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Recent Dictionaries of Note

New Reference Volumes that Get to the Heart of the Language

Emmanji Jirō

Two fundamental questions confront the compilers of any new dictionary: what terms to include, and how to define them. In the case of a general-purpose dictionary of a single language, the number of pages decided by the publisher more or less determines how many entries the compilers can include. The nature and quality of the final product therefore depend largely on the ingenuity that the dictionary's editors bring to the second of their tasks.

With specialized dictionaries, which focus on terms selected from the lexicon of a given language according to certain characteristics they have in common, the situation is slightly different. For these books, the appropriateness of the terms chosen is crucial. In this sense, one of the most noteworthy publications of the past decade is *Kazokata no jiten* [Dictionary of Counting Words] by Iida Asako (editorial supervision by Machida Ken), published by Shōgakukan in 2004.

Japanese has an abundance of *josūshi*, or suffixes used in counting. “One sheet” when referring to a piece of paper is *ichi-mai*. Other words use a different counter: *ichi-yō* for postcards or photographs, for example. Houses are usually counted with the counter *ken*, but large buildings are enumerated using *tō*. Knowing which *josūshi* to use with which noun can be difficult, even for native speakers. Questions about the correct *josūshi* to use with particular words are perennial favorites on school exams.

The *josūshi* are the main subject of the dictionary, which is divided into two parts. The first half of the book lists some 4,600 nouns with their proper *josūshi*, while the second provides lists of about 600 *josūshi* with the nouns they are used to count. This is an extremely handy dictionary for anyone using the Japanese language.

That it comes in a 389-page, A5-size package retailing for ¥2,200 also shows editorial good sense, its affordable price bringing it within the budget of general readers. In choosing to concentrate on *josūshi*, the dictionary's compilers have successfully hit on a subject of widespread concern among speakers of Japanese.

Another excellent specialized dictionary is *Giongo, gitaigo 4500: Nihongo onomatopoe jiten* [4,500 Japanese Onomatopoeia], edited by Ono Masahiro (Shōgakukan, 2007). Like *Kazokata*, this dictionary focuses on a distinctive aspect of the Japanese language, in this case, the rich lexicon of onomatopoeia and mimetic words that is a characteristic of the language.

Although this is not the first attempt to compile a guide to the rich lexicon of onomatopoeia in Japanese, this dictionary is distinguished by its unprecedented scale and thoroughness. It includes 4,500 entries (against around 2,000 in previous guides) and also covers onomatopoeia

of Chinese origin that are (unlike most onomatopoeia) written in *kanji*. An index of onomatopoeia arranged by what they refer to makes it easy for users to look up onomatopoeia from their meaning. The volume is also full of illuminating commentary on onomatopoeias in Japanese, making this dictionary noteworthy from the second of our “compilers’ criteria” as well. This will prove a handy reference for all intermediate and advanced learners of Japanese.

Onomatopoeia are highly sensory words whose meaning is perhaps easier for many speakers to feel than define. They are words that many native speakers of Japanese would not expect to encounter in a dictionary. This may explain why the 576-page, A5-size *Giongo* retails for a hefty ¥6,000, even though *Giongo* and *Kazokata* have the same publisher. The higher price no doubt reflects the assumption that the main buyers of the onomatopoeia dictionary will be libraries rather than individuals.

Shades of Meaning

Any language contains large numbers of words with very similar meanings. But in most cases, even the closest synonyms differ subtly in their nuances and in the contexts in which they are used. *Kuyamu* and *kuiru* are two such words in Japanese. Both words express unhappiness at what has happened, but whereas *kuyamu* refers to a sense of sorrow felt for an overall situation or turn of events, *kuiru* is used to express remorse for one's own actions. The difference is subtle, but a writer or speaker who uses the wrong term will sound unnatural and risks being misunderstood.

Nakamura Akira's *Nihongo: Gokan no jiten* [A Feel-



Nakamura Akira's *Nihongo: Gokan no jiten* [A Feel-for-Language Dictionary of Japanese]. This page explains the usage of the word *kuyamu*.

for-Language Dictionary of Japanese] (Iwanami Shoten, 2010) is an attempt to shed light on subtle nuances of usage. It contains some 10,000 entries. The dictionary shows how a fresh approach to defining terms—the second of our two criteria—can result in an outstanding product. This is an immensely valuable reference book for anyone aspiring to hone their Japanese skills.

The large number of entries means that even with 1,170 generously sized pages, the print is rather small. And the list price of ¥3,000 makes it more appealing to specialists than the general reader. Perhaps future efforts along these lines might be tightened and further improved by more rigorous pruning of material at the compilation stage.

There is also the problem of “collocations,” the way in which individual words join together to form longer units—an area that traditional dictionaries, with their emphasis on defining the meaning of terms, struggled to

たべる

に一時ダブって見えた／主人公を自分の生き方とダブらせてとらえ
留年したので1年生をダブっている
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ト、果物、菓子、弁当、料理、ごちそう、げてもい)を食べる ②
ばく、バリバリ、ポリポリ、もぐもぐ、むさぼるように、黙々と、
ずつ、一口、少しずつ、遠慮がちに、端からせつと、片っ端から
る ③(どうか、やっと、しばらくは)食べていける
【例文】小魚をポリポリ食べる／妻が夕飯を食わずに待っていた

Nihongo hyōgen katsuyō jiten, edited by Himeno Masako.

cover adequately. The ways in which individual words join together to form longer units lay beyond the scope of such books. As a result, there have been relatively few collocation dictionaries, which deal with the way in which words are joined together. Rapid progress in the digitization of Japanese texts during the last fifteen years of the twentieth century made it much easier to collate and analyze large corpora of written materials. Since the turn of the new millennium, a number of dictionaries have drawn on the fruits of these advances.

One outstanding example is the *Kenkyūsha Nihongo hyōgen katsuyō jiten* [Kenkyūsha's Dictionary of Japanese Collocations], edited by Himeno Masako (Kenkyūsha, 2004, ¥4,700; new edition due late November 2012, with the title *Kenkyūsha Nihongo korokeshon jiten*). This volume covers 1,544 entries and features 25,000 usage examples over 721 pages. The publisher is well known for its English-Japanese dictionaries, and this volume too is likely to prove useful for learners of Japanese as a foreign language. The relatively hefty price tag suggests that the dictionary is aimed primarily at Japanese language instructors. Each entry is given thorough treatment, with lists of frequently encountered collocations for separate senses of the key term and separate explanations for idioms and compound words.

Connectives

Dealing with how words join together, collocation dictionaries are necessarily weighted toward the second crite-

riterion: How entries are defined. *Tenioha jiten* [Japanese Particles Dictionary] (Sanseidō, 2010), edited by Onai Hajime, also falls into this category, but has quite different aims. Published in a rather small B6-size format, the book's 1,788 pages are crammed with text laid out in four columns—something that has become quite rare. This was probably unavoidable, considering that it boasts an incredible 35,000 entries, far more than any existing collocation dictionary, and features, according to the notes, some 600,000 examples.

Indeed, the dictionary contains little else. The main entries and usage examples continue relentlessly, page after page. How this ocean of examples is to be used is for the reader to decide. The vast reams of data can be gleaned to check the correctness of a certain postpositional particle. Other users may prefer to explore its depths in search of clever turns of phrase.

In that sense, the dictionary is intended less for learners of Japanese than for those who have attained a certain level of mastery. At ¥3,800, it is not cheap. Perhaps the secret behind the success of this “upscale” dictionary is its title: *Te-ni-o-ha*, the four most common particles in the language, is also the popular name for the parts of speech that act as grammatical suffixes to connect words. The terms thus sum up precisely what a “collocation” dictionary is all about, while the use of a term familiar even to young teenagers makes this huge compendium of 600,000 usage examples a surprisingly accessible guide to correct usage.

As I mentioned at the outset, the make-or-break factors for dictionaries are the selection of what terms to include and the question of how to define them. Obviously, there is much more to dictionary-making than this. How the material is presented is another key concern, which will be largely determined by the target audience. The nature of this audience often forces editors and compilers to re-examine the first two factors. And so the dictionary-making process evolves.

Approaches to presentation can have dramatic effects. Even in the case of relatively similar entries and definitions, different editorial approaches often lead to two quite different books. This is what makes dictionary-making so fascinating. Even now, compilers are doubtless hard at work on the next generation of outstanding dictionaries that will continue to inform and delight readers in the years to come.

Emmanji Jirō



Born in 1967. After college, entered a publishing house, where he edited Japanese textbooks and kanji dictionaries for 17 years before leaving to become a freelance writer and editor. Authored works include *Kanwa jiten ni kike!* [Look It Up in a Kanji Dictionary!], *Kokoro ni shimiru yoji jukugo* [Four-Character Phrases to Move the Heart], *Kazu ni naritakatta kōtei* [The Emperor Who Wanted to Become a Number], and *Kanji toki akashi jiten* [Unlocking the Secrets of Kanji].

FICTION



Ishii Shinji

Born in 1966. Graduated from Kyoto University with a degree in French literature. Awarded the Tsubota Jōji Award for Mugifumi kūsue [*Kutze the Wheat Treader*] in 2003. Yukiya no Rossu-san [*Mr. Roth the Snowmaker*], published in 2006, was introduced in JBN No. 50. Also a prolific essayist.

Aru ichinichi [One Day]

By Ishii Shinji

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 133 mm. 144 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-10-436303-2.

Ishii Shinji's latest work, *Aru ichinichi*, reveals a new and entirely unexpected side to his talent. Until now, Ishii has been known mostly for his surrealistic fantasies and fairy-tale settings, but this story of a married couple—to all appearances, the author and his wife—reads more like a conventional autobiographical novel. Even when he is writing about ordinary everyday life, though, Ishii allows his imagination to wander far afield. His reflections span the globe—from an eel spawning ground to Latin America and the Yaeyama Islands of Okinawa—and the writing, full of mushrooms, frogs, and other strange images, brings a touch of the surreal to its depictions of the everyday world.

Ishii also writes about food in appetizing detail, providing masterful descrip-

tions of scenes in which the characters prepare and enjoy traditional Japanese foods like *matsutake* mushrooms and *hamo* (pike conger). The second half of the book is a dramatic account of the birth of the couple's child in a maternity hospital in Kyoto, where the wife is determined to give birth naturally, even though she is having her first child at the age of forty-three. Although childbirth is a basic part of life, it is a subject that is rarely addressed in contemporary Japanese literature. In his imaginative depiction of the fetus just before birth, as a living thing that moves and feels within the womb, Ishii transcends the limitations of the documentary I-novel. This alone would be enough to make Ishii's latest novel an important, groundbreaking achievement. (Numano)

Kekkon [Marriage]

By Inoue Areno

Kadokawa Shoten, 2012. 193 x 131 mm. 208 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-04-110140-7.

Thirty-four-year-old Hiiragi Asako is working as an administrator in a cram school when she meets a man named Toriumi in an essay-writing class she is taking. Struck by his sweet-talking charm, it is not long before she starts to fall in love with him.

The man moves quickly. Before long, he has proposed and Asako is sporting a pink diamond engagement ring. Explaining that he is temporarily unable to access his funds, Toriumi asks Asako to put up the money for the ring herself. Soon the couple are buying a fancy apartment to live in together after the wedding. Once again, Toriumi asks Asako to stump up the deposit. Immediately after the purchase goes through, Toriumi disappears, claiming to have been called away with work. She calls his number repeatedly, but gets no response.

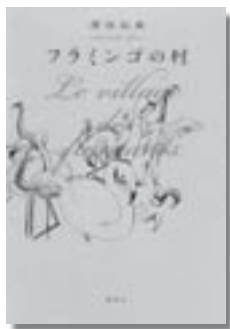
The reality is that the man is a jewelry appraiser and conman who has lured his victims into a succession of fraudulent engagements.

But this is not a conventional crime novel. Rather than the crime itself, it is the precise and convincing depiction of the psychology of the women involved that captures the reader's interest. Even after they realize that they have been tricked, the victims are reluctant to admit that they have been deceived and continue to feel a strong connection to the man who has lied to them. Through these depictions of the subtleties of the female heart and twisted relationships between the sexes, the author succeeds in drawing a vivid portrait of the isolation felt by many people in contemporary society. (Chō)



Inoue Areno

Born in 1961. Daughter of Inoue Mitsuharu, a major literary figure of the postwar years. Won the Shimase Romance Prize in 2004 for *Jun'ichi* [*Jun'ichi*] and the Naoki Prize in 2008 for *Kiriha e* [*To the Mine Face*] (see JBN No. 59). Received the Chūō Kōron Literary Prize for Soko e iku na [*Don't Go There*] in 2011.



Sawanishi Yūten

Born in 1986. Currently enrolled on a master's course at the Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. Awarded the Subaru Prize for Literature in 2011 for *Furamingo no mura*.

***Furamingo no mura* [The Village of Flamingos]**

By Sawanishi Yūten

Shūeisha, 2012. 193 x 135 mm. 136 pp. ¥1,100. ISBN 978-4-08-771440-1.

Kyoto University graduate student Sawanishi Yūten won the 2011 Subaru Prize for Literature with this, his first novel. Born in 1986, Sawanishi is a devotee of the novelist Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927). This impressive debut recalls Akutagawa in the way the author spins a fantastic conceit into an absurd yet compelling fable.

Set in rural Belgium at the end of the nineteenth century, the novel tells the story of a farmer named Adam, whose wife suddenly metamorphoses into a flamingo. Adam does his best to keep this “scandal” a secret, but in time he learns the shocking truth: Practically all the women in the village have turned into flamingos. Sawanishi employs a metafictional approach to his narrative, allowing his story to develop from the perspective

of a somewhat pedantic narrator who reconstructs the bizarre chain of events from a diary kept by one of the villagers. That the author succeeds in spinning a compellingly readable narrative out of such an unlikely story—and a totally foreign setting—bespeaks a considerable talent that promises an exciting career ahead. Shortly after receiving the Subaru Prize, the author published another remarkable novella in *Subaru*. Titled *Moji no shōsoku* [News Letters], this whimsical allegory tells the story of a Japanese town where writing falls from the sky, burying the town and destroying people's homes. Like *Furamingo no mura*, this piece suggests that Sawanishi is a writer to watch.

(Numano)

***Rakuen no kanvasu* [Paradise Canvas]**

By Harada Maha

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 135 mm. 304 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-10-331751-7.

The story begins seventeen years ago, when Hayakawa Ori is a promising young Rousseau scholar in the art history department at the Sorbonne. One day, the legendary collector Konrad Beyeler hires Hayakawa and Tim Brown, an assistant curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to evaluate the authenticity of a painting with the title “J'ai Revé,” a previously unknown variation on Rousseau's famous painting “The Dream.” The two scholars travel to Beyeler's opulent mansion in Basel, where they are presented with an old text and told that they have one week to read it—a chapter a day—and report to Beyeler on whether the painting is genuine or a fake.

As the pair work on their assignment, Tim becomes aware of a plot to steal the painting. Two major auction houses sus-

pect that a Picasso painting may be hidden behind the canvas and are determined to do whatever it takes to get hold of it. At this juncture, a coordinator from Interpol's art department appears and asks Tim to help protect the painting. When the day comes for them to pass their verdict, Tim and Ori follow their consciences and succeed in saving the masterpiece.

The author, who has worked in museums, skillfully incorporates her experience and expertise into her story. From the outset, the novel is a succession of riddles and surprises, leading to a final twist as the truth is revealed at the very end. A suspenseful page-turner, this novel is also enjoyable for its inspiring depiction of the two main characters, who resist the temptations of financial gain to stay loyal to their love of art. (Chō)



Harada Maha

Born in 1962. Majored in Japanese literature at Kwansei Gakuin University and later studied art history at Waseda University. Worked on the preparations for the Roppongi Mori Art Museum prior to its opening in 2003, later working as a museum curator on a freelance basis. Her debut novel, *Kafū o machiwabite* [Waiting for Good News] won the first Japan Love Story Award in 2005. Received the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize for *Rakuen no kanvasu*.

CRITICISM



Kinoshita Naoyuki

Born in 1954. Professor at the University of Tokyo, where his work has looked at the culture of 19th-century Japan through art, photography, misemono exhibits, religious festivals, monuments, architecture, museums, zoos, and war. Received the Sun-tory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities for Bijutsu to iu misemono [The Spectacle of Art] in 1993 and the Minister of Education's Arts Encouragement Prize for Watashi no jōkamachi [My Castle Town] in 2008.

***Kokan waka shū: Otoko no hadaka wa geijutsu ka* [An Inguinal Manthology: The Artistic Question of Male Nudity]**

By Kinoshita Naoyuki

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 133 mm. 192 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-10-332131-6.

This is truly a one-of-a-kind publication. A more sober-minded, more typically academic title for the book might have been something like “A Study of the Male Nude in Modern and Contemporary Japanese Sculpture and Photography.” But like the tongue-in-cheek title—a pun on the title of one of Japan’s imperial poetry anthologies—Kinoshita’s treatment of this “forbidden” subject sparkles with irreverent humor. The impetus for the book came from a sculpture of two young male nudes outside of Tokyo’s Akabane Station, a work that attracted the attention of the author by its treatment of the two men’s genitalia. Although the other parts of the figures are rendered realistically, their genitals appear as mere “amorphous

bulges.” Kinoshita, an art historian, resolved to get to the “crotch of the matter” by traveling all over Japan to study how men’s private parts are depicted in public sculpture. This book presents his findings and, with the help of numerous illustrations, sheds light on Japanese artists’ long battle with censorship during the modern era and the peculiar modes of representation that have developed as a result. Despite the off-color connotations of the jokey title, this is a serious work of cultural history. This fresh new approach to the artistic treatment of sexuality in modern Japan brings a previously unexplored aspect of Japanese intellectual history into vivid focus. The book also contains a wealth of photographs. (Numano)

***Sengo SF jiken-shi* [A Science Fiction History of Postwar Japan]**

By Nagayama Yasuo

Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2012. 181 x 127 mm. 288 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-309-62439-6.

This comprehensive history covers a number of related genres, including manga, anime, fantasy literature, modern art, and underground theater. But its main focus is on Japanese postwar science fiction. The study shows how movements in different genres have developed in parallel and makes clear the interlocking chains of influence and inspiration between them.

The science fiction imagination at the heart of these developments, according to Nagayama, was an attempt to depict the future that took an imaginative approach even to moments of crisis and despair. In the context of technological progress and economic development, large numbers of distinctive science fiction novels were produced. The vivid perception of reality that characterized these novels allowed the genre to become a kind of magnetic

field within which talents could resonate and interact across the generations. This creative drama involved readers and consumers, who hungrily absorbed and mixed together cultural products from different genres and provided a constant demand for new creativity.

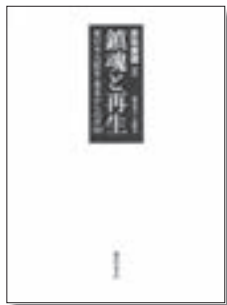
The decline of science fiction in Japan has coincided with the country’s economic and political collapse, along with a similar dwindling of creativity in fantasy and drama. The author suggests that the Japanese have lost the ability to imagine the future, as the disaster of March 2011 in particular made clear.

The book is shot through with a heartfelt call for people to regain this imaginative energy without losing sight of reality. (Yonahara)



Nagayama Yasuo

Born in 1962. A practicing dentist. Has written on a wide range of topics, from cultural and philosophical history to literary criticism and contemporary social theory. Won the Nihon SF Taishō Award and the Seiun Award for Non-Fiction of the Year for Nihon SF seishinshi [A History of the Japanese SF Spirit] in 2010. Also the author of Gishi bōken sekai [The Adventurous World of Falsified History] and numerous other works.



Akasaka Norio

Born in 1953. Folklore scholar and professor at Gakushuin University. Director of the Fukushima Museum and director of the Tōno Cultural Research Center. Received the Bunkamura Deux Magots Literary Prize in 2007 and the Minister of Education's Arts Encouragement Prize in 2008 for Okamoto Tarō no mita Nihon [Okamoto Tarō's Japan]. Other works include Tōhokugaku: Wasurerareta Tōhoku [Tōhoku Studies: The Forgotten Tōhoku]. His essay on the culture of the Tōhoku region was featured in JBN No. 69.

***Chinkon to saisei* [Requiem and Rebirth]**

Edited by Akasaka Norio

Fujiwara Shoten, 2012. 209 x 147 mm. 488 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 978-4-89434-849-3.

Not long after the devastating earthquake and tsunami of March 2011, the editor of this book published a piece in the *Nikkei* newspaper that provoked a huge response. Akasaka recalled how the anthropologist Yanagita Kunio had visited the Sanriku Coast in 1920 and recorded the ways in which memories of the 1896 Sanriku earthquake lingered nearly a quarter of a century later. Akasaka proposed a venue for compiling memories of the recent disaster, which would be open to contributions from anyone who wanted to take part. Since then, a movement to preserve memories and draw up archives of the disaster has spread across the Tōhoku region. This book, part of these efforts, contains a series of interviews with 100 survivors. The diversity of regions, professions, and ages represented underlines

the massive scale of the damage and its impact on the Tōhoku region. The accounts are imbued with the survivors' determination to pass on a record of their experiences of this unprecedented disaster to future generations: the terror they felt as they fled from the tsunami, the rescue workers who scrambled to save lives amid confusion and chaos in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, life in the evacuation centers. Whole towns were wiped out so thoroughly that it is almost impossible to imagine them as they once were. But people's accounts of the disaster survive, along with new media for passing on these stories to a wider audience. Society as a whole should lend its support to the various venues for memory that have opened up as a result of this project. (Yoshimi)

***Tekiya kagyō no fōkuroa* [The Folklore of Japan's Tekiya Business Networks]**

By Atsu Kanae

Seikyūsha, 2012. 215 x 150 mm. 168 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 978-4-7872-2045-5.

Tekiya or "peddlers" are itinerant retailers who operate outdoor stalls selling lucky charms, food, and games, often setting up temporary stalls in Shintō shrines on festival days and other special occasions. The *tekiya* have a long history as a highly ordered group society and continue to survive today in the midst of modern city life. This book, based on extensive fieldwork with a *tekiya* group in eastern Tokyo, is based on deeper access to the group than any previous study. The author paints a vivid picture of the practical theory by which order is maintained within the group. In particular, her analysis of the "nanori na" identifying names and territories makes the book stand out. The *nanori na* is the lengthy distinguishing name given to each trader, used in place of the trader's real name. The *nanori na* serves

as a calling card, allowing *tekiya* traders from around the country to know at first meeting who a person is and where he or she stands in the *tekiya* community. The author demonstrates how the *nanori na* works to show the multilayered relationships between groups and regions and the position of the individual within the group hierarchy. The author also shows how rather than each group having its own self-contained territory, *tekiya* groups are skillfully structured in ways that allow them to balance their relationships with other groups. The book takes a socio-anthropological approach, allowing the reader to understand the logical theory and practice behind the *tekiya* groups' use of language and space, making it the perfect guide for introducing the culture of the *tekiya* to readers overseas. (Yoshimi)



Atsu Kanae

Born in 1975. Holds a PhD in literature. Visiting researcher at the National Museum of Japanese History.



Satō Shūhō

Born in 1973. Manga artist who made his debut in 1998. Won the Japan Media Arts Festival Manga Award for *Burakkujakku ni yoroshiku* [Give My Regards to Black Jack] in 2002. Numerous hits have been serialized on television or made into films, including *Umizaru* [Sea Monkeys].

***Manga binbō* [Manga Poverty]**

By Satō Shūhō

PHP Kenkyūsho, 2012. 187 x 128 mm. 192 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-569-80383-8.

The author is one of Japan's leading manga artists. His series *Burakkujakku ni yoroshiku* [Give My Regards to Black Jack], which began serialization in the weekly *Morning* in February 2002, became a million-seller. Many of his works have been turned into movies and television adaptations.

Manga artists are often assumed to enjoy fame and fortune. In this book, Satō reveals the shocking reality behind the glamorous image.

Manga artists work 16 to 20 hours a day. Despite the long hours, many of them make a paltry income. Many have their own studios and employ several assistants who help with drawing. Not only must the studio cover salaries, bonuses, health insurance, and transportation costs—an industry custom also requires the studio to provide staff with their meals as well.

Even a bestselling manga artist will struggle to get by on serializations alone. Even if a manga artist does succeed in getting a series accepted by a weekly magazine, it is common for serialization to be stopped abruptly after six months if the series fails to strike a chord with readers. The aspiring artist often struggles to stay afloat, and takes on serious debts. Of course the economic outlook improves dramatically if the artist can produce a million-seller. But the reality is only 1% of all manga artists will ever achieve this level of success.

As well as making clear the severe competition that exists within the manga world and the unforgiving conditions in which manga artists are required to work, the book also offers tips to aspiring artists on how to build a successful career based on the author's own experiences. (Chō)

***Tōkyō migi hanbun* [The Right Half of Tokyo]**

By Tsuzuki Kyōichi

Chikuma Shobō, 2012. 215 x 152 mm. 576 pp. ¥6,000. ISBN 978-4-480-87851-9.

Traditionally, Tokyo has been thought of as consisting of two cultural spheres: the *shitamachi* or “low city” along the banks of the Sumida River, and the “uptown” Yamanote district of the Musashino Uplands. But this book argues that the current dynamo of contemporary Tokyo culture is to be found in neither of these well-known examples but rather in what the author terms the “right-hand side” of the map of Tokyo—where an offbeat, international, and highly diverse underground culture is rapidly unfolding.

The “right side” of Tokyo, essentially a northeasterly extension of the old *shitamachi* area, is an area that until recently had been left behind by the shifting of the center of cultural gravity to the west and south. The author wanders the streets with his camera, conveying a vivid sense of

the reality of the places he visits, from a small bar in Asakusa where the clientele dress in loincloths to “Philippine pubs” in Takenotsuka, music bars in Yushima, and “Little Bangkok” in Kinshichō, along with numerous specialist bars and shops catering to fans of Hawaiian music, folk songs, ballroom dancing, and musical revues.

Although the economy continues to shrink, in stark contrast to the excesses of the 1980s bubble years, the potential for new culture survives.

This book visits the sources of a vibrant new outpouring of creativity and offers readers a tantalizing glimpse of a world of cultural potential quite different from the usual branded version of the city. (Yoshimi)



Tsuzuki Kyōichi

Born in 1956. Graduated from Sophia University. After a spell as a magazine editor, published *Tokyo Style*, a collection of photographs, in 1993. Received the Kimura Ihei Award for the photo collection *Rōdosaido Japan chin Nihon kikō* [Roadside Japan: Travels in an Offbeat Land] in 1996. Has also worked as a writer and editor in fields including contemporary art, architecture, photography, and design. Works as an author, include *Yoroshiku gendaishi* [Hell Low, Modern Poetry] and *Junrei chin Nihon chōrō den* [Pilgrimage: The Super-Oldies of Offbeat Japan].



Ikeuchi Osamu

Born in 1940. Prize-winning essayist, translator, and scholar of German literature. Publications include Fūshi no bungaku [Satirical Literature] and Gētesan konbanwa [Good Evening, Mr. Goethe]. Translations include Goethe's Faust and a six-volume edition of Kafka's fiction. Beginning this issue, JBN will carry a ten-part series of essays by Ikeuchi on "The Regional Roots of Japanese Literature."

Onchi Kōshirō: Hitotsu no denki **[Onchi Kōshirō: A Biography]**

By Ikeuchi Osamu

Genki Shobō, 2012. 215 x 153 mm. 336 pp. ¥5,800. ISBN 978-4-901998-92-5.

Onchi Kōshirō (1891–1955) is little known today, despite his wide-ranging achievements as a painter, printmaker, poet, editor, and photographer. In fact, this is the first serious critical biography of this multitalented figure. With its striking cover, illustrated by one of Onchi's prints, the book is a work of art in its own right. Onchi came to maturity as an artist during the early heyday of Japanese modernism. Influenced by the European avant-garde and the Bauhaus movement, Onchi carved out a unique place for himself in the Japanese art world, even while interacting with other important Japanese painters and writers of the period, including Takehisa Yumeji, Hagiwara Sakutarō, and Murō Saisei. His style, epitomized by his "symbolic prints," is reminiscent of the abstract paintings of Wassily Kandinsky.

But Onchi was no strident, aggressive revolutionary. He was a "gentle reformer" who quietly resisted the rising tide of Japanese militarism through his art. Ikeuchi's spare, restrained style is well suited to his subject. Although he has relatively little to say about Onchi's private life, he paints a vivid picture of a uniquely talented and multifaceted modernist. Ikeuchi has written a valuable critical biography that fills in a key "missing link" in the history of Japanese modern art. (Numano)

Hakushū bōkei **[Perspectives on Kitahara Hakushū]**

By Kawamoto Saburō

Shinshokan, 2012. 215 x 151 mm. 436 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 978-4-403-21105-8.

Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942) continues to exert a powerful hold over Japanese readers. From nursery rhymes to traditional and modern verse and prose, not to mention his translations of *Mother Goose*, his writing has found a place deep within the fabric of the modern Japanese sensibility.

This critical biography is based on an exhaustive study of the writer's life and work. In a series of dialogues, Kawamoto Saburō follows the course of Hakushū's life, giving free rein to his thoughts as he visits places associated with Hakushū and sees with his own eyes the scenery that inspired the writing. Rather than confining Hakushū to a literary context, the author treats him as an individual modern Japanese, and has a keen ear for telling incidents from the writer's life. The book brings to life the humble, anonymous peo-

ple among whom the writer lived and worked.

