

The Japan Foundation Support Program for Translation and Publication on Japan QE-TPS
List of Recommended Works

This list is to introduce some Japan-related books of each genre. We hope it is helpful for translators and publishers motivated to publish Japan-related books.
*Applications of these works listed will be considered on the same conditions as other translation works and newly written ones.

| | | Title | Author/Editor | Publisher | Year |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Philosophy, Religion & Psychology | <i>Nihon no Kamigami</i> [Gods of Japan] | Tanigawa Ken'ichi | Iwanami Shoten | 1999 |
| 2 | Philosophy, Religion & Psychology | <i>Nihon shukyo shi</i> [History of Japanese Religion] | Sueki Fumihiko | Iwanami Shoten | 2006 |
| 3 | World History | <i>Ajia wa "Ajiateki" ka</i> [Is Asia "Asian"?:] | Uemura Kunihiko | Nakanishiya Shuppan | 2006 |
| 4 | World History | <i>Kindai Ajia seisinshi no kokoromi</i> [An intellectual History of Modern Asia] | Matsumoto Ken'ichi | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 1994 |
| 5 | World History | <i>Rekishi no saho: Ningen, shakai, kokka</i> [Manners of History: People, Society, State] | Yamauchi Masayuki | Bungei Shunju | 2003 |
| 6 | Japanese History | <i>Gakutohei no seishinshi [Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers]</i> | Ohnuki Emiko | Iwanami Shoten | 2006 |
| 7 | Japanese History | <i>Jomon bunka to Nihonjin: Nihon kiso bunka no keisei to keisho</i> [Jomon Culture and the Japanese: The Emergence and Transmission of the Foundations of Japanese Culture] | Sasaki Komei | Kodansha | 2001 (first published in 1986) |
| 8 | Japanese History | <i>Kanpon: Showashi no onna</i> [Women in the Showa History] | Sawachi Hisae | Bungei Shunju | 2003 |
| 9 | Japanese History | <i>NHK Supesharu: Meiji ichi: Henkaku o michibita ningenryoku</i> [NHK Special: Meiji 1: The Human Forces of Change] | NHK | Nihon Hoso Shuppan Kyoku | 2005 |
| 10 | Japanese History | <i>Nihon o tsukutta ju-ni-nin [The Twelve Men Who Made Japan]</i> | Sakaiya Taichi | PHP Institute | 2006 (first published in 1996) |
| 11 | Japanese History | <i>Senjiki Nihon no seishinshi 1931-1945 [An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945]</i> | Tsurumi Shunsuke | Iwanami Shoten | 2001 (first published in 1982) |
| 12 | Politics & Diplomacy | <i>Nihon no gaiko</i> [Japanese Diplomacy] | Iriye Akira | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 1966 |
| 13 | Politics & Diplomacy | <i>Shin Nihon no gaiko</i> [Japanese Diplomacy since the War] | Iriye Akira | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 1991 |
| 14 | Economics | <i>Nihon keizai o manabu</i> [Studying the Japanese Economy] | Iwata Kikuo | Chikuma Shobo | 2005 |
| 15 | Economics | <i>Nihon no monozukuri tetsugaku</i> [The Japanese Philosophy of Manufacturing] | Fujimoto Takahiro | Nihon Keizai Shimbun Sha | 2004 |
| 16 | Economics | <i>Tojokoku Nippon no ayumi [The Path Traveled by Japan as a Developing Country]</i> | Ono Ken'ichi | Yuhikaku | 2005 |
| 17 | Social Science | <i>Kaiyo kokka Nihon no koso</i> [Vision for Japan as a Marine Nation], included in the first volume of the series Kosaka Masataka Chosakushu [Collected Works of Kosaka Masataka] | Kosaka Masataka | Toshi Shuppan | 1998 (first published in 1965) |
| 18 | Social Science | <i>Oiru junbi: Kaigo suru koto sareru koto</i> [Preparing for Old Age: Caring for and Being Cared for] | Ueno Chizuko | Gakuyo Shobo | 2005 |
| 19 | Social Science | <i>Senso o kioku suru</i> [Remembering War] | Fujiwara Kiichi | Kodansha | 2001 |
| 20 | Culture | <i>Bungei ni arawareta Nihon no kindai: Shakai kagaku to bungaku no aida</i> [Japanese Modernity as Seen in Literature: Between Social Science and Literature] | Inoki Takenori | Yuhikaku | 2004 |
| 21 | Culture | <i>Bunka no ofusaido/nosaido</i> [The Offsides and No Sides of Culture] | Cho Kyo (Zhang Jing) | Iwanami Shoten | 2004 |
| 22 | Culture | <i>Tokyo sutadizu</i> [Tokyo Studies] | Yoshimi Shun'ya and Wakabayashi Mikio | Kinokuniya Shoten | 2005 |
| 23 | Culture | <i>Nihonjin no ai shita iro</i> [Colors Loved by the Japanese]* | Yoshioka Sachio | Shinchosha | 2008 |
| 24 | Culture | <i>"Shudan shugi" to iu sakkaku</i> [The Illusion of "Groupism"]* | Takano Yohtaro | Shinyosha | 2008 |
| 25 | Culture | <i>Hitotsubu no kaki no tane: Saiensu komyunikeshon no hirogari</i> [A Persimmon Seed: A Propagation of Science Communication]* | Watanabe Masataka | Iwanami Shoten | 2008 |
| 26 | Fine Arts | <i>Gendai kenchiku no boken: "Katachi" de kangaeru: Nihon 1930-2000</i> [The Adventure of Contemporary Architecture: Thinking in Terms of "Form": Japan 1930-2000] | Echigojima Ken'ichi | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 2003 |
| 27 | Fine Arts | <i>Gendai kenchiku no pasupekutibu</i> [Perspectives in Contemporary Architecture] | Igarashi Taro | Kobunsha | 2005 |
| 28 | Fine Arts | <i>Nara, Kyoto no koji meguri</i> [Old Temples in Nara and Kyoto] | Mizuno Keizaburo | Iwanami Shoten | 1985 |
| 29 | Fine Arts | <i>Nihon bijutsu no rekishi</i> [History of Japanese Art] | Tsuji Nobuo | Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai | 2005 |
| 30 | Fine Arts | <i>Nihon no kindai kenchiku</i> [Modern Japanese Architecture] (2 vols.) | Fujimori Terunobu | Iwanami Shoten | 1993 |
| 31 | Fine Arts | <i>Nihon shashin shi o aruku</i> [A Stroll through the History of Japanese Photography] | Iizawa Kotaro | Chikuma Shobo | 1999 (first published in 1992) |
| 32 | Performing Arts | <i>Hijikata Tatsumi no ho e: Nikutai no rokuju nen dai</i> [Hijikata Tatsumi: The 1960s, Decade of Flesh] | Tanemura Suehiro | Kawada Shobo Shinsha | 2001 |

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|----|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 33 | Performing Arts | <i>Kabuki</i> [Kabuki] | Kawatake Toshio | Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai | 2001 |
| 34 | Performing Arts | <i>Kyogen: Densho no waza to kokoro</i> [Kyogen: The Transmission of Spirit and Technique] | Nomura Manzo | Heibonsha | 1995 |
| 35 | Performing Arts | <i>Nihon no oto: Sekai no naka no Nihon ongaku</i> [Sounds of Japan: Japanese Music in the Global Context] | Koizumi Fumio | Heibonsha | 1994 (first published in 1978) |
| 36 | Performing Arts | <i>Nogaku handobukku</i> [The Noh Handbook] | Toita Michizo and Kobayashi Yasuharu | Sanseido | 2000 |
| 37 | Performing Arts | <i>Noh: Genzai no geijutsu no tameni</i> [Making Noh a Modern Art Form] | Tsuchiya Keiichiro | Iwanami Shoten | 2001 (first published in 1989) |
| 38 | Cinema | <i>Eiga kantoku besuto hyaku-ichi: Nihon hen</i> [Japan's Best One Hundred and One Film Directors] | Kawamoto Saburo | Shinshokan | 2003 |
| 39 | Cinema | <i>Nihon eiga no radikaru na ishi</i> [Radical Will in Japanese Cinema] | Yomota Inuhiko | Iwanami Shoten | 1999 |
| 40 | Manga & Anime | <i>Kyoyo toshite no "manga, anime"</i> [Basic Knowledge of Manga and Animation] | Otsuka Eiji and Sakakibara Go | Kodansha | 2001 |
| 41 | Linguistics | <i>Nihongo no genryu o motomete</i> [Seeking the Origin of the Japanese Language]* | Ono Susumu | Iwanami Shoten | 2007 |
| 42 | Literature | <i>Buta no mukui</i> [The Pig's Retribution] | Matayoshi Eiki | Bungei Shunju | 1999 (first published in 1996) |
| 43 | Literature | <i>Chi to hone</i> [Blood and Bones] (2 vols.) | Yan Sogiru (Yan Sogil) | Gentosha | 2001 (first published in 1998) |
| 44 | Literature | <i>Mina no koshin</i> [Mina's March] | Ogawa Yoko | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 2006 |
| 45 | Literature | <i>Omoide toranpu</i> [A Deck of Memories] | Mukoda Kuniko | Shinchosha | 1983 (first published in 1980) |
| 46 | Literature | <i>Semishigure</i> [Chorus of Cicadas] | Fujisawa Shuhei | Bungei Shunju | 1991 (first published in 1988) |
| 47 | Literature | <i>Yoru no pikuniku</i> [Nighttime Picnic] | Onda Riku | Shinchosha | 2004 |
| 48 | Literature | <i>Yokame no semi</i> [Eighth-day Cicada] | Kakuta Mitsuyo | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 2007 |
| 49 | Literature | <i>Kawa no hikari</i> [Light on the River] | Matsuura Hisaki | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 2007 |
| 50 | Literature | <i>Kenshin</i> [Dog's Body]* | Matsuura Rieko | Asahi Shimbunsha | 2007 |
| 51 | Literature | <i>Goruden suranba</i> [Golden Slumbers]* | Isaka Kotaro | Shinchosha | 2007 |
| 52 | Literature | <i>Chichi to ran</i> [Breasts and Egg]* | Kawakami Mieko | Bungei Shunju | 2008 |
| 53 | Literature | <i>Kazahana</i> [Whirling Snowflakes]* | Kawakami Hiromi | Shueisha | 2008 |
| 54 | Theory, Criticism & History | <i>Amerika no kage: Sengo saiken</i> [America's Shadow: Reexamining the Postwar Era] | Kato Norihiro | Kodansha | 1995 (first published in 1985) |
| 55 | Theory, Criticism & History | <i>Nihon no shiika: Sono honegumi to suhada</i> [The Poetry and Poetics of Ancient Japan] | Ooka Makoto | Iwanami Shoten | 2005 (first published in 1995) |
| 56 | Essay & Travel | <i>Saigyō</i> [Saigyō] | Shirasu Masako | Shinchosha | 1996 (first published in 1988) |
| 57 | Biography & Autobiography | <i>Hoshi Shin'ichi: sen-ichi wa o tsukutta hito</i> [Hoshi Shin'ichi: The Man Who Wrote 1,001 Stories] | Saisho Hazuki | Chuo Koron Shinsha | 2007 |
| 58 | Biography & Autobiography | <i>Tezuka Osamu</i> [Tezuka Osamu, Don't Be an Artist]* | Takeuchi Osamu | Minerva Shobo | 2008 |

* Several works in this list are already available in foreign languages. For details, please consult with the publishing company or copyright agency concerned.

* The titles marked * are the ones listed for the first time.

1

***Nihon no Kamigami* [Gods of Japan]**

Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 173x105 mm. 226 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-00-430618-3.

Japanese Book News, no. 29 (Spring 2000)

Author

Tanigawa Ken'ichi

Synopsis

The inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago of antiquity revered the “awesome beings” they believed dwelled in all natural phenomena as *kami* (gods). All aspects of nature—trees, mountains, wind—whose powers humans could never hope to match, were the target of reverence. According to Tanigawa, however, when Japan’s first official histories, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, were compiled early in the eighth century, the gods and spirits of ancient belief were “reorganized” in accordance with the political order of the contemporary state, some being imperial line while others were ousted from official religion altogether.

This book sketches the lifestyle of ancient Japanese by retracing the history of their gods, a history long in the making and a key factor behind the compilation of the nation’s first written chronicles. The author believes that such research can help guide contemporary Japanese out of the present confusion they suffer over their identity. Among the folk gods excluded from official Shrine Shinto, and among the localities of the Amami and Okinawan islands, where the influence of Buddhism was minimal, he seeks clues for Japanese duties revered prior to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.

2

***Nihon shûkyô shi* [History of Japanese Religion]**

Iwanami Shoten, 2006. 173x105 mm. 242 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-00-431003-2.

Japanese Book News, no.49 (Fall 2006)

Author

Sueki Fumihiko

Born in 1949. Professor at the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at the University of Tokyo, where he teaches Japanese Buddhism. Works mainly on the reconstruction of the intellectual history of Buddhism in Japan from ancient to modern times. Has contributed several articles in English to the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* and other journals.

Synopsis

The author is known as a great scholar of Japanese Buddhist history, but in this work he goes beyond Buddhism to include the ancient Japanese religion Shinto, the Christianity that came to Japan in the early modern period, and a number of new religions that have emerged in recent years, packing them all into a concise, pocket-sized book. He looks at the ancient histories *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and debates more modern phenomena, like the 1995 sarin gas attack by the Aum Shinrikyô cult and the controversy over Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of class-A war criminals are venerated.

This book presents a broad overview of the history of religion in Japan. While it is based on the findings of recent research, it does not delve too far into the details of religious ceremonies or the inner workings of religious groups, so it is easy to digest. Focusing mainly on religious thought, this should be a greatly welcomed overview by those who have an interest in Japanese religion.

At the root of the author's view of history is the idea that the deep strata of the Japanese spirit are not fixed and unchanging, but have rather been formed through a dynamic historical process. In order to get at the essence of Japanese culture, the author argues against "groundlessly extolling its virtues," insisting on the necessity of "once again digging out the hidden core and tracing its path dispassionately." In order to better understand the spiritual foundation of modern Japan, following the development of Japanese religious thought from this kind of perspective is invaluable.

3

Ajia wa "Ajiateki" ka [Is Asia "Asian"?)

Nakanishiya Shuppan, 2006. 195x135 mm. 294 pp. ¥2,600. ISBN 4-7795-0031-1

Japanese Book News, no. 50 (Winter 2006)

Author

Uemura Kunihiko

Born in 1952. Graduated from Nagoya University with degree in economics and is now a professor in the Faculty of Economics at Kansai University, where he teaches the history of social thought. Has written *Marukusu o Yomu* [Reading Marx], among other works.

Synopsis

This volume presents a collection of essays that examine changing images of Asia as well as the history of the term Asia itself. "Asian stagnation," "Asian despotism," and "Asian mode of production" are all examples of the numerous stereotyped phrases that have been employed to describe the region's political and economic systems. These are generally used in contrast with "progressive Europe" or the "modern West," and are nothing more than images of "backward" Asia.

In this work, the author traces the creation and development of these perceptions of Asia back to Montesquieu and Hegel. He then considers the history of modern Japan through an analysis of Fukuzawa Yukichi's treatise on the nation's need to pursue *datsu-A* (extrication from Asia) and Uchida Ryohei's *ko-A* (development of Asia), two opposing concepts espoused by thinkers who had internalized this European-produced image of Asia.

The author's real interest lies in discovering the Asia conceived by figures who overcame the European image of Asia, such as Sun Yat-sen, Lu Xun, and Takeuchi Yoshimi. His conclusion, however, does not go far beyond the assertion made by Takeuchi: that there is actually no such thing that could be described as an "Asian entity."

4

***Kindai Aija seisinshi no kokoromi* [An intellectual History of Modern Asia]**

Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 1994. 191x131 mm. 260 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-12-002275-7.

Japanese Book News, no. 8 (Fall 1994)

Author

Matsumoto Ken'ichi

Synopsis

From the mid-nineteenth century, the urge to resist Western imperialism has prompted Asian countries to try to establish distinctive political and economic systems giving top priority to domestic economic development. The author of this book sees the common and consistent endeavor to recast modern history of the region from the 1850s up to the present as a single, continuous process: for Asian nations, modernity has meant the totality of political, economic and religious efforts to resist the West. From this, it follows that all the discussion among Asian intellectuals and political leaders on national polity were part of such efforts, and that the authoritarian systems created thought the region may be regarded as kinds of fiction needed to bolster that ongoing resistance.

5

***Rekishi no sahô: Ningen, shakai, kokka* [Manners of History: People, Society, State]**

Bungei Shunjû, 2003. 173x110 mm. 262 pp. ¥750. ISBN 4-16-660345-0.

Author

Yamauchi Masayuki

Born in 1947. A graduate of Hokkaido University, Yamauchi is currently a professor at the University of Tokyo. His principal publications include *Gendai no Isuramu* [Islam Today] and *Surutangariefu no yume* [Sultan-Galiev's Dream].

Synopsis

In this book, one of Japan's leading historians draws from the works of over 150 other historians from various countries and historical periods in a search for clues and methods for understanding history.

In the author's view, historical reality is generated by the flow of time carrying human destiny along by a process that transcends human morality and values. Does this imply that human endeavors are ultimately doomed to simply fade away, ineffectual against the flow and process of history? What mode of narration is appropriate for history? Does history's emphasis on narration make it akin to literature, or does history as a discipline belong, rather, to the sciences? How should historians address the issues of practical politics?

The author explores such questions in connection with the key words that make up the book's subtitle: "people," "society," and "state." While the questions themselves may not be answerable in any final or definitive way, the process by which the author addresses them, citing numerous historians and delving in detail about how they tried to understand history, is in itself thought-provoking and demonstrates the meaning and purpose of grappling with history. This is a trove of valuable information and insights for both scholarly and general readers of history.

6

Gakutohei no seishinshi [Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers]

Iwanami Shoten, 2006. 195x135 mm. 332 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-00-022462-X.

Japanese Book News, no.50 (Winter 2006)

Author

Ohnuki Emiko

Born in 1934. William F. Vilas Research Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An expert in the social, cultural, and symbolic anthropology of Japan. Has been awarded Guggenheim, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Japan Foundation fellowships, and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Synopsis

When the 9/11 terrorist attacks took place in 2001, media around the world immediately began using the word “kamikaze” to describe them. Only in Japan was this term not heard, as the Kamikaze Special Attack Force formed by the Japanese military as a last resort toward the end of World War II differed considerably from the “suicide bombings” of al Qaeda.

This book, written by a Japanese anthropologist living in the United States, documents the last words, prayers, and fears of seven student soldiers who perished during the war. The heartbreaking collection of diaries and letters seeks to mend current misconceptions about kamikaze pilots, clarifying that the boys were forced to volunteer for these doomed missions. While they innocently loved their country, the systemized violence within the military was counterproductive, causing many of these young men to become skeptical of patriotism.

What we can see from each of these diaries is a detailed portrait of the intellectual interior of the writers, not a single one of whom was a fanatic. By demonstrating the difference between the images of kamikaze pilots fabricated by the military for propaganda purposes and the actual reality of the young men involved, this book represents an important step in better understanding how the Japanese dealt with extreme circumstances.

7

***Jōmon bunka to Nihonjin: Nihon kisō bunka no keisei to keishō* [Jōmon Culture and the Japanese: The Emergence and Transmission of the Foundations of Japanese Culture]**

Kōdansha, 2001 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Shōgakukan in 1986).
148x107 mm. 325 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-06-159491-5.

Author

Sasaki Kōmei

Born in Osaka in 1929. Graduate of Kyoto University. Former president of the National Museum of Ethnology and currently professor emeritus of the museum. Major works include *Higashi Minami Ajia nōkō ron* [East and South Asian Agriculture], *Inasaku izen* [Before Rice Farming], and *Nihon nōkō bunka no genryū* [Origins of Japanese Farming Culture].

Synopsis

Focusing on the Jōmon period as a hunting-gathering culture, this book is a seminal work arguing that the fundamental nature of Japanese culture can be traced to Jōmon culture. The prevailing view has long been that Japan's rice-growing culture, which evolved from the Yayoi period onward, provided the basis for Japanese culture as it is known today. Sasaki demonstrates that Jōmon culture was a hunter-gatherer culture that had matured to the extent that it can be called an essential part of the Japanese cultural substratum. Using a hypothetical framework with the entire East Asia in perspective, he classifies the characteristics of Jōmon people's life and livelihood under the categories of "oak forest culture" in the east and "evergreen broad-leaf forest culture" in the west. He then discusses the various stages of Jōmon culture. As of 1986, the year this book was published, scholarly discourse viewing Jōmon culture from this perspective had not yet begun, making it a forerunner on this subject.

The book consists of five chapters and a supplementary essay. Chapter 1 outlines previous theories on the emergence of Japanese culture and Chapter 5, toward a reappraisal of the traditions of Jōmon culture, examines the *yamabito*, or mountain dwellers, who were the non-rice-farming, aboriginal inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago.

Reasons for Recommendation

In his later years, founder of Japanese folklore studies Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962) argued that Japanese culture was based on rice-farming, but when he was a young scholar his focus was on the non-rice-farming people who were the earlier inhabitants of the archipelago. Writing in an easy-to-understand style, Sasaki returns to this important thesis to consider the basis of Japanese culture, presenting a fresh perspective for research on this subject.

8

***Kanpon: Shôwashi no onna* [Women in the Shôwa History]**

Bungei Shunjû, 2003 (1st edition published in 1980 under the title *Shôwashi no onna*, its sequel in 1983). 194x140 mm. 536 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-16-365120-9.

Author

Sawachi Hisae

Born in Tokyo in 1930. Graduate of Waseda University. After working as editor for the women's magazine *Fujin kôron*, Sawachi became a nonfiction writer. Major works include *Tsumatachi no Ni-ni-roku jiken* [The February 26th Incident from the Wives' Perspective], *Mitsuyaku* [Secret Promise], *Rakuin no onnatachi* [Stigmatized Women], and *Hi wa waga kyôchû ni ari* [The Fire in Our Hearts].

Synopsis

This is a documentary account of Japanese women who lived through the long and turbulent Shôwa era (1926-89). Originally published serially in the literary magazine *Bungei shunjû*, it is made up of sixteen stories. After the completion, the entire series was published in two volumes, and later in a single volume under the title *Kanpon: Shôwashi no onna*.

The first story, titled "Tôgô Seiji and His Wives," is about the relationships between Tôgô Seiji, a well-known Western-style painter, and the women close to him. Despite having two "wives," this artist attempted a double-suicide with another woman with whom he was having an affair. The last story, "After the Terrorism on a Snowy Day," traces the lives of the women whose fates were changed by the February 26th Incident, the abortive military rebellion led by junior army officers in 1927, in which prime minister Inukai Tsuyoshi and other political figures were assassinated.

The other stories include one about a woman who commits suicide on the eve of the day her husband, an army officer, was to leave for the front immediately after the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident. Through the lives and experiences of such women, the book brings the turmoil of the Shôwa era into clear relief.

Reasons for Recommendation

Based meticulously conducted research and interviews, this book vividly portrays conditions in Japan during the Shôwa era through the experiences of women whose loves are normally hidden behind the scenes of history. It is a dramatic story, absorbingly told.

***NHK Supesharu: Meiji ichi: Henkaku o michibiita ningentryoku*
[NHK Special: Meiji 1: The Human Forces of Change]**

Nihon Hôshô Shuppan Kyoku, 2005. 195x138 mm. 229 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-14-081035-1.

Synopsis

Based on the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) television special *Ima Meiji ni nani o manabu beki ka* [Lessons of the Meiji Period], this book retraces the revolutionary achievements of Japan's Meiji era (1868-1912), when the country first emerged into the main current of world history.

Japan today faces many problems—declining birthrate, aging population, and the accompanying depletion of its labor force, the waning of its trade competitiveness, and deterioration of its school environments—leaving many wondering what the future holds. This book is based on the idea that, in considering what to do to redress the situation, Japan could draw valuable lessons from its own Meiji era, another transitional period when pervasive reforms enabled it to achieve dramatic development in a short span of time. The key feature of the Meiji reforms was the “fusion of the old and the new,” the book points out, and goes on to examine them in terms of promotion of education, utilization of human resources, and Japanese cultural independence. The book revolves around interviews with American economist Peter F. Drucker and Japanese critic Katô Shûichi, whose insights on Meiji Japan gradually bring to light the relevance of Meiji reforms to the problems confronting Japan today. The book thus provides an excellent framework for understanding modern and contemporary Japan.

Nihon o tsukutta jû-ni-nin [The Twelve Men Who Made Japan]

PHP Institute, 2006 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1996). 150x105 mm. 413 pp. ¥724.
ISBN 4-569-66560-8.

Author**Sakaiya Taichi**

Born in 1935. Graduate of the Faculty of Economics, University of Tokyo. Sakaiya was an official in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (now the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry), left public service to become a writer, and later served as director general of the Economic Planning Agency.

Synopsis

Japan has entered a major period of transition, and a proper consideration of what course Japan should take from here on requires reexamining the past, that is, the history of Japan and the Japanese people. This book takes up that challenge by looking at twelve leading figures in Japanese history whose influence is still felt in Japan today.

Prince Shôtoku (574–622) proposed and put into practice a philosophy that drew simultaneously from Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism, and laid the foundations for subsequent Japanese religious and cultural understanding. Hikaru Genji, though only a fictional character in the Heian-period (794–1185) narrative *Genji monogatari* [Tale of Genji], nonetheless became an exemplar of the refined political leader. The warlord Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–99) created a dual structure of power by establishing a warrior government that nonetheless preserved the law-based state system (*ritsuryô* system) that had been in place since the Nara period (710–784). In more recent times, Ikeda Hayato (1899–1965; prime minister 1960–64) implemented a unique brand of economism in postwar Japan and guided the country's development as a major economic power. Through the stories of these and eight other heroic figures—Oda Nobunaga (1534–82), Ishida Mitsunari (1560–1600), Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), Ishida Baigan (1685–1744), Ôkubo Toshimichi (1830–78), Shibusawa Eiichi (1840–1931), Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964), and Matsushita Kônosuke (1894–1989)—the book describes when, how, and by whose hand Japan developed its distinctiveness as a nation.

This book, which has also been published in English translation (Kodansha International, 2003), offers valuable food for thought about not only Japan's own future but also how it relates to the rest of the world.

Senjiki Nihon no seishinshi 1931–1945 [An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931–1945]

Iwanami Shoten, 2001 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1982). 150x105 mm. 296 pp. ¥1,100. ISBN 4-00-600050-2.

Author

Tsurumi Shunsuke

Born in Tokyo in 1922. Graduated from Harvard University. Philosopher. Tsurumi led the 1946 founding of the magazine *Shisô no kagaku* [Science of Thought]. Eschewing academism, he has commented widely on popular culture and other topics, and has been involved in joint research on the phenomenon of *tenkô* (political or ideological conversion). Among his major publications are *Amerika tetsugaku* [American Philosophy], *Yanagi Muneyoshi* [Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889–1961, poet and the founder of the Folkcraft Movement in Japan)], *Genkai geijutsu ron* [Studies of Marginal Art], and *Sengo Nihon no taishû bunka shi, 1945-1980* [A Popular Culture History of Postwar Japan, 1945–1980].

Synopsis

This is the first part of an intellectual history of modern Japan originally written as a series of lectures for university students in Canada. It examines the nature of knowledge and thought by tracing the intellectual development of opinion leaders in fascist-controlled prewar and wartime Japan in terms of *tenkô* (political or ideological conversion).

The notion of *tenkô* refers to a change in thought that occurs under the influence of state power. There are two types of *tenkô*: that which the state imposes by force or coercion, and that which individuals or groups undergo voluntarily by way of self-reform. *Tenkô* was a social phenomenon prevalent in Japan between 1931 and 1945. In this connection, the author notes that Japanese display particular attitudes rooted in their general lack of experience abroad and the fact that they have always lived within their own secure territory. These attitudes, which are fostered by freedom from the fears people must face when they move outside their own country, encourage a tendency to isolate the nation from the rest of the world. In the author's view, this deep-rooted isolationism influenced the processes of *tenkô*. Through an inquiry into the effects of this unique phenomenon in Japanese thought and culture, he elucidates key issues in the intellectual history of prewar and wartime Japan.

Reasons for Recommendation

Originally written for lectures delivered in English to students in Canada, the work presents the distinctive features of Japanese thought in a lucid, logical style. An essential aid to understanding the intellectual history of prewar and wartime Japan, it has also been published in English translation as *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan, 1931-1945* (London, New York: Kegan Paul International, 1986. 144pp. ISBN 0710300727).

***Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy]**

Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 1966. 173x110 mm. 187 pp. ¥660. ISBN 4-12-100113-3.

Author**Iriye Akira**

Born in 1934, Iriye received a BA from Haverford College (USA) and a PhD in history from Harvard University. He is a world authority on diplomatic history, particularly the history of Japan-U.S. relations. His other major publications include *Nijusseiki no sensô to heiwa* [War and Peace in the Twentieth Century]. He is author of English publications including *Pacific Estrangement* (Harvard University Press) and *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (Longman).

Synopsis

The author is an American-based Japanese scholar whose research focuses on the history of American foreign relations. In this book, he applies that international perspective to examine the evolution of Japanese diplomacy from the Meiji Restoration (1868) to just after the Pacific War. First published in 1966, the book has continued to enjoy a wide readership among students and general readers for almost forty years.

By considering the relationship between Japanese foreign policy and the international situation during the period concerned, and taking care to identify the hidden factors underlying superficial phenomena, the author seeks to understand where those circumstances placed Japan in international affairs. In so doing, he pays particular attention to the intellectual and ideological underpinnings of Japanese diplomacy. In his view, Japanese diplomacy has traditionally been realistic and pragmatic, with an ideological framework determined by both military and economic national interests—national security and the promotion of trade—and grounded in the additional concept of “Japan as a bridge between East and West.” The problem is that, from the Meiji Restoration on, Japan has failed to identify any core diplomatic principles other than these, with the result that it has not always been able to adapt adequately to changes in international circumstances. He concludes the book by declaring that the time has come for devising new ideological parameters for Japanese foreign policy.

This book is essential reading for anyone seeking to gain a sound understanding of the development of Japanese diplomacy.

**Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy] and *Shin Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy since the War] have been published in English translation as a single volume titled *Japan and the Wider World: From the Mid-nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Longman, 1997).

***Shin Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy since the War]**

Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 1991. 173x110 mm. 221 pp. ¥740. ISBN 4-12-101000-0.

Author**Iriye Akira**

Born in 1934, Iriye received a BA from Haverford College (USA) and a PhD in history from Harvard University. He is a world authority on diplomatic history, particularly the history of Japan-U.S. relations. His other major publications include *Nijusseiki no sensô to heiwa* [War and Peace in the Twentieth Century]. He is author of English publications including *Pacific Estrangement* (Harvard University Press) and *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (Longman).

Synopsis

This sequel to *Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy] was written twenty-five years after its predecessor. In it, the same author applies the same approach as in the earlier work, this time to retrace the history of Japanese diplomacy since World War II.

The Pacific War had disastrous consequences for Japan militarily, economically, and ideologically, and with the defeat the framework of Japanese diplomacy that had been in place since the Meiji Restoration (1868) came crashing down. In the fifty years following the war, Japan, which in the prewar period had been a strong military and weak economic power, became, conversely, an economic superpower and weak military power, and as such was incorporated into a new world order. This book looks at Japanese diplomacy during that half-century, focusing on its military, economic, and intellectual (and cultural) facets and examining how its essential character evolved over time. The account reflects the author's conviction that the study of diplomatic history should be conducted with as wide a purview as possible, taking into consideration not only military and political affairs but also the economic and intellectual factors involved. From the same standpoint, he also considers what role Japan should play in the emerging international order of a globalized world. While the coincidence of the book's writing with the advent of the post-Cold War era was presumably accidental, it nonetheless provides an excellent basis for exploring the significance of postwar Japanese diplomacy.

**Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy] and *Shin Nihon no gaikô* [Japanese Diplomacy since the War] have been published in English translation as a single volume titled *Japan and the Wider World: From the Mid-nineteenth Century to the Present* (Longman: London: 1997).

***Nihon keizai o manabu* [Studying the Japanese Economy]**

Chikuma Shobô, 2005. 173x110 mm. 269 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-480-06212-2.

Author**Iwata Kikuo**

Born in 1942. Graduate of the Faculty of Economics, University of Tokyo. Professor of the Faculty of Economics, Gakushuin University. Among Iwata's major publications are *Keizaigaku o manabu* [Studying Economics] and *Kin'yû nyûmon* [Introduction to Finance].

Synopsis

Aiming to identify what is needed to put Japan's economy back on the track of stable growth, this book retraces the economy's evolution from the postwar boom period to the "lost decade" of the Heisei (1990s) recession, elucidating a number of important issues pertaining to that time span.

The author's consistent argument is that the crucial economic policies for Japan's economic revival are (a) macroeconomic policies to stabilize prices and employment and (b) structural reform- and competition-promoting policies to ensure maximum scope for innovation and ingenuity. The author takes up a variety of specific topics—the features of each historical phase and the successive industrial and fiscal policies that were adopted; the nature and future of Japanese-style management; the features and evolution of Japanese corporate governance (external monitoring of corporate management by stockholders or other supervisory agents); deregulation; privatization; structural reform in fiscal affairs; pension reform; birthrate decline and population aging; the bad-debt problem; environmental issues; and the challenges confronting the Japanese economy today—and for each one provides both lucid explication and concrete proposals for improving the situation. Also woven into the discussion are thought-provoking observations on Japan's case of "British disease" (economic decline) and the Thatcherite reforms by which Britain itself overcame the affliction.

This compactly presented volume provides a handy introduction to the Japanese economy in terms of real-life issues.

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***Nihon no monozukuri tetsugaku* [The Japanese Philosophy of Manufacturing]**

Nihon Keizai Shimbun Sha, 2004. 194x134 mm. 349 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-532-31139-X.

Japanese Book News, no.43 (Spring 2005)

Author

Fujimoto Takahiro

Born in Tokyo in 1955. A graduate of the Faculty of Economics, University of Tokyo, where he is now professor of the university's Graduate School of Economics, Fujimoto is also executive director of its Manufacturing Management Research Center and a Harvard Business School senior research fellow. Specialist in technical management and production management. Major publications include *Product Development Performance* (Harvard Business School Press) and *The Evolution of a Manufacturing System at Toyota* (Oxford University Press).

Synopsis

This work presents management strategy as it is rooted in actual manufacturing practice and based on a structural analysis of the organizational capabilities of Japanese enterprises.

Japan's economy has prospered on the strength of its manufacturing. In the 1990s, however, business went into decline, and confidence remains at a low ebb today. To explain the reasons, the author introduces the concept of manufacturing "architecture," meaning approaches taken to product design. There are two types of such architecture: the integral and the modular. For the former type, used in manufacturing automobiles, for example, the product is designed and produced in its entirety, with its various components adjusted to one another. In products of the latter type, such as personal computers, the final form of the product is determined by combining ready-made components in ingenious ways. According to the author, the integral approach best suits the organizational capabilities of Japanese companies and they should therefore devise management strategies to fit that approach. The problem, he says, lies in the "strong factory, weak company" configuration caused by the lack of such strategies.

While the book mainly elaborates a thought-provoking theory of "factory-floor-driven management strategy," its treatment of the differences in product architecture from one country to another makes it an interesting study in comparative culture as well.

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Tojôkoku Nippon no ayumi [The Economic Development of Japan: The Path Traveled by Japan as a Developing Country]

Yûhikaku, 2005. 212x147 mm. 258 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 4-641-16231-X.

Japanese Book News, no. 45 (Fall 2005)

Author

Ôno Ken'ichi

Born in 1957. After earning his BA and MA in economics from Hitotsubashi University, went on to get a PhD in economics from Stanford University. Was an economist at the International Monetary Fund and an associate professor at Tsukuba University; since 1997 has been a professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies.

Synopsis

This book seeks to answer the question of how Japan was able to successfully modernize over such a short period of time. By viewing the economic history of Japan from the nineteenth century to the present day as the story of a developing nation, this text presents a highly understandable rundown of the key topics from each era in that history.

Ono specializes in practical applications of developmental economic theory, and has deep ties with developing nations, as well as with programs run by the Japanese government and international organizations that aim to help those nations. Many of his students are young government officials from developing countries. After coming to Japan on short-term programs to study developmental economics, these students return to their countries and put their newfound knowledge to work. It is Japan's past as a developing nation-its transformation into a cuttingedge industrial power-that these foreign elites are most interested in as they try to help their own nations along the development path.

This book has been compiled as a text containing much of the information these students need. At the end of the book Ono offers a selection of questions asked by his students and answers to them. Readers should find it interesting to learn what areas of Japan's economic history spark the most curiosity among foreign students. This is a helpful book for anyone hoping to gain a fuller understanding of what Japan is.

***Kaiyô kokka Nihon no kôsô* [Vision for Japan as a Marine Nation]** (included in the first volume of the series *Kôsaka Masataka Chosakushû* [Collected Works of Kôsaka Masataka])

Toshi Shuppan, 1998 (originally published by Chûô Kôron Sha in 1965). 220x162 mm. 605 pp. ¥6,500. ISBN 4-924831-80-8.

Author

Kôsaka Masataka

Born in Kyoto in 1934 (d. 1996). Graduate of Kyoto University. Professor at the Graduate School of Law, Kyoto University, he appeared frequently in the media as an international specialist in political science. His major books include *Kokusai seiji* [International Politics], *Saishô Yoshida Shigera* [Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru], *Seijiteki shisô no fukken* [The Restoration of Political Thought], *Koten gaikô no seijuku to hôkai* [The Maturation and Collapse of Classical Diplomacy], and *Bunmei ga suibô suru toki* [When Civilization Declines].

Synopsis

This book is among the major works by an author who first made his mark in the mass media with an essay entitled “Genjitsushugisha no heiwa-ron” [A Realist’s View of Peace]. Persuasive even in today’s environment, this essay is critical of the idealists’ advocacy of Japanese neutrality in foreign policy and calls for peace based on realism.

The essay, which is included in this book, was inspired by the power politics of the Cold War such as resumed nuclear testing by the Soviet Union and the U.S. blockade of Cuba. It struck at the weak points of the idealists’ insistence on neutrality. The title essay, “*Kaiyô kokka Nihon no kôsô*” analyzes maritime Japan’s place in international politics, supporting a realistic theory of defense.

Reasons for Recommendation

The essays in this book, written in the 1960s, are still convincing and thought-provoking; they present a realist’s ideas on peace argued in clear logic vis-à-vis the idealists’ arguments for neutrality advocated by Japan’s postwar peace movement.

***Oiru junbi: Kaigo suru koto sareru koto* [Preparing for Old Age: Caring for and Being Cared for]**

Gakuyô Shobô, 2005. 188x130 mm. 278 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-313-86095-9.

Author**Ueno Chizuko**

Born in 1948, Ueno received a doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. A professor of the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology, she specializes in gender and sexuality studies. Her numerous publications include *Nashonarizumu to jendâ* [Nationalism and Gender] and *Kindai kazoku no seiritsu to shûen* [The Rise and Fall of the Modern Family].

Synopsis

In this book, the author, a leading feminist and sociologist, looks at the issues of aging and elderly care from the perspective of her own life and experiences.

As hinted in the title, the book evolved from the author's increasing awareness of her own advance toward old age and her growing interest in the issues facing elderly women. She opposes the idea of "active aging"—the striving to stay youthful even in old age—and instead advocates creating a society in which all people can continue to live beyond the peak of their abilities without being devalued or demeaned by others. From that standpoint she explores various issues relating to caregiving, family, and society, and puts forward a number of concrete proposals. For example, in response to the increasing "socialization of care" that she sees occurring along with the introduction of care insurance systems, she points to the need for contract-based family care measures as well as to the great potential for community-run care-related businesses. Based on recent research, the author's arguments are persuasive but at the same time presented in plain language that makes them readily accessible. In both content and tone, the book thus provides an accessible account of the conditions and related problems of long-term and elderly care in Japan.

***Sensô o kioku suru* [Remembering War]**

Kôdansha, 2001. 173x108 mm. 204 pp. ¥680. ISBN 4-06-149540-2.

Author**Fujiwara Kiichi**

Born in 1956. Fujiwara received his doctorate from and is currently professor of the Graduate School of Law and Politics, University of Tokyo. He specializes in international politics. His research covers a wide range of topics including nationalism and national consciousness in the United States and Southeast Asia. Among other works he has published are *Demokurashî no teikoku* [Empire of Democracy] and *Heiwa no riarizumu* [The Realism of Peace].

Synopsis

This book probes the historical and social reasons why memories of war differ according to place, time, and point of view.

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (in Washington, D.C.) are both dedicated to preserving the grim memories of war. They are also alike in that both provide a focal point not only for mourning the victims of past wars but also for thinking about what war and peace mean now and for the future. However, whereas the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum carries an antiwar message—that war is an absolute evil that must be abolished and that peace must be preserved at any cost—the Holocaust Memorial Museum conveys a message about “just” wars—that sometimes we must take up arms and fight against injustices in the real world. According to the author, this difference in moral outlook stems from differences in the “telling” of war—in how war is perceived, given meaning, and remembered. On that basis he considers the subtle relationship between war history and war memory and considers the nature of nationalism and the formation of war perceptions in the Japanese and American contexts.

Through a discussion of war perceptions, this book offers useful clues on the potential for true mutual understanding between societies that differ from one another in many ways.

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***Bungei ni arawareta Nihon no kindai: Shakai kagaku to bungaku no aida* [Japanese Modernity as Seen in Literature: Between Social Science and Literature]**

Yûhikaku, 2004. 194x138 mm. 221 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-641-16219-0.

Japanese Book News, no. 44 (Summer 2005)

Author

Inoki Takenori

Born in 1945. Graduate of the faculty of economics, Kyoto University. Professor, International Research Center for Japanese Studies. Specialist in labor economics, economic thought, and studies of the Japanese economy. Principal publications include *Gakkô to kôjô: Nihon no jinteki shigen* [School and Factory: Japan's Human Resources] and *Jiyû to chitsujo: Kyôsô shakai no futatsu no kao* [Freedom and Order: The Two Faces of Competitive Society].

Synopsis

This work explores a new direction in the social sciences by examining issues of Japan's modernity through works of literature.

The social sciences, in particular the author's field of economics, are premised on application of the principles of analysis of facts derived from the natural sciences. While granting the effectiveness of that approach, the author asserts that scientific methods alone are not sufficient for a proper grasp of reality, and that other approaches are needed to complement understandings gained thereby. The method he chooses is that of ascertaining the nature of people's inner lives and the mood of society as described in works by novelists as the "observers of quality" of their times. For this purpose he selects ten works occupying important places in Japanese literary history. In the chapter on the oldest of these, Natsume Sôseki's *Bungei no tetsugakuteki kiso* [The Philosophical Foundations of Literature] (1907), he considers the issues of "plurality" and "freedom" in modernity; and discussing that most recent work, Mishima Yukio's *Kinu to meisatsu* [Silk and Insight] (1964), he examines the nature of industrial relations and labor disputes in the early 1950s. The author thus brings into relief the realities of the society and economy of modern Japan and then examines them from various angles. With occasional thought-provoking sidelines on the author's personal experience and opinions, the book can also be read as a collection of literary essays.

***Bunka no ofusaido/nôsaido* [The Offsides and No Sides of Culture]**

Iwanami Shoten, 2004. 194x134 mm. 266 pp. ¥2,500. ISBN 4-00-024621-6.

Japanese Book News, no. 43 (Spring 2005)

Author**Chô Kyô (Zhang Jing)**

Born in Shanghai in 1953. Chô received a doctoral degree in comparative culture at the University of Tokyo. He is currently professor at Meiji University. His previous publications include *Koi no Chûgoku bunmei shi* [A Cultural History of Love in China] (Chikuma Shobô), for which he won the 1993 Yomiuri Prize for Literature, and *Kindai Chûgoku to “ren’ai” no hakken* [Modern China and the Discovery of “Love”] (Iwanami Shoten), for which he won the 1995 Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities.

Synopsis

Written by a Chinese scholar who now teaches at a university in Japan, this study considers from various angles how cultural otherness has been understood and received in the last decade or so, with particular reference to China and Japan.

The environment surrounding culture changed dramatically in the 1990s. Before that time, cultures were easily distinguished, and in cross-cultural relations it was thought to be sufficient to recognize and understand otherness and heterogeneity. Since the mid-1990s, however, rapid advances in globalization of the economy and communication technology have ushered in an age in which different cultures mingle and merge in unprecedented ways (the theme to which the sports-evoking title refers). This book examines how the cultures of East Asia have changed in this important transition period.

The first of the book’s three parts is an intriguing analysis of Japan’s cultural influence on China—particularly shifts in the reception of various subcultures—in the days when perceptions based on the notion of distinct national cultures still prevailed. This is followed by a discussion, focusing mostly on Japan, of the confusion over culture that arose once the boundaries between national cultures began to grow fuzzy. Finally, the author interprets works by contemporary writers and considers the relationships between literature and the media and between fiction and “history.”

This is both an ambitious study of culture and notable critique of East Asia’s evolving society today.

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***Tôkyô sutadîzu* [Tokyo Studies]**

Kinokuniya Shoten, 2005. 210x150 mm. 285 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-314-00979-9.

Japanese Book News, no.45 (Fall 2005)

Author

Yoshimi Shun'ya

Born in 1957. Professor at the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies of the University of Tokyo. Specializes in urban theory and cultural sociology.

Wakabayashi Mikio

Born in 1962. Professor at Waseda University. Specializes in sociology, urban theory, and media theory.

Synopsis

This book is the most up-to-date Tokyo guidebook written by young researchers of cultural studies. It neither introduces the buildings created by famous architects nor indulges in the nostalgia of the generation that knew prewar Tokyo. The book presents the city of Tokyo using a multidimensional approach that goes beyond old dichotomies, such as physical space versus image space, foreign versus Japanese, center versus periphery, and anecdotal experience versus official documents.

The arbitrariness of Tokyo's urban planning can be seen in the area of land that has been reclaimed from Tokyo Bay. These areas without history or tradition emphasize their break from the *genius loci* of the surrounding districts and have a closed structure. Roppongi Hills, with its closed off appearance of self-completion, is an extension of this trend. In Ikebukuro the large numbers of laborers who have come from Asian countries are no longer newcomers but are participating in cultural production as members of the community, with some of them even taking part in providing welfare for the homeless.

This book vividly introduces the reader to the newest realities of Tokyo and its environs. The authors note, for instance, that the prominence of the bourgeois boom in the Shônan district in the postwar years was due to the culture of the US military base at nearby Yokosuka. This book is extremely interesting as a work that examines the deepest layers of Tokyo, a city that changes by the day.

***Nihonjin no ai shita iro* [Colors Loved by the Japanese]**

Shinchosha, 2008. 194x136 mm. 156 pp. ¥1,200. ISBN 978-4-10-603597-5.

Japanese Book News, no.58 (Winter 2008)

Author**Yoshioka Sachio**

Born in 1946. Dyer. After graduating from Waseda University's School of Letters, Arts and Sciences I, founded the art book publishing firm Shikōsha. In 1988, became the fifth master of Sometsukasa Yoshioka, a dyeing studio in Kyoto in operation since the Edo period. Seeks to revive and preserve "Japanese colors" produced by traditional plant-based dyes. Has created artificial flowers, attire, and utensils for events at renowned temples. Other books include *Nihon no iro o aruku* [A Promenade through Japanese Colors].

Synopsis

Japanese in the Edo period (1603–1868) are said to have had some 2,700 names for different colors. This estimate isn't so far-fetched, considering that there were roughly 100 appellations for hues of red alone, which were based—as were the names of other colors—on things in the natural world, such as taisha-iro (deep brown) from the color of clay, toki-iro (Cupid pink) from the crested ibis, hiwada-iro (Van Dyke brown) from cypress bark, suō-iro (deep purplish red) from sappanwood, and enji-iro (purplish crimson) named for Mt. Yanzhi, a mountain in China surrounded by safflowers.

The author operates a dyeing studio where only dyes from plants and other natural sources are used. Influenced by his previous job editing art publications, he seeks to faithfully recreate traditional dye colors by referring to old texts.

Modern Japanese writers often refer to the color gray as just gurē, a transliteration of the English word. However, the Japanese language has about 70 terms for various shades of gray, such as sakuranezu (pinkish gray), ginnezu (silvery gray), and rikyūnezu (greenish gray). There are also around 80 names for brown hues, such as rokōcha (yellow ochre) and shirocha (pinkish beige), and some of these hues have yet to be properly identified.

In addition to explaining the colors of the "Five Phases" of Taoism (blue, red, yellow, white and black), Yoshioka elucidates how one color not in the group—purple—came to be considered the supreme color in China and Japan.

“Shudan shugi” to iu sakkaku [The Illusion of “Groupism”]

Kinokuniya Shoten, 2005. 210x150 mm. 285 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 4-314-00979-9.

Japanese Book News, no.59 (Spring 2009)

Author**Takano Yohtaro**

Professor at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology/Faculty of Letters. Specializes in cognitive psychology and social psychology. He is the author of works including *Katamuita zukei no nazo* [The Mysteries of Tilted Diagrams] and *Kagami no naka no misuteri* [Mysteries in the Mirror] and editor of such works as *Ninchi shinrigaku 2: Kioku* [Cognitive Psychology, vol. 2, Memory]. (As of Mar., 2009)

Synopsis

There is a general trend to view the Japanese as being group-oriented, while Americans are seen as individualistic. Ever since the cultural anthropologist Ruth Benedict published *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* in 1946, this view of the Japanese has been reinforced multiple times by various theories on the people. Today, it is a deeply rooted stereotype of the fundamental Japanese nature. Takano builds on the field of psychology to investigate the truth of this view. He carried out an exhaustive survey of psychological research directly comparing Japanese and Americans to reach a surprising conclusion: the commonly accepted theory of group-oriented Japanese and individualistic Americans is illusory, with no realistic evidence to back it up, and has never been proven scientifically. Takano argues that it is far from rare to find cases of Japanese people acting more individualistically than Americans, or Americans more collectively than Japanese. His finding sheds light on the various biases at play in human thought giving rise to inaccurate stereotypes, as well as on the fact that the view of Japanese as collectivist is actually a form of orientalism. The conclusions reached by this book--that human beings everywhere resemble each other very closely, that their behavior is decided by circumstances, not culture, and that cultural differences are not decisive factors in human affairs--go beyond the specialized discipline of psychology. They contain significance for a range of fields, from comparative cultural studies to international relations.

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Hitotsubu no kaki no tane: Saiensu komyunikeshon no hirogari
[A Persimmon Seed: A Propagation of Science Communication]

Iwanami Shoten, 2008. 197 pp. ¥1,800. ISBN 978-4-00-005879-7.

Japanese Book News, no.59 (Spring 2009)

Author

Watanabe Masataka

Born in 1955. Visiting professor at Wakayama University, Nihon University, and Nara Institute of Science and Technology. A freelance science writer and researcher of science history and evolutionary biology for over 25 years. Author and coauthor of eight books on science communication, history of science, and evolutionary biology, the latest of which is *Hitotsubu no kaki no tane: Saiensu komyunikēshon no hirogari* [A Persimmon Seed: A Propagation of Science Communication]. Has translated over 50 English popular science books into Japanese, including almost all of Stephen Jay Gould's works. In April 2008, joined the Japan Science and Technology Agency, where he is organizing Science Agora, Japan's biggest sciencecommunication conference.

***Gendai kenchiku no bôken: "Katachi" de kangaeru: Nihon 1930–2000* [The Adventure of Contemporary Architecture: Thinking in Terms of "Form": Japan 1930–2000]**

Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 2003. 173x110 mm. 248 pp. ¥840. ISBN 4-12-101724-2.

Author

Echigojima Ken'ichi

Born in Kanagawa prefecture in 1950. After graduating from Waseda University's School of Science and Engineering, Echigojima completed a doctoral degree in engineering at the University of Tokyo, where he is now a research associate in the Faculty of Engineering. He also heads the Echigojima Sekkei Jimusho (Echigojima Design Office).

Synopsis

At the time of its completion in the 1930s, Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye embodied the latest developments in modern Western architecture. Taking three of the Villa Savoye's characteristics as key reference points (the "white box" form, the "envelopment" of interior space, and the sense of "rising up" and "pushing forward"), and illustrated with a wealth of photographs and actual examples, this comprehensive history of modern and contemporary Japanese architecture traces the influences of modern Western architecture in Japan.

The author identifies five main types of architectural form in the evolution of Japanese interior space. The first is the "roofed, open" type, which represents the traditional Japanese model of comfort. Next is the "horizontally enclosing" type, an open space contained above and below by horizontal planes, with free interaction between interior and exterior areas; appearing from the 1930s to the 1950s, this type resulted from the convergence of the "roofed, open" type with the geometrical forms of modern Western architecture. The third is the "rising-roof" type (late 1950s to mid-1960s), whereby the interior space of the "horizontally enclosing" type was extended vertically. The fourth is the "vertically enclosing" type (a space contained laterally by vertical planes, with the exterior penetrating from above; 1966-76), which was a progression from the transitional "rising-roof" type and is at the opposite extreme from the "horizontally enclosing" type. And the fifth is the "roofed enveloping" type, in which thin planes, including the roof, wrap the interior as a "mass of space." Evident from the late 1970s on, this last type was achieved in a context of more free-ranging imagination after the limits of the "horizontally enclosing" and "vertically enclosing" types had been reached.

As this five-stage classification suggests, a defining feature of the book is its focus on the features and forms of actual structures rather than on the social, intellectual, or other contexts of architectural design. It thus presents a highly readable account of the distinctive character and appeal of contemporary Japanese architecture up to the emergence into the international limelight of such leading Japanese architects as Tange Kenzô, Isozaki Arata, and Andô Tadao.

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***Gendai kenchiku no pâsupekutibu* [Perspectives in Contemporary Architecture]**

Kôbunsha, 2005. 173x118 mm. 306 pp. ¥850. ISBN 4-334-03315-6.

Japanese Book News, no.47 (Spring 2006)

Author

Igarashi Tarô

Synopsis

This book outlines Japanese architecture in the “post-postmodern” phase since the latter half of the 1990s. The first chapter covers the huge developments and the brand-name architecture of Tokyo, while the second moves on to the provinces to look at art museums and renovated buildings there. The third chapter concentrates on residential buildings, and the fourth examines the relationship between cars and architecture, mainly with respect to metropolitan expressways. The book’s final section looks at where the works by the architects of each generation stand in relation to each other.

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***Nara, Kyôto no koji meguri* [Old Temples in Nara and Kyoto]**

Iwanami Shoten, 1985. 175x105 mm. 224 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-00-500089-4.

Japanese Book News, no.48 (Summer 2006)

Author

Mizuno Keizaburô

Synopsis

From the statues of the Shaka triad in the Hôryûji Golden Hall to the various statues in the Kôfukuji North Hall, this book takes up 15 major Buddhist statues in chronological order. The text of this easy-to-understand book is somewhat sparse, but its content is detailed enough to make this one standard history of Japanese sculpture. While touching on forms and creative methods to explain the beauty of the Buddhist statues, this book also mentions the circumstances in which they were created.

***Nihon bijutsu no rekishi* [History of Japanese Art]**

Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2005. 210x150 mm. 480 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-13-082086-9.

Japanese Book News, no.48 (Summer 2006)

Author**Tsuji Nobuo**

Born in Nagoya in 1932. Major in art history at the faculty of literature, University of Tokyo. He served as director of Chiba City Museum of Art, professor and later president of Tama Art University, among other positions. He is professor emeritus of University of Tokyo and Tama Art University. In July 2005 he became director of MIHO Museum. He is author of numerous publications, including *Kisô no keifu: Matabei-Kuniyoshi* [A Lineage of the Fanciful: Matabei and Kuniyoshi] (Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1970; Perikansha, 1988), *Jakuchû* [Jakuchû] (Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1974), *Kisô no zufu: Karakuri, Jakuchû, kazari* [Pictorial Book of the Fanciful: Devices, Jakuchû, and Decoration] (Heibonsha, 1989), *Sengoku jidai Kanô-ha no kenkyû* [Study of the Kano School of the Sengoku Period] (Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1994), and “*Kazari*” *no Nihon bunka* [Japanese Culture of “Decoration”] (editor, Kadokawa Shoten, 1998).

Synopsis

The author provides a history of Japanese art focusing on its characteristics of decorativeness, playfulness, and animism. He does not force his view of history on the reader, however, instead depicting a variety of phenomena in an impartial manner. The first section on the Jômon period and the final section on the modern era are particularly dynamic. The back of the book contains a guide to other literature for people who would like to know more about Japanese art history.

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***Nihon no kindai kenchiku* [Modern Japanese Architecture] (2 vols.)**

Iwanami Shoten, 1993. 174x105 mm.

Vol. 1: 268 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-00-430308-7.

Vol. 2: 286 pp. ¥780. ISBN 4-00-430309-5.

Japanese Book News, no. 9 (Winter/Spring)

Author

Fujimori Terunobu

Synopsis

In these two volumes, architectural historian Fujimori reviews 130 years of Western-style architecture in Japan.

The first Western-style houses in Japan were built in the foreign settlements around 1853, during the final stages of Tokugawa period (1603–1867). In the Meiji period (1868–1912), foreign architects hired by government built a number of authentic Western-style structures, mainly in central Tokyo, and soon Japanese architects were designing their own building after those modes. During the Taishô period (1912–26), architects developed a new artistic sensibility, vigorously exploring such themes the essence of architecture, its place in the social context, and the relationship between technology and artistic expression. Absorbing and giving shape to the new style of post-World War I European architecture almost as soon as it appeared, they thus laid the groundwork for the modernist and fascist architecture of the early Shôwa period (1926–1989).

Not confining itself strictly to the realm of architectural history, this book is also a chronicle of intellectual and cultural history traced in the aesthetic sensibilities that came into being with the emergence of modern Japan.

***Nihon shashin shi o aruku* [A Stroll through the History of Japanese Photography]**

Chikuma Shobô, 1999 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Shinchôsha in 1992).
160x112 mm. 350 pp. ¥1,300. ISBN 4-480-08497-5.

Author

Iizawa Kôtarô

Born in Miyazaki prefecture in 1954. Photography critic. After graduating from the Department of Photography, College of Art, Nihon University, Iizawa completed a doctoral degree at the Graduate School of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba. His numerous publications include “*Geijutsu shashin*” to *sono jidai* [Art Photography and Its Era] (winner of the Annual Award of the Photographic Society of Japan), *Shashin no genzai* [Photography Today], *Fotogurafâzu* [Photographers], *Araki!* [Araki!], and *Shashin bijutsukan e yôkoso* [Welcome to the Photography Museum] (winner of the Suntory Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities).

Synopsis

This book plots the history of Japanese photography from the middle of the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century through accounts of prominent figures of the world of photography.

After conducting various experiments, Yokoyama Matsusaburô (1838–84) made pioneering advances in photography during the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868). Kajima Seibei (1866–1924), who emerged onto the photography scene around 1890, patronized it so generously that he was nicknamed the “baron of photography” and made the subject of novels and plays. The last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837–1913), took up photography as one of his hobbies. Count Kamei Koreaki (1861–96) produced a detailed photographic record of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) after volunteering for military service. Yasu Kôhei (1846–1917), who originally hoped to become an astronomer, traveled as a young man to Guatemala, where he established a photography studio and remained for the rest of his life (taking the name Juan Jose de Jesus de Yas). While quietly nurturing Japanese art in the Taishô period (1914–26), Nojima Yasuzô (1889–1964) devoted himself to *shinkô shashin* (“new photography”), which incorporated the essential elements of German and French modernist photography. The renowned poet Hagiwara Sakutarô (1886–1942) also created a unique aesthetic world as a photographer. Photographer Nakayama Iwata (1895–1949) spent his life in pursuit of “things of beauty.” Fukuhara Shinzô (1883–1948) was an enthusiastic photographer in addition to being a prominent businessman. Photographer Ueda Shôji (1913–2000) centered his activities around photographic clubs, groups that sustained the heyday of amateur photography in Japan. Yasui Nakaji (1903–42) devoted himself “body and soul” to exploring the possibilities of photography while remaining an amateur photographer throughout his life. Kageyama Kôyô (1907–81) came to be known as “the demon of documentary photography.”

Through the stories of these and other figures who were involved in photography in diverse ways, the book offers a vivid account of the evolution of Japanese photography that is made even more appealing by the inclusion of 190 photographic plates.

Written by one of Japan's leading photography critics, the book is the result of his extensive and painstaking fieldwork, including visits to eminent photographers' families and collectors and careful investigation of relevant materials. It can be enjoyed not only as an introduction to the history of Japanese photography but also for its portraits of people who lived through a turbulent phase of history.

***Hijikata Tatsumi no hô e: Nikutai no rokujû nen dai* [Hijikata Tatsumi: The 1960s, Decade of Flesh]**

Kawada Shobô Shinsha, 2001. 194x131 mm. 242 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-309-26472-7.

[Japanese Book News, no. 36 \(Winter 2001\)](#)

Author

Tanemura Suehiro

Synopsis

Credited with making “butoh” an internationally recognized word, *butô* dancer Hijikata Tatsumi (1928–86) achieved renown from the very beginning of his career in 1958. He remained at the center of the avantgarde movement throughout the 1960s and was surrounded by such distinguished fellow dancers as *buto* founder Ôno Kazuo, Ôno’s son Yoshito, and Ishii Mitsutaka. He enjoyed the support of writer Mishima Yukio and essayist Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, and helped nurture numerous talented artists from among his many young and adoring pupils.

This book is a collection of commentaries on Hijikata, spanning a thirty-five-years period. There are essays written in the 1960s about the contemporary art and theater scene and observations made only recently. The author (1933–2004), who regards Hijikata as someone who combines a Nijinsky-like genius for *butô* with a Diaghilev-like commitment to protecting and preserving art and literature, calls this volume “a portrait of Hijikata as a facilitator.”

Interest in Hijikata has been increasing in the fifteen years since his death, and this work is valuable not only for understanding the artist himself but for insights into the eclectic art scene of 1960s Japan.

Kabuki [Kabuki]

Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2001. 210x150 mm. 275 pp. ¥2,800. ISBN 4-13-083032-5.

Author**Kawatake Toshio**

Born in Tokyo in 1924. Grandson of nineteenth-century kabuki playwright Kawatake Mokuami (1816–93). Graduated from the department of physics, faculty of science, Tokyo Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo). Completed postgraduate program at Waseda University. Professor emeritus of Waseda University. Person of Cultural Merit. Principal publications include *Hikaku engeki gaku* [Comparative Theater Studies] (2 volumes), *Sakka no ie* [Writers' Houses] (for which he won the 1980 Yomiuri Prize for Literature and the Mainichi Publishing Culture Award), and *Butai no oku no Nihon* (English translation under the title *Japan on Stage: Concepts of Beauty in the Traditional Theatre*, published by 3A Corporation, 1990).

Synopsis

The author is a kabuki expert who has worked on several overseas kabuki tours as special artistic advisor. Drawing on that experience, he compares kabuki with Western theater, and from both their similarities and their differences describes the features of the art of kabuki in terms of its component elements, including the kabuki stage, its audience, acting and staging, and plays and playwrights.

The author begins his account of the characteristics of kabuki by considering the local responses, both favorable and not, to kabuki performances with which he toured in the United States and what was then the Soviet Union, among other countries. *Kanadehon chûshingura* [The Treasury of Loyal Retainers] was well received in the United States, as was *Shunkan* (the story of the exiled twelfth-century Buddhist priest Shunkan) in the Soviet Union. These plays were successful outside Japan because both are highly dramatic and deal with serious themes. Works thought to be suited to overseas audiences for the splendor of their staging and costumes, such as the kabuki dance *Musume Dôjôji* [Maiden of the Dôjôji Temple], by contrast, were poorly received because they appeared to lack drama. The author's suggestion based on this experience is that, whereas Western theater is overtly "dramatic," the drama of kabuki dance and *aragoto* (bombastic-style) kabuki plays moves at a deeper level, and this is why some kabuki may not be readily understood by overseas audiences. He notes that as a performing art kabuki presents a comprehensive expression of stylized beauty within a flexible, freeform theatrical space.

Reasons for Recommendation

Written in a highly accessible, colloquial style, this is a clear and instructive introductory work for understanding the distinctive character and appeal of one of Japan's most important performing arts.

***Kyôgen: Denshō no waza to kokoro* [Kyogen: The Transmission of Spirit and Technique]**

Heibonsha, 1995. 200x140 mm. 326 pp. ¥2,913. ISBN 4-582-24608-7.

Author

Nomura Manzô

Born in Tokyo in 1930 as the eldest son of Nomura Manzô VI. Graduate of the department of traditional Japanese music, Tokyo Ongaku Gakko (now Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music). A Kyogen actor, he made his stage debut at age 4, and has performed traditional as well as newly created Kyogen plays. In 1993 he succeeded to the Nomura Manzô name as the 7th generation.

Synopsis

Nomura Manzô VII wrote this book at the suggestion of Fujinami Takayuki, director of the National Theater, whom Nomura has known since their kindergarten years. Nomura sets down his thoughts about the Kyogen stage, telling about specific plays he has performed during his long career.

The book is divided into several themes: auspicious plays about a lucky person, god, farmer; daimyo lord; Tarôkaja (manservant); a bridegroom and a woman; an ogre and a mountain priest (*yamabushi*); a priest and a blind person; plays reflecting social trends and folk customs; music; dancing and singing; and actor's lines and narration. Four auspicious plays (*waki-kyôgen*) are introduced, including *Sue-hirogari* and *Asô*. The *Sue-hirogari* ("increasing prosperity") was a major *waki*-Kyogen play in the Taishô era (1912–26) and the early years of the Shôwa era (1926–89), but, in recent years it is no longer staged even at New Year's and other Noh-related happy events, the author says. The play with a daimyo lord as principal character is now considered an essential part of Kyogen. The author also shows what words were used to indicate the self in the old scripts of *Sue-hirogari*. He points out that the role of Tarôkaja in *Sue-hirogari* became the template for the manservant role in Kyogen as a whole. Likewise he presents a detailed analysis of other plays as well.

Reasons for Recommendation

Offering much more than personal recollections and stories of the profession, this book offers objective discussion of the distinctive features of the art of Kyogen drawing on an actor's accumulated experience. He is attentive to details, such as what the characters in a play call themselves in old scripts. It is a very useful guide to understanding this traditional form of comic theater.

***Nihon no oto: Sekai no naka no Nihon ongaku* [Sounds of Japan: Japanese Music in the Global Context]**

Heibonsha, 1994 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Seidosha in 1977).
160x111 mm. 363 pp. ¥1,165. ISBN 4-582-76071-6.

Author

Koizumi Fumio

Born in Tokyo in 1927 (d. 1983). Graduated from University of Tokyo. First attracted attention with *Nihon dentô ongaku no kenkyû* [A Study of Japanese Traditional Music], published in 1958. Known for his work in introducing Indian and other traditional ethnic music from around the world to Japan, he was professor at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. Other major publications include *Ongaku no kongen ni aru mono* [At the Roots of Music] and *Kayôkyoku no kôzô* [The Anatomy of Popular Song].

Synopsis

Introducing Japanese music as one of the world's traditions of ethnic music, this book gives an easy-to-understand description of its character and distinctive features.

The book is composed of three parts. The first part looks at both the spatial and temporal aspects of Japanese traditional music today from various angles—"Japanese music in the global context," "the present and future of Japanese music," and so on. The second part analyzes Japanese traditional music by genre, and the third presents a basic theory of Japanese music. In part 1, the author notes that Japanese music is often thought to be atypical and undeveloped in comparison to Western music. Analyzed in terms of tonal scale, rhythm, and so on, and compared with various other ethnic music traditions from around the world, however, he delineates Japanese music's universal elements. Rather, he suggests, it could be argued that the clear-cut rhythm structure of Western music, where importance is placed on dynamics, is atypical. In part 2, he explains various kinds of Japanese music—including *gagaku* (court music), Buddhist music, music for Noh and Kyôgen theater, popular music, and music for specific instruments such as the *shakuhachi* (vertical flute), the *koto* (thirteen-stringed zither), and the *samisen* (three-stringed lute)—from their origins to their musical characteristics. Part 3 is a theoretical discussion on such topics as the tonal material and tonal system, and rhythms and music forms.

Reasons for Recommendation

Authored by a scholar who has engaged in extensive fieldwork in world music, this is a stimulating and cogently argued account of Japanese music that is easy to follow and well-grounded in the basic principles of the field.

Nôgaku handobukku [The Noh Handbook]

Sanseidô, 2000. 210x138 mm. 280 pp. ¥1,500. ISBN 4-385-41044-5.

Authors**Toita Michizô**

Born in Tokyo in 1909. Graduated from Waseda University. Noh critic. Other major publications include *Nôgei ron* [The Art of Noh], *Nô: Kami to kotsujiki no geijutsu* [Noh: The Art of the Gods and Begging], and *Kyôgen: Rakuhaku shita kamigami no henbô* [Kyogen: The Transformation of Ruined Gods].

Kobayashi Yasuharu

Born in Aomori in 1938. Professor of medieval Japanese literature at Waseda University. Other major publications include *Nô, kyôgen zuten* [Illustrated Dictionary of Noh and Kyogen], *Heike-monogatari to shura-nô* [The Tale of the Heike and Noh's Asura Plays], and *Yôkyoku "Motomezuka" no hôhô* [Techniques in the Noh Play *Motomezuka*].

Synopsis

This is a revised version of the 1984 volume *Nô no jiten* [Noh Dictionary]. Introducing in a plain language the rules peculiar to Noh and the practices to follow on stage, it is edited as a guidebook for thorough understanding of the Noh theater.

This handbook is made up of four parts, an introduction to the appeal of Noh, the plays, a glossary, and reference materials, in that order. The introductory part outlines a history of Noh and Kyogen, explaining how Noh and Kyogen were lumped together under the generic name Sarugaku until the Edo period (1603–1868), and how Noh was known as “sarugaku's noh.” It also portrays artistic features of Noh and the development of Noh performances. The second part deals with playwrights, the types of plays, and the individual plays. The glossary gives detailed explanations of Noh roles and actors, masks, makeup and costumes, stage properties, and dances and related terms. The fourth part introduces Noh performance halls among other useful information.

Reasons for Recommendation

Written in a plain style accessible even to the high school student classes and young people who attend Noh performances dressed in jeans, this book would lend itself readily to translation, answering many of the questions non-Japanese visitors ask about this traditional form of theater.

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***Noh: Genzai no geijutsu no tameni* [Making Noh a Modern Art Form]**

Iwanami Shoten, 2001 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Shin'yôsha in 1989). 150x110 mm. 214 pp. ¥800. ISBN 4-00-602033-3.

[*Japanese Book News*, no.49 \(Fall 2006\)](#)

Author

Tsuchiya Keiichirô

Synopsis

Noh is an abstract type of theater that celebrates deep meditation. This wonderful book analyzes this meditation from a modern perspective. It was originally written as an introduction to Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku. Watanabe Tamotsu handled the Kabuki section, and Mizuochi Kiyoshi wrote the part on Bunraku, which is also an exceptional work. Neither is contained in this paperback version, so readers seeking the entire work will have to look for the original edition of this concise, easy-to-understand introduction put out by Shin'yôsha.

***Eiga kantoku besuto hyaku-ichi: Nihon hen* [Japan's Best One Hundred and One Film Directors]**

Shinshokan, 2003. 211x140 mm. 260 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-403-25071-8.

Author**Kawamoto Saburô**

Born in 1944. Graduate of the University of Tokyo Faculty of Law. Kawamoto is a critic who deals mainly with the topics of cinema, literature, and urban life. His major publications include *Hayashi Fumiko no shôwa* [Hayashi Fumiko and the Shôwa Period].

Synopsis

Despite its title, this book actually introduces a total of 142 Japanese film directors—from Uchida Tomu and Mizoguchi Kenji, both born in 1898 and active in the early days of Japanese cinema, to such recent directors as Furumaya Tomoyuki (b. 1968)—in two chapters respectively titled “Best 101” and “Plus 41.” Edited by Kawamoto Saburô, a literary critic who has also published several works of film criticism, the book consists of commentaries by him and eleven other contributors. The selection of directors is finely tuned and drawn from a wide range of filmmaking genres. In addition to such greats as Ozu Yasujirô, Kurosawa Akira, Naruse Mikio, Kinoshita Keisuke, Shimizu Hiroshi, and Ichikawa Kon, there are the comparatively minor “program picture” directors, including Makino Masahiro, Suzuki Hideo, and Furusawa Kengo; noted directors of pornographic movies, such as Wakamatsu Kôji, Zeze Takahisa, Satô Hisayasu, and Satô Toshiki; documentary directors, such as Ogawa Shinsuke, Haneda Sumiko, and Hara Kazuo; and animated-film directors, including Miyazaki Hayao, Takahata Isao, Oshii Mamoru, and Tomino Yoshiyuki. As suggested by Kawamoto’s observation that “we live in an age when it is possible to speak in the same breath about Tim Burton and Jissôji Akio, Abbas Kiarostami and Suô Masayuki, Chen Kaige and Uchida Tomu” (p. 11) one can discern his intent to reexamine Japanese cinema through the lens of foreign cinema.

***Nihon eiga no radikaru na ishi* [Radical Will in Japanese Cinema]**

Iwanami Shoten, 1999. 195x140 mm. 495 pp. ¥3,000. ISBN 4-00-001756-X.

Author**Yomota Inuhiko**

Born in 1953, Yomota studied religion at the University of Tokyo, where he advanced to postgraduate studies in comparative culture and comparative literature. Currently professor in the Faculty of Literature at Meiji Gakuin University, he is also known as a critic in wide range of fields from literature to manga to cooking. Among his other major publications are *Eiga shi e no shôtai* [Invitation to Cinema History] and *Nihon eiga shi hyaku-nen* [One Hundred Years of Japanese Cinema].

Synopsis

This book, whose title reminds of Susan Sontag's *Styles of Radical Will* (1969), looks at seventeen Japanese film directors who have distinguished for their work since the collapse of the Japanese movie studio system in the 1980s. The author seeks an overall view through an analysis based as much as possible on the entire opus of each director, including not only their feature films but also amateur-period 8-mm studies, works produced for television, and works of "V cinema" (movies originally made on videotape). While the book is thus at one level a study of cinema auteurs, it also provides useful coordinates for considering the body of Japanese cinema as a whole since the 1980s. Taking as his starting point the view that [by the 1980s] "Japanese cinema had been getting along without charismatic directors like Kurosawa Akira for quite some time," the author introduces directors who have continued to make stimulating movies in the "post-charisma" era, building his discussion around key concepts associated with each director—Kitano Takeshi and violence, Sai Yôichi and ethnicity, Oshii Mamoru and devastation, Bandô Tamasaburô and the remaking of tradition, and so on.

Kyôyô toshite no “manga, anime” [Basic Knowledge of Manga and Animation]

Kôdansha, 2001. 174x106 mm. 266 pp. ¥720. ISBN 4-06-149553-4.

Authors**Ôtsuka Eiji**

Born in 1958. Graduated from Tsukuba University. While working as a freelance manga journal editor, Ôtsuka is also active as a critic, manga writer, and novelist. Among his other published works is “*O-taku*” no seishin shi [An Intellectual History of “Otaku”].

Sakakibara Gô

Born in 1961, Sakakibara graduated from the faculty of literature of Waseda University. He is a freelance editor whose major publications include “*Bishôjo*” no gendai shi [“Bishôjo”: A Contemporary History of Beautiful-girl Icons].

Synopsis

Numerous critical and scholarly works are recently coming out on the topics of manga and anime (animated films), but this compact volume provides an overview of the two genres that includes the a survey history of the development of each and elucidates the roles of their key authors and artists. The book is divided into two parts, Ôtsuka Eiji writing on manga in the first half and Sakakibara Gô on anime in the latter half. Ôtsuka in particular examines manga works in their historical setting and offers insights into postwar Japanese society. He explores a range of intriguing topics, including the connection between postwar democracy and manga by Tezuka Osamu that feature robots with names related to atomic and nuclear power, such as Atomu (Atom) and Uran (the Japanese word for uranium) in *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Mighty Atom, which in English was titled *Astro Boy*); the works of Japan-resident ethnic Korean manga writer Kajiwara Ikki, who repeatedly wrote what might be called inverted bildungsroman about underprivileged youths who, aspiring to sporting fame, undergo grueling training regimens that end in disaster; and women manga artists of the baby boom generation, such as Hagio Moto, who successfully used the manga medium to portray the inner lives of young women.

***Nihongo no genryu o motomete* [Seeking the Origin of the Japanese Language]**

Iwanami Shoten, 2007. 172x106 mm. 284 pp. ¥ 820. ISBN 978-4-00-431091-4.

Japanese Book News, no.56 (Summer 2008)

Author**Ono Susumu**

Born in 1919. Prominent Japanese language researcher. Current Honorary Professor of Gakushuin University. Started his research on the ancient Japanese language by pursuing the question, "What is Japan?" While continuing to pursue the origins of the Japanese language, his studies include special usage of kana through the Nara era, Man'yoshu, Kojiki and Nihon Shoki. An author of many books.

Synopsis

Ono Susumu, a prominent Japanese language researcher, has pursued the origin of the Japanese language for the past 30 years. This is an introductory textbook on his vast research results that meets his goal of including easy-to-understand explanations. When he was 60, Ono was flabbergasted to discover that a Dravidian etymological dictionary he came across contained many words that were identical with ancient Japanese. Since then, he has continued his research on the origins of Japanese in Tamil, which belongs to the Dravidian language group of South India. Coupling his profound knowledge on the Japanese language with archaeological and ethnological research, he devised a hypothetical scheme that he clearly explains in this book. He argues that the Tamil tribe came to northern Kyushu by sea during the ancient Jomon period (ca. 3000-200 B.C.) and taught rice-growing, steel-making and weaving to Japan. Moreover, the Tamil also passed on their language to the locals so that Tamil words and grammar were mixed with the Polynesian language that was assumed to be used by the Japanese at the time. Criticized by comparative linguists, his hypothesis is highly divisive and has not been widely acknowledged. However, his bold and persuasive hypothesis is attractive enough for those interested in the mysterious origins of the Japanese.

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***Buta no mukui* [The Pig's Retribution]**

Bungei Shunjû, 1999 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1996). 150x105 mm. 235 pp. ¥429.
ISBN 4-16-761801-X.

Author

Matayoshi Eiki

Born in Okinawa prefecture in 1947. Novelist. After graduating from Ryûkyû University, began writing novels while working for the Urasoe municipal government. Won the Akutagawa Prize in 1996 for *Buta no mukui* [The Pig's Retribution]. A leading figure in the emergence of literature of distinctively Okinawan flavor.

Synopsis

The title work of this two-story volume centers around a university student named Shôkichi. After a large white pig runs amok in a hostess bar that Shôkichi frequents, Shôkichi mentions a local belief that the curse that the pig has cast can be lifted by making spiritual supplication on the island of Maja—his native home—and gets roped into taking three of the hostesses to the island. Dotted with *utaki* (sacred sites of Okinawan culture), Maja Island is regarded as hallowed ground, but at the inn where they lodge, the hostesses spend most of their time on a rowdy binge of eating and drinking. Meanwhile, Shôkichi locates the spot on the island where his father's remains were disposed (by open-air "burial"). He makes the spot his own, personal *utaki*, and decides to bring his female companions to it. The second story, "Senaka no kyôchikutô" [Oleander on My Back], is set in Okinawa during the Vietnam War. It describes a budding love between a young Okinawan woman—the daughter of an Okinawan woman and an American serviceman killed in the Korean War—and a young, artistic-minded American soldier stationed at an Okinawan military base and waiting to be mobilized to Vietnam.

Reasons for Recommendation

This is a contemporary novel depicting the vitality of Okinawan life while also taking up themes of local folk beliefs. Particularly in its humorous portrayal of interpersonal relationships among the openhearted, big-eating, big-drinking local people, it offers a vivid picture of Okinawa in both its traditional and contemporary guises

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***Chi to hone* [Blood and Bones] (2 vols.)**

Gentôsha, 2001 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1998). 150x105 mm.

Vol. 1: 466 pp. ¥648. ISBN 4-344-40105-0.

Vol. 2: 476 pp. ¥648. ISBN 4-344-40106-9.

Author

Yan Sogiru (Yan Sogil)

Born in Osaka prefecture in 1936. Graduated from Osaka Prefectural Takatsu High School night-school course. After an unsuccessful career in business, followed by work as a taxi driver, among other jobs, Yan first began to receive recognition as a writer in the 1980s. Many of his works depict the chaos of the social underworld from the perspective of an ethnic Korean writer living in Japan.

Synopsis

Set in Osaka from around 1930 to the postwar period, this is the story of Kim Shunpei, a Korean from Cheju Island who works in Osaka making *kamaboko* (fishpaste cakes). Shunpei is a large, violent man feared even by gangsters. He redeems a prostitute named Yae by paying the ransom for her, only to find soon afterward that she has run away from him, too. After changing jobs, he rapes bar proprietor and single mother Lee Young-hee and forces her to marry him. Their marriage turns to turmoil as he takes up with another woman even as he milks Lee for money. He has five children with Lee, but in their squalid living conditions only two survive—their daughter Hanako and son Sung-hwan. After World War II, Shunpei becomes successful operating his own *kamaboko* business, but is still too miserly to let his family benefit from the money he makes. On the contrary, he starts living with his young mistress right near where his wife and children live. After his mistress falls ill, Shunpei, now with four more children from yet another woman named Sadako, comes to further grief when his son Sung-hwan rebels against him. After collapsing from a stroke, he is forsaken by both Sadako and Sung-hwan, and returns to North Korea with three of his children. Ten years later, Sung-hwan, now a taxi driver, learns that his father has died and that his half-siblings are looking for their mother.

Reasons for Recommendation

The title of this novel alludes to a Korean saying that one gets one's blood from one's mother and one's bones from one's father. Based heavily on the life of the author's own father, this tale of grim conflict between a father and son linked by Confucian ideals has made a deep impression on Japanese readers. Kim Shunpei is one of the most skillfully wrought characters in Japanese contemporary literature.

***Mina no koshin* [Mina's March]**

Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2006. 195x135 mm. 330 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 4-12-003721-5.

Japanese Book News, no. 50 (Winter 2006)

Author**Ogawa Yoko**

Born in 1962. A selection from her short story collection *Ninshin Karenda* [trans. *Pregnancy Diary*], whose title story won the Alitagawa Prize, appears in the December 2005 issue of *The New Yorker*. A film version based on the French translation of her novel *Kusuriyubi no hyohon* [The Ring-Finger Specimen] was released in 2005. Her novel *Hakase no aishita sushiki* [trans. *The Gift of Numbers*] is available in English and other languages.

Synopsis

All people have happy memories they would like to freeze in time for eternity. This novel depicts one such memory. For 12-year-old Tomoko, the year she spent living with her aunt's family in Ashiya, Hyogo Prefecture, beginning in spring 1972 was a blissful one. This novel, which won the Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Prize, finds her some 30 years later, reminiscing about that year at her aunt's house.

It is the spring of 1972. The new Shinkansen line between Okayama and Kobe has just opened, and the world awaits the Summer Olympic Games in Munich. Tomoko's aunt is married to a half-German man, and the family resides in a Spanish-style villa. Pochiko, a pygmy hippopotamus that the family has kept as a pet since before the war, can be found bathing in a pond in the large backyard.

Tomoko's cousin, Mīna, is a beautiful 11-year-old with chestnut-brown hair and eyes. Since Mina is physically weak, she gets to ride to school on Pochiko's back. The 160-kilogram hippo has a giant body but extremely short legs. Whenever Pochiko makes an appearance, the story grows more interesting. Mina loves to light matches and creates stories inspired by the pictures on matchbox labels. These stories remain in Tomoko's memory even into the present.

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Omoide toranpu [A Deck of Memories]

Shinchôsha, 1983 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1980). 150x105 mm. 225 pp. ¥400.
ISBN 4-10-129402-X. (Some of the stories in the book translated and included in *The Name of the Flower*, Stone Bridge Press, 1994.)

Author

Mukôda Kuniko

Born in Tokyo in 1929 (d. 1981). Graduated from Jissen Women's College (now Jissen Women's University). Achieved high acclaim as a radio and television scriptwriter and as an essayist and novelist.

Synopsis

Completed just before the author's life was tragically cut short in a plane crash in 1981, this is a collection of thirteen short stories about the human dramas that take place unexpectedly in everyday life, among them the Naoki Prize-winning work "Hana no namae" [The Name of the Flower].

"Kawauso" [The Otter] is the story of a married couple three years before the husband is to retire. While Takuji (the husband) recuperates from a cerebral hemorrhage, his wife Atsuko grows increasingly vivacious and decides to use the land that has been their long-cherished garden to build an apartment building. Her behavior reminds Takuji of a painting titled "Dassai-zu" [Otter's Fiesta], which alludes to the old belief that the otter amuses itself by laying out its catch of fish on the riverbank. When Takuji draws a kitchen knife on Atsuko, she deftly diverts his murderous intent with her carefree attitude.

"Inugoya" [The Doghouse] revolves around a pregnant woman named Tatsuko. One day, she notices another pregnant woman on the train, then recognizes the woman's husband as the man who used to work at her local fish shop and who often came by Tatsuko's family home to take care of their dog. Tatsuko had rejected his romantic advances at the time and eventually married another man. While recalling those events, Tatsuko walks past the drowsing man without saying a word.

Like "Kawauso," the stories "Hana no namae" [The Name of the Flower] and "Hame-goroshi mado" [The Window] both depict emotional disjunction between husbands and wives.

Reasons for Recommendation

With expert scene-setting and composition, Mukôda has a special gift for capturing the effects of memories as they flit through the lives of middle-aged couples. This is a collection of signature works by one of Japan's most talented short-story writers.

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***Semishigure* [Chorus of Cicadas]**

Bungei Shunjû, 1991 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1988). 150x105 mm. 470 pp. ¥629.
ISBN 4-16-719225-X.

Author

Fujisawa Shûhei

Born in Yamagata prefecture in 1927 (d. 1997). Novelist. Graduated from Yamagata Normal School. Began writing historical fiction while working as a journalist for a trade newspaper and went on to become one of Japan's most popular writers. His collected works (25 vols.) were published in 1992–94 by Bungei Shunjû.

Synopsis

This full-length novel is one of the best in the *jidai shôsetsu* or historical romance genre set in Japan before the opening of the modern era. The protagonist is Maki Bunshirô, a young man who has been adopted into the Maki family of the Unasaka domain (a fictional domain that appears in several of Fujisawa's novels and is thought to be based on the Shônai domain of what is now Yamagata, the author's native prefecture). The story begins with Bunshirô at age fifteen. He spends his early youth mainly with two friends of contrasting character—the rough-and-ready Oyamada Ippei, who is adept at martial arts, and the brainy, bookish Shimazaki Yonosuke—though during this time he also experiences an adolescent love for Fuku, the daughter of a neighboring family. Before long, rivalry and intrigue erupt within the Unasaka clan over succession to domanical power, and Bunshirô grows to manhood carried along by the course of ensuing events. His first love is unrequited, as Fuku is taken as a concubine by the lord of the domain. The last chapter, in which Bunshirô is twenty years older and has risen to the post of *kôri-bugyô* (district commissioner), includes the touching and beautiful scene of his final, fleeting encounter with Fuku, who has resolved to take the tonsure following the lord's death.

Reasons for Recommendation

A master of storytelling and finely crafted depictions of both nature and human psychology, Fujisawa Shûhei is one of the pioneers of Japan's modern historical romance genre. *Semishigure*, with its vivid story of the trials of a young samurai growing to manhood in feudal Japan, is one of his best works.

47

***Yoru no pikunikku* [Nighttime Picnic]**

Shinchôsha, 2004. 188x127 mm. 342 pp. ¥ 1,600. ISBN 4-10-397105-3.

Japanese Book News, no. 43 (Spring 2005)

Author

Onda Riku

Born in Miyagi prefecture in 1964 and a graduate of Waseda University, Onda has won a large following for her unconventional works not bound by the established genres of horror, science fiction, and mystery, including *Kyûkei no kisetsu* [The Spherical Season] and *Kinjirareta rakuen* [Forbidden Paradise].

Synopsis

This novel is about a series of events that occur during an all-day, eighty-kilometer walk undertaken by the students of a high school. For the senior students the walk is the final school event before graduation.

Two of the senior students, a boy named Nishiwaki Tôru and a girl named Kôda Takako, are half-siblings born of different mothers. Burdened with the shame of his father's infidelity, Tôru avoids Takako and cannot confide in any of his classmates. Takako makes a bet with herself that if she can talk to Tôru during the walk she will ask him to do something she has long had in mind. But things keep coming between them, including Ryôko, a girl who has feelings for Tôru, a message left by Anna, a girl who has gone to study in the United States, and a mysterious boy wearing a white hat. When Tôru suffers a sprain while favoring a previous injury, his chances of finishing the walk look grim. Takako, too, has yet to achieve what she set out to do.

Although no serious incidents occur, the story is nonetheless told in an exciting style that uses the techniques of romance and mystery fiction to hold the reader's attention from beginning to end. The depiction of characters almost entirely through the dialogue brings out realistic and recognizable personality in each of them. When the main characters resolve to walk through the night to complete the event, their trial becomes a metaphor for youth as an unavoidable and irreversible rite of passage. The story leaves the reader feeling positive and somehow refreshed.

48

***Yokame no semi* [Eighth-day Cicada]**

Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2007. 197x142 mm. 352 pp. ¥ 1,600. ISBN 4-12-003816-7.

Japanese Book News, no. 55 (Spring 2008)

Author

Kakuta Mitsuyo

Born in 1967. Her debut work *Kofuku na yugi* [A Blissful Pastime] received the Kaien Prize for New Writers in 1990. Other accolades include the Noma Literary Prize for New Writers in 1996 for *Madoromu yoru no UFO* [A Sleepy Night's UFO], the Naoki Prize in 2005 for *Taigan no kanojo* [trans. Woman on the Other Shore], and the Kawabata Yasunari Prize for Literature in 2006 for *Rokku haha* [Rock Mother].

Synopsis

Readers are kept on the edge of their seat from the very first page of this lengthy suspense novel. A recipient of the Chuo Koron Bungei Prize, the work poignantly questions the nature of motherhood and family by digging deep into the hearts of the two main female characters, a kidnapper and a kidnapped child.

In the novel's first part, a run-of-the-mill office worker snaps emotionally and kidnaps her lover's baby. She then spends close to four years on the run with the girl. During this time they take shelter with a shady religious cult; they also enjoy some momentary happiness while taking refuge on a small island in the Seto Inland Sea. Readers will fully feel the pain of the main character after her impulsive commission of this serious crime. They will also share her joy as their own during the scene in which she is moved as she and the child together look at the nature around them.

The real beauty of this novel, however, is in its second part. Time has passed and the kidnapped child has grown up. She understands what has happened to her, but becomes more and more confused because of it. Finding herself in a situation similar to that of the woman who snatched her, she embarks on her own journey of self-discovery, and finally experiences a brilliant revelation. The last scene of this harrowing tale is infinitely touching.

49

***Kawa no hikari* [Light on the River]**

Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2007. 197x139 mm. 392 pp. ¥1,700. ISBN 4-12-003850-1.

Japanese Book News, no. 55 (Spring 2008)

Author

Matsuura Hisaki

Born in 1954. Graduate of and currently professor at the University of Tokyo, where he teaches representational culture theory and French literature, poet, and novelist. His *Hana kutashi* [A Spoiling Rain] won the 2000 Akutagawa Prize. Is also a film critic and a translator.

Synopsis

This is a thrilling full-length novel aimed at younger readers. The plot centers on a family of three mice that live in a riverbank: the father mouse, Tata the elder son, and his younger brother Chicchi, only just born at the beginning of spring. When work starts on turning their river into a conduit, the mice find themselves forced out of their cozy home. They set out to find a new place where they can once again live in peace. This is no easy journey for such small animals, though. They go through a succession of difficulties and many adventures.

They have to contend with a band of fiendish rats, attacks by a ferocious bird and a weasel, the hustle and bustle in front of a train station, a typhoon, and snow. However, a friendly face always pops up from somewhere to save them in the nick of time--Tami the ingenuous dog, the cat granny, the merry mole widow, a pair of sparrows, and a wise, elderly mouse. As the readers are carried through one exciting episode after another, they realize that the world is not just one of danger, but is also made up of the bonds of love and friendship.

Famous works of children's literature in this vein include Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Richard Adams' *Watership Down*. With modern-day Tokyo as the stage for the travels and adventures of the mice, Matsuura has written a similarly stirring tale that rivals even these established masterpieces. Matsuura's story, which he tells in lithe, graceful Japanese, is sustained by the loving author's gaze that he fixes on his protagonists' tiny lives.

50

Kenshin [Dog's Body]

Asahi Shimbunsha, 2007. 190x132 mm. 512 pp. ¥2,000. ISBN 978-4-02-250335-0.

Japanese Book News, no. 56 (Summer 2008)

Author

Matsuura Rieko

Born in 1958. Debuted with *Sogi no hi* [The Day of the Funeral], which won the Bungakukai New Writers Award in 1978. Received the 2008 Yomiuri Prize for Literature in 2008 with *Kenshin [Dog's Body]*, her full-length novel released after a seven-year hiatus.

Synopsis

In this full-length novel, Matsuura Rieko dreamed up an unexpected by turning a human being into a dog that is petted by the person it loves. Positioned on the other side of the story is a gruesome, realistic, abnormal love-hate family relationship, which contrasts sharply against the pure heartfelt relationship between the dog and person. Matsuura probed her original stance towards sex by releasing a voluminous novel called *Oyayubi P no shugyo jidai* [The Edification of Big Toe P] in 1993 that surprised the readers by basing her story on an extremely strange setting. Matsuura expanded her free imagination further in *Kenshin*. Unbound by the conventional framework of a popular story, her stance struck a chord in the readers hearts. In the tale, the dogturned-heroine says, "My soul is damaged, and must taste very bad." In response, the Mephistopheles-like man who demands Fusae's soul says, "Don't worry. A well-beaten soul tastes good, just like certain kinds of meat." With exquisite humor and earnestness of the dialog, this story cultivates new ground for the contemporary novel.

The story features dog-related puns and the title *Kenshin* has a double meaning: "dog's body" and "devotion."

51

Goruden suranba [Golden Slumbers]

Shinchosha, 2007. 194x142 mm. 503 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-10-459603-4.

Japanese Book News, no. 57 (Fall 2008)

Author

Isaka Kotaro

Born in 1971. Graduated from the School of Law, Tohoku University. Debuted as a writer with *Odyubon no inori* [Audubon's Prayer], which received the Shincho Mystery Club Award. Nominated for the Naoki Prize in 2003 for *Juryoku piero* [Gravity Clown]. Appealing to a wide range of readers with his stylish humor and precise story structures, five of his works have been turned into movies, including *Shinigami no seido* [Accuracy of Death].

Synopsis

Goruden suranba is the latest full-length novel from one of the most popular young mystery writers in Japan today. Isaka's strong following is attested to by his winning of the 2008 Hon'ya [Bookseller] Prize, a unique award given to the book that bookstore employees throughout Japan would most like to sell.

The story takes place in a fictionalized yet highly convincing version of modern Japan. The prime minister is elected by popular vote, and machines called "security pods" are installed nearly everywhere to monitor citizens' private activities and communications. One day, the prime minister is killed by an assassin's bomb while parading through his hometown of Sendai. An ordinary young man is framed as the assassin by a shadowy organization, and the story of his life on the run begins. Can he get away with the help of his friends?

With nostalgic nods to the Beatles' music and allusions to the Kennedy assassination, this elaborate story goes beyond being just a good page-turner to serve up a sharp rebuke to today's surveillance society.

52

***Chichi to ran* [Breasts and Egg]**

Bungei Shunju, 2008. 192x136 mm. 138 pp. ¥1,143. ISBN 978-4-327010-4.

Japanese Book News, no. 57 (Fall 2008)

Author

Kawakami Mieko

Born in 1976. Calls herself a "writing singer." After graduating from high school, majored in philosophy at the Nihon University Correspondence Division, and debuted as a singer in 2002. Her first medium-length novel, *Watakushiritsu in ha, matawa sekai* [The World According to Tooth], was nominated for the Akutagawa Prize in 2007. In the same year, she received the Incentive Prize of the Tsubouchi Shoyo Award.

Synopsis

Winner of the 138th Akutagawa Prize, this work is characterized by a unique writing style that is rhythmic and comfortable, the result of a merger between Kawakami's Osaka dialect and a distinct style developed as a singer. Her writing style is the opposite of the approach of stringing together short sentences, a technique that became the standard for elegance in modern Japanese literature. Her style is reminiscent of the prose of the earlier Meiji era (1868-1912), which featured seemingly never-ending sentences broken up by an occasional comma. Her long sentences allow her to paint a complete picture of the drama that unfolds as well as the characters' emotions, sensations, associations and recollections. As such, her verbose style creates a unique mood and vivid imagery with each turn of the page.

The main characters include a middle-aged mother who is intent on getting breast implants, and her daughter, who is obsessed with her first menstrual period. The cast of quirky but lovable characters interact to produce a humorous, offbeat tale. Written in a folksy Osaka dialect, the story smoothly proceeds to philosophical observations on women's bodies. This freedom of ideas is part of the appeal of this new writer.

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Kazahana [Whirling Snowflakes]

Shueisha, 2008. 190x138 mm. 285 pp. ¥1,400. ISBN 978-4-08-771207-0.

Japanese Book News, no. 58 (Winter 2008)

Author

Kawakami Hiromi

Born in 1958. Graduated from Ochanomizu University's Faculty of Science. Previously taught biology at junior and senior high schools. Won the Akutagawa Prize in 1996 for *Hebi o fumu* [Tread on a Snake]. Her best-selling *Sensei no kaban* [Teacher's Briefcase] garnered the Tanizaki Jun'ichiro Prize in 2001, and her *Manazuru* [Manazuru] received the Minister of Education's Arts Encouragement Prize in 2007. Member of the Akutagawa Prize selection committee since summer 2007.

Synopsis

Kawakami Hiromi, one of the most popular female writers in Japan, strikes out in a new direction with this tale of a 33-year-old woman named Noyuri. One day, Noyuri is tipped off by an anonymous phone call that Takuya, her husband of seven years, is having an affair. She meets with Takuya's lover, Satomi, to discuss the situation, but her vacillating personality prevents her from taking action. Noyuri then turns to a trusted uncle for advice, asking him whether she should get a divorce. But leaving Takuya, whom she still loves, is too painful, so she remains married to him, if only on paper.

Kawakami entices the reader to question what is really going in Noyuri's mind, and in the mind of the self-centered Takuya, who initially seeks a divorce but ultimately reverses course. Their relationship continues in a delicate balance, without ever reaching a dramatic resolution. This limbo is deftly symbolized by the titular image of *kazahana*--the whirling snowflakes that Noyuri sees outside during a winter visit to a spa. The novel is pervaded with a sense of being stuck between joy and sadness, like wind-driven snowflakes that neither settle on the ground nor sail upward in the sky. Kawakami once again demonstrates her prowess with language in her exquisite portrayal of the ambivalent relationship between Noyuri and Takuya, the rhythm of their conversations, and their emotions.

Amerika no kage: Sengo saiken [America's Shadow: Reexamining the Postwar Era]

Kôdansha, 1995 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Kawade Shobô Shinsha in 1985). 150x105 mm. 333 pp. ¥1,000. ISBN 4-06-159182-7.

Author

Katô Norihiro

Born in Yamagata prefecture in 1948. Graduated from the University of Tokyo. Formerly employed at the National Diet Library, Katô is a professor of Meiji Gakuin University and a literary critic. His major works include *Hihyô e* [Toward Criticism], *Kimi to sekai no tatakai de wa, sekai ni shien seyo* [Support the World in Your and the World's Struggles], and *Haisengo ron* [Japan After the Defeat in World War II].

Synopsis

This volume brings together three finely wrought essays on postwar relations between Japan and the United States based on the evidence of postwar Japanese literature and literary criticism. The essays are: "America's Shadow: Literature of the Economic Boom Years," "Collapse and Humiliation: The Frontier Vanishes," and "Reexamining the Postwar Era: The Emperor, Atomic Bombs, Unconditional Surrender."

The first essay looks at criticism by literary critic Etô Jun of two novels depicting trends among Japanese youth in the 1970s and 1980s: Murakami Ryû's *Kagirinaku tômei ni chikai burû* [Almost Transparent Blue], which Etô criticized, and Tanaka Yasuo's *Nantonaku Kurisutaru* [Somehow Crystal], which he praised. Introducing Etô's critiques of these works, the author discusses the influence of United States on postwar Japan. In the second essay, with such works as Etô's *Seijuku to sôshitsu* [Maturation and Loss, 1967] and literary critic Isoda Kôichi's *Sengo Nihon no kûkan* [The Space of Postwar Japan] as his point of departure, he examines U.S. policy for the postwar occupation of Japan. The third essay also deals with American occupation policy, primarily through Eto's views on Japan's unconditional surrender at the end of World War II.

Reasons for Recommendation

The author explains political conditions and attitudes reflected in important works of literature and literary criticism. Katô has opened up a new genre combining literary criticism with the study of intellectual history.

Nihon no shiika: Sono honegumi to suhada [The Poetry and Poetics of Ancient Japan]

Iwanami Shoten, 2005 (*bunko* edition; originally published by Kôdansha in 1995).
145x105 mm. 216 pp. ¥900. ISBN 4-00-602097-X.

[Japanese Book News, no. 49 \(Fall 2006\)](#)

Author**Ôoka Makoto**

Born in 1931. Poet, literary critic. A former president of the Japan PEN Club, a professor of Japanese literature at Meiji University and at the National University of Arts & Music, and member of the Advisory Board of Poetry International (Rotterdam). Has received numerous awards, including Officier Ordre d'Arts et des Lettres from the French government.

Synopsis

This book is a compilation of the lectures delivered at Collège de France in 1994 and 1995 by Ôoka Makoto, a prominent poet and critic in Japan today. It has already been published in French under the title *Poésie et poétique du Japon ancien*, and a Japanese version was released by Kôdansha in 1995, followed by the publication of an English version in 1997. This new release in an accessible form is highly welcomed, though, as it provides the sort of superb overview of classical Japanese poetry that can hardly be found elsewhere.

As the original audience was French, classical Japanese poetry is explained in an easy-to-understand manner in clear language for the benefit of readers who approach the subject from a very different European perspective. The book first takes up the late-ninth-century Chinese-style poet Sugawara no Michizane. After a reexamination of the potential for social and political expression in his preferred genre, it moves on to consider the poetics of the 31-syllable *waka*, noting that Ki no Tsurayuki, one of four poets selected by the emperor to compile the *Kokin wakashû* anthology of poetry in the early tenth century, held that harmony was the original basis of *waka*. Also covered in the lectures in this book are the female poets of the Middle Ages, the ballads of that period, and poetry on natural scenery, which the author gives an especially important place in Japanese poetry. This book contains a vast number of insights supported by the author's deep knowledge and his refined sense as a poet and is thus the ideal introduction to classical Japanese poetry for the interested foreign reader.

Saigyô [Saigyô]

Shinchôsha, 1996 (*bunko* edition; 1st edition 1988). 150x105 mm. 314 pp. ¥476.
ISBN 4-10-137902-5.

Editor/Author**Shirasu Masako**

Born in Tokyo in 1910 as the granddaughter of Count Kabayama Sukenori (1837–1922), a prominent Meiji-period admiral and politician originally from the Satsuma domain (now Kagoshima prefecture). Trained in Noh from an early age under the head of the Umewaka school of Noh. After returning to Japan from studies in the United States, she married businessman Shirasu Jirô. Published her first book, *O-nô* [Noh], in 1943. Twice won the Yomiuri Prize for Literature, for *Nô men* [Noh Masks] (1962) and *Kakurezato* [Hidden Village] (1972).

Synopsis

The Buddhist priest and poet Saigyô (1118–90) lived during the turbulent final decades of the Heian period (794–1185). It is known that he entered the priesthood at the age of twenty-three and composed numerous superb poems in the tanka form during a series of walking tours around the country. On the other hand, there are also many unanswered questions about his life that continue to attract the attention of various writers today.

Believing that “Saigyô the man exists only in the poems he wrote,” critic Shirasu focused her biography on Saigyô’s verses. Retracing his wanderings, she creates a portrait of the poet that can also be read as a travelogue. While commenting critically on Saigyô’s poetry, she probes for a deeper understanding of his mind and character. She identifies the popular appeal of the poet, who is the subject of numerous stories and legends, in the way his image wavers between truth and fiction, and suggests that his life was lived toward the attainment of “a spirit as open and wide as the sky.”

By reading his poetry, as it were, from within the mind of Saigyô himself, Shirasu seeks to bring us an image of the poet that is truer than the many myths about him. A skillful writer, she also offers penetrating critical commentary on various Saigyô-related sources, demonstrating that her insights are not limited to subjective impressionism.

Reasons for Recommendation

While various people have written about Saigyô, Shirasu brings to the task her talent as a fine writer and her penetrating eye for the truth about people. As a result, her discussion of the enigmatic poet carries a force of gravity rarely attained in conventional Saigyô studies.

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***Hoshi shin'ichi: sen-ichi wa o tsukutta hito* [Hoshi Shin'ichi: The Man Who Wrote 1,001 Stories]**

Shinchosha, 2007. 196x136 mm. 576 pp. ¥2,300. ISBN 4-10-459802-1.

Japanese Book News, no. 54 (Winter 2007)

Author

Saisho Hazuki

Born in 1963. A nonfiction writer who deals with such themes as the relationship between science and technology and humanity, sports, and education. Her works include the 1997 Shogakukan Nonfiction Award winner *Zettai onkan* [Perfect Pitch] and *Ano koro no mirai: Hoshi Shin'ichi no yogen* [The Future Back Then: Prophecies of Hoshi Shin'ichi], a collection of analytical essays. *Hoshi Shin'ichi: Sen-ichi wa o tsukutta hito* won the 2007 Kodansha Non-Fiction Award.

Synopsis

Hoshi Shin'ichi (1926-97) left behind a body of 1,001 "short short" science fiction stories--tiny, engaging works that seem at times to foresee the future within their humorous passages. He has long been read avidly by readers of all ages. Tens of millions of books full of his stories have sold over the years, and they remain popular today, a decade after his death. In 1963 a selection of his tales were translated into English, touching off a wave of global popularity that has seen more than 650 of Hoshi's works appear in a total of more than 20 languages. New translations are still appearing.

Readers of this biography will learn that this wildly popular writer had a past that he kept sealed away from the public view. He was constantly burdened by the "negative legacy" of the history of his father, a powerful business figure; it was in the world of science fiction that he found some temporary emotional refuge. There were more aspects of his life that made it a tragic one in ways, though: producing the unending stream of "short short" tales that came across as such light-hearted material was actually a brutally draining creative process that took a severe toll on the author.

Saisho spent some five years writing this book on the "god of the short short story." She worked with an astounding amount of material as she polished her picture of this mysterious man, carrying out detailed interviews with 134 people related to Hoshi's life and examining numerous items left behind by the late writer. It is this labor that makes Hoshi, a man who lived such a complex life, leap vigorously off the pages of this biography.

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***Tezuka Osamu achisto ni naru na* [Tezuka Osamu, Don't Be an Artsit]**

Minerva Shobo, 2008. 195x135 mm. 330 pp. ¥2,400. ISBN 978-4-623-05251-6.

Japanese Book News, no. 59 (Spring 2009)

Author

Takeuchi Osamu

Born in 1951. Manga researcher and professor at the Department of Media, Journalism, and Communications in the Doshisha University Faculty of Social Studies. Specializes in manga history and children's culture. Works include *Tezuka Osamu ron* [On Tezuka Osamu], *Sengo manga goju-nen-shi* [Fifty Years of Postwar Manga], *Manga hyogengaku nyumon* [Introduction to the Study of Manga Expression], and, as editor, *Manga hiho taikai* [A Compendium of Manga Reviews]. (As of Mar., 2009)

Synopsis

Tezuka Osamu is a manga artist beloved in Japan, best known for such works as *Tetsuwan Atomu* [trans. *Astro Boy*] and *Janguru taitei* [trans. *Kimba the White Lion*]. The influence he has had in Japan cannot be overestimated. His character *Astro Boy*, a robot with human emotions that runs on atomic power, is still popular today and has become a symbol of the nation's prayers for peace. This critical biography focuses principally on the first half of Tezuka's life. It follows the process through which Tezuka, who had great artistic aspirations, pioneered the field of story manga after being influenced by Disney films. As his work appeared in manga magazines, he came to compromise his art with forms of expression aimed at a mass audience. Takeuchi is meticulous in his bibliographic verification throughout this book. He clearly sees where the evidence deliberately presents Tezuka in a favorable light, and he compares the similarities in *Tetsuwan Atomu* and works by other artists that preceded it. Tezuka always struggled to stay at the forefront of media attention, and it is somehow awful to see the trail of his trial and error in doing so brought into agonizingly sharