



● ● ● Symposium and Workshop—A Wild Haruki Chase: How the World Is Reading and Translating Murakami



▲ The two-day Tokyo program attracted a total of 750 people.



▲ Dmitry Kovalenin of Russia uses a blackboard to give a graphical explanation of Murakami's worldview.



▲ Richard Powers gives a keynote speech.

Novels by Murakami Haruki have been translated into more than 30 different languages. The author's works can thus be thought of as a lingua franca for young readers around the world. What is the biggest appeal of Murakami's stories? How does his message relate to the major issues confronting modern society? And what is the role of translation in a rapidly globalizing world? In March 2006 the translators, novelists, and critics most qualified to address these questions were invited to take part in symposiums and workshops titled "A Wild Haruki Chase: How the World Is Reading and Translating Murakami" in Tokyo, Kobe, and Sapporo.

The Tokyo program was held on March 25 and 26 and attracted a total of around 750 people. Richard Powers, one of the most celebrated novelists in the United States, gave a keynote presentation, which was followed by a panel discussion among translators. They shared their knowledge of how Murakami is being translated, published, and read in their respective countries, and offered insights on why Murakami is so popular and related interesting episodes during the translation process. During the workshop on translation, comparative analyses of technical points were made by examining how specific passages from Murakami's works were treated. Panelists also

related the joy of translating Murakami. In the workshop on representation, the global Haruki boom was examined from the viewpoint of cultural representation. Comparisons were made of how Murakami's works were being read in various countries, and trends were revealed in the foreign acceptance of Murakami's works. At Kobe High School, Murakami's alma mater, Professor Yomota Inuhiko gave a keynote speech and also moderated a panel discussion on the latest Murakami-related developments around the world.

In Hokkaido, which is deeply associated with some of Murakami's novels, Professor Mochizuki Tetsuo of Hokkaido University's Slavic Research Center led a discussion on the secret of Murakami's popularity in various countries. The Hokkaido program was held at Hokkaido University in the city of Sapporo.

The programs examined such issues as how foreign readers of Japanese literature regard Murakami's works, how the Murakami boom is changing Japan's image among foreign readers, and what the role of translation should be in a globalizing world.

The contents of the workshops and symposiums, which explored the possibilities of new forms of communication through Murakami literature, were published in book form in October 2006.

●●● The Asia Leadership Fellow Program (ALFP)

The Asia Leadership Fellow Program seeks to create a close personal and professional network of intellectuals in Asia who are deeply rooted in and committed to civil society beyond their own cultural, disciplinary, and geopolitical backgrounds. Jointly founded by the Japan Foundation and the International House of Japan in 1996, the ALFP annually provides an opportunity for selected leaders from across Asia to reside for two months at the International House of Japan in Tokyo and engage in collaborative and individual research and exchange activities. Since its initiation, the program has annually invited five to eight fellows from nearly 15 countries, and there are now over 50 fellows representing diverse professional backgrounds, ranging from academia, journalism, publishing, law, education, and the arts, in nongovernmental organizations and nonprofit activities.

Marking the 10th anniversary of the program, a reunion conference was held in Fukuoka and Busan from June 26 to 30, 2005, with the participation of 39 ALFP fellows. Under the theme, “Asia as a Community: Concept or Reality?” a wide variety of topics were discussed to examine the identity of Asia as a hybrid entity with diverse and pluralistic values and growing solidarity. Two other commemorative projects were conducted: the compilation of a directory of all 54 fellows with updated information on each fellow, including affiliation, specialty, and accomplishments, such as major publications, and an alumni book project, in which selected writings by ALFP fellows were edited into book form and published under the title, “The Community of Asia: Concept or Reality?” in May 2006.



●●● Beijing Center for Japanese Studies Twentieth Anniversary International Symposium

The year 2005 was the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, as well as the twenty-fifth year since the founding of its predecessor, the Ohira School. To celebrate this milestone, an international symposium was conducted under the theme of current Japanese affairs. The program included a commemorative lecture, panel discussions, group sessions, and a presentation on posters.

The commemorative lecture, titled “A Comparison of Chinese and Japanese Cultures: The Past and Present of Things ‘Chinese’ and ‘Japanese,’” was given by Managing Director Liu Deyou of the China International Culture Association. Liu introduced traditional concepts and recent research topics of Japanese studies in China by referring to familiar examples, such as a comparison of haiku and Chinese-style poetry. He spoke to the audience about “heart-to-heart” exchange while emphasizing the importance of creative Japanese studies from a scientific perspective.



In a panel discussion focused on the power of Ghibli’s *Anime* films, three panelists—Professor Susan J. Napier of the University of Texas, Assistant Professor Yonemura Miyuki of Konan Women’s University, and Wang Zhong Yi, editor-in-chief of *People China*—were joined by Professor Qin Gang of the Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, who served as moderator.

At the group sessions, more than 150 presentations and discussions were held in 18 venues under the themes established for each of three fields.



●●● Fortieth Anniversary of Normalization of Korea-Japan Diplomatic Relations



To commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan, the Japan Foundation supported a major international conference drawing upon the academic communities of Japan and Korea, organized by the Korean Association of Contemporary Japanese Studies. The three-day event, which received ample media coverage,

explored the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of the bilateral relationship and featured four roundtables of business, political, and military/security leaders and opinion makers.

Approximately 2,000 people attended presentations and workshops led by about 200 experts from Japan, Korea, China, and other countries. The outstanding attendance and breadth of the conference set the stage for frank, passionate discussions focusing on the past, present, and future of Japan-Korea relations.

●●● Japan-Arab Dialogue from a Global Perspective



In the context of advancing globalization, relations between Japan and Arab nations are growing in importance, necessitating a fresh look at policy issues and potential areas of collaboration.

The Japan Foundation and the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Egypt sponsored two discussion meetings in Cairo and Tokyo. The meetings brought together intellectuals from both nations primarily engaged in policy studies in the social sciences to sketch out a common

agenda. Topics of discussion included: the role and responsibility of the media in resolving misunderstandings between cultures; the potential of applying Japan's experience of modernization to Arab countries; optimum scenarios for economic reform and regional economic integration in the Arab and Asian regions; an effective Japan-Arab security dialogue framework for comprehensive security; and fair definitions of terrorism and other concepts that are prone to political and factional biases.

Public symposiums and lectures were also held in both cities, and the results were reported through media channels.

●●● Second Japan-EU Think Tank Roundtable

The Second Japan-EU Think Tank Roundtable took place in Brussels, Belgium, in mid-November 2005, following up on the first roundtable held in Tokyo in January. Both roundtables were jointly hosted by the Japan Foundation, the National Institute for Research Advancement, and the European Policy Center, a Belgian think tank.

In contrast with the discussions on global governance and reform of the United Nations that took place at the first roundtable, the second roundtable focused on the declining populations in Europe and Japan and the Asian and

European approaches to regional integration.

A report summarizing the content of the discussions and presentations along with policy recommendations was widely distributed to research institutions, policy makers, and other concerned organizations.