The author regards tears as the central motif of modern Japanese history, emblematic of the desperation and struggle of a small island nation. Hakushū's writing was shaped by his early experiences in a declining provincial town in Kyūshū. He later traveled to the modern metropolis of Tokyo, where he encountered the culture of the West and widened his poetic horizons.

Hakushū lived in an age dominated by the threat of war. He was the first poet in Japanese to make use of the rich expressive potential of "color" as a subject, and developed a distinct rhythmical sense. Hakushū, the "sentimental poet," knew better than anyone the cleansing properties of tears. (Yonahara)



Kawamoto Saburō

Born in 1944. A critic, essayist, and translator who has written widely on literature, film, and travel. Numerous award-winning works include Taishō gen'ei [Taishō Era Illusions], Kafū to Tōkyō [Nagai Kafū and Tokyo], and Hayashi Fumiko no Shōwa [The Shōwa Era of Hayashi Fumiko]. Mai bakku pēji [My Back Pages], which dealt with his time as a reporter with the Asahi Shimbun, was made into a film. Hakushū bōkei won the Itō Sei Prize for Literature.

HISTORY



Namba Tomoko

Born in 1980. Currently assistant professor at Ochanomizu University. Has written numerous scholarly articles about changing attitudes to appropriate attire for female students in modern Japan.

Gakkō seifuku no bunkashi **[A Cultural History of School Uniforms]**

By Namba Tomoko

Sōgensha, 2012. 216 x 152 mm. 384 pp. ¥4,800. ISBN 978-4-422-21014-8.

One interesting aspect of the AKB48 phenomenon is that although some members of the group are well into their twenties, a large number of the girls' costumes are based on school uniform motifs. The school uniform is now firmly established as a key presence in young women's fashion and as a symbol of *kawaii* culture.

This book discusses the origins and development of girls' school uniforms in Japan, both within the context of clothing and from the perspective of modern Japanese history. The period covered ranges from the first schools for girls in the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. The book draws on materials from schools all over the country and incorporates many photographs and tables, providing a comprehensive overview of the early history of school uniforms in Japan.

Female students were a new and privileged class in the early years of the modern era, and the clothes they wore were often the subject of controversy. Over the years, uniforms shifted from Japanese to Western-style dress, via an intermediate stage that combined elements of both.

The school uniform is a paradoxical item of clothing—born out of school rules and social norms but also shaped by the preferences of the students themselves. Although uniforms by their nature impose a standardized appearance, they are often modified to bring out the wearer's personality. This is another fascinating aspect of the subject. The history of school uniforms is the history of the competing viewpoints that have worked together to create a new image of female students and the way they should dress. (Yonahara)

Nihon yūgishi **[A History of Pastimes in Japan]**

By Masukawa Kōichi

Heibonsha, 2012. 194 x 131 mm. 350 pp. ¥3,200. ISBN 978-4-582-46814-4.

Over the centuries, the people of the Japanese archipelago have built a rich culture of games and pastimes, absorbing the examples of continental culture and building on them to create their own unique traditions. Until now, however, there has been no comprehensive history of games in Japan from the earliest times to the present.

This book provides an encyclopedic introduction to the origins, characteristics, and changing nature of entertainments and games from the seventh century to the present.

In ancient Japan, games brought to Japan from China and Korea, such as backgammon, go, and *tōko* (in which players compete to throw arrows into a pot), were popular among the nobility. In the Middle Ages, entertainments such as the poetry-based *uta-awase* and *esug-*

oroku, in which dice were thrown and pieces moved on a painted paper board, spread from their aristocratic origins and became popular among the masses. Playing cards (known as *karuta* in Japanese) were introduced by Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century. A local adaptation soon became the most popular mainstream game in Japan. In the modern period, a wide variety of Western games were introduced, but the only ones to become truly established were playing cards and billiards. Mahjong, by contrast, has enjoyed remarkable popularity since it was introduced from China at the beginning of the twentieth century. This book traces the trends and changes in popular games through the centuries, and by doing so sheds fresh light on a little-known aspect of Japanese cultural history. (Chō)



Masukawa Kōichi

Born in 1930. An expert on the history of shōgi (Japanese chess) and other board games. Works include Tobaku no Nihon-shi [History of Gambling in Japan], Shōgi no kigen [The Origins of Shōgi], and Go [Go].



Matsuki Hidefumi
Born in 1972. Currently
broadcasting director of NHK
Hiroshima. Has made
documentaries on subjects
including dying alone, China,
and the atomic bombings.

Yaku Yasuhiro
Born in 1977. Currently
broadcasting director of NHK
Hiroshima. Has made
documentaries on a wide
range of subjects, including
education, medical care, diplo-
macy, and war.

Genbaku tōka **[The Dropping of the Atomic Bombs]**

By Matsuki Hidefumi and Yaku Yasuhiro

NHK Publishing Inc., 2012. 194 x 131 mm. 287 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-14-081531-1.

By the end of 1945, more than 210,000 people had died from the effects of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 that year. People continued to die from radiation sickness for years after the bombing, making the use of atomic weapons by the United States one of the worst massacres in human history. But what if the Japanese armed forces had possessed information about the risk of the atomic bombings beforehand? This would surely change our perception of the situation dramatically. Remarkably, it has emerged that the Japanese army *did* have sufficient grounds to suspect that the United States had succeeded in developing an atomic weapon and that a plane carrying the new bomb might soon be making its way to Japan. The Japanese had followed the progress

of the American nuclear program via sources in Spain, and military intelligence units had detected suspicious movements from special airborne units based on the island of Tinian. The crucial information that planes from the same unit were approaching Kyūshū on August 9 was conveyed to the military leadership command. But the military high command in Tokyo did nothing. It was not only Okinawa that was abandoned to its fate by the Japanese military, but the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki too. This shocking revelation reminds us that some of the worst aspects of Japanese society remain a problem today. We saw the same instinct for secrecy and concealment of information within a closed organization in the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster. (Yoshimi)

MANGA

Nanohana **[Rapeseed]**

By Hagio Moto

Shōgakukan, 2012. 215 x 153 mm. 160 pp. ¥1,143. ISBN 978-4-09-179135-1.

This series of linked works by manga artist Hagio Moto depicts the aftermath of the tsunami and nuclear disaster of March 2011.

A twelve-year-old girl and her family are forced from their home in Fukushima by radioactive contamination. They begin new lives in unfamiliar new surroundings, wearing protective facemasks and terrified of radiation. The young protagonist is unable to get over the loss of her grandmother, who died in the tsunami, and despairs of ever being able to return to her old life again.

But a farming tool that she keeps as a memento of her grandmother brings a little hope. In a dream she meets a girl from Chernobyl and starts to sow rapeseed, which her new friend says will help to cleanse the ground of pollution.

In the next three episodes of the story, radiation appears in personified form, as the manga tell the story of how, in spite of the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear energy was transformed into a force for good, a “beautiful” form of energy that could make the dream of a prosperous lifestyle a reality. Despite being aware of the dangers, people were unable to escape from the clutches of nuclear power.

Finally comes the story of “what happened next” to the girl from Fukushima. A dream-journey on the “Milky Way Railroad” that transports the dead to the Other World serves as a gentle demonstration of how memory can save people and lead to rebirth. (Yonahara)



Hagio Moto

Born in 1949. Japan's best-known writer of shōjo manga (girls' comics). Received the Shōgakukan Comics Award for Pō no ichizoku [The Family Poe] and 11-nin iru! [trans. They Were Eleven] in 1976. Three times winner of the Seiun Award for comics. Received the Tezuka Osamu Cultural Award for Zankoku na kami ga shihai suru [The Savage God Reigns] in 1997 and the Nihon SF Taishō for Barubara ikai [Otherworld Barbara] in 2006. See “In Their Own Words,” JBN No. 63.

