in advance by three individuals studying Japanese literature at the University of Tokyo.

Kawakami started off by reading the text. The three translators then discussed several problems they had encountered when translating the passage. This was followed by a general discussion among all those in attendance. Topics included how to deal with Japanese words (such as the word *kazahana* itself) and expressions (such as the variety of terms of address in Japanese and the effects that can be created by shifting between the two *kana* syllabaries) that do not have close equivalents in other languages.

In the second half of the session, the invited attendees introduced themselves and spoke briefly about how Japanese literature is being studied or translated in their countries, which included Russia, Poland, China, France, and Britain. With many questions and comments coming even during the self-introductions, the salon concluded in an intellectually stimulating and friendly atmosphere.

## Kawakami’s World in the Eyes of a French Translator

When the organizers asked me to report on the salon, I was delighted to accept. But the assignment came with an extra task attached: The organizers also wanted me to introduce Kawakami Hiromi’s fiction to foreign readers. I tensed up when I learned this. Each person is different, a unique individual shaped by the environment of his or her native language and the cultural landscape of his or her native land. I did not feel qualified to reach out to these faceless people from lands unknown. But there is one thing I can talk about with some authority—what fascinates me as I translate Kawakami’s works.

Translation is a curious profession. In fact, I would be hard pressed to think of any job as whimsical as that of a translator, characterized as it is by a combination of haphazard diversity in the material to be translated and sheer hard work. I believe my passion for language and a desire to provide readers with a convincing reading experience has allowed me to work the sometimes frustrating but always fertile field of “transmission” without being trapped into the self-satisfaction that comes from feeling involved in the creative process. I was delighted when Kawakami once told me that *Les Années douces*—my translation of her novel *Sensei no kaban* [trans. *The Briefcase*—is in some ways a work that belongs to me, as the translator.

But I digress. My advice for readers who wish to approach Kawakami’s world is to pick up a copy of one of Kawakami’s texts translated into their language and inhale

the distinctive aroma of Kawakami’s work. If this stirs an emotional response, the only thing to do is dive right in. When this happens, the supposedly unchanging text is transformed into a new work through the act of reading, eventually becoming a kind of kaleidoscope.

Since *Sensei no kaban*, I have translated *Hikatte mieru mono, are wa* [trans. *Cette lumière qui vient de la mer*]; *Furudōgu, Nakano Shōten* [trans. *La brocante Nakano*]; *Manazuru*; and *Doko kara itte mo tōi machi* [trans. *Le temps qui va, le temps qui vient*], which came out in France in the immediate aftermath of the triple disaster of March 2011. I am currently at work on a translation of *Nishino Yukihiko no koi to bōken* [The Love and Adventures of Nishino Yukihiko]. Of these, I feel a particular attachment to *Manazuru*. Perhaps ironically, this was also the work that was the most difficult to translate. At several points, the novel contains passages in which the real and supernatural intermingle and there is no longer any clear line between dream and reality. These passages required particular attention and care to get right. For me, this subtle ambiguity is a large part of the appeal of Kawakami’s works, along with her gentle evocation of the mundane, trivial things that make the difference between happiness and unhappiness. The author appeals to all the senses and creates works that burst with flavor. The graver the subject matter, the lighter her style. In *Doko kara itte mo tōi machi*, for example, hints of death run through the entire book.

I cannot help feeling that in order to translate and convey the nuances of these novels successfully, it is essential to live in Japan and breathe in the linguistic and cultural atmosphere of the author’s work. Without this personal experience, I think it would be easy for the translator to overlook the relationships between nature, human beings, and objects that marks Kawakami’s work as distinctly Japanese. To read Kawakami—and this is something that can be said of much Japanese literature—is to step into Japan’s traditional calendar, with its festivals, events, and seasonal rites. Through translation, it becomes possible for the sensitive reader to make the Japanese lifestyle his or her own, and perhaps to discover there a meaning to life that will lead to an acceptance of death.

Kawakami herself has said in an interview that writing a novel is real work. I would say the same about translating—although in the case of translation there is the additional fear of betraying the original. The text, having been worked by the hands of another, takes on a new face—one in which the translator cannot help seeing his or her own reflection. That anxiety grows all the stronger when I remember something that the recently deceased Yoshimoto Takaaki, one of the greatest thinkers, poets, and literary critics in postwar Japan, once spoke to me personally. “You’ve read many works in translation,” I asked. “Don’t you ever doubt the translation?” His reply was instant: “If I ever have a doubt, it’s when something doesn’t sound right.”

(Elisabeth Suetsugu has translated numerous works of Japanese literature into French, including several novels by Kawakami Hiromi.)

## Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winners of the 147th Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes have been announced. The Akutagawa Prize was awarded to Kashimada Maki for *Meido meguri* [A Tour of the Land of the Dead], published in the Spring issue of *Bungei*. The Naoki Prize went to Tsujimura Mizuki for *Kagi no nai yume o miru* [Dreams Without Keys], published by Bungei Shunjū.

Kashimada is a talented writer who has won several other major awards, including the Mishima Yukio Prize. This was the fourth time she had been nominated for the Akutagawa Prize. Her prize-winning work features a woman who sets out on a trip for the first time in eight years with her husband, who is unable to work after being struck down suddenly by a brain disease. The story depicts her new perspective on life and the spiritual changes she experiences in the course of the journey.

Tsujimura is one of Japan's best-known mystery writers. She won the prize for a collection of short stories subtly depicting the suffering of a series of ordinary women who get caught up in crimes.

## Mishima and Yamamoto Prizes

The winners of the 25th Mishima Yukio and Yamamoto Shūgorō Prizes have been announced. The Mishima Yukio Prize went to Aoki Jungo for *Watashi no inai kōkō* [The High School With No Me], published by Kōdansha. The Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize was won by Harada Maha for *Rakuen no kanvasu* [Paradise Canvas], published by Shinchōsha.

*Watashi no inai kōkō* unfolds in the form of a diary, depicting in subtle detail daily life in a school that has recently welcomed a mysterious student from Canada. *Rakuen no kanvasu* is a mystery involving the works of French painter Henri Rousseau.

## Bestsellers for the First Half of 2012

Tōhan Co., Ltd. has announced its list of the bestselling books for the first half of 2012. In first place were two volumes of dieting advice: *Taishibō*

*kei Tanita no shain shokudō* [The Employee Cafeteria at Health-O-Meter Manufacturer Tanita] and a follow-up volume *Zoku: Taishibō kei Tanita no shain shokudō* [The Employee Cafeteria at Health-O-Meter Manufacturer Tanita: Continued].

The bestselling fiction title was Miura Shion's Hon'ya [Bookseller] Prize-winning novel *Fune o amu* [Building a Boat], in joint fifth place.

## Unpublished Work by Kawabata Yasunari Discovered

A handwritten short story titled "*Hoshi o nusunda chichi*" [Father Who Stole a Star], in the collection of the Ibaraki Municipal Kawabata Literature Memorial Hall in Osaka Prefecture, has been confirmed as a previously unpublished work by Kawabata Yasunari, Japan's first Nobel Prize winner. The story is an adapted translation of *Liliom*, a play by Hungarian author Molnár Ferenc.

The lack of any editorial markings on the manuscript led experts to conclude that the work had never been published. Specialists believe the story is an early work dating from around 1926, when Kawabata's breakthrough story "*Izu no odoriko*" [trans. "The Izu Dancer"] was published.

## Books on Japan Reading Salon Opens

A new walk-in library called "Books on Japan" has opened in Tokyo's Jimbōchō district, famous for its many bookstores. Visitors can consult titles published in English on Japanese subjects from the 1960s onward. Some 400 titles are available, most of them published by Kōdansha International.

The collection shows definite trends over time. The 1960s and 1970s saw numerous books on traditional culture published, many of them lavishly illustrated, such as Donald Keene's *Bunraku*, about the fascination of the puppet theater, and *Katsura*, about the Katsura Imperial Villa.

In the 1980s, there was a surge in interest in contemporary Japanese lifestyles, and a far greater range of material became available. Translations of Murakami Haruki's novels, Japanese cookbooks, and Japanese

language study books now joined the translations of Japanese classics that had previously made up the bulk of what was available. (<http://www.booksonjapan.org/>)

## Murakami Haruki Lectures at University of Hawaii

Murakami Haruki has been a visiting researcher at the University of Hawaii since the summer of 2011. In April 2012, he gave a lecture and reading at an event titled "What I Talk About When I Talk About Writing."

Murakami read in Japanese the short stories "*Kagami*" [The Mirror] and "*Tongari yaki no seisu*" [The Rise and Fall of Sharpie Cakes] before speaking in English about the "underwater bridge" that can only be seen through the power of the imagination—when "the door opens to a strange room deep inside the self," in Murakami's words. Murakami argued that only literature has the power to provide experiences that can change the way people see their lives.

## Yoshimura Akira Museum to Open

A museum commemorating the life and work of Yoshimura Akira (1927–2006), famous as the author of *Senkan Musashi* [BattleShip Musashi: The Making and Sinking of the World's Biggest Battleship] and *Tengu sōran* [The Tengu Riots], is slated for a 2016 opening in the author's birthplace, Arakawa City in Metropolitan Tokyo. Yoshimura published a succession of long historical novels characterized by extreme realism and attention to detail. His intricately plotted novels featured meticulously depicted locations based on an exhaustive research into the relevant historical materials. *Senkan Musashi* broke new ground in the genre of documentary literature.

In *Sanriku kaigan ōtsunami* [Major Tsunamis on the Sanriku Coast], published in 1970, Yoshimura examined the tsunamis that struck the northeastern Sanriku coast in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What causes these terrible tragedies with the power to devastate the lives of thousands of people in their path? Yoshimura's work recreated the disasters based on



priceless first-hand testimonies of the omens, damage, and relief efforts. The book was reprinted to meet unprecedented demand following the Great East Japan Earthquake, which battered the same Sanriku Coast in March 2011.

## Messages from Writers One Year On From 3/11

Numerous books and magazines have been published to mark the first anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. The anthology *Sore demo Sangatsu wa, mata* [March Was Made of Yarn: Reflections on the Japanese Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Meltdown], featuring stories and essays from 17 writers including Ikezawa Natsuki, Kawakami Mieko, and Ogawa Yōko, was published si-

multaneously in Japan, the United States, and Britain.

The monthly magazine *Bungei Shunjū* published a special supplementary edition under the title *Hyakunin no sakka no kotoba* ["Words from a Hundred Writers"]. *Bungei Anemone* [Literature Anemone], an online publication launched by Yoshikawa Toriko and nine other female writers immediately after the earthquake to raise money for earthquake relief, was published in book form by Shinchōsha in February 2012. Elsewhere, the March 10 edition of the manga monthly *Jump X* included a special supplement titled *for someone 3.11*, containing the often emotional one-year-on reflections of Urasawa Naoki and a number of other leading manga artists, expressed in a variety of media, including drawings, manga, and articles.

## Advisory Board

Chō Kyō (Zhang Jing), professor of comparative literature, Meiji University  
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## Editing, Translation, Design, and Production

Japan Echo Inc.

Printed in Japan on recycled paper  
© The Japan Foundation 2012  
ISSN 0918-9580

## Other Titles of Interest

*Due to space limitations only 16 books can be introduced in the "New Titles" section. The following are additional works selected by the Advisory Board as worth sharing with Japanese Book News readers.*

- *Furueru ushi* [The Quivering Cow]. By Aiba Hideo, Shōgakusan, 2012. ISBN 978-4-09-386319-3. An entertaining novel that deals with issues of food safety, murder, the decline of Japan's provincial cities, and a society that prioritizes economic efficiency over public safety.
- *Higurashi no ki* [Chronicle of the Cicadas]. By Hamuro Rin, Shōdensha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-396-63373-8. A historical novel depicting the life of a samurai who has come to terms with death.
- *Jentoruman* [Gentleman]. By Yamada Amy, Kōdansha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-06-217386-5. Beneath the smooth mask of the handsome young man lurks a violent criminal whose charms hold a male classmate spellbound. This picaresque novel deals with love and sex in a variety of forms.
- *Kaigui* [Raise Them Then Eat Them]. By Uchizawa Junko, Iwanami Shoten, 2012. ISBN 978-4-00-025836-4. A journalist describes her experiences as a small-scale livestock holder, documenting the process by which she rears three pigs all the way to the slaughterhouse and dinner table.
- *Chūgokuka suru Nihon* [The Sinification of Japan]. By Yonahara Jun, Bungei Shunjū, 2011. ISBN 978-4-16-374690-6. An original essay that looks back on the past 1,000 years and claims that Japan has become increasingly Chinese.
- *Kanpon Jōkyō e no hatsugen* [Collected Works]. By Yoshimoto Takaaki, Yōsensha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-86248-825-1. A compilation of 35 years of work by Yoshimoto Takaaki, one of the pre-eminent thinkers of postwar Japan.
- *Bunkaryoku no jidai* [The Age of Cultural Power]. By Aoki Tamotsu, Iwanami Shoten, 2011. ISBN 978-4-00-024667-5. Written by a cultural anthropologist with a wealth of international experience, this book discusses the role of culture in the modern world.
- *Ozawa Seiji-san to ongaku ni tsuite hanashi o suru* [Talking About Music with Ozawa Seiji]. By Ozawa Seiji and Murakami Haruki, Shinchōsha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-10-353428-0. A series of lengthy conversations between Murakami Haruki and Ozawa Seiji on the subject of music. Highly recommended for classical music lovers.
- *Wahon no susume* [An Invitation to Wahon]. By Nakano Mitsutoshi, Iwanami Shoten, 2011. ISBN 978-4-00-431336-6. A comprehensive introduction to the history, production, and cultural background of *wahon*, or traditional Japanese books.
- *Edo no engimono* [Edo-Period Good Luck Charms]. By Kimura Yoshitaka, Aki Shobō, 2011. ISBN 978-4-7505-1128-3. An illustrated introduction to the small figurines carried by tradesmen and commoners during the Edo period to ward off accidents and disease and bring good luck in business.
- *Nengajō no sengoshi* [A Postwar History of New Year's Cards]. By Naitō Yōsuke, Kadokawa Shoten, 2011. ISBN 978-4-04-110087-5. Sending New Year's greeting cards has become an annual tradition in Japan. This book uses the history behind the cards to discuss the changes in Japanese society and the lifestyles of the Japanese people.
- *Itai* [The Bodies Left Behind]. By Ishii Kōta, Shinchōsha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-10-305453-5. Heart-rending reportage about the final resting places of the thousands who lost their lives in the Great East Japan Earthquake.
- *Sengo Nihon Indonēshia kankeishi* [Japan-Indonesia Relations: A Postwar History]. By Kurasawa Aiko, Sōshisha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-7942-1853-7. A clear and comprehensive account of postwar relations between Japan and Indonesia, based on interviews with influential figures and a thoroughgoing use of the source materials.
- *Nichibei shōtotsu no kongen* [Origins of the US-Japan Conflict]. By Watanabe Sōki, Sōshisha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-7942-1862-9. This new interpretation of the origins of the Pacific War traces the changing trends in American opinion on Japan from the period of friendly relations after the opening of Japan to the mutual suspicion of the immediate prewar years.
- *Kahoku Shinpō no ichiban nagai hi* [Kahoku Shinpō's Longest Day]. By Kahoku Shinpōsha, Bungei Shunjū, 2011. ISBN 978-4-16-374470-4. A book documenting how the *Kahoku Shinpō*, a Tōhoku newspaper, covered the Great East Japan Earthquake while being in the middle of events as they unfolded.
- *Sawari* [Resonant]. By Samiya Kei, Shōgakusan, 2011. ISBN 978-4-09-388215-6. A nonfiction account of the checkered life of Tsuruta Kinshi, the great *biwa* player who remains little known in her native Japan.

## Teller of Tales

Award-winning author Ikeido Jun is Japan's best-known writer of "business novels"—books depicting the intrigues and scandals of daily life in corporate Japan that are snapped up by thousands of devoted readers. His latest novel, *Rūzuberuto gēmu* [Roosevelt Game], is the thrilling saga of a financially strapped Tokyo manufacturing company and its employees' struggles to hold onto their company baseball team.

The tiny electronic component manufacturer is on the verge of being taken over, and loan officers at the company's bank want to get rid of the team to cut costs. The management is inclined to agree: Laying off employees and scrapping the team seems like a quick and easy solution. But the company president believes in the firm's technology and fights to survive. He believes that the power of the team to unite employees is worth many times what it costs the company.

