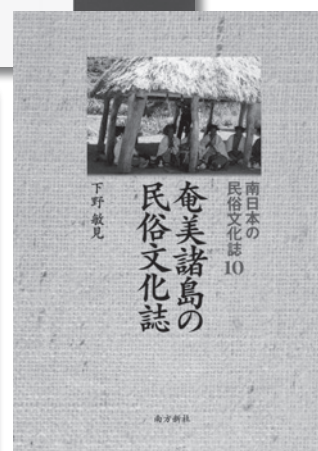
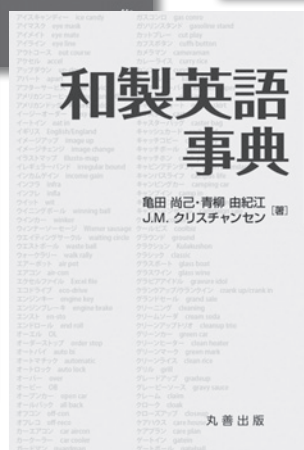
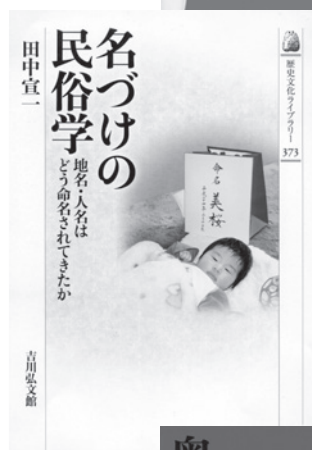


JAPANESE BOOK NEWS

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WINTER 2014



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Japanese Mysteries Today

Gōhara Hiroshi

The police novel has been a major phenomenon in Japanese mysteries for some time now. Works featuring police have consistently placed at the top of the rankings in the major annual “best mysteries” lists over recent years. In no other time since the modern mystery began in Japan ninety years ago with Edogawa Ranpo has the category been so popular. Surely no mystery watcher will disagree: the era of the police novel is upon us in the Japanese mystery world.

Two works that set this trend in motion were *Shinjuku-zame* [trans. *Shinjuku Shark*] (1990) by Ōsawa Arimasa and *Dōki* [trans. *Motive*] (2000) by Yokoyama Hideo. *Shinjuku-zame* tells the story of Samejima, who started his police career on the elite track until circumstances bumped him down to the Crime Prevention (later renamed Community Safety) unit of the Shinjuku precinct. Through the figure of this lone-wolf investigator, Ōsawa merged conventional hardboiled and police fiction to establish a new style of whodunit starring not a “private” but an “official” eye, as it were.

In the title story of *Dōki*, Yokoyama broadened the purview and potential of the police novel by giving the role of hero to a deskwork officer, a character type that until then had essentially gone unexploited in Japanese mystery fiction. Later, with *Han'ochi* [Half Confession] (2002), Yokoyama cleared away the divide between the police mystery and “serious” literature through his probing of a veteran policeman’s inexplicable refusal to fully confess the details of the mercy killing of his ill wife despite turning himself in for the act.

Third, we must not overlook the contributions of Takamura Kaoru. This woman author with a gender-ambiguous pen name has been fearless in her tackling of genres such as adventure, crime, and spy fiction long marked out as “male” territory, winning the Mystery Writers of Japan Prize among other honors and succeeding in breaking down the formidable barriers of gender. Takamura pioneered new ground in the police mystery with the Naoki Prize winner *Mākusū no yama* [Marks’ Mountain] (1993), a gritty portrayal of detectives hunting down a psychotic killer whose mind is haunted by images of “dark slopes.”

Inspired by these three and their works, a succession of talented writers—more than a dozen of them, including Sasaki Joh, Ōsaka Gō, Konno Bin, Higashino Keigo, Dōba Shun’ichi, Honda Tetsuya, Shizukui Shūsuke, and Tsukimura Ryōe—have also taken up the police novel, generating outstanding and attention-getting mysteries that deserve their place among each year’s best. Sasaki and Konno, like Ōsawa, began in hardboiled and adventure fiction before moving on to achieve new fame with their police stories. Theirs are cases of a genre fostering new authors, who in turn go on to open up new developments in the genre.

The following is a rundown of the major police mysteries published over the last three years.

Yokoyama Hideo’s *Rokuyon* [Six-Four] (2012) centers on a former police detective who now serves at the prefectural headquarters as press secretary. The man races to uncover the truth behind the kidnapping and murder of a young girl before the case reaches its statute of limitations in one year’s time, all the while facing pressure from within the police and a family crisis at home. A masterly combination of puzzle-solving and human drama, the work placed first in the 2013 domestic division of *Kono misuteri ga sugoi!* [This Mystery Is Great!]¹—an annual guidebook published by Takarajimasha and popularly known as *Konomys*—and second in the 2014 domestic rankings compiled by Hayakawa Publishing Corporation’s *Hayakawa Mystery Magazine*.

Kiryū keisatsu: Ankoku shijō [Police Dragoon: Black Market] (2012), the third in a series by Tsukimura Ryōe, is set in a terrorist-ridden Tokyo of the near future. A gripping work of hybrid entertainment, the novel offers robot action in the form of high-tech armored manned bipedal machines dubbed “Dragoons,” coupled with noir police suspense starring the international cast of characters who are their pilots. It garnered third place in the 2013 *Konomys*.

Kyōjō [Academy] (2013) by Nagaoka Hiroki is unique for its setting: a police academy in an unidentified Japanese prefecture. A training institution only in name, the academy is in fact dedicated not to turning out law-enforcement professionals, but to ejecting anyone and everyone deemed “unwanted” by the system. In taut prose, the author follows cadets of diverse ages and backgrounds as they battle to survive. The work came in first in the domestic division of the 2013 “Mystery Best Ten” list from *Weekly Bunshun* (published by Bungei Shunjū), second in the 2014 *Konomys*, and fourth in the 2013 *Hayakawa Mystery Magazine* rankings.

Inori no maku ga oriru toki [When the Curtain of Prayer Falls] (2013) is the latest in Higashino Keigo’s works starring police detective Kaga Kyōichirō, a series that has also inspired popular TV incarnations. The story opens with the murders of a woman visiting Tokyo and a homeless man. As Kaga and his cousin Matsumiya Shūhei, also a police investigator, pursue these two seemingly unrelated cases, they discover a link to the past of Kaga’s long-estranged mother. The novel was second in the 2013 *Weekly Bunshun* best ten, tenth in the 2014 *Konomys*, and eleventh in the 2014 *Hayakawa Mystery Magazine* rankings.

Daikan’yama kōrudo kēsu [Daikanyama Cold Case] (2013) by Sasaki Joh is the second in the “Special Investigation Unit” series about a group inside the Metropolitan Police Department specializing in unsolved crimes. The 17-year-old murder of a female sales clerk in the

Daikan'yama neighborhood of Tokyo that went unprosecuted upon the death of the suspect comes to the forefront again when matching DNA traces are recovered from a similar recent killing in Kawasaki to the south. With its credibility on the line, the Metropolitan Police orders an unofficial probe into the original case. The work came in ninth in the 2013 *Weekly Bunshun* best ten and fourteenth in the 2014 *Konomys*.

The setting for Ōsawa Arimasa's *Umi to tsuki no meiro* [Maze of Sea and Moon] (2013) is Hashima—or “Battle-ship Island,” as it is more popularly known from its silhouette—a coal-mining outpost off the shores of Nagasaki that before its closure in 1974 prospered as a proud symbol of Japan's post-World War II recovery. In 1959, during the island's heyday, a young policeman comes up against the taboos of this closed and clannish community in his lonely investigation of a girl's suspicious death. The novel received the forty-eighth (2014) Yoshikawa Eiji Prize for Literature.