Beginning in this issue, *Japanese Book News* presents a 10-part series of articles on literary works that capture the landscape, history, and culture of a particular region of Japan, starting in Hokkaidō and moving south through the

archipelago. Ikeuchi Osamu is a prolific literary critic, essayist, novelist, and translator who has written widely on literature and travel. We hope readers will enjoy this literary journey through Japan's rich regional diversity.

No. 1: Hokkaidō and Honjō Mutsuo's *Ishikarigawa*

School teacher and proletarian writer Honjō Mutsuo was born in Tōbetsu, Hokkaidō, in 1905. He was a member of the Japan Proletarian Writers Federation and the Japanese Communist Party. He died of tuberculosis in 1939, shortly after the publication of *Ishikarigawa*, in which he described the Hokkaidō landscape where he grew up.

The Ishikari River, the third longest in Japan after the Shinano and the Tone, rises from Mount Ishikari in the Daisetsuzan volcanic group in central Hokkaidō, then snakes its way across the Ishikari Plain to the west before emptying into the Sea of Japan. Its name derives from the Ainu words for “river of many bends,” and a trail of oxbow lakes across the plain bears witness to an even more dramatically winding course in earlier times. In terms of drainage area, the river is second only to the Tone.

The writer Honjō Mutsuo (1905–39) was born in Tōbetsu, a town in the center of the Ishikari Plain on the northern banks of a downstream section of the Ishikari River, about ten kilometers from the river's mouth. Although a fertile grain-producing district today, the region was still a densely forested wilderness when pioneers from mainland Japan began settling there in the early Meiji era (1868–1912). In his report to the Tokugawa shogunate, the early explorer Kondō Jūzō (1771–1829) wrote, “The Ishikari River is the greatest river in central Ezo [Hokkaidō]. For about a hundred leagues from the riverhead, it is wide open on both sides. All around is fertile flatland with dense forests. The savages [Ainu] have scattered settlements along the river, and there is abundant fishing far upriver.”

Born in this former frontier settlement, Honjō Mutsuo grew up with the Ishikari River almost constantly in his field of vision, hearing stories from his parents of the hardships the settlers endured as they struggled to tame the wilderness. Years later, when he was an established

figure in Japan's proletarian literature movement, Honjō conceived the idea of a novel in which the river would play a central role. As he explained in his afterword to *Ishikarigawa*, this naturally meant exploring the interaction between the river and human beings and giving voice to “the thoughts and feelings of our forefathers, buried for half a century” through the history of the region.

The novel opens with a lyrical evocation of the natural history of the river: “Cutting west from the foothills of the snow-capped Nutaku Kamushupe [Daisetsuzan], the water plunged down through mountain gorges, gathering speed, and rushed across the erosion-sculpted valleys of the upstream sections. Gathering to it the waters of smaller rivers as it crossed the plains, the river finally hit the westernmost wall of the central mountain range. There it pounded the jagged crags of Paleozoic rock before gushing out as a raging torrent onto the Ishikari Plain.”

Once out on the Ishikari Plain, the torrent subsided and the river meandered lazily across the flatland. Still, the current was strong enough to wash away any plants that tried to take root. Only a very few “chosen weeds who joined their hands and tangled their legs together” were able to take hold. Slowly, these plants grew and expanded. First came reeds, pampas, and sedge with their strong rhizomes, clinging to the earth with wispy, whisker-like roots. Then came other weeds, like sphagnum moss, chickweed, and mugwort.

Ishikarigawa was published serially in seven magazine installments, the first installment appearing in September



A view of the Ishikari River in Hokkaidō. (PANA)

1938. Honjō's plans for a sequel remained unfulfilled when the author died in 1939. One wonders if Honjō might have suspected that his life was nearing its end as he wrote *Ishikarigawa*. Certainly he treats the Ishikari River as more than just a body of water. He speaks of it as a great living being whose story dates back to the beginning of life and death. Like the beasts of the forest, it changes with the seasons, even hibernating beneath the snow: "In the winter, the great river that divided the Ishikari Plain slept. The water tunneled deep beneath the frozen surface of the land, its roar muffled. Layer upon layer of snow piled up on the bed of ice. The river hid itself completely from view." The snow has piled up in layers



Honjō Mutsuo's *Ishikarigawa* [*Ishikari River*] (Shin-Nihon Shuppansha).

on top of the thick ice, so that it is hard to imagine the river still flowing underneath.

Eventually, however, spring fills the air, and the river awakens. The snow melts to reveal the outlines of the riverbed. The sound of flowing water grows louder. "An unearthly groan issued forth. One heard the river roar, as if it were cursing the ice that had held it fast. Finally the spring rose up from below, from within the earth itself."

The novel tells the story of a band of 150 settlers from a small branch clan of the Sendai

domain in northeastern Japan. Led by their former lord, this band of vassals and their families migrates to Hokkaidō in search of a new start after losing their privileged status in the wake of the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Trekking over the snow-covered Ishikari Plain, the settlers use axes to clear a path through the virgin forest and build cabins. Abandoning any outdated notions of samurai dignity, they throw themselves into a fierce battle with the forest, the land, and the river, struggling valiantly to build a new settlement on the Ishikari—a village they name Tōbetsu.

The Ishikari was known as a fishing ground from early times. Japanese-style fishing boats began to appear at the mouth of the river, lowering their sails against a backdrop of high undulating dunes that stretched out far into the distance—a scene Honjō witnessed countless times growing up here as a boy. "To the north one could vaguely make out the dim outline of the Cape of Tambake (Ofuyu). And that area of shadowy mist over there to the west must be the Sea of Otaru . . ."

As the river approached the sea, the waters slowed and formed large pools—an ideal spawning ground for fish. The masses of salmon and trout that gathered in these pools were sometimes enough to turn the water silver. In the beginning, it was just the Ainu who lay in wait for the fish. Later came "waves of Japanese in pursuit of fishing profits." The novel divides the newcomers into categories, announcing the arrival of a new type of person quite different from the original samurai settlers: "men who had lost their way, vagabonds who no longer cared about the future, people who faced starvation at home, and, finally, those who could never go back." These newcomers settled down to their lives on the new land, "like sediment natu-

rally sinking into the water."

Although *Ishikarigawa* is set primarily in and around Tōbetsu, the descriptions could apply to much of Hokkaidō during the Meiji era, before the land was developed. The rivers of Hokkaidō seem to flow more slowly than those of Japan's other islands, the swollen, turbid waters of rivers like the Ishikari, Sorachigawa, and Teshiogawa moving silently and languidly across the plains of that vast, continental landscape, occasional trees poking up out of the water. At times the water seems almost to stop still. From a distance, the river resembles a static ribbon of blue.

After putting himself through teachers' college, Honjō Mutsuo became an elementary school teacher but was eventually dismissed for his role in organizing a teachers' union. At the height of Japanese militarism, as the Imperial Army scorched its way through China, Honjō wrote of the everyday heroism of farmers and workers who kept bouncing back after being battered down by the difficult conditions of the times. As the government censorship of literature tightened its grip, many "proletarian" writers recanted and underwent public changes of heart. But Honjō remained true to his principles.

Honjō's original plan called for a two-part work that began with the river and then shifted to focus on the fluctuating battle between the river and the people who lived along its length. But as the author explained in his afterword, the power of the river's song and its vast expanses inspired a lyrical impulse that drove him to produce "pages and pages of writing without ever getting past the story's beginning."