The book's title comes from a saying attributed to Franklin Roosevelt, who reportedly described an 8–7 score line as the most exciting type of ballgame. The author's message is clear: Never give up. Even if you are seven runs behind, you can still win if you score eight.

The novel follows the company's travails with its competitors, banks, and shareholders, as well as the struggling team's games, climaxing with a sequence of dramatic come-back victories against the odds.

"I wanted to write a story that would help to lift people's spirits," Ikeido says. "People in Japan have been in the dumps since the global economic crisis and recession set in. But spending cuts won't revitalize a company—and they certainly won't do anything to rebuild people's morale."

All of Ikeido's twenty novels depict dramatic reversals of fortune. They are novels of suspense and the ultimate triumph of justice. The victory of good over evil gives encouragement to readers disillusioned with Japan's corporate culture and the woeful state of national politics. His fast-paced storylines also make for a quick, entertaining read. "I like to keep things moving," Ikeido says. "I'm always looking to move the story forward. I can't stand getting bogged down." But what makes Ikeido unique as a writer is his ability to draw on a wealth of experience in two quite different worlds.

Before making his debut as a writer in 1998, Ikeido worked for seven years at one of Japan's biggest banks, managing small-business loans. Although he now writes full-time, he still serves as an outside director at a small camera-lens manufacturer in Tokyo, giving financial advice to the company president every Monday morning.

Combining his experience of banking and hands-on consultancy with a passion for mystery, Ikeido is uniquely positioned to depict the real-life dramas of small companies battling valiantly against bigger rivals and arrogant banks. *Shitamachi roketto* [Downtown Rocket], which won the Naoki Prize in 2011, is a good example.

Ikeido takes the reader on a thrilling ride through a corporate world of deceit, intrigue, and unscrupulous busi-

ness practices. The book's protagonist is Tsukuda Kōhei, a former space researcher who now heads a small manufacturing firm. In the course of the novel, he faces a succession of challenges and reversals. The company loses its biggest client, faces a lawsuit for patent infringement, and is turned down for new loans. Tsukuda even faces complaints from his own employees for clinging stubbornly to his dream of making rocket engine valves in his small factory. The story ends with an electrifying moment when a rocket built with parts made by Tsukuda's company lifts off into space.

The characters are believable and convincingly realized, as Tsukuda wrestles with the tyranny of big companies. The head of the accounts department used to work at a bank. The company's bankers consider money spent on research to be a total waste of resources.

"Bankers know nothing about craftsmanship in manufacturing. They only care about numbers," Ikeido says. "Funding problems are the major preoccupation of any manager of a small business. Business novels that fail to mention banks and financing are just not realistic."

Business novels are generally read for information on how businesses operate. Writers gather information and write fiction based on actual events. But Ikeido says he never conducts interviews for his stories. Instead, he prefers to focus on human drama.

Ikeido's personal favorite among his own works is the short story collection *Shairokku no kodomotachi* [Shylock's Children], whose ten linked stories, each narrated from the perspective of a different employee of the same bank branch, deal with the theft of a million yen in cash.

Ikeido has plans to release no fewer than nine books in the course of the next three years. The first is *Rosujene no yakushū* [The Lost Generation Strikes Back], in which the middle-aged central character, who has been working in a bank since the years of the bubble economy, takes a stand against his career-obsessed coworkers with the help of several younger employees who joined during the so-called "employment ice age."

Ikeido has produced a steady stream of runaway successes. His thrilling novels of real-life drama have earned him an army of loyal fans. Ikeido also reveals that readers of *Shitamachi roketto* have a sequel to look forward to: in a new story, Tsukuda's next challenge will be to refine his valve so that it can fit into an artificial heart and save lives. Ikeido's legions of readers are in for another treat.

(Kawakatsu Miki, freelance writer)



**Ikeido Jun**

Born in Gifu in 1963. Debuted in 1998 with his bank mystery, *Hatsuru soko naki* [Without End], which won the Edogawa Rampo Award. Received the Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for new writers for *Tetsu no hone* [Bones of Steel] and the Naoki Prize for *Shitamachi roketto*. All three have been turned into TV dramas.