The crop of police mysteries also includes a wealth of new titles in series such as “Cover-Up Investigation” by Konno Bin, “Metropolitan Police Department Missing Persons Division” by Dōba Shun'ichi, “Himekawa Reiko” by Honda Tetsuya, and “Forensic Entomologist” by Kawase Nanao. They, too, help sustain the current boom, in both quantity and quality.

In Japanese mysteries outside the police novel, one marked trend is the emergence of mixed-genre works that mesh the classic *honkaku*, or “puzzle story,” form of mystery with science fiction, horror, or fantasy. No doubt this reflects the rising demands of readers who—their tastes honed by the many works coming out of the so-called “third wave” of puzzle stories since the 1990s—are no longer satisfied by the usual old plot devices and tricks.

A case in point is *Nokkusu mashin* [Knox's Machine] (2013) by Norizuki Rintarō, which ranked top in the 2014 *Konomys* rankings. A beautiful union of the puzzle story and science fiction, the title work in this collection takes place in a future world where novels are generated by computer program. The key to solving a program glitch is determined to be hidden away in the study of real-life twentieth-century British author Ronald Knox, prompting a Chinese researcher of his works to be sent back in time to investigate. Mystery lovers will have no trouble recognizing the reference to the fifth of Knox's famed “ten commandments” of detective fiction: “No Chinaman must figure in the story.” This sort of deliberate borrowing or parodying of British and American classics is yet another telling feature of recent Japanese puzzle stories.

Burakku raidā [Black Rider] (2013) is a near-future science-fiction mystery by Higashiyama Akira set in Mexico and the American Midwest. In a post-apocalyptic world where nuclear war has put an end to civilization and hunger has brought on widespread cannibalism, a sheriff bent on justice tracks an outlaw band that has seized horses, which are now counted as more valuable than human lives. Here, adventure meets science fiction meets the Western.

Shinigami no furyoku [Buoyancy of Death] (2013) is the second in a series about Death, who approaches humans to judge whether their lives should end in one more week as predetermined. In this installment, author Isaka Kōtarō spins an unlikely tale out of the interchange among three

parties: a kidnapper-murderer, the parents of his young female victim, and Death, who appears before the victim's father. The result is a happy pairing of horror and the puzzle story.

Nagase Shunsuke's *Jūnigatsu no himawari* [December Sunflower] (2014) tells the story of the friendship between a police detective and a *yakuza* gangster. Originally members of the same high-school judo team and also romantic rivals, the two as adults choose different sides of the law: one puts his fighting prowess to use to push himself up in the world of organized crime, while the other devotes himself to justice as a police officer who likewise rises through the ranks. Ultimately the two face off with the pride and prestige of their respective organizations at stake, confronting a succession of struggles and misunderstandings on their way to a tragic—yet profoundly moving—denouement. Their tale makes for a mystery that stands as a prime candidate for this year's best.

Yami ni kaoru uso [Scenting Deceit in the Darkness] (2014) by Shimomura Atsushi is the winner of the sixtieth (2014) Edogawa Ranpo Award. The first-person narrator, a blind man, seeks to donate a kidney to his stricken granddaughter, but it is found to be incompatible. Though he has an older brother who was left behind in China after World War II and later repatriated to Japan in adulthood, when approached about the possibility of a transplant this brother flatly refuses to even attempt a test. Suspicious, the protagonist begins to secretly inquire into his brother's true identity. Shimomura utilizes the challenging device of a blind narrator to maximum effect, evoking mystery and suspense with a deftness of style that belies his newcomer status.

The winner of this year's thirty-fourth Yokomizo Seishi Mystery Award, meanwhile, is *Kamisama no ura no kao* [The Two-Faced God] (2014) by Fujisaki Shō. A wake is held for a man who dedicated his life to education and who was revered by all who knew him. As the mourners offer their remembrances of the deceased, however, their combined account begins to take a bizarre turn, finally laying bare the man's most unexpected “other” face. The author is a former professional comedian, and indeed his style betrays a natural humor.

The 1960s and 1990s were both deemed golden ages in the annals of Japanese mystery fiction. Richly diverse in style and conceptualization and rising above the limits of genre, the works I have introduced here give proof we stand now at the dawn of a third new golden age.

Gōhara Hiroshi

A poet, critic, and translator, Gōhara was born in 1942. After completing undergraduate studies at the Waseda University School of Political Science and Economics, he joined the Yomiuri shinbun newspaper, where he worked in various positions including local reporter and book editor. A poet since youth, he received the 1974 Mr. H Prize for the poetry anthology Kanan made [To Canaan] and the 1983 Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities for the critical study Shijin no tsuma: Takamura Chieko nōto [A Poet's Wife: Notes on Takamura Chieko]. In 2006 his Matsumoto Seichō jiten: Ketteiban [Matsumoto Seicho Encyclopedia: The Definitive Edition] won the Mystery Writers of Japan Award for Criticism. Other works include Monogatari Nihon suiri shōsetsu shi [A Narrative History of the Japanese Mystery Novel], published by Kōdansha in 2010 and featured in JBN 69.

FICTION



Nashiki Kaho

Born 1959. Won the Japan Association of Children's Literature Scholars Newcomer Prize, the Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Prize, and the Shōgakukan Literary Prize for Nishi no majo ga shinda [*The Witch of the West Is Dead*]. Won the 62nd Yomiuri Literary Prize for essay/travel writing.

*Natural beauty
and religious tra-
ditions on an
imaginary island*

Umiso **[Mirage]** By Nashiki Kaho

Iwanami Shoten, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 198 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-00-022227-3.

In the early years of the Shōwa era (1926–1989), a young geographer travels to a small island in southern Kyushu to carry out research, and over time gets to know the local people. The island's mountains were once a popular retreat for Shugendō ascetics, but many of its temples, where Buddhist and indigenous religious traditions mingled, now lie ruined and buried in overgrowth.

The young man is searching for “the silence and the scenery left behind after something decisive has passed.” Through his relationships with an elderly couple and a hermit-like recluse who lives in one of the few Western-style buildings on the island, he comes to feel the tangible presence of the island's past. He gazes at the mountains that people revered as sacred, eats rice wrapped in butterbur leaves,

and stands under waterfalls to purify himself.

The natural beauty of the surroundings begins to soothe the pain the young man suffers in losing his parents and fiancée in short succession. The island's temples were destroyed in the anti-Buddhist violence that erupted in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. But even after that upheaval, the atmosphere of these sacred places is still a forceful presence on the island. In precisely weighted prose, the author draws a moving portrait of the culture and past of this imaginary island. The book ends with an epilogue written fifty years later. What sights await the geographer when he returns to the island after so many years? This beautifully written story is filled with affection for the vanished landscapes of Japan. (Nozaki)

Sabishii oka de kari o suru **[Hunting in Lonely Hills]**

By Tsujihara Noboru

Kōdansha, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 344 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-06-218856-2.

Nozoe Atsuko is working in a small movie production company when she is raped by a man she doesn't know named Oshimoto Fumio. After the rape, Oshimoto tries to extort money. Nozoe ignores his threats and reports the crime to the police. Oshimoto is arrested and sentenced to seven years in prison. Declaring that Nozoe has broken her promise to him, he vows to kill her after his release.

When she learns of Oshimoto's plan, Nozoe hires a female detective named Kuwamura Midori to track Oshimoto's movements after he gets out of prison. Kuwamura, too, has suffered violence at the hands of a man named Koga, an ex-lover who continues to stalk her after they break up.

The similarities in their circumstances bring the women close together. They

decide to form a team and tackle the criminal head on. The plot suddenly shifts gears and builds to a thrilling climax.

The narrative grips till the last page. The sequence of tense scenes of the terror experienced when one's personal life is in peril and peace of mind is invaded gives the writing the quality of video imagery. Tsujihara Noboru is a gifted novelist who has published in a wide range of genres, from literary to historical fiction and mysteries. This, his first crime novel, is an outstanding example of the genre. But the work provides more than just entertainment. By focusing on the acts committed against society by unrepentant criminals like Oshimoto and Koga, the author brings out the complex psychology of his characters and asks what it means to be human. (Chō)



Tsujihara Noboru

Born in 1945. Director of the Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature. He received the Mainichi Geijutsu Prize for Yurusarezaru mono [*The Unforgotten*] (see JBN 62) in 2010 and the Shiba Ryōtarō Prize for Dattan no uma [*Tartar Horse*] in 2012.

*Two women fight
back against a
vengeful criminal*



Okuizumi Hikaru

Born in 1956. Professor at Kinki University. Received the Akutagawa Prize in 1994 for *Ishi no raireki* (trans. The Stones Cry Out), and the Noma Prize for Literature in 2009 for *Shinki*: Gunkan “Kashihara” satsujin jiken (Sacred Treasure: The Kashihara Warship Murders).

*Garrulous
genius loci tells
Tokyo’s story*

Tōkyō jijoden **[Tokyo: The Autobiography]** By Okuizumi Hikaru

Shūeisha, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 432 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-08-771559-0.

The protagonist and first-person narrator of this novel is the city of Tokyo itself, the numinous “genius loci” of Tokyo that abides on the site through a series of incarnations beginning long before Edo castle was built and continuing to the present day. At times the spirit has been reborn not as a human being but as an animal. One incarnation was as the cat who lived with Natsume Sōseki when he wrote his famous novel *Wagahai wa neko de aru* [trans. *I Am a Cat*].

The narrator experiences the tumultuous history of the city as it moves from militarism to postwar growth and post-bubble stagnation. Long years of experience don’t seem to bring wisdom or philosophical maturity, to judge by the narrator’s total lack of introspection and refusal to accept responsibility: “What

will happen will happen and there’s nothing anyone can do about it.” This fatalism turns out to be the leading principle of Tokyo as a metropolis and of the wider Japan that emulates its example.

While enjoying the narrator’s garrulous and humorous account of Tokyo’s history, readers will detect foreboding signs of catastrophe. If everything is to be destroyed sooner or later, the narrator suggests, where’s the sense in thinking too deeply about it? The premonition turns into reality in the final chapter. The triple disaster of March 2011 was a hint of what lies in store for Tokyo’s future. Okuizumi takes the fate of a metropolis and spins it into a picaresque story of heroic resolve in the face of looming disaster. (Nozaki)

CRITICISM

Monozukikō: Kottō to kattō **[The Curiosity Collectors: Antiques and Disputes]** By Matsubara Tomo’o

Heibonsha, 2014. 210 x 148 mm. 394 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 978-4-582-26808-9.

Matsubara Tomo’o, a specialist in the history of Western art, sheds new light on an important but previously neglected aspect of Japanese literature and art by examining the idiosyncrasies of writers and artists who were obsessed with antiques. The book brings together a diverse array of figures who have not been considered together before. Among them are Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kawabata Yasunari, literary critic Kobayashi Hideo, French literature scholar Aoyagi Mizuho, poet Andō Tsubuo, manga artist Tsuge Yoshiharu, and contemporary artist Sugimoto Hiroshi.

These quite diverse figures had one thing in common: a shared passion for antiques that bordered on fetishism. Some argued heatedly over authenticity; others found a special beauty in imperfect pieces

like chipped ceramics or broken shards of pottery. Some dreamed of becoming dealers themselves. For all these collectors, no pleasure could compare with the joy of stroking and rubbing antique pottery and porcelain. Some carried their favorite pieces with them into the bath.

The author finds in the behavior of these collectors a distinctly Japanese aesthetic, woven from diverse strands: material and spiritual, past and present, life and death. The book reveals an experience of beauty quite different from conventional concepts of art—one that is deepened through intimate physical encounters with the *objet d’art*. The book also provides an eye-opening introduction to the world of antiques and to the intoxicating, almost mad spell it has cast over so many of the country’s leading artistic figures. (Nozaki)

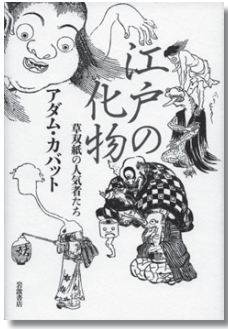


Matsubara Tomo’o

Born in 1971. Professor of the Department of Intercultural Studies, Seinan Gakuin University. Specialist in art history, mainly medieval Italian and Renaissance painting. Received the 4th Bijutsushi Essay Prize for “Teikoku to jiyū” [Empire and Freedom] in 2006.

*The intoxicating,
mad spell cast by
antiques*

CULTURE



Adam Kabat

Born in 1954 in New York City. Professor at Musashi University. A specialist in early modern and modern Japanese literature (fantasy), he studies yōkai. His other books include *Edo kokkei bakemono zukushi* [Humorous Monster Stories of Edo] (see JBN 53).

A new look at the genealogy of humor

Edo no bakemono [Monsters of Edo]

By Adam Kabat

Iwanami Shoten, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 206pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 978-4-00-022289-1.

This book on the *bakemono* (monsters) of the Edo period includes retellings of stories that originally appeared in *kusazōshi* and *kibyōshi*. It also looks at the general appeal of illustrated reading materials published in Edo and clarifies the relationship between *kusazōshi*, *kibyōshi*, and humorous *kokkeibon*.

Kusazōshi were read by both children and adults. Kabat starts by analyzing how authors dealt with the demands of this unique market. He then considers the increasingly formulaic nature of the stories and characters and discusses the effect this had on changing styles.

Illustrated monster books (*bakemono zōshi*) played an important role in Edo literature. Although Jippensha Ikku is best known for his humorous *kokkeibon*, he also wrote numerous *kibyōshi*. His *Tōkaidōchū*

hizakurige [trans. *Shank's Mare*] is acknowledged as a classic of Japanese literature, but critics have tended to dismiss Ikku's *kibyōshi* output or ignore it altogether.

However, a comparison of the monsters in Ikku's *kibyōshi* with the characters in *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* reveals considerable structural similarities between the genres. In both, characters encounter an unfamiliar world with different cultural expectations, and their slipups and gaffes are a source of laughter. Kabat looks at how the characters are depicted, and argues that Ikku's masterful portrayals of Yajirōbei and Kitahachi drew heavily on the sensibility and technique he had developed by writing illustrated monster stories. As well as providing a useful study of *bakemono zōshi*, the book suggests a new way of understanding the genealogy of humor in Edo fiction. (Chō)

Sakura wa hontō ni utsukushii no ka [Are Cherry Blossoms Really Beautiful?]

By Mizuhara Shion

Heibonsha, 2014. 175 x 106 mm. 288 pp. ¥860. ISBN 978-4-582-85723-8.

Cherry blossoms are the definitive symbol of Japanese spiritual culture. People often assume that the annual excitement over cherry blossoms has been part of Japanese culture since ancient times—but is this really the case, asks poet and essayist Mizuhara Shion. The book surveys how the significance of cherry blossoms has changed over the years, and how these changes fit into the history of poetry and prose.

In the distant past, cherry trees grew wild in the mountains far from human habitations. People attributed an occult power to the blossoms, believing they could foretell the success or failure of the year's rice harvest. A major shift in people's relationship with the blossoms came in 905 with the compilation of the *Kokinshū*, the first imperial collection of

waka poetry. This marked the first appearance of poems in which the scattering of cherry blossom petals was imbued with philosophical significance. The *Kokinshū* represents a deliberate attempt to break away from the Chinese poetry previously dominant at court and develop a distinctively Japanese aesthetic. Absolute sovereignty, says Mizuhara, led to the establishment of a system that “controlled human consciousness and even the subconscious.”

Mizuhara describes how cherry blossoms have appeared through the centuries in court poetry, *noh*, and *kabuki*, as well as in the spirit of the warrior, martial culture, and even in popular songs, and uses them to tell a millennium-long story of the relationships between poetry, narrative, and people. (Yonahara)



Mizuhara Shion

Born in 1959. Poet. In 2004 she received the Yamamoto Kenkichi Literary Prize and the Wakayama Bokusui Prize for her seventh collection of poems *Akarutae*. Known for her knowledge of *waka* and classical performing arts, she creates innovative *tanka* and verses based on classical *waka*.

The millennium-long story of cherry blossoms



Kawazoe Fusae

Born in 1953. Scholar of ancient and medieval literature. Professor of the Faculty of Education, Tokyo Gakugei University. Her works include *Hikaru Genji ga aishita ōchō burando-hin* [*Heian Court "Brand Goods" Treasured by the Shining Prince*].

*Symbols of
authority, position,
and wealth*

***Karamono no bunka shi* [A Cultural History of *Karamono* Imports]**

By Kawazoe Fusae

Iwanami Shoten, 2014. 175 x 106 mm. 258 pp. ¥880. ISBN 978-4-00-431477-6.

The term *karamono* originally referred to items imported into Japan from or via China. It later came to be used more widely to indicate foreign objects, whatever their origin. In some contexts, it described items made in Japan in imitation of foreign originals.

Until now there was no comprehensive survey of the process by which *karamono* entered Japan and became absorbed into local culture. Scholars tended to treat the subject within the framework of research into a particular period.

Taking a broader historical perspective that sheds light on aspects previous writers have neglected, the author paints a more complete picture of the reception of *karamono* and succeeds in correcting a number of mistaken interpretations.

Many scholars have assumed that the

influence of Chinese material culture began to wane after embassies to the Tang court came to an end in 894 (middle of the Heian period), leading to a shift to a more purely Japanese culture known as *kokufū bunka*. The history of how *karamono* were collected and cherished, however, shows that large numbers of objects from the continent continued to be imported through Chinese traders. Far from fading away, the appetite for luxuries from China and other countries may actually have increased.

Items acquired through trade with Song and Ming China entered the family collections of the shoguns and became new symbols of authority, position, and wealth. *Karamono* were always much more than collectors' items. During the Sengoku period, they were used as prestigious gifts to cement political alliances. (Chō)

BIOGRAPHY

***Aru bunjin gakusha no shōzō* [Portrait of a Scholar and Man of Letters]**

By Fujikawa Yoshiyuki

Shinshokan, 2014. 210 x 148 mm. 446 pp. ¥3,600. ISBN 978-4-403-21106-5.

Born in 1938, the author is a well-known scholar of English literature who has published definitive translations of works by writers like Nabokov and Wilde. His father, Fujikawa Hideo (1909–2003), was also a translator, famous for his renderings of Hofmannsthal and Rilke into Japanese. In this book, the son speculates that his father's ambition was to become a scholar grounded in the literary traditions of both Japan and the West. Hideo's father, Fujikawa Yū (1865–1940), studied in Germany and later became the founder of medical history in Japan. He had a profound influence on his friend and associate, the writer Mori Ōgai. This account of three generations of scholars vividly depicts a community of learning in which various genres and fields intersect and interact.

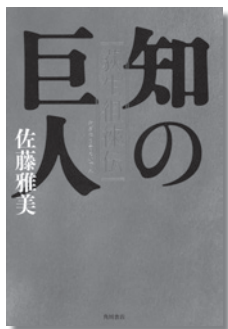
In crisp, restrained prose the book traces Hideo's life, analyzing his translations and writing and introducing some of his correspondence with prominent men of letters. In his fifties, Hideo immersed himself in the world of Edo-period Chinese poetry and prose and wrote a number of excellent studies on the subject. For many years this turning point in his father's life was something of a mystery for the son. Researching for this book allows the author to see the overall course of his father's life clearly for the first time. He suggests that Hideo aimed to live within a single, unified culture made up of Western, Japanese, and traditional elements. The book contains a moving portrait of Hideo's life of peace and contentment in his later years. (Yonahara)



Fujikawa Yoshiyuki

Born in 1938. Scholar of English literature, and literary critic. Professor emeritus of the University of Tokyo. His works include *Nabokofu mangekyō* [*A Nabokov Kaleidoscope*] and *Kimagure na dokusho: Gendai Igrisu bungaku no miryoku* [*Capricious Reading: The Fascination of Modern English Literature*].

*Vivid portrait of a
community of
learning*



Satō Masayoshi

Born in 1941. Won the Naoki Prize in 1993 for *Ebisuya Kihe-tebikae* [Notes of Ebisuya Kihee]. His other works include the series *Hanji torimono hikae* [Hanji's Detective Notes] and *Monogaki dōshin Inemuri Monzō* [Scribbler Policeman, Dozing Monzō].

Fictional biography of a major eighteenth-century thinker

***Chi no kyojin: Ogyū Sorai den* [Colossus of Knowledge: A Biography of Ogyū Sorai]** By Satō Masayoshi

Kadokawa, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 372 pp. ¥1,900. ISBN 978-4-04-110755-3.

Ogyū Sorai, a Confucian scholar active in Japan during the eighteenth century, is famous for the major changes he brought about in the thought of Tokugawa Japan. But until now there have been only a few accessible introductions to his life and thought for the general reader. This book fills that gap. It is neither a study of Sorai's thought nor a conventional biography but a novel with Sorai as its main protagonist. Scrupulously based on the latest scholarship, the novel is nevertheless an ideal introduction to the subject.

Ogyū Sorai is best known for his critique of Neo-Confucianism, the shared philosophical foundation of intellectual thought throughout East Asia at the time. Sorai's ambition was to restore what he believed to be the original cultural system

of Confucianism. To achieve this, he carried out a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of the Confucian classics built on exacting linguistic scholarship. Based on this revived version of Confucianism, he discussed the policies that should be used in actual government. Eventually, the Tokugawa government recognized his talent and he rose to the position of suggesting policies directly to the shogun himself, the highest honor possible for an intellectual at the time.

Many other Confucian scholars besides Ogyū Sorai himself appear in the book, making this an excellent introduction that brings the history of Tokugawa thought alive. (Karube)

HISTORY

***Kyōkairyō Nagasaki: Iezusu-kai to Nihon* [Nagasaki Under Ecclesiastical Rule: The Society of Jesus and Japan]**

By Anno Masaki

Kōdansha, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 224 pp. ¥1,550. ISBN 978-4-06-258579-8.

Christianity first arrived in Japan in the mid-sixteenth century, brought by Jesuit missionaries from Portugal. For a time, the new religion won large numbers of converts, particularly in the western parts of the country. But after first Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) and then Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) brought the country under unified control, Christianity was outlawed and its followers persecuted.

Most previous accounts of the early development of Christianity in Japan have focused on these tragic aspects: the ruthless suppression and the martyrdoms that followed. In this study, historian Anno Masaki turns his attention to another side of the story, and examines the “ecclesiastical territory” that existed under Jesuit rule

after a local daimyo turned over control of lands that included the port of Nagasaki. The Jesuits had their own armed forces to maintain order within their territory and grew rich thanks to involvement as a broker in the international silk trade.

In medieval Japan, powerful Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines controlled land rights and, as *kenmon* (socially privileged groups), exercised political authority on a small scale. Anno's new interpretation sees the Society of Jesus as another *kenmon* of this kind in sixteenth-century Japan. Based on meticulous use of historical materials, the book makes clear the activities of Christians in Japan and will dramatically change the way readers look at the history of the period. (Karube)



Anno Masaki

Born in 1940. Specialist in the history of negotiations with other countries; professor emeritus of Hirosaki University and professor at Seitoku University. In 1989, he received the Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities for *Bateren tsuihōrei* [The Edict Expelling the Jesuit Priests].

Jesuit power in sixteenth-century Japan



Goza Yūichi

Born in 1980. Received Ph.D in 2011 for "A Study of the Principle of Group Solidarity of Local Communities in Medieval Japan." He is currently a researcher specializing in Japanese history in the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, University of Tokyo.

The truth about the samurai of medieval times

Sensō no Nihon chūseishi **[A Military History of Medieval Japan]**

By Goza Yūichi

Shinchōsha, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 335 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 978-4-10-603739-9.

The popular image of samurai warriors of medieval Japan has often been covered in legend and myth. In *Bushido, the Soul of Japan*, for example, Nitobe Inazō claimed that the samurai fought nobly in single combat and never resorted to underhanded tactics in battle. Goza Yūichi, however, uses historical sources documenting the Mongol invasions of Japan in the thirteenth century to show that the samurai did indeed fight in numbers when necessary.

He also examines the strategies the samurai adopted for survival during the long period of civil war and unrest that raged through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These were not brave warriors always resolved to sacrifice their lives, as the legends might suggest. Worried about their families, the samurai avoided battle

as much as possible. Even the groups of samurai called *ikki*, the author argues, were not so much about taking the battle to the enemy as about ensuring their own survival.

This book, based on the latest scholarship, offers reliable readings of many of the most important issues in Japanese medieval history, making it an ideal overview of the latest currents in Japanese scholarship in the field. (Karube)

Yakeato kara no demokurashī **[Democracy Out of the Ruins] (2 vols.)**

By Yoshimi Yoshiaki

Vol. I: Iwanami Shoten, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 258 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 978-4-00-029125-5.

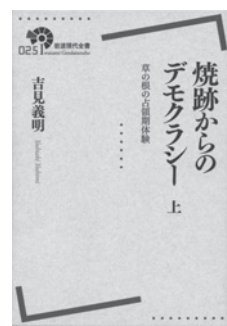
Vol. II: Iwanami Shoten, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 264 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 978-4-00-029126-2.

How did ordinary people in Japan understand the social upheaval that took place during the seven years Japan spent under the Allied Occupation after the end of World War II, and what were their hopes for the future? John Dower previously examined these questions in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. Research papers by Yoshimi Yoshiaki were among Dower's chief sources for understanding what people thought at the time.

Yakeato kara no demokurashī is perhaps the definitive edition of that research. Having amassed a huge collection of materials from Japan and the United States, Yoshimi draws on statements left behind by mostly unknown individuals to present a comprehensive view of the period. This book will contain much that

is new for most readers.

For example, many intellectuals at the time argued that in order to establish true democracy in Japan the country needed not just reforms of its institutions like those imposed by the occupying forces but a spiritual revolution in the minds of the Japanese people themselves. Included in this book is a piece written by a mining worker who is deeply moved by this idea and tries to respond to it. The democratization of Japan was not something that happened just because of pressure from the Allied powers. Ordinary people all over Japan actively supported it. The book contains much food for thought regarding the state of Japanese politics today and the process of democratizing non-democratic regimes more generally. (Karube)



Yoshimi Yoshiaki

Born in 1946. Professor of history of Japan, Faculty of Commerce, Chuo University, specializing in the issues of war responsibility and popular society in wartime. Among his works is *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II*.

How ordinary people helped forge democracy in Japan

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY



Shimono Toshimi

Born in 1929. A scholar of folklore, Shimono is a leading authority on the folklore of the southern region of Japan and recipient of the 1st Yanagita Kunio Prize. Among his many works is *Ta no kami to moriyama no kami* [*Gods of the Rice Paddies and Gods of Forested Mountains*].

An important cross-roads of diverse influences

Amami shotō no minzoku bunkashi [A Compendium of Folklore from the Amami Islands] By Shimono Toshimi

Nanpō Shinsha, 2014. 210 x 148 mm. 442 pp. ¥3,500. ISBN 978-4-86124-273-1.

Located between the Japanese main islands and Okinawa, the Amami islands were ruled first by the Ryukyu kingdom and in the Edo period were controlled by the Satsuma domain based in modern Kagoshima. They were at the important crossroads of the maritime traffic in both the pan-East China Sea area and the western Pacific, and the people thus absorbed diverse influences and wove them into a distinctive cultural blend of their own. While part of the wider Ryukyuan cultural sphere, the islands successfully preserve the foundations of their own culture.

The author is a comparative folklorist who has compiled the findings of his exhaustive research in every community of the Amami islands over half a century. The project was unprecedented in scale; the main island of Amami Ōshima alone

is home to 150 such communities.

The book is divided into five sections that include subjects like folk utensils, daily life, and occupations. It contains extremely detailed discussions of everything from festivals and the performing arts to religious beliefs, magic, cosmetics, and language. The author's extensive interviews and 800 photographs make for an invaluable document.

Even today, the people of the islands come together on summer nights to perform ring dances known as *hachigatsu odori* or "eighth month dances." Shimono traces this custom genealogically to the original transmission of rice cultivation to the islands and the beginnings of joint communal labor, and shows how the group dance united the community in celebration of agriculture. (Yonahara)

Nazuke no minzokugaku [A Folklore of Names]

By Tanaka Sen'ichi

Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 240 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 978-4-642-05773-8.

Japanese personal and place names are often both fascinating and strange. Where do the names for Japan's mountains, rivers, and people come from? This book is a folklorist's attempt to answer that question.

Discourse on naming practices differs from one academic field to another. In folklore studies, attention tends to focus on how names deal with the characteristics of the thing being named and the suitability of the name to its subject. This book goes further, finding in names evidence of the hopes and aspirations of the people who devised them.

Place names come under three broad categories: natural, cultural, and aspirational. "Natural" place names are further divided into four types, including names based on topography or other natural features and names based on climatic condi-

tions. "Cultural" place names are divided into five groups, including names alluding to development of the land or how it will be used, and Buddhist or Shintō names. The author proposes ten types of place names in all, including names based on people's aspirations for the place and the lives they will live there.

The book's introduction to the folklore of personal names and naming practices is particularly valuable. Drawing on original fieldwork, Tanaka shows how regional practices differ in terms of when, how, and by whom a new name is given, and the celebrations held to mark the occasion. He also explains the reasons behind these different regional practices. This accessible volume is an ideal introduction for anyone wanting to understand personal and geographical names in Japan. (Chō)



Tanaka Sen'ichi

Born in 1939. Folklorist and professor emeritus of Seijō University, he holds a Ph.D. in folklore studies. His works include *Matsuri o kou kamigami* [*Unwelcome Deities*] and *Kuyō no kokoro to gankake no katachi* [*The Spirit of Kuyō Ceremonies for the Repose of Spirits and the Forms of Gankake Prayer*].

The origins of Japanese names for people and places



Saitō Mareshi

Born in 1963. Professor at the University of Tokyo. Received Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities for *Kan bunmyaku no kindai: Shin-matsu = Meiji no bungakuken* (Classical Chinese Context in the Modern Age: The Late Qing and Meiji Era Literature Sphere) in 2005.

*The history of
Chinese writing in
East Asia*

Kanji sekai no chihei [The Horizons of the Kanji World]

By Saitō Mareshi

Shinchōsha, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 223 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-10-603750-4.

Japanese scholars often use the term *kanji bunka-ken* or “kanji cultural sphere” to refer to the countries that incorporated Chinese characters and formed their own written languages under Chinese influence. Saitō Mareshi believes this term suggests a simplistic cultural unity that never existed. He examines the diverse experiences of Chinese-derived writing systems in East Asia behind the simpler term *kanji-ken* (kanji sphere), and looks at what the Chinese script has brought to each culture.

The book traces the historical development of Chinese characters and related writing systems from the oracle bones that are the earliest surviving examples of Chinese writing to the invention of the phonetic Hangeul script in Korea and the *kana* syllabaries in Japan. The author emphasizes throughout that writing did not

emerge as a simple means of copying down speech, and that there is no exact correspondence between speech and writing. Chinese characters illustrate this point perfectly.

The bone oracle script was originally independent of speech and was imbued with a sacred significance that set it apart from everyday language. Over time, people began to use the characters to write down ordinary speech and the script was gradually “domesticated.” The ideology of a “national language” developed in juxtaposition to the characters imported from overseas. Discussing the conflict and interaction between spoken and written language that lies at the root of these developments, the author offers a broad perspective on the multilingual and multiorthographic realities of the “kanji sphere.” (Nozaki)

Wasei Eigo jiten [A Dictionary of “Made-in-Japan” English]

By Kameda Naoki, Aoyagi Yukie, and John. M. Christiansen

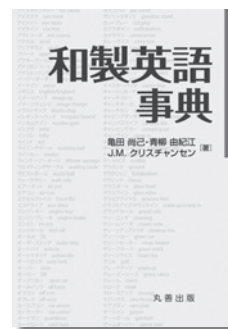
Maruzen Shuppan, 2014. 190 x 130 mm. 320 pp. ¥3,800. ISBN 978-4-621-08763-3.

Japanese conversation is often sprinkled with “English” words. In many cases, however, it is only the Japanese themselves who regard these terms as English. Words like “shūkurūmu” (nothing to do with “shoe cream,” but a kind of cream puff), “freeter” (a job-hopping part-timer), “wide show” (TV gossip show; talk show), and “kone” (connections; pull) are just a few examples of “Janglish” coinages that may baffle native speakers of English.

This book introduces 500 examples of *wasei eigo*, giving the intended meaning and explaining how the word is likely to be misunderstood by English speakers. Perhaps the book’s major contribution is its analysis of the origins of many *wasei eigo* coinages.

By and large, the authors say, made-in-

Japan coinages follow one of two patterns. The first is to form an abbreviation by omitting the second half of the original English word; *infura* (from “infrastructure”) is an example. A second is to shorten two English words and combine them, as in the case of *sekuhara*, formed from the initial syllables of the Japanese pronunciation of “sexual harassment.” Abbreviations of this kind are common in Japanese, and English terms are simply subjected to the same treatment as native vocabulary. The book introduces numerous terms that were coined deliberately or came into common use after they were used in the title of a popular movie, book, or song. This volume is a useful reference tool as well as an enlightening study of language and culture. (Yonahara)



Kameda Naoki, Aoyagi Yukie, and John. M. Christiansen

Kameda is professor emeritus at Doshisha University and a specialist in international business communication. Aoyagi is a full-time lecturer at Seitoku University specializing in business English. Christiansen heads a group of English-language schools in the Osaka area.

*Useful reference
and enlightening
study*

No. 9: Hayashi Fumiko and Yakushima

Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1903, Hayashi Fumiko was one of the most important Japanese women writers of the twentieth century. In the travel essay *Yakushima kikō* [A Journey to Yakushima] she describes a trip she took to the remote island off southern Kyushu not long before she died. The young women she saw there working barefoot in the fields, reminded her of her own impoverished childhood.

Hayashi Fumiko set out for Yakushima in April 1950. She went in part to research the setting for a novel she had in mind, but her initial assignment was to write a travel piece for a magazine. Two editors traveled with her. At the time, the only way to reach Yakushima was by boat from Kagoshima, and when conditions were rough the island was cut off. Hayashi and her editors had to wait three days in Kagoshima before a boat could leave the port. They finally set out early on the morning of the fourth day aboard the *Terukuni-maru*, a ship with a displacement of just over 1000 tons. After stopping at the island of Tanegashima, they finally docked in the port of Miyanoura on the morning of their fifth day. Hayashi Fumiko's account makes no mention of how long the sea journey took; in those days, it was probably taken for granted that travel to the remoter islands of the archipelago required lengthy travel times and plenty of patience.

Yakushima lies some 70 kilometers south of Cape Sata, the southernmost point of Kyushu. The island is mountainous, with many of its peaks towering over 1000 meters, including the highest of all, Mt. Miyanoura (1935 meters). The island is sometimes known as the "Alps on the Sea." The rugged terrain and the rainy climate produce the island's famously luxuriant vegetation, and the upper slopes of the mountains are covered with soaring cedar trees known as *Yaku-sugi*.

Hayashi Fumiko and her fellow travelers had reserved rooms in the smaller port town of Anbō. The harbor there was not equipped to deal with such a large ship, and a small tugboat came out to meet the passengers. As the tug pulled closer to the shore, the mountains loomed up over the bay in front of them.

The mountains were awe-inspiring. The gloomy, cloud-covered skies were gone, and the mist-wreathed peaks of the mountains stretched in undulating layers as far as the eye could see.

After a meal, their first stop was at the forestry department office. Most of the island was covered in woodland that belonged to the national government. This gave the forestry office a position of unrivalled importance. As Hayashi writes: "It would be impossible to write about the island without discussing the role of the forestry department." The island's roads, electricity, and other facilities were all under the control of the department; it was only natural that Hayashi and her editors should stop by to introduce themselves to the influential figures in the community and ask for help with their research. Told that the office had no pamphlets or other written information, being the conscientious person she was, Hayashi carefully noted down the names of all the trees in her account:

cedar, fir, Japanese hemlock, red pine, black pine, and so on.

Apparently suffering from a cold and fever, Hayashi was close to exhaustion by this point. "I felt dazed, as if my body were slowly sinking." Her symptoms may have presaged something more serious. Although she had no way of knowing it at the time, Hayashi Fumiko would die of a heart attack in June the following year. The feeling of fatigue may have been the first warning signs. In fact, *Yakushima kikō* is shot through with whispered intimations of something about to go wrong. "I felt somehow pursued; it was a strange and unsettling feeling," she writes at one point. At another, she says: "I felt feverish and had no interest in anything."

As if to pull herself out of her lethargy, Hayashi Fumiko threw herself into research for her piece. She traveled over a narrow-gauge logging railroad to a mountain pass to visit a family who lived in a small hut there. On the way back she was steered back downhill in a single handcar under torrential rain, the hurtling journey down the hillside feeling as if we were "bouncing balls." At their inn that night, a group of tax officials from the mainland were being wine and dined until the early hours, when they stumbled out loudly in the company of a group of women.

The next place they wanted to visit was around 15 kilometers away overland. Learning that a local transportation company owned a bus that had never been used, Hayashi and her editors arranged for the owner to drive them there



in his new bus. The road conditions were terrible, and the passengers were flung from their seats “like beans popping in a pan.” At one point, their route took them across a rickety, half-rotten bridge, the deep ravine visible below thoroughly terrifying them. Groups of local children chased after the vehicle like a flock of chickens.

The driver told us that whenever he drove this way, the children would run close behind his truck for several miles. They were all barefoot.

The bus took two hours to cover the relatively short distance. When they arrived, they found a small thatched hut that served as a factory where sugarcane was being boiled down to make black sugar. Barefooted young women carried sheaves of barley on their backs. Out to sea, white birds skimmed across the crests of the waves. “Suddenly the scenery struck me as being unbearably lonely, totally removed from any human contact.”

Besides sugar, Hayashi notes, the island also exported *ponkan* oranges, flying fish, a unique species of horse (*ushiuma*), seaweed, charcoal, and other items. She seems to have taken detailed notes about everything she encountered on her travels. She noticed dog pelts hanging from the eaves of several houses. When they got back to their lodgings, they found that because of rough seas it was unlikely they would be able to get a boat without traveling to Miyanoura. Once more, they negotiated a deal with the owner of the bus.

The road conditions were even worse than on the previous occasion, and each time the tires stuck deep in the mud the driver and his assistant gathered pieces of wood and levered the wheels out of the mire. As night fell, children rushed out of the houses to chase after the vehicle as it made its way laboriously to the port. The houses had stones on the roofs to weigh down the shingling, and windows had no glass, only wooden shutters. There was no electricity; houses were lit with oil lamps. The children’s eyes glinted in the headlights of the bus as it passed. Watching the children standing in the dark road waving, Hayashi Fumiko writes: “I felt a stabbing in my heart. . . . The moon shone wanly between the trees. A feeling of desolation surged through me, as though I were completely lost and didn’t know what to do.”

Today, Yakushima lies just one hour from Kagoshima by plane. Its lush vegetation and rich natural habitat have earned it a place on UNESCO’s World Heritage list. A constant stream of hikers visits the island year round to climb the Miyanoura peak, which was voted one of the hundred “most beautiful mountains in Japan.” A road now encircles the island. The map shows an island demarcated into differently shaded areas of natural protection: “national park: special protected area,” “natural conservation area,” “recreation forest,” “forest ecosystem conservation area,” and so on. More or less the entire area has been designated as some kind of protected area by either the national and prefectural government at some stage, so although the names vary there is no marked difference between them. As Hayashi Fumiko knew from bitter experience, Yakushima is a place of heavy rainfall. In the areas between the mountains, annual rainfall ranges from 8,000 to 10,000 millimeters. (I had to double-check the

numbers to make sure I hadn’t miscounted the zeroes: up to ten *thousand* millimeters a year.)

In the Edo period (1603–1867), the island was under the control of the Shimazu feudal domain based in present-day Kagoshima prefecture. A local magistrate (*dai-kan*) was responsible for Yakushima, but he was based in Kagoshima and sent a deputy to take charge of affairs on the island. The islanders referred to the deputy as *danna*, or “master.” Since no rice was grown, the islanders paid their annual taxes in slate-like slabs of cedar, 2,310 slates of wood being counted as the equivalent of one bale of rice. The astonishing number of wooden slates that were shipped to the mainland over the years speaks of the heavy burden imposed by taxation. Hayashi Fumiko refers to tax in the context of sugar, the island’s chief commodity. Manufactured by the villagers using quite primitive methods, each *kin* of sugar (approximately 600 grams) was subject to a consumption tax of 18 yen, plus an income tax on top of that. She also notes the tax inspectors’ rowdy carousing and all-night womanizing. At one stage she writes, “Interest in politics could be described as non-existent in this village, and there doesn’t seem to be any true political party.” She seems to suggest that the feudal traditions of the “master” from the mainland remained unchanged.

Hayashi Fumiko’s novel *Ukigumo* [trans. *Floating Clouds*] came out two months before she died in June 1951. The book’s doomed lovers return from Indochina after Japan’s defeat in the war and end up on Yakushima, where the rich natural environment and unpretentious people of this “abandoned island” help to soothe their mental scars for a time. Kagoshima was the city where Hayashi had spent her impoverished childhood as the daughter of itinerant peddlers. “I too spent my early years here on Sakurajima, running barefoot along the stony paths.” She comes to see the similarities between herself and the barefooted young women she saw toiling on the island. Perhaps it was the dreamlike state of mind induced by these memories that inspired the poems she included in her account.

Yakushima, this island heavy with mountains and
young women
The shoeless soles of the young women and children
flashing white



Mountains of Yakushima as viewed from the sea.
(Photo by (c)Tomo.Yun, URL: <http://www.yunphoto.net/>)

The sandy ground soft like canvas
A young woman shyly smiles

In Onoaida, one of the places she visited for her research, there was a natural hot spring with a public bathhouse. Hayashi was normally a great lover of hot springs, but on this occasion held off from entering because of her cold. If she had gone in, she would no doubt have been pleased to see the strong physiques of the local women.

In May, the flying fish are in season
And all around Yakushima is a frame of silver fish
An Olympus of flying fish shining on the blue sea

The verse she wrote about the island is touched with a note of prayer. This “Olympus of flying fish” was a fitting setting indeed for a strong woman.

(Ikeuchi Osamu, essayist and scholar of German literature)

Events and Trends

The 2014 Japan Foundation Awards

The recipients of the Japan Foundation Awards for 2014 were announced on August 28. The award ceremony took place on October 14. The winners were Yanagiya Sankyō, *rakugo* performer, Peter Drysdale, professor emeritus of the Australian National University, and the Japanese Philology Department, Institute of Asian and African Countries, Lomonosov Moscow State University.

Yanagiya Sankyō is a *rakugo* storyteller, a master of traditional tales of human foibles and comical stories. In addition to his professional activities, he has worked to convey the appeal of Japanese language and culture through lectures and *rakugo* performances. He has performed and given lectures not only for international students in Japan, but in the United States, Korea, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and other countries. He received the 63rd Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Art Encouragement Prize in 2013. The Japan Foundation Award was conferred in recognition of Yanagiya's continuous commitment to Japanese-language education in Japan and overseas.

Professor Drysdale is known worldwide for policy research on the economies of Japan and East Asia. In particular, his research emphasizing economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region played a significant role in the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. His book

International Economic Pluralism: Economic Policy in East Asia and the Pacific (Allen & Unwin and Columbia University, 1988) won an Asia-Pacific Award in 1989. He received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon from the Government of Japan in 2001. The Japan Foundation Award was conferred in recognition of his contributions to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Australia.

The Japanese Philology Department, Institute of Asian and African Countries, Lomonosov Moscow State University, was established in 1956. Since then, the Department has played a central role in Japanese-language education in Russia and the former Soviet Union, producing many teachers and researchers specializing in Japanese language education, and developing Japanese language teaching materials. The Japan Foundation Award was conferred in recognition of the Department's dedicated efforts to Japanese-language education over 50 years, thereby supporting cultural exchange and contributing to better relations between Japan and Russia.

Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes Announced

The winners of the 151st Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes (sponsored by the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Literature) have been selected and awards presented at a ceremony on July 17. The Akutagawa Prize went to Shibasaki Tomoka for *Haru no niwa*

[Spring Garden], which originally appeared in the June edition of *Bun-gakukai*. The Naoki Prize was awarded to Kurokawa Hiroyuki for *Hamon* [Excommunication], published by Kadokawa.

Shibasaki was born in Osaka Prefecture in 1973. She won the Minister of Education's Encouragement Prize for New Artists and the Oda Sakunosuke Prize for *Sono machi no ima wa* [The Way the Town Is Now]. This was the fourth time she had been nominated for the Akutagawa Prize.

The story is set in an old apartment building in the Setagaya ward of Tokyo, and depicts the relationship between a man who used to work as a hair stylist and a woman who lives next door, portraying daily life in a big city where people are brought together and tugged apart by the drifting tides of time. Shibasaki said she wanted to write a story in which people come and go through space and time. Takagi Nobuko, one of the judges, praised the work for its “effective shifts of perspective, which create a mysterious blurring. The layering of time, and the shimmering vividness of color; this story is a big step forward from her previous work in terms of perfection and maturity.”

Kurokawa was born in Ehime Prefecture in 1949. He won the Mystery Writers of Japan Award in 1996 for *Kaunto Puran* [Count Plan]. This was his sixth nomination for the Naoki Prize.

His winning novel is a hard-boiled thriller about a construction consultant and a gang member trying to get back

some stolen money that had been set aside for making a film. "I'm very fortunate for having been nominated so many times," commented Kurokawa. "The prize money? Oh, I'm going to go to Macao and blow it in the casinos," he joked.

Ijūin Shizuka, one of the judges, said: "I think it's wonderful the way he's able to create something so gripping without describing the psychological state of his characters. This was the most entertaining of the nominated works."

Complete Edition of Inō Tadataka's Maps Published

A complete edition of maps drawn by the Edo-period cartographer and explorer Inō Tadataka (1745–1818) was published in November 2013 by Kawade Shobō Shinsha (*Inō-zu tai-zen*, 7 vols., ¥129,600). The originals, which Inō submitted to the shogunate, are believed to have been destroyed by fire. This edition brings together copies of those maps, reproducing them using color restoration techniques that bring them remarkably close to the originals.

According to the publisher this is the most comprehensive edition of Inō's work to date. Special printing methods were used to bring out the finest details. As a result, the set is rather expensive—but sales have exceeded expectations, with more than 2000 copies already sold, almost 70 percent of them to private collectors.

Discovery of an Unsent Love Letter by Kawabata Yasunari

Eleven letters documenting the tragic first love of Nobel Prize-winning writer Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) were recently discovered in Kawabata's former residence in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture. The letters trace a relationship that was a major influence on many of the author's early works, including *Izu no odoriko* [trans. *The Izu Dancer*] the best-known work of his early period. Kawabata wrote only one of the letters, which he never sent; the remaining ten were letters he received from Hatsuyo, his first sweetheart. Kawabata met Itō Hatsuyo in 1919 when

she was working in a Tokyo café. Kawabata was a student at the elite First High School (later a part of Tokyo University), and would have been around 20 at the time. They became engaged in 1921, when Kawabata was 22 and Hatsuyo was 15, but she broke off the engagement almost immediately and the relationship ended.

Hatsuyo's letters date from September to November 1921. Until late October the tone of the letters suggests a close, trusting relationship between the lovers. In one she writes, "How happy I am to think you could love someone like me." But in early November she suddenly announces that they can never meet again. She breaks off the engagement, citing an "emergency" that she refuses to discuss: "I would rather die than speak of it," she writes. Kawabata's unsent letter, roughly 700 characters long, describes his anguished wait for a reply to his unanswered letters. "I yearn for you. I can't do a thing until we meet. . . I miss you so much, and I can't sleep at night for worry that you might be lying sick somewhere." The date of the letter is unclear but context suggests it must have been written sometime after late October 1921.

The discovery of the letters reveals that Kawabata quoted parts of Hatsuyo's letters in his story *Hijō* [Emergency], changing personal names and other details. A selection of the letters went on public display at the Okayama Prefectural Museum July 16 to August 24.

Sōseki and the People Who Knew Him

A new reference book has been published that contains biographic details of many of the people who played a role in the life of Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916). *Natsume Sōseki shūhen jinbutsu jiten* [A Dictionary of the People Around Natsume Sōseki] (Kasama Shoin) contains entries on 138 people who knew the writer. The entries are divided into seven periods, from the writer's childhood and student days through his teaching stints in Matsuyama and Kumamoto, his time in London, all the way to the final years before his death. Among

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Editing, Translation, Design, and Production

Showa Information Process Co., Ltd.

Printed in Japan on recycled paper
© The Japan Foundation 2014
ISSN 0918-9580

those covered are the writer's relatives, his teachers, friends, pupils, and fellow writers. The entries provide information on the background and life of each individual, focusing on how they influenced Sōseki's work and were influenced by him in turn. The book is arranged in chronological order, making it possible to follow Sōseki's career and writing through the people he knew throughout his life.

New Government Funding for Translation Program

The Japanese government has announced plans for a new program to fund and publish English translations of books in the fields of culture, society, natural science, and technology. A panel of seven experts will select the works. The project eventually hopes to translate around 100 works, which will be donated free of charge to research facilities and libraries overseas. The project started this fiscal year (April 2014 to March 2015), with an initial batch of around ten books planned.

From a Village in Japan to a Garden in France

The 300-year-old apartment and paint-factory-turned house on Rue Tudelle in Orléans, France has a huge backyard with a beautiful magnolia tree. The owners are renowned French poet Claude Mouchard, and his wife, Hélène Mouchard-Zay. Japanese writer Ono Masatsugu used to sit for hours beneath the majestic magnolia, reveling in stimulating repartee with his landlord couple, meeting with the immigrants and refugees they supported, and writing stories about his remote hometown in Japan.

Influenced greatly by what he saw and discussed with his mentors during a five-year stay at the Mouchard's apartment, Ono created a fantastical novel set in a small coastal village on Japan's southern island of Kyushu. He had lived there until he went to the University of Tokyo and then moved on to do research on Francophone literature at the University of Paris VIII.

"What I learned from Claude and Hélène is immense," proclaims Ono, who is now back in Tokyo and teaches at Rikkyo University. "In their garden, I met so many marginalized and suffering people, including a man who had escaped from Sudan. Each encounter inspires me, and affects, albeit indirectly, my storytelling."

The novel, *Nigiyakana wan ni seowareta fune* [The Boat Carried by the Bustling Bay], which Ono wrote at the Mouchard's apartment, features appealing characters like the drunk who visits his neighbor every day and the corrupt cop cozying up with local crime bosses, as well as the ordinary citizens of a sparsely populated village in Japan.

The novel won the Mishima Yukio Prize and one of the judges praised the author as a combination of the two masters of magic realism, Columbian Gabriel García Márquez and Japanese Nakagami Kenji.

"Some people do believe in superstition and magic," laughs Ono, who admits García Márquez and Nakagami are among his favorite authors. "I love pre-modernistic hinterlands" about which those literary giants wrote—"their people, myths, and history."

Ono also confesses that his reading of the French Caribbean literature prompted him to shift his interests from French philosophy to Francophone literature and fiction writing. "I was moved when I read Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronique des sept misères* [trans. *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*]," he recalls. "It was astonishing to find a novel that addressed the theme of islanders suffering from the erosion of their local culture. Tales about worlds left behind by the tide of globalization always touch me deeply."

Like Chamoiseau, who sets his stories on his native island of Martinique and adopts the style of magic realism, Ono usually writes stories set in his rural Kyushu village. His stories invariably present dualities—man and nature, past and present, the real and the spiritual, and so on.

The character types that regularly appear in his novels include people with mental disabilities or limited education. For example, *Maikurobasu* [Microbus] depicts Nobuo, a man who cannot speak but skillfully drives a microbus along the winding roads of the saw-tooth coastline. Others are men who cannot live independently of their mothers.

The mothers are heroines playing supporting roles in Ono novels like *Kyu-nenmae no inori* [The Nine-Year-Old Prayer] and *Aku no hana* [trans. Bad Seeds].

Although many of his favorite character-types are men, it is also worth noting that Ono's fictional narrator tends to be a woman.

Ono's writing is highly poetic and his sentence structures easy to translate. In his book, *Ura kara magunoria no niwa e* [From a Remote Seaside Village to a Garden of Magnolia], Ono explains that he began to choose words more carefully after he translated Japanese poems into French with his mentor, Mouchard, who doesn't know Japanese.

"In explaining the meaning of each word and its sound effect to someone who doesn't know the language, I learned that it's important to pay more attention to the sound and the form of the word, like a poet," Ono says.

The 44-year-old writer, who has published Japanese translations of French works by Édouard Glissant and Marie NDiaye, also says that whenever he is stuck in constructing sentences, when writing novels, he tries to think in French. "Translating Francophone literature into Japanese certainly affects my own writing, as I strive to be sensitive to the sound and flavor of French and examine its logic and expressiveness," Ono says. "When searching for the right Japanese words, I try to cultivate the same sensitivity in my mother tongue when I am writing," he adds.

Recently, Ono had another kind of translation experience. After talking with David G. Boyd, who was translating his novella *Aku no hana* into English, Ono found parts of Boyd's translation to be better written than his original, so "I rewrote some of my Japanese text," in a type of reverse translation exercise, says Ono. "Producing novels is, in a way, translating what's in my head into language."

Mentioning Charles Baudelaire, Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, Paul Auster, and other prominent novelists, Ono adds, "Many novelists are also well-known translators."

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since Ono left his seaside village in Kyushu. Though he was once eager to escape, it is his own village that drove him to write in a garden in France and that still most occupies his mind. Today, every time the author returns there, he sits down with the elders of the village, asking them to tell their stories.

"We cannot create novels out of nothing," Ono asserts. By blending oral histories of people in Kyushu with valuable anecdotes from France, the up-and-coming novelist lives to keep the past from fading away.

(Kawakatsu Miki, freelance writer)



Ono Masatsugu

Born in 1970. A writer, translator, researcher of Francophone literature. Won the Mishima Yukio Prize for *Nigiyaka na wan ni seowareta fune*, which was translated into Vietnamese. The English translation of *Aku no hana* is available on Granta magazine's website www.granta.com/New-Writing/Bad-Seeds, and other short stories appear in the periodical *Monkey Business* magazine series.