Despite Honjō's regrets, from a literary perspective it may have been for the best that he never managed to complete his original plan for the novel. A closer focus on the human element in the second part would have diminished the force of the river's presence and reduced the novel to a more or less standard work of proletarian literature—a genre with little appeal for today's readers.

It is precisely the fact that it devotes pages and pages to the river itself that makes *Ishikarigawa* of enduring interest today. Take the following passage, describing the turbulent battle between ice and water as winter turns to spring. The rushing water lets out a roar beneath the ice's yoke and a section of snow collapses with a splatter into the water: "The first sign of thawing snow sets off an avalanche, as if each cascading section of snow were competing to be the first to melt. In an instant, the thick blanket of snow that covered this vast expanse of prairies becomes a raging torrent of water." Honjō describes the butteburbs and fern shoots flooded by the melting snow. Small fry dart among the tendril roots of mugwort plants. Through his evocation of this mighty river, Honjō Mutsuo succeeded in creating an enduring paean to the majestic natural scenery of Hokkaidō.



(Ikeuchi Osamu,
essayist and scholar of German literature)

The 2012 Japan Foundation Awards

The recipients of the Japan Foundation Awards for 2012 were announced at an awards ceremony on October 9. The winners were the Department of Japanese Language and Civilization of the French National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations; Irene Hirano Inouye, president of the US-Japan Council; and author and translator Murakami Haruki.

As the cradle of Japanese language education in France, the Department of Japanese Language and Civilization of the French National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations has produced countless diplomats, interpreters, teachers, and Japan specialists since its first Japanese language courses began in 1862. The department has also performed a central role in promoting diplomatic relations and mutual understanding between France and Japan and holds regular symposiums on topics of current interest.

Inouye was the founding CEO of the Japanese American National Museum when it opened in Los Angeles in 1992. In 2009 she established the US-Japan Council, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC. For many years she has worked as a bridge between the people and cultures of Japan and the United States.

Murakami Haruki's novels and short stories have enthralled readers, and young people in particular, around

the world. His work has been published in over forty languages and has inspired countless people to study Japanese and develop an interest in Japanese literature and culture.

Although unable to attend the awards ceremony because of commitments overseas, Murakami prepared an acceptance speech for the occasion in which he said: "Each of us has been granted the inherent right to dream, and it is also the significance of a truly fine story that it helps people to have good dreams. I want to go on having these dreams by both translating and being translated."

The Japanese Literature Publishing Project Comes to an End

The Agency for Cultural Affairs has announced that this will be the final year of the Japanese Literature Publishing Project. The JLPP was launched by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 2002 to promote modern Japanese literature overseas. The JLPP has supported the translation and publication of selected works into English, French, German, and Russian, and also ran a translation competition. At a government budget screening, a panel of experts concluded that "there is little obvious need for government support of work that could be done by the private sector." The report acknowledged that "discovering and training talented translators is an important undertaking

that deserves national support, and consideration should be given to efficient and effective ways of supporting this work."

Books from Japan

The NPO Japanese Literature Publishing and Promotion Center launched the Books from Japan website (www.booksfromjapan.jp) in June 2012. The site provides English-language author biographies and synopses of numerous literary works, including the winners of prestigious literary prizes such as the Naoki and Akutagawa Prizes and the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize.

Bestselling Manga Opened Up for Free Secondary Use

The manga artist Satō Shūhō (see p. 8) has announced that all secondary use of his hit manga *Give My Regards to Black Jack*, including film adaptations, publication, merchandising, and translation, will be unrestricted and free of charge from September 15. Set in a university hospital, the popular manga was originally serialized between 2002 and 2006 in the magazine *Morning* and later published by Kōdansha in thirteen volumes. The manga has also been made into a television series. With the recent announcement, Satō has made *Give My Regards to Black Jack* freely available for commercial and noncommercial use without prior consent. The original manga is also available to read or download in both Japanese and English via the author's Manga on Web site (<http://mangaonweb.com>).

Satō said on his blog that he was interested to see how making his manga freely available would affect the diffusion and use of the work and "the ways in which it may be profitable or unprofitable to me as the original author."

Takahashi Gen'ichirō Wins the Tanizaki Prize

The 2012 Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize, awarded by Chūō Kōron Shinsha, has gone to Takahashi Gen'ichirō for his book *Goodbye, Christopher Robin* (published by Shinchōsha). In an essay on the award published in the November issue of *Chūō Kōron* mag-



From left: Japan Foundation President Andō Hiroyasu; prize recipients Irene Hirano Inouye, president of the US-Japan Council, and Professor François Macé, Department of Japanese Language and Civilization of the French National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations. (Photo by Takagi Atsuko)

azine, selection committee member Ikezawa Natsuki wrote: “Takahashi Gen’ichirō is a master of allusions. He uses preexisting works as the raw ingredients from which he creates new works of literature. This collection of short stories is an outstanding example of what can be produced by this process.” Kirino Natsuo, another member of the selection committee, described the collection of linked short stories as “a rare work that depicts how children battle with loss and despair from the child’s point of view.”

Obituary

Maruya Saiichi, 87, novelist, October 13, 2012.

Maruya Saiichi, one of Japan’s leading novelists, critics, and translators, was a prominent figure in Japanese letters for more than forty years. He first came to widespread public attention in 1968 when he won the Akutagawa Prize for his novel *Toshi no nokori* [The Rest of the Year], and continued to work in a wide range of genres over the decades that followed, winning numerous awards, including the 1988 Kawabata Yasunari Prize for Literature, the Independent Award for Foreign Fiction (UK) in 1991, and the Order of Culture in 2011. He was also known for his Japanese translations of James Joyce. His translation of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* won a Yomiuri Prize for Literature in 2010.

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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.

- *Shōjo wa sotsugyō shinai* [Girls Who Never Graduate]. By Asai Ryō, Shūeisha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-08-771442-5. A high school marks its last ever graduation day before the school is demolished. This vibrant collection of linked stories depicts seven girls as they make their farewells.
- *Kami no tsuki* [Paper Moon]. By Kakuta Mitsuyo, Kadokawa Haruki Jimusho, 2012. ISBN 978-4-7584-1190-5. A 41-year-old housewife steals 100 million yen from the bank where she works and flees the country in a thought-provoking thriller that touches on issues of family life in contemporary society.
- *Tanaka Shinya no shōgekijō* [Tanaka Shinya’s Palm-of-the-Hand Theater]. By Tanaka Shinya, Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-620-10779-0. A collection of 37 ultra-short mysteries, fantasies, and comedies.
- *Taiyō wa ugokanai* [The Stationary Sun]. By Yoshida Shūichi, Gentōsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-344-02168-6. An industrial espionage thriller involving the discovery of new oil fields between China and Japan.
- *Sendai gurasu* [Life in Sendai]. By Isaka Kōtarō, Araemishi, 2012. ISBN 978-4-904863-18-3. Essays about the 2011 earthquake and tsunami by a popular novelist living in Sendai, together with a short story set in postdisaster Ishinomaki.
- *Umi no hosomichi* [The Narrow Road Across the Sea]. By Hasegawa Kai, Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-12-004345-1. Inspired by Bashō’s famous travel diaries, one of Japan’s leading haiku poets travels west from Lake Biwa on a journey that eventually takes him across the seas to China.
- *Hyōsetsu no bungakushi* [A Literary History of Plagiarism]. By Kanro Junki, Shinwasha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-86405-030-2. Plagiarism and piracy are major problems of the Internet age. This book examines the rise of the modern concepts of “originality” and plagiarism by looking at cases from Meiji-era Japan.
- *Tsūyaku-tachi no bakumatsu ishin* [Interpreters Before and After the Meiji Restoration]. By Kimura Naoki, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012. ISBN 978-4-642-08072-9. A book about the lives of the interpreters who used their linguistic talents to help Japan interact with the outside world in English and other unfamiliar languages in the period between the first arrival of foreign shipping and the turbulent years of change following the Meiji Restoration in 1868.
- *Chichi Yoshida Kenkichi to Shōwa modan* [My Father, Yoshida Kenkichi, and Shōwa Modernism]. By Shiozawa Tamae, Sōshisha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-7942-1877-3. Introduces the life and work of the pioneering modernist, including numerous color reproductions of his posters and art for the stage.
- *Kōbunsho o tsukau* [Using Public Documents]. By Sebata Hajime, Seikyūsha, 2011. ISBN 978-4-7872-3332-5. An account by a historian who makes frequent use of public documents looks at the way these documents are archived and managed and the outlook for the future.
- *Kindai Tōkyō no shiritsu chūgakkō* [The Private Middle Schools of Modern Tokyo]. By Takeishi Norifumi, Minerva Shobō, 2012. ISBN 978-4-623-06177-8. An analysis of private middle schools that examines the social importance of “moving to Tokyo” during the years of Japan’s modernization.
- *Nihonjin no shiseikan o yomu* [Understanding Japanese Views of Life and Death]. By Shimazono Susumu, Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc., 2012. ISBN 978-4-02-259985-8. A theologian’s wide-ranging exploration of how Japanese views of death have changed through time.
- *Shigotoba Tōkyō Skytree* [Working on the Tokyo Skytree]. By Suzuki Noritake, Buronzu Shinsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-89309-542-8. A children’s picture book illustrating the various jobs of the people who helped to build the Tokyo Skytree, which opened in May 2012.
- *Chūgoku yome nikki* [My Chinese Bride]. By Inoue Jun’ichi, Enterbrain, 2011. ISBN 978-4-04-727359-7. A 40-year-old Japanese otaku marries a 20-something Chinese woman and uses their relationship as material for a humorous diary-style comic strip.
- *Denki buranko* [Electric Swing]. By Takeshima Nami, Shōdensha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-396-76539-2. A manga on pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing. Household appliances serve as props as the mysterious story unfolds.

Capturing Japan's Pain in Tanka and Haiku

When a devastating earthquake rocked northern Japan on the afternoon of March 11, 2011, Hasegawa Kai was on a railway platform in central Tokyo. Even here, several hundred kilometers from the epicenter, the shaking was severe. Like millions of others, Hasegawa stood in terror until the shocks finally subsided, and then set out on foot to the nearest place of safety. Hasegawa is one of Japan's most prominent haiku poets, but as he slowly made his way to his son's house in the suburbs, it was a 31-syllable tanka poem that came into his head to express his fear and anxiety. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, the haiku poet suddenly found himself composing a stream of tanka.

"The disasters just seemed to keep on coming. There was so much I wanted to say, and so little time. Haiku seemed too short, and regular prose writing too long," Hasegawa explains. "Tanka seemed to be the perfect form for allowing me to express my feelings about the terrible events that were happening."

Tanka, Japan's oldest form of lyric poetry, is composed of five unrhymed metrical units of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. The two extra lines give a writer more room to convey emotion than is generally possible with haiku. Hasegawa suspects it was this greater potential for subjective expression that led him to reach instinctively for the tanka form in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, when it was still too early to depict events objectively.

During the first twelve days after the quake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown, Hasegawa wrote 119 tanka poems about the chaos engulfing the country: the devastation of the landscape and the loss of human life, the mismanagement of the country's nuclear power stations, the lack of political leadership, and the terrifying reminder of the potentially devastating force of nature. These were published in April 2011 as *Shinsai kashū*, a collection of tanka poems about the disaster. (See *JBN* No. 70, p. 6 and No. 71, p. 2.)

A week or so after the quake, however, new haiku began to stir in Hasegawa's mind. He spent much of the following year writing the 125 verses contained in *Shinsai kushū* (A Collection of Earthquake Haiku). This collection exemplifies many of the distinctive qualities of the haiku form. "Haiku is more philosophical, more objective than tanka," Hasegawa explains. The use of *kire* (cutting) sets haiku off from normal reality, creating a special space called *ma*—a kind of psychological moment in time and space: "Instead of simply expressing ordinary human grief in the face of terrible disaster, a good haiku poet will take a longer, more cosmological view of events. A haiku perspective sees these misfortunes as part of the many things that can happen in the vast seas of time."

Another distinctive feature of haiku is the use of *kigo* (season words). Hasegawa structured his collection to start with a haiku about New Year 2011, three months before the earthquake and tsunami, and end with one composed exactly a year later. "No matter what happens, the old year goes and a new one comes, just as people eat and fall in love in all kinds of dreadful situations," Hasegawa says. "I wanted to take advantage of that ability to show

the grand flow of time and the ruthlessness of life."

The unprecedented disaster prompted the 58-year-old poet to move beyond genre, creating reams of new work in both haiku and tanka forms. Hasegawa was thrilled to find many ordinary people turning to these same forms of poetry to express their anguish in the wake of the disaster. What is it that makes the 5-7-7 pattern so appealing to the Japanese ear? Hasegawa has a theory. "Our ancestors must have come to Japan in boats. I believe they rowed here. My guess is that they moved their boats forward by stroking their oars in alternating patterns of five and seven strokes, rather than just paddling forward at a steady pace," he says. Hasegawa suggests that the simple rhythm of rowing boats somehow worked its way into the Japanese psyche and language and remains there to this day.

Hasegawa came up with his theory when he visited Sumiyoshi Shrine in Osaka: "The shrine happens to be dedicated to the gods of war on the sea and of classical poetry. It occurred to me that the distinctive pattern of Japanese poetry might date back to the original rhythm carried here by our ancestors in the ancient past."

This theory was included in Hasegawa's *Umi no hosomichi* [The Narrow Road to the Sea], published in 2011. The idea was to travel to places that the seventeenth-century haiku master Matsuo Bashō might have visited if he had survived his final journey to western Japan. Bashō is an iconic figure for Hasegawa—the most important figure in the haiku world—and this travel diary is intended as a homage to Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* [The Narrow Road to the Interior]. Bashō was the poet who lifted the humble wordplay of *haikai* to the status of art: "Bashō placed great significance on moments of *ma* in the haiku experience. Recently, a number of other poets have tried to return to this style of haiku. We focus more on what is in our hearts than what is physically there before our eyes."

The two poems that follow show one example each of Hasegawa's postdisaster work in the tanka and haiku forms.

*Hitobito no nageki michimitsuru michinoku o
kokoroshite yuke sakurazensen*

Cherry blossom front/Brace yourself before you go to
Michinoku/Where the land is filled/With the pain of
people's hearts

Michinoku no sanga dōkoku hatsuzakura

Michinoku: Mountains and rivers cry in pain—The
first cherry blossoms

(Kawakatsu Miki, freelance writer)



Hasegawa Kai

Born in 1954. Graduated from the University of Tokyo. A journalist-turned-poet and haiku critic. His book *Haiku no uchū* [The Haiku Universe] won the Suntory Prize in 1990. A collection of his haiku titled *Kokū* [The Void] won the Yomiuri Prize for Literature in 2003. An in-depth study of his prose and haiku is available in English in "Modern Haiku," Volume 42.3 (Autumn 2011).