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JAPANFOUNDATION 国際交流基金

Miyamoto Tsuneichi

Recording Japan's Precious Rural Life

Hirashima Akihiko

Japanese ethnologist and folklorist Miyamoto Tsuneichi (1907–81) spent most of his adult life traveling the length and breadth of Japan. Shibusawa Keizō, Miyamoto's lifelong patron, once remarked that if you marked all the places Miyamoto visited on a map, you would end up with a mass of solid red. Miyamoto's great strength as a folklorist lay in his thorough approach to research, built on the idea of "walking, watching, and listening."

Shibusawa Keizō (1896–1963) was a scion of industry and finance who served as governor of the Bank of Japan and minister of finance in the mid-1940s. But his real passion was Japanese folklore. He founded the Attic Museum (forerunner of the Kanagawa University Institute for the Study of Japanese Folk Culture) on his own Tokyo estate. Miyamoto was a member of the society and a lodger at the Shibusawa residence for some 23 years before and after the war.

Ethnology, or folklore studies (*minzokugaku*), aims to understand the traditional lifestyles and cultures of ordinary people, which are rarely described in written records. Miyamoto decided to devote his life to the field after meeting Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), the father of Japanese folklore studies, in 1935. His first encounter with Shibusawa also took place around this time. Four years later, Miyamoto moved to Tokyo on Shibusawa's suggestion and joined the Attic Museum. For the rest of his life, Miyamoto regarded Yanagita as his mentor. He often called on the older scholar at home after completing his research trips to brief him on his findings. After Yanagita's death, he made pilgrimages to his gravesite and his birthplace. Yet there can be little doubt that over time he became increasingly frustrated with Yanagita's approach to Japanese ethnology and folklore.

Yanagita's work focused almost exclusively on agricultural societies based on wet-paddy rice farming. Later scholars have criticized him for neglecting other types of traditional community. Miyamoto's studies in eastern Japan convinced him that dry-field grain cultivation was traditionally more important than paddy farming in the region, and he began to explore the basic differences between eastern and western Japan, not only in their food production but in the way they organized their communities. His belief was that Japanese culture was not built on a single homogeneous foundation; instead, it consisted of a number of different, overlapping substrata. This was a theory that emerged directly from his observations as he explored every corner of the archipelago. He came to feel uncomfortable with Yanagita's emphasis on paddy cultivation as the dominant basis for rural society throughout Japan.

Basket weaving. Kumamoto Prefecture, 1962. "A simple and humble life, perhaps…but one that is perfectly fulfilling." Quoted from Watashi no Nihon chizu *Vol. 11 [My Atlas of Japan Vol. 11]. (Photo courtesy of Suō Ōshima Cultural Exchange Center)*

Miyamoto's work continues to fascinate readers today, 32 years after his death. An edition of his collected writings is currently underway (Miraisha), with 51 volumes published to date. A new facsimile edition of his fifteen-volume *Watashi no Nihon chizu* [My Atlas of Japan] is also being published as a supplement. A number of unpublished works have appeared in book form for the first time in recent years, including *Kiga kara no dasshutsu* [Escape from Hunger] and *Saiji shūzoku jiten* [Dictionary of Seasonal Customs], both published by Yasaka Shobō.

What is it that draws people to Miyamoto's writing? I believe the key to his popularity can be found in what is surely his masterpiece: *Wasurerareta Nihonjin* [trans. *The Forgotten Japanese: Encounters with Rural Life and Folklore*]. First published in 1960, this classic is a comprehensive portrayal of traditional life in rural Japan based on interviews with elderly people around the country. Miyamoto recorded accounts that were based on oral tradition, handed down by word of mouth. Once these people were gone, Miyamoto realized, nothing would remain of the folk memories they carried. Miyamoto wrote to preserve the history of Japan's traditional communities before it was "forgotten" forever. It is individuals like the people he interviewed who collectively make up "Japanese" communities. Implicit in the title *Wasurerareta Nihonjin* is Miyamoto's belief that the common people are the leading characters in Japanese history.

The devastating tsunami of March 2011 is still fresh in the national memory. The disaster left close to 20,000

Shibusawa Keizō (seated) and Miyamoto Tsuneichi together in 1961. (Photo courtesy of Bungeishunjū)

Relaxing on the veranda. Fukushima Prefecture, 1978. "The engawa *is what makes Japanese houses so interesting…Apparently superfluous at first glance, the* engawa *has played a vital role in enriching family life and bringing people closer together." Quoted from* Nihonjin no sumai *[The Japanese House]. (Photo courtesy of Suō Ōshima Cultural Exchange Center)*

A boat carries children home from school. "The children here were quite at one with nature. And in each and every one of them I could clearly see the simplicity that is so important to human beings." Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1960. Quoted from Watashi no Nihon chizu *Vol. 9 [My Atlas of Japan Vol. 9]. (Photo courtesy of Suō Ōshima Cultural Exchange Center)*

dead, triggered a nuclear accident, and destroyed many rural communities. Rebuilding could take decades. Thousands have left the coastal towns where they grew up in search of a better life elsewhere. For many people all over Japan, the disaster of March 2011 served as a reminder of the preciousness of enriching family life and bringing people closer together and of their own ancestral homes in the provinces—their *furusato*.

Of course, it is human nature to feel nostalgia for the community where we grew up. But something more than simple nostalgia seems to lie behind the persistent urge among the Japanese to identify themselves with their *furusato* in spite of all the upheaval and change of recent decades. It is a truism that the same forces of urbanization and economic growth that have enriched Japanese society since World War II have also led to widespread alienation and isolation. Nuclear households have become the norm, and familial and community ties have weakened to the extent that people now talk of modern Japan as a *muen shakai*, a society without human ties.

An important part of the appeal of *Wasurerareta Nihonjin* for readers today is the vivid way in which it depicts what we have lost: the poor but close-knit rural communities where mutual assistance and support were a way of life. Miyamoto describes a society built on the fundamental understanding that happiness is difficult to achieve in isolation. Individuals can only find true fulfillment when the community around them is happy as well.

Miyamoto notes the importance of the village meetings where community decisions were made. These were often held in the *odō* (also called the *ryō* or *iori*). The *odō* was a small structure where villagers met to pray, including meetings of the local *Jizō kō* or *nenbutsu kō* (Buddhist lay societies originating in the medieval era). His thought-provoking conclusion is that community meetings may have evolved from religious gatherings.

Miyamoto's *Nihon no mura* [The Japanese Village] (1953) and *Umi o hiraita hitobito* [Pioneers of the Ocean] (1955) were written to introduce elementary and middle school students to life in traditional Japanese farming and fishing villages. The author drew from his travels to paint a vivid picture of lifestyles in rural Japan before rapid economic growth began to transform the countryside in the mid-1950s.

Miyamoto himself was born into a poor farming family. He left home to start work at the age of 16, but kept up his studies, determined to dedicate his life to learning. It was in the course of these studies that he encountered the work of Yanagita Kunio, which made him aware for the first time of the importance of the Japanese *furusato*. Yanagita's ideas also made Miyamoto realize that his own father, who had barely completed an elementary education, embodied the kind of virtues to which every scholar should aspire. It was Miyamoto's father who taught him never to "travel heedlessly." "Always pay close attention to everything," he told him, and "you will learn many things by traveling."

These quotations appear in Miyamoto's late work *Minzokugaku no tabi* [Ethnographic Travels] published by Kōdansha, in which he explains the focus of his ethnological observations in detail. This emphasis on precision and objectivity seems to have gone hand in hand with a growing dissatisfaction with the state of the field: "We should be doing more work to produce a record of local life [*seikatsu shi*]," he wrote, "instead of producing more and more records of folklore [*minzoku shi*]. We need a more detailed and structural study of the technologies that led to improvements in people's lives."

Published when Miyamoto was 71, *Minzokugaku no tabi* is an autobiographical account that Miyamoto himself compared to the memorial tablets that believers in Japanese folk Buddhism often erect while they are still alive. This was Miyamoto's last testament, and it makes essential reading for anyone who wants to understand his life and work.

In *Minzokugaku no tabi*, Miyamoto writes that he "began to have doubts regarding the discipline of folklore studies" around 1955. It was around this time that he started to build up an extensive collection of visual records, taking as many photos as possible as he traveled. "I follow my impulses and photograph anything that catches my eye or makes an impression," he wrote in *Tenryūgawa ni sotte* [Along the Tenryū River], Volume 1 of *Watashi no Nihon chizu*. Miyamoto ended up with around 100,000 photos, most intended to supplement or replace written notes. I was privileged to be personally involved in the process of editing many of these photos for publication in the two-volume collection *Miyamoto Tsuneichi ga totta Shōwa no jōkei* [Miyamoto Tsuneichi's Scenes of the Shōwa Era] (Mainichi Shimbunsha, 2009). The photos offer the clearest evidence that the focus of Miyamoto's life work was not Japanese "folklore" but Japanese life itself.

Hirashima Akihiko

Born in 1946. Photographer and editor. Former director, Publishing and Photography Division, Mainichi Shimbunsha. Publications include Miyamoto Tsuneichi ga totta Shōwa no jōkei *[Miyamoto Tsuneichi's Scenes of the Shōwa Era] (co-editor),* Shinpen Shōwa 20-nen Tōkyō chizu *[New 1945 Map of Tokyo] (co-author), and* Kyū Asakusa-ku machi no kioku *[Memories of the Old Asakusa District] (co-author).*

FICTION

Ekuni Kaori

Born in 1964. Won the Yamamoto Shūgorō Prize in 2002 for Oyogu no ni, anzen demo tekisetsu demo arimasen *[Not Safe or Suitable for Swimming] and the Naoki Prize in 2004 for* Gōkyū suru junbi wa dekite ita *[On the Verge of Tears]. Her novel* Mahiru na no ni kurai heya *[A Dark Room in the Middle of the Day], which won the 2010 Chūōkōron Literary Prize, was introduced in* JBN *No. 66. This novel won the Kawabata Yasunari Prize for Literature.*

Inu to hamonika [Dog and Harmonica]

By Ekuni Kaori

Shinchōsha, 2012. 197 x 134 mm. 224 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 978-4-10-380809-1.

Ekuni Kaori's romance novels have made her one of Japan's bestselling novelists of the past 20 years, particularly popular among young women readers. Ekuni's recent stories, shot through with insightful observations of human behavior and some fine descriptive passages, perhaps have more literary heft than some of her previous work. The title story, for example, shows Ekuni at the top of her game. The narrative traces the lives of five strangers who happen to be on the same flight, describing their thoughts as the plane lands at Narita airport. The story's depiction of misunderstandings between men and women establishes one of the main themes of the collection, which is played out with subtle variations in the stories that follow.

In "Shinshitsu" [Bedroom], the main character is suddenly dumped by his young girlfriend of more than five years, who announces one day: "You just don't realize how *difficult* you are!" As this case shows, men often cause distress to the women in their lives by their unreflecting, selfish behavior and rarely seem to achieve true repentance. Ekuni skillfully depicts the lives of women struggling against loneliness and self-contradiction.

"Yūgao," a retelling of the famous chapter from the *Tale of Genji,* overflows with tragic lyricism. The closing piece "Alentejo" moves the setting to Portugal, bringing a gay couple's relationship into vivid focus. This deft and lively collection makes a perfect introduction to Ekuni's fictional world. (Nozaki)

Karamāzofu no imōto [The Sister Karamazov]

By Takano Fumio

Kōdansha, 2012. 193 x 134 mm. 327 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-06-217850-1.

In the introduction to *The Brothers Karamazov,* Dostoevsky outlined his plan for two linked novels, of which "the second is the more important." This novel is Takano Fumio's bold attempt to write the second part of this original plan, which was left unwritten at Dostoevsky's death. The novel starts from the premise that Dimitri, the eldest of the brothers, despite having been sent into exile for parricide, was not the true culprit. So who really murdered Fyodor Karamazov?

It falls to Ivan, the second of the brothers, to investigate. The story opens as Ivan, now a detective in the Ministry of the Interior's Unsolved Crimes Department, returns from Moscow to the family's seat in the country. Alyosha, the youngest brother, has become a beloved and respected teacher. Incredibly, however, he is involved with a terrorist group that is planning to assassinate the czar. One mystery leads to another. Eventually, a murder threatens to bring Ivan's investigations to a halt. To make things even more complicated, Ivan himself turns out to be mentally unstable, with a split personality.

The story is rollicking entertainment from start to finish, even incorporating science fiction elements such as a race to develop a manned rocket and a "difference engine." But Takano never loses sight of her original inspiration: her deep admiration for Dostoevsky and an ambition to make the most of the possibilities hinted at in the original work. This masterpiece of mystery storytelling promises the reader an experience full of surprises. (Nozaki)

Takano Fumio

Born in 1966. Made her debut as a science fiction novelist in 1995 with Mujika makiina *[Musica Machina]. Works include* Kanto anjeriko *[Canto Angelico],* Aiōn *[Aion], and* Akai Hoshi *[Red Star]. This book won the Edogawa Rampo Award for Mystery.*

Tsujihara Noboru

Born in 1945. Won the Akutagawa Prize in 1990 for the novella Mura no namae *[The Name of the Village]. Won the Yomiuri Literary Prize in 1999 for* Tobe kirin *[Fly, Qilin!], and the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize in 2000 for* Yūdōtei Enboku *[The Rakugo Storyteller Yūdōtei Enboku].* Yurusarezaru mono *[The Unforgiven] was introduced in* JBN *No. 62.*

Chichi, danshō
[My Father, A Fragment]
By Tsujihara Noboru

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 132 mm. 223 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-10-456305-0.

The book opens: "Soon, he knew, he would have to settle down and write truthfully about his father." Before long, the "he" of the opening lines switches to the first person, and the story that unfolds could be described as a conventional "I-novel" narrative. But the events depicted are raw and fresh and full of narrative interest. With this novel, Tsujihara Noboru, one of the finest storytellers in Japan today, has freely adapted the template of autobiographical fiction to produce a collection of rare brilliance.

Throughout the stories, Tsujihara depicts moments of return and regeneration. In the opening piece, he conjures up an image of his father as he was when he was still alive. In the moving "Natsu no bōshi" [Summer Hat], the narrator suddenly has a vivid flashback of the face of a forgotten girlfriend from long ago. Other stories depart from first-person narrative, casting a spell with their beguiling depictions of remote times and exotic locales. In "Chipashiri" [Chipashiri] a convict escapes from a series of remote prisons in northern Honshū and Hokkaidō. "Mushi-ō" [King of Insects] depicts a group of seventeenth-century Han warriors who dream of liberating China from Manchu rule.

All the stories depict moments of encounter or near misses with a returning figure, including the dreamlike piece that concludes the connection, "Tenki" [Weather], in which the first-person narrator's parents return. In such moments, these new stories encapsulate what makes Tsujihara's writing so appealing. (Nozaki)

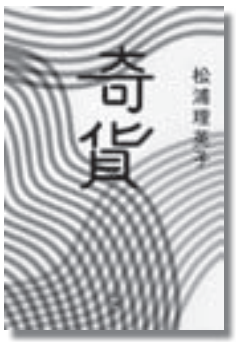
Kika
[Strange Fruit]
By Matsuura Rieko

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 132 mm. 159 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 978-4-10-332721-9.

Honda is a middle-aged writer living with a younger woman named Nanashima. No sexual relationship exists between them. Nanashima is a lesbian, and although Honda is straight he has never had much of a libido—besides which, he is now practically impotent following complications from diabetes. The two are friends who decide to share an apartment for the sake of convenience. They live peacefully together for a while, until Nanashima starts a new relationship and tensions start to rise.

Nanashima takes to shutting herself away in her room, talking to her new female friend on the phone for hours at a time. Honda is stung by something akin to jealousy and sets up an eavesdropping device in Nanashima's room. Honda has never had a close friendship like this with another man. He convinces himself that listening in on Nanashima's conversations will allow him to experience the happiness he has never known. Inevitably, his actions have dire consequences for his life with Nanashima.

Matsuura Rieko's writing career has been built on daring explorations of unconventional relationships between men and women. Despite its minimalist setup, featuring just one male and two female characters, the book's dense and thrilling prose offers rich rewards. More than just a sensitive appeal on behalf of a sexual minority, this finely observed story cuts to the heart of the reality at the center of human relationships. (Nozaki)



Matsuura Rieko

Born in 1958. Her debut novel, Sōgi no hi *[The Day of the Funeral], won the Bungakukai New Writers Award in 1978. Won the Women's Literature Prize in 1994 for* Oyayubi P no shūgyō jidai *[trans.* The Apprenticeship of Big Toe P.*] and the Yomiuri Literary Prize in 2008 for* Kenshin *[Dog's Body] (see* JBN *No. 56).*

Murata Kiyoko

Born in 1945. Won the Akutagawa Prize in 1987 for Nabe no naka *[In the Pot]. Novels include* Shiroi yama *[White Mountain] (winner of the 1990 Women's Literature Prize),* Kokyō no waga ya *[Back Home] (winner of the 2010 Noma Prize for Literature), and* Anata to tomo ni yukimashō *[Dying with You] (introduced in* JBN *No. 62).*

Kōsen
[Rays]

By Murata Kiyoko

Bungeishunjū, 2012. 193 x 132 mm. 221 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-16-381550-3.

As the title story opens, Akiyama's wife has been diagnosed with uterine cancer. The couple's personal trauma unfolds against the backdrop of the tsunami and nuclear disaster of March 2011. Having decided to undergo radiation therapy, Akiyama's wife moves into a small rented apartment in a city in southern Kyūshū, where she will spend a month receiving daily radiation treatments. Day after day, the television shows footage of terrified residents fleeing the crippled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Far away in Kyūshū, Akiyama's wife is deliberately exposing her body to radiation in hope of a cure. Akiyama pores through books on radiation in an attempt to understand its effects and risks.

This is the first of eight linked stories that make up Murata's book. The stories stand alone, but read in sequence come together as sections of a full-length novel.

The March 2011 tsunami remains a traumatic memory for everyone who was in Japan at the time. For Murata's characters, the trauma is compounded by personal anxiety. The book skillfully depicts the way in which extraordinary circumstances force people to confront their feelings and take stock of their lives. The desperate circumstances in which they find themselves enable them to find new meaning in the ordinary and serve as a reminder of how closely they are tied to the place where they live. Despite the somber content, Murata's stories are far from depressing. Her writing is reminiscent of watercolor sketches, full of flashes of finely judged detail and subtle observations. (Chō)

LITERARY ESSAY

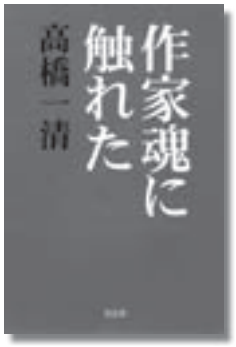
Sakka-damashii ni fureta
[Touching the Spirit of Writers]

By Takahashi Kazukiyo

Seishisha, 2012. 194 x 131 mm. 264 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-905042-48-8.

Editors in Japan play a vital role in the literary process. In recent years many of the small, independent magazines that previously brought talented new writers into the public eye have disappeared, along with the literary groups in which they found support and inspiration. Nowadays, aspiring writers must hope that their work is picked up by one of the major literary journals or manages to snag one of the prizes for newcomers. This makes the role of editors in nurturing and promoting new talent more important than ever. Literary editors today do much more than give feedback. They guide the writer through a host of revisions, and may send a manuscript back again and again until they are satisfied. Editors are less likely to insist on revisions in the case of established writers, but for better or worse their opinions can still have a major impact when they commission a manuscript. Given this reality, literary criticism, which has traditionally concerned itself chiefly with authorial intent, should perhaps begin to pay more attention to the role of the editor.

As a first-hand account of the editing process, Takahashi Kazukiyo's new book is a valuable tool for understanding the literary production process. In addition to the author's observations of writers and their work, it provides detailed explanations of the influence that Takahashi has had on his writers and their works. The book sheds light on little-known aspects of the Japanese book world, giving a behind-the-scenes glimpse of literary awards and containing numerous anecdotes from his magazine interviews with famous writers. (Chō)



Takahashi Kazukiyo

Born in 1944. Joined the publishing company Bungeishunjū after graduating college. Published numerous new authors as editor in chief of the company's literary journal.

Nakano Toshio

Born in 1950. Completed his PhD in literature at the University of Tokyo. Teaches sociology at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Works include Makkusu Uēbā to gendai *[Max Weber and Modernity].*

Shiika to sensō [Song, Poetry, and War]

By Nakano Toshio

NHK Publishing Inc., 2012. 181 x 127 mm. 320 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-14-091191-4.

Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942) was the leading lyrical poet of twentieth-century Japan. Many of the nursery rhymes and children's songs he wrote during the 1920s remain familiar to practically everyone in Japan today. However, Hakushū also wrote large numbers of jingoistic songs designed to stir the martial spirits of the people in the lead-up to war. What connection existed between nursery rhymes and nationalistic poems? This book provides a clear answer.

For Hakushū, nursery rhymes (*dōyō*) were the antithesis of the *shōka* choral singing introduced by the Meiji state in an attempt to force children into the framework of the modern state. For writers like Hakushū, *dōyō* nursery rhymes were supposed to arise autonomously from children's hearts. This idea, premised on the concept of a preexisting childlike sensibility, became reified as the spirit of the Japanese people—a longing for the mother, and nostalgia for an idealized *furusato* home. The author believes that this idea, by denying the possibility of any childhood lacking this kind of sensibility, helped to build the foundations of a system of thought in which the existence of the other was denied. This denial provided domestic support for the nationalism that attempted to transplant this native spirit onto people in Japan's overseas colonies. This book explores Hakushū's daily life, looking at what drew him to these ideas and the framework of mass mobilization that produced the nationalist folksongs and jingoistic songs in support of the war. This powerful work sheds new light on the cultural history of the 1920s and 30s. (Yoshimi)

Kaku-enerugī gensetsu no sengo-shi 1945–1960 [Nuclear Power Discourse: A Postwar History]

By Yamamoto Akihiro

Jimbun Shoin, 2012. 192 x 134 mm. 327 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 978-4-409-24094-6.

After the nuclear catastrophe that unfurled in Fukushima in the months following March 2011, many people asked the same question. How was it that Japan had built no fewer than 54 nuclear power stations despite the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, making it one of the world's most nuclear dependent countries? But in fact, when the decision to introduce large-scale nuclear power generation was taken in the 1950s, there was a widespread feeling that Japan's experiences meant that the country should work extra-hard to develop peaceful uses for nuclear power. In other words, Japan's nuclear power industry developed not despite the country's tragic past, but precisely because of it.

This study uses a wide range of sources, from statements made by scientists to articles in newspapers and magazines, to examine how this counterintuitive idea took root.

Despite the apparent contradictions between the two positions, the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki actually helped the dream of peaceful use to gather support. After the 1950s, the military and peaceful uses of nuclear power became separated. The more the tragedy of the former was stressed, the more appealing the latter position came to appear, offering as it did a potential way of undoing some of the horror of nuclear destruction. This book marshals an impressive range of sources to demonstrate that this argument did not strike people in the 1950s as paradoxical, and shows how the argument overcame opposition to become the dominant position. (Yoshimi)

Yamamoto Akihiro

Born in 1984. Completed a PhD at Kyoto University, and currently teaches as an adjunct instructor at Ritsumeikan University. Specializes in modern culture and media history. This is his first book.

Fujihara Tatsushi

Born in 1976. Graduated from Kyoto University in 1999 and teaches at the University of Tokyo. Works include Nachisu no kitchin *[The Nazi Kitchen] and* Nachisu Doitsu no yūki nōgyō *[Organic Agriculture in Nazi Germany].*

Ine no Daitōa Kyōeiken
[The Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of Rice]

By Fujihara Tatsushi

Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012. 188 x 127 mm. 202 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-642-05752-3.

This book traces attempts to introduce improved rice strains in Japan and its colonies during the first half of the twentieth century. As Japan expanded into Manchuria, China, and Southeast Asia, agricultural scientists attempted to propagate improved strains throughout Japan's growing sphere of control. Although their chief purpose was to supply the homeland with food and make Japan less dependent on imports, they also wanted to take the lead in improving local agriculture.

According to the program's slogan, rice was "an essential part of the great Japanese nation (*Yamato-minzoku*)." Essentially, these scientists were nothing more than part of the colonizing effort. And although they had some successes, many varieties turned out to be unsuitable to the local soil or climate, while others produced bountiful harvests for a short period only to starve the soil after a season or two. Local farmers were sometimes resistant to the imposition of new rice strains by outsiders.

The wider effects of these efforts have rarely been examined. It has generally been assumed that the program brought significant benefits. This new study focuses on rice—central to the cultures of East Asia—to illustrate the reality of the "Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," and sees the improved cultivar project as an early example of "ecological imperialism." The book compares Japan's efforts to the "Green Revolution" led by the United States after the war, which the author sees as a similar example of "scientific conquest." (Yonahara)

ARTS

Jōruri o yomō
[Reading Jōruri]

By Hashimoto Osamu

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 132 mm. 448 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 978-4-10-406113-6.

Jōruri is a traditional Japanese puppet theater that uses puppets, chanted narration, and *shamisen* music to tell stories of torrid passions, divided loyalties, and high drama. It flourished during the Edo period (1603–1868) as a popular entertainment among the common people in Osaka and other cities. But the drama long ago became fossilized as one of the "classics," and is now kept going by a dwindling number of committed fans. Without a text, it is hard for the uninitiated to follow the story, even though fragments of some of the most famous stories are familiar to many Japanese people.

Hashimoto Osamu has become well known for his popular approach to the Japanese classics, which he writes about in an easy and accessible style. This entertaining introduction to the *jōruri* tackles the theater as the archetype of a distinctly Japanese mentality and an important predecessor to the modern novel.

The plays are set in the Edo period, when the system of government and the position of the common people were quite different from today. But Hashimoto's lively and affectionate account brings the atmosphere and attitudes of the times vividly to life, allowing readers to enter into the imaginative world of the drama and identify with the feelings of the characters.

The puppet theater often drew on contemporary events for inspiration. Centuries later, it still has the power to thrill audiences with the sweeping scale of its stories, its intricate structure, and the richness and dynamism of its characterization and human drama. (Yonahara)

Hashimoto Osamu

Born in 1948. Studied Japanese literature at the University of Tokyo. Has published novels, criticism, plays, essays, and modern translations of classical literature. Won the Kobayashi Hideo Prize in 2002 for Mishima Yukio to wa nanimono datta no ka *[Who Was Mishima Yukio?] and the Shibata Renzaburō Award in 2005 for* Chō no yukue *[Where the Butterfly Goes]. Won the Mainichi Publishing Culture Award in 2008 for* Sōjō Heike monogatari *[Tale of the Heike in a Classical Key]. His novel* Yoru *[Night] was introduced in* JBN *No. 59.*

SOCIETY

Tachikawa Kenji

Born in 1950. Did his doctorate at Kyoto University, and is currently a professor at the University of Toyama. Research interests include modern Japanese history and horseracing.

Chihō keiba no sengo-shi
[A Postwar History of Regional Horseracing]

By Tachikawa Kenji

Seori Shobō, 2012. 215 x 151 mm. 706 pp. ¥7,500. ISBN 978-4-902163-62-9.

Horseracing was imported to Japan along with many other aspects of Western culture in the early years of the Meiji era. In later years, after Japan's wars with Russia and China revealed the need for an improved stock of cavalry horses, the government sponsored horse races with the aim of selecting superior breeds for stud. As part of its support, the government made an exception to the laws against gambling. This was the background to the culture of horseracing that flourished in postwar Japan. After the war, horseracing moved away from its military roots, and incredible numbers of races were held around the country. This was the age of black market races organized by regional stockbreeding associations and other unofficial organizations in the absence of an overarching national regulatory system.

This detailed study is the first to reveal the whole picture of postwar Japanese horseracing clearly, from black market racing to officially sponsored meets. What emerges from the remarkable array of materials collected from around the country is a vivid picture of the jumbled and chaotic nature of life in immediate postwar Japan. The author describes the colorful figures who congregated at race courses throughout the regions and became passionate fans of the turf, and shows the relationship that existed between these elements of Japanese society and the occupation forces. The sheer volume of materials contained in the volume may make it unsuitable for translation, but this volume deals with an aspect of Japanese postwar history that conventional histories overlook, making it ideal for library collections. (Yoshimi)

BIOGRAPHY

Suingu Jyapan: Nikkei beigunhei Jimmy Araki to senryō no kioku
[Swing Japan: The Occupation Experiences of Jimmy Araki, Japanese-American Jazzman and GI]

By Akio Satoko

Shinchōsha, 2012. 196 x 136 mm. 320 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-10-437003-0.

Akio Satoko

Born in 1957. Completed an MA in Asian studies at Sophia University. Publications include Lēnin-zō o taoshita onna-tachi *[The Women Who Toppled Statues of Lenin],* Unmei no chōjo: Sukaruno no musume Megawati no hansei *[Daughter of Destiny: Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesian Politics] (winner of the Asia-Pacific Special Prize), and* Washinton Haitsu: GHQ ga Tōkyō ni kizanda sengo *[Washington Heights: GHQ, Tokyo, and Postwar Japan] (winner of the Japan Essayist Club Award, and introduced in* JBN *No. 63).*

James Tomomasa Araki taught Japanese literature at the University of Hawaii for some 20 years from 1964, enjoying an outstanding career as a scholar and translator of Japanese literature. Better known as "Jimmy," Araki was a second-generation Japanese-American, born in Utah in 1925. As well as a scholar of Japanese literature, he was also a jazz musician. This book traces both facets of Araki's fascinating life, through a variety of interviews and documentary sources.

Araki's father immigrated in 1904 and moved to Hollywood in 1936, where he worked as a cleaner in a film studio and was active in attempts to spread the Shintō faith. Following the outbreak of war, the Araki family was forced into an internment camp, where Jimmy encountered jazz and was soon showing rare talent on the alto sax and piano. He was later drafted and assigned to the US Army's Japanese academy. He spent the war years translating and deciphering Japanese military documents, and came to Japan as a member of the occupying forces after the war.

Postwar Japan was in the throes of an unprecedented jazz craze. Araki played a vital role in training a generation of Japanese jazz musicians. Over the course of a remarkably full life lived between the United States and Japan, Araki responded to the allure of the "strange magic" of the Japanese people. (Yonahara)

Iwamoto Kenji

Born in 1943. Completed a PhD at Waseda University and teaches the history of film at the Nihon University College of Art. Works include Sairento kara tōkī e: Nihon eiga keiseiki no hito to bunka *[From Silent Films to Talkies: The People and Culture of the Formative Years of Japanese Film] and* Hikari to kage no seiki: Eigashi no fūkei *[A Century of Light and Shadow: A Landscape of Film History].*

Murayama Tomoyoshi: gekiteki sentan [Murayama Tomoyoshi and the Dramatic Avant Garde]

By Iwamoto Kenji (ed.)

Shinwasha, 2012. 193 x 132 mm. 416 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 978-4-86405-037-1.

In the 1920s Murayama Tomoyoshi was one of the leading lights of the Japanese avant garde. In 1922, shortly after turning 20, he traveled to Germany—a country still reeling from the effects of the Great War. It was here he made his fateful first encounter with the European avant garde. Murayama threw himself into the thriving scene and absorbed all the influences he could. Following his return to Japan just before the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, he was instrumental in introducing new approaches in a wide range of arts, from stage performance to playwriting, novels, picture books, film, dance, and clothes design. Murayama's remarkably diverse activities have attracted renewed interest in recent years thanks to the work of Omuka Toshiharu and Gennifer Weisenfeld. The present book shines new light on Murayama's complex involvements in the worlds of stage and film. Nishidō Kōjin draws attention to the fact that Murayama and the other leading figures in the Japanese avant garde of the 1920s, including Hijikata Yoshi and Senda Korenari, were all born around the turn of the twentieth century. He points to several striking parallels between this group and the later generation, born around 1940, that led the underground theater movement of the 1960s and 70s. From the 1930s on, however, the avant garde of the 1920s turned toward more realistic modes of expression, obscuring the points of similarity. How should we interpret this interrupted continuity across a gap of 40 years? This is the main central question asked by this study, written from the vantage point of a further 40 years on. (Yoshimi)

HISTORY

Kanryōsei to shite no Nihon rikugun [The Japanese Army as a Bureaucracy]

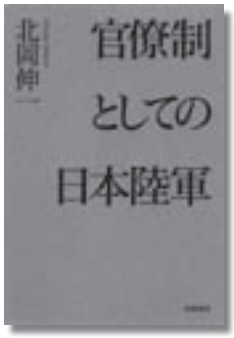
By Kitaoka Shin'ichi

Chikuma Shobō, 2012. 193 x 132 mm. 377 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 978-4-480-86406-2.

This book covers the rise and fall of the Imperial Japanese army and its rush into a reckless war. The modern military was a massive bureaucracy, organized into a system with a clear chain of command. The military top brass therefore needed to be extremely strong politically if it were to provide effective leadership. Instead, as senior officers lost this political ability, the various internal hierarchies within the military began to come apart.

Kitaoka analyzes the descent into militarism in the 1920s and 30s. "The army of the times was not operating with a single purpose to pull government policy in a particular direction," he writes. "Rather, it was the loss of this ability to form a unified purpose that led the country toward destruction." This approach leads to fresh insights into factional infighting within the army. The book gives biographical sketches of the major figures and explains the arguments between civilian politicians and the military, showing how the power struggles developed out of differences over philosophy and policy.

Kitaoka argues that attempts to turn the military into a bureaucracy and expunge its political aspects had the result of pushing the country further along the road to war. This can be seen particularly clearly in Japan's changing policy to China in the years leading up to the war. The book's account of factionalism and conflicts within the armed forces is more than a description of past failures; it is a reminder that the issues at stake remain relevant for us today. (Yonahara)



Kitaoka Shin'ichi

Born in 1948. Holds a doctorate in law from the University of Tokyo and teaches at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies. Has served as Japan's ambassador to the UN and as chairman of the Japan-China Joint History Research Committee. Publications include Nichibei kankei no riarizumu *[Realism in US-Japan Relations] and* Jimintō: seikentō no 38-nen *[38 Years of LDP Government]. He won the Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities for* Kiyosawa Kiyoshi *[Biography of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi].*

Konno Shinji

Born in 1958. Completed a doctorate at Waseda University and teaches Japanese language at Seisen University. His books include Kesareta Sōseki *[Sōseki's Excisions] and* Bunken kara yomitoku Nihongo no rekishi *[Understanding the History of Japanese from Documents]. Won the Kindaichi Kyōsuke Memorial Prize for* Kana hyōki no ronkō *[Discussions of Kana Orthography].*

Hyaku-nen mae no Nihongo [Japanese a Hundred Years Ago]

By Konno Shinji

Iwanami Shoten, 2012. 173 x 105 mm. 198 pp. ¥700. ISBN 978-4-00-431385-4.

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 ushered in an era of dramatic change, not only for the country's political, economic, and social systems but for its language as well. Konno's book looks at how the written language changed in the early decades of the modern era, focusing on writing in newspapers and magazines, with a particular emphasis on the works of Natsume Sōseki. Ignoring widespread preconceptions, the author bases his conclusions on a careful review and analysis of the documentary evidence. Konno demonstrates that the really important changes in the written language occurred later than previously thought, over the course of roughly 100 years from the Meiji era to the present day. He also tracks changes in the public's attitudes to Chinese compounds, recording previously common locutions that have faded from use as well as now familiar usages that were unknown to previous generations.

Anyone who reads newspapers and magazines from the Meiji era today is likely to be struck by how inconsistent the writing is in terms of style. Educational reforms in the Meiji era brought mass literacy and swelled the size of the reading public. Since the written language was not yet standardized, writers were free to adopt a variety of styles to meet the needs of readers from different sectors of society. Eventually these styles began to converge, but it was not until after World War II that the written language was standardized in its current form. Konno's book is essential reading for anyone interested in the development of modern written Japanese. (Chō)

Onna kotoba to Nihongo [Women's Speech in the Japanese Language]

By Nakamura Momoko

Iwanami Shoten, 2012. 173 x 105 mm. 244 pp. ¥800. ISBN 978-4-00-431382-3.

Most studies of *onna kotoba,* or "women's language," do little more than provide a chronological account of how women spoke in previous eras, based on historical documents. This new book takes a different approach, drawing from a rich variety of linguistic materials to demonstrate how *onna kotoba* has been shaped by the prevailing ideology of each era. Her sources include books on women's etiquette from the Kamakura period (1185–1336) through the Taishō era (1912–26), popular fiction from the Edo period, readers from the Meiji era, modern novels and manga, language textbooks and commentaries published during World War II, and the policies adopted by Japan's postwar occupation authorities. The book is concerned not so much with the actual details of women's speech as with the codes of linguistic behavior that women were expected to adhere to, reflecting the standards, knowledge, and values of the time.

Nakamura's book challenges the received wisdom regarding *onna kotoba,* by highlighting instances in which women's speech drew social censure rather than approval. Particularly interesting is her account of *jogakusei kotoba* ("female student speech") in the Meiji era. Unlike *onna kotoba* imposed on women by the state, *jogakusei kotoba* evolved organically, as a way for women students to assert their own identity. As a result, it came in for harsh criticism as "frivolous." By shedding light on the ideological forces that shaped women's speech, Nakamura punctures the myth of *onna kotoba* as a beautiful, naturally evolved linguistic tradition reflecting Japanese sensibilities. (Chō)

Nakamura Momoko

Born in 1955. Completed her doctorate at Ochanomizu University. Professor of linguistics at Kantō Gakuin University. Works include Onna kotoba wa tsukurareru *[The Construct of Women's Language],* Sei to Nihongo *[Sex and the Japanese Language], and* Kotoba to jendā *[Language and Gender].*

No. 3: Takamura Kōtarō and Iwate

Shortly before Japan's surrender in August 1945, the poet and sculptor Takamura Kōtarō moved to a hut in a remote region of Iwate Prefecture. Here he spent several years, reflecting on his support for Japan's war effort, cherishing the memory of his wife, and writing of the excitement and delight he felt at discovering a new world.

The sculptor and poet Takamura Kōtarō moved from Tokyo to rural Iwate Prefecture in May 1945, as Japan's war with the United States drew to an end. In March that year, Takamura's Tokyo studio had been destroyed in an Allied bombing raid. Learning of his distressed circumstances, the family of the famous writer Miyazawa Kenji invited Takamura to stay with them in Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture. But in early August, the Miyazawa residence too suffered damaged in another air raid. On August 15, Japan finally surrendered.

Learning of his predicament, an influential member of the local community offered a helping hand. Not far from Hanamaki was a small village called Yamaguchi, on the edge of which was an area of uninhabited land. Some four kilometers away stood an abandoned Forestry Department hut. How about buying that from the authorities and bringing it closer to town? With help from local residents, Takamura carried the disused materials to the foothills and a small temporary dwelling was completed. He moved in on November 17, 1945. The harsh Tōhoku winter had already begun, with pre-dawn temperatures plummeting as low as minus 20 degrees. It was so cold that the ink on his desk was frozen when he woke in the mornings. After a blizzard, the snow would reach the eaves. Takamura called this his "water prison"—a prison of frozen water in which he had confined himself alone for the duration of the winter.

The hut was little better than a hovel. In fact, it *was* a hovel—but that in itself was not so unusual in the immediate aftermath of the war. Many people who had been bombed out of their homes in Tokyo and soldiers returned from the front to carve out new lives in remote parts of the country lived in more or less the same circumstances. What made Takamura's case unusual was that he continued to live in this makeshift hut for the next seven years. As the country recovered from the devastation of war and life returned to normal, most people moved out of their temporary hovels into something more permanent. But the sculptor and poet made no move to leave his tiny, bare-bones shack.

Takamura Kōtarō in front of the Yamaguchi hut where he spent several years after the war. (Photo courtesy of Takamura Kōtarō Memorial Foundation)

Three tatami mats of space is room enough to sleep
This is my humble kitchen
A well where
The mountain water tastes as sweet as the mountain air.

As a place to live, it could hardly have been more basic or less promising. And yet for Takamura, it offered the kind of comfort and ease that had been missing from his life for a long time. He began to write gentle poems, shot through with a relaxed tone and easy-going attitude to life. One example is the poem "Annai" [Directions], in which the poet seems almost to be sketching a route on a map with his finger as he writes.

Chestnuts and pines grow around the hut.
From the top of the hill, the view stretches
Twenty miles to the south.
To the left, the Kitakami mountain range;
To the right, the mountains that mark the boundary with the province of Ōu.

The person Takamura dreamed of guiding to his simple hut was his deceased wife, Chieko. It had been seven tough years for the couple—years of mental instability, drawn-out medical treatments, gradual decline, and death. It was seven years of bitter struggle. And then, seven years later, defeat in war.

Tell me, Chieko: What do you think? Do you like it?
The range out back is called Busu-ga-mori:
Serow deer visit me there, and occasionally bears.
Isn't this the kind of place you always dreamed of?

The emptiness he felt after losing the person closest to him may have been one factor that helped determine the direction Takamura's career took. For much of the next seven years he wrote mostly patriotic verse and war poems. The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor "affected my mind like an alembic, distilling yesterday into the distant past. *The emperor's life is at risk*. These words were enough to decide everything for me."

Foolishly, Takamura had proclaimed Japan's fight a "holy war" and written a succession of bombastic, jingoistic verse in support of the war effort. His self-enforced confinement in his "water prison" was therefore at least in part a period of atonement. He found a kind of comfort in his self-imposed exile.

At least, this is what has become the standard view of

Takamura's work in the postwar years. But there was surely more to his behavior than simple expiation. It was also the discovery of a new land and new people, and the exploration of a previously unknown landscape and topography. Takamura's previous experience of Iwate came through the poems of Miyazawa Kenji, which he had read with something approaching awe. In 1932 he published *Sanriku meguri* [A Tour of Sanriku], a newspaper-commissioned piece in which he walked the length of the Sanriku coast in northeastern Honshū. Thirteen years later, he was seeing the inland regions of Iwate for the first time. He recorded his impressions in *Michinoku-dayori* [Letters from the Deep North], published in the magazine *Subaru*.

"The area of Hienuki in Iwate Prefecture is located almost exactly in the middle of the old Michinoku province of the deep north." Takamura starts with a description of geographical location, describing with childlike excitement his discoveries of a new unknown world where even the constellations in the skies are different from Tokyo.

"The starlit sky is an astonishing sight. The biggest stars are almost frightening. Orion in the winter and Scorpio in the summer look like burning objects hanging down from the heavens, resting suspended just out of reach above your head."

In the series of linked poems *Angu shōden* [An Abbreviated Record of Darkness and Folly], Takamura came to terms with his former self. At the same time, in the linked poem *Den'en shōshi* [Short Poem of the Countryside] he recorded the small world he had recently discovered. This was a world where *mizu* weed grew along the riverbanks, and giant striped snakes lay coiled in the grass. The *mizu* weed could be eaten boiled or prepared as a thin soup, providing a slightly slimy but cooling and refreshing food.

"The people of Iwate start out before dawn and spend the whole day foraging for this strange mountain vegetable."

For someone like Takamura, born and raised in Tokyo, the idea that there might be a communal plaza in the middle of the mountains was something unimaginable. And yet from a nearby viewpoint along the dividing ridge of the mountains, "half of Iwate Prefecture" could be seen. The place functioned as a local meeting place—a space where people gathered to talk about whatever was on their minds. It was the kind of place on which it was easy to transpose a vision of Miyazawa Kenji's imaginary "Porāno no hiroba" [Polano Plaza], complete with a citizens' community center, library, and community hall, and a place where people from all over the world could converse by shortwave: the receptionist a bush warbler, the butler a hare, and a grizzly black bear to act as guard.

The move to the mountains of Iwate freed the poet's thoughts and emotions from the constrictions and pressures of the war years, allowing his imagination and emotions to soar like a bird spreading its wings in the mountain air.

What are you saying, thrush?
What is it that you warble,
All day long in the woods over there?
Pew-it, pew-it; Pi-yo, Pi-yo

This singing was also the song of Takamura himself. By absorbing himself in the world of nature beyond human concerns, Takamura succeeded in restoring his beloved Chieko to life. In the vocalizations of Takamura's thrush are some telling words: *koishiiyou, koishii-you*: "I miss you, I miss you."

Takamura's mountain retreat was in a damp spot on the banks of a pond, with a local population of vipers known as "*kuchi-bami*" in the local dialect. As a sculptor, Takamura was deeply struck by the beauty of the coiled snakes. He saw in them an "all-too-beautiful animosity," as they scowled at the writer "proud, knowing, and thoughtful."

As he returns the snake's glare, he comes to see the shape of the snake's coil as reflecting the spiraling thoughts within himself. It is the kind of writing that encapsulates Takamura's joint identity as both poet and sculptor.

From the narrow confines of his humble hut, the poet counts the many kinds of tree that flourish on the surrounding hillsides: beech, oak, chestnut, horse chestnut, and maple. To the south, shouldering the mountains of the village on their back, stretched fields of *susuki* grass.

The Iwate summer sun
Beating like a taiko drum
Turns slowly toward Akita

What he had discovered was a microcosm, but one that was an integral part of the wider cosmos. Above the peaks there appeared the "Amida from beyond the mountains"; the room where the villagers gathered together to recite the sutras was "like the catacombs of Rome."

One of his linked verses has the title "Man of Iwate." It is a song of praise for the people who have welcomed him in his time of need and introduced him to a new world. "Man of Iwate, with quiet eyes/and noble nose/strong-jawed, /square of mouth, straight of lip." He sees the people with the eyes of a sculptor, their stately countenances compared to a stone bull in ancient Egypt receiving a celestial sphere between its horns.

Perhaps I should take an axe and carve one of these huge trees
Here among the mountains
In the land of Iwate, the backbone of Japan
And form a mold for the soul, like an ox shouldering the unknown future

The image of a mighty ox conjures up not so much the average man of Iwate as Takamura himself, who at 1.80 meters towered head and shoulders above most Japanese men of his generation, with huge 32.4 cm feet. Rubber boots were essential items for life in the country, but shoes in such an unusual size were not available anywhere. Takamura eventually had to beg the owner of a shoe shop in Hanamaki to let him have an extra-large pair that hung outside the shop for advertising purposes. Even these pinched uncomfortably, but Takamura apparently made do with one single pair throughout his seven years in the mountains.

(Ikeuchi Osamu, essayist and scholar of German literature)

2013 Hon'ya [Bookseller] Prize

Kaizoku to yobareta otoko [The Man They Called Pirate] by Hyakuta Naoki (Kōdansha) has been awarded the 2013 Hon'ya Prize, chosen by the nation's booksellers. *Kaizoku to yobareta otoko* is a novel based on the life of Idemitsu Sazō, founder of the petrochemical giant Idemitsu Kōsan. The story's protagonist successfully rebuilds a petrochemical company following Japan's defeat in World War II, without laying off a single employee.

The first edition, published in July 2012, sold 60,000 copies. This had reached 800,000 by the time the book was awarded the Hon'ya Prize. A subsequent printing of 100,000 copies each of the first and second volumes means that the book has now topped the one million mark.

The author has been a writer for popular television shows for some 25 years. His first novel, *Eien no zero* [Eternal Zero], was published in 2006, when the author was 50. This book, which depicted the reality of war through the fate of a suicide squad, became a huge word-of-mouth hit, eventually selling two million copies.

Murakami Haruki's Latest Sells a Million

On April 18 the publisher Bungeishunjū announced that Murakami Haruki's novel *Shikisai o motanai Tazaki Tsukuru to kare no junrei no toshi* [Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage] had sold a million copies. This was just a week after the book went on sale on April 12—making Murakami's latest the fastest literary million-seller in Japanese publishing history, according to Bungeishunjū.

Railway employee Tsukuru Tazaki is still bothered by the pain he felt in college when his four best friends from high school broke off contact with him. Why was he cut off like that? Tazaki sets off on a journey—his pilgrimage—to find out.

This is Murakami's first novel since the third volume of 1Q84 three years ago. Prior to publication, almost everything about the book beyond its title was kept under wraps. There was a rush of advance orders, and at midnight on the day the book was released some bookstores saw lines of 150 people or more.

One reason for the interest comes from the fact that this is Murakami's first novel since the major earthquake and tsunami of March 2011. In a speech given when he accepted the 2011 Catalonia International Prize, Murakami referred to the earthquake and the subsequent nuclear accident, saying the Japanese "should have been unrelenting in saying 'No' to nuclear power." Readers have been waiting anxiously to see what, if anything, Murakami has to say about the disaster and its impact on contemporary society.

Yamada Amy Receives 65th Noma Literary Prize

Yamada Amy received the Noma Prize for Literature for her novel *Jentoruman* [Gentleman], published by Kōdansha. Yamada made her debut as an author 27 years ago. Her stories often deal with issues of sexuality and the delicate feelings of adolescence. Yamada has received numerous accolades, winning the Naoki Prize in 1987 for *Sōru myūjikku rabāzu onrī* [Soul Music, Lovers Only] and the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Prize in 2005 for *Fūmizekka* [Wonderful Flavor].

Jentoruman tells the story of the immaculately kempt Sōtarō and the young man Yumeo who falls in love

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.*

- *Shisha no teikoku* [The Empire of Corpses]. By Itō Keikaku (Project Itoh) and Enjoe Toh, Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-309-02126-3. The dead come to life and work as laborers and soldiers in this tale set in nineteenth-century England and Asia. A young Dr. Watson (in the years before his first encounter with Sherlock Holmes) investigates.
- *Nijū seikatsu* [Double Life]. By Koike Mariko, Kadokawa Shoten, 2012. ISBN 978-4-04-110233-6. A female graduate student is inspired by the French artist and writer Sophie Calle to begin stalking a married man who lives in her neighborhood. The illicit thrill of unearthing other people's secrets soon starts to affect her own relationship with her boyfriend.
- *Rokuyon* [64]. By Yokoyama Hideo, Bungeishunjū, 2012. ISBN 978-4-16-381840-5. The investigation of a kidnapping and murder case in 1989 (year 64 of the Shōwa era according to the Japanese calendar) leads to open conflict within the police department. A gripping tale of criminal investigation.
- *Hiraite* [Open]. By Wataya Risa, Shinchōsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-10-332621-2. The drama that arises when an intense love triangle develops between three high school students about to undergo their university entrance exams.
- *Teigishū* [Anthology of Definitions]. By Ōe Kenzaburō, Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc., 2012. ISBN 978-4-02-250810-2. Offering pointed suggestions for today's society, the book is a collection of essays centered on "definitions" of memorable quotations from some of the books and authors that have shaped the writer's life, including the *Tale of Genji,* Dostoevsky, Lévi Strauss, and Inoue Hisashi.
- *Kābon asurīto* [Carbon Athlete]. By Yamanaka Shunji, Hakusuisha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-560-08218-8. A nonfiction account by one of Japan's leading product designers about the challenges involved in developing a high-performance, aesthetically pleasing prosthetic leg for use in athletic competitions.
- *Sekitan no bungakushi* [A Literary History of Coal]. By Ikeda Hiroshi, Impact Shuppankai, 2012. ISBN 978-4-7554-0221-0. As the energy source that fueled industrialization, coal played an important part in Japan's overseas expansion. This book studies literary depictions of the role of coal mining in modern Japan, and the oppression and discrimination suffered by the workers.
- *Rakugo shokufu* [Directory of Food in Rakugo]. By Yano Seiichi, Seiabō, 1992. ISBN 978-4-7905-0881-6. New edition released in 2012. An enjoyable guide to *rakugo* based on 72 popular foods that come up in famous routines.
- *Shashin keiken no shakaishi* [A Social History of Photographic

with him. Yumeo's feelings for the cold and bitter Sōtarō deepen over the course of 20 years and eventually lead to tragedy.

The 34th Noma Prize for New Writers was awarded to Hiwa Satoko for *Rahō yonsennen-ki* [The 4,000 Year History of Rahō], published by Genki Shobō, and Yamashita Sumito for *Midori no saru* [The Green Monkey], published by Heibonsha.

Hiwa is also an award-winning poet, who has received the Nakahara Chūya Prize for her work. *Rahō yonsennen-ki* depicts the various incarnations of a man during his lengthy stay at a traditional Japanese inn, mixing together antiquated language and the modern colloquial. Strange, poem-like lines are woven throughout the novel.

Midori no saru, which was the first novel by Yamashita, who comes from a stage background, uses disjointed language to portray the day-to-day life of a man who works at a funeral parlor for two weeks every month.

The 50th Noma Children's Literature Prize went to Ishizaki Hiroshi for his novel *Sekai no hate no majō gakkō* [Witch School at the Edge of the World], published by Kōdansha.

Unknown Works by Abe Kōbō and Kawabata Yasunari Discovered

A manuscript attributed to Abe Kōbō (1924–93), famous for works such as *Suna no onna* [trans. *Woman in the Dunes*] and *Hako otoko* [trans. *The Box Man*], has been discovered. Abe is believed to have written the work, entitled *Tenshi* [Angels], on board a repatriation ship from Manchuria to Japan when he was 22. The short story describes a man with a mental disorder who escapes from hospital. In a typically absurdist world, the man wanders from place to place, convinced that he and the people he sees are angels.

Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) became the first Japanese author to win the Nobel Prize in 1968. The recently unearthed story, the author's first newspaper serialization, was not included in Kawabata's complete works, and was unknown even to specialists until recently. The story, entitled *Utsukushii!* [Beautiful!], appeared in the *Nishinippon Shimbun* in 1927, when the author was 27. It is the story of a factory manager who loses his disabled son. A crippled young woman who was close to the young man also dies in an accident. This early work shows Kawabata already combining an interest in the perspective of the weak with the concern for the nature of beauty that would continue to obsess him for the rest of his life.

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Experiences]. Edited by Ogawa Naoto and Gotō Makoto, Iwata Shoin, 2012. ISBN 978-4-87294-749-6. Bringing together papers given at a symposium at Osaka City University in 2010, this book marks a search for new levels of historical and social awareness through the use of historic photographic resources and a diverse range of approaches from across the humanities.

- *Reddoarō to sutāhausu* [Red Arrow and Star House]. By Hara Takeshi, Shinchōsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-10-332841-4. The "Red Arrow" of the title is a limited-stop express train that runs on the Seibu railway line in western Tokyo. The "Star House" refers to the star-shaped buildings symbolic of the public housing complexes (*danchi*) of postwar Japan. This groundbreaking book uses these two emblematic keywords as the basis for an original analysis of postwar Japanese thought.
- *Tōkyō wa kōgai kara kieteiku!* [Tokyo Disappearing from the Outside In!]. By Miura Atsushi, Kōbunsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-334-03698-0. Tokyo and its suburbs face rapid change in the years to come, as a result of population decline, an aging population, and dwindling rates of marriage. The author uses his own data drawn from interviews and surveys to suggest ways in which the city can deal with these issues.
- *Edo no tensai sūgakusha* [Brilliant Mathematicians of Edo]. By Narumi Fū, Shinchōsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-10-603712-2. A unique mathematics culture blossomed in Japan in the Edo period. This study follows the lives of eight highly individualistic mathematicians and looks at what drove them to devote their lives to Japanese mathematics.
- *Ogata Taketora to CIA* [Ogata Taketora and the CIA]. By Yoshida Noriaki, Heibonsha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-582-85639-2. Before the war, Ogata Taketora was one of Japan's leading journalists as the editor of the *Asahi Shimbun*. After the war, he was instrumental in bringing conservative forces together to form the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955. This book examines Ogata's links to the CIA, and the agency's plans to use Ogata to exert influence over Japanese politics.
- *Hara Yumiko no shigoto 1970* [The Work of Hara Yumiko]. By Hara Yumiko, Bookmansha, 2012. ISBN 978-4-89308-776-8. An autobiographical account of 40 years in the fashion and media worlds by one of Japan's pioneering fashion stylists.
- *Nisshin nichiro sensō to shashin hōdō* [Photojournalism in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars]. By Inoue Yūko, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2012. ISBN978-4-642-05748-6. An introduction to the pioneering press photographers who covered Japan's first major conflicts of the modern era at a time that coincided with the first flowering of photojournalism.
- *Saigai to yōkai* [Natural Disasters and Supernatural Creatures]. By Hatanaka Akihiro, Aki Shobō, 2012. ISBN 978-4-7505-1212-9. An attempt to analyze the cultural background to folk legends of *kappa* water sprites and *tengu* demons through the writings of folklorist Yanagita Kunio.
- *Pekorosu no haha ni aini yuku* [Meeting Pecoross's Mother]. By Okano Yūichi, Nishinippon Shimbun Co., 2012. ISBN 978-4-8167-0853-4. A manga depicting the daily life of a manga artist who returns home to Nagasaki at the age of 40 to care for his mother, who has senile dementia.

Inoue Areno: Following in Her Father's Footsteps

Award-winning author Inoue Areno is keeping the family business going, following in the footsteps of her father, acclaimed social novelist Inoue Mitsuharu. "He was not a perfect father," she says today. "He was an inveterate liar and had a constant string of mistresses. When he died, we found out he had even falsified his place of birth! But as a writer, he was one of the best. He was a natural storyteller whose work has been a constant source of ideas and inspiration."

Lies and deceit have been recurring motifs in the younger Inoue's fiction. Inoue says it was watching her father in the final months of his battle with cancer—unrepentant to the end—that prompted her to think about what drives some people to embrace deceit as a way of life.

"All the cheating men who appear in my stories somehow end up resembling my father. I suppose the living example at home was just too powerful to ignore," Inoue confesses. "These characters are bad, but they're charming too: irresistibly so, in many cases. I'm not interested in passing judgment and condemning them for their behavior. I want to write about them as real human beings."

Inoue's novels often depict people caught in a tense world of deception, lies, and extramarital affairs. Not that her novels are sensational. Inoue rarely writes explicitly about sex. Indeed, her novels contain remarkably few moments of intimacy, given the frequency with which romance and illicit love features as a subject. As a writer, Inoue is more interested in character and conflict than in plot for its own sake.

In her Naoki-prize winning novel *Kiriha e* [To the Mine Face] (introduced in *JBN* No. 59), a 31-year-old nurse at an elementary school on a small island finds herself drawn to a mysterious young man who arrives from the mainland as the school's new music teacher. Although the woman is already married to a local artist, she finds herself infatuated with the young man. The woman's infatuation seems to be leading nowhere, until the young music teacher suffers an injury and visits the nurse in her infirmary for treatment. The tension between them reaches a climax when she touches his ankle to disinfect his wound. This is the only instant of physical contact between them. Despite the spark that passes between them, the man soon leaves the island for good, and the nurse discovers that she is pregnant with her husband's child.

Inoue has few peers when it comes to depicting the conflicted private thoughts of her female characters. Despite her abundant gifts, however, for almost a decade after her debut Inoue lacked the confidence to commit to a full-time career as a writer. Inoue first came to public attention as a 28-year-old in 1989, when her debut novella won the Prix Femina for promising young women writers. Her father was famous for hard-hitting novels that dealt with serious subjects like the atomic bombings, social discrimination, and injustice. Struggling under the pressure of the inevitable comparisons, Inoue found herself incapable of writing or even reading much fiction for nearly 10 years. "I was obsessed with the idea that I had to write socially relevant novels like my father's. Eventually, I realized that my father and I live in totally different eras and face totally different environments. I finally understood that I didn't need to look at things the way my father did," she says. "That allowed me to step out of his shadow and start again in my own right."

Her first novel after this long absence was *Mō kiru wa* [Incisions], which appeared in 2001. The title of the novel was inspired by a line from her father's notebooks. The true meaning of what her father had written was not clear. Was he referring to severing ties with a lover, or an operation to cut out his cancer? The story Inoue came up with depicted the complex web of relationships between a man with terminal cancer, his wife (who stays at home to take care of her husband, despite an affair she is having on the side), and the man's neglected young mistress. In 2002 Inoue published a long essay about her father and his lies in *Hidoi kanji, Chichi – Inoue Mitsuharu* [Feelings of Betrayal: My Father, Inoue Mitsuharu]. "It was by writing about my father that I finally learned how to create my own stories. Until then, I'd always been asking myself: How would my father write this?"

Her confidence boosted by a series of glowing reviews, in 2011 Inoue published perhaps her most ambitious novel to date, *Kekkon* [Marriage] (see *JBN* No. 74). Audaciously borrowing the title her father had used in 1982 for a novel about an amateur detective on the trail of a con-artist who lures women with empty promises of marriage, Inoue wove together an intricately plotted novel about seven women who fall victim to a smooth-talking conman. Unlike her father's novel, though, her version is written entirely from the female point of view. No longer are the deceived women simply innocent victims. Instead, they are real women with egos and an unfulfilled hunger for love. Inoue's homage to her father was hailed as a masterpiece.

"I grew up with the idea, implanted in my mind from an early age, that my father was the greatest writer ever," Inoue says. "Today, although I still have the highest admiration for his work, I've stepped out of his shadow and am ready to write stories of my own."

Inoue Mitsuharu would surely be delighted to know that his daughter has become such a versatile novelist. Although Inoue is the first to acknowledge her father's influence on her writing, she has developed a voice that is distinctly her own—one that she uses to great effect in crafting her captivating and thought-provoking novels.

Kawakatsu Miki (freelance writer)

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]. Received the Chūōkōron Literary Prize for *Soko e iku na* [Don't Go There] in 2011. Her *Kaerenai neko* [A Cat That Can't Go Home] and *Tsuya no yoru* [Tsuya's Night] were made into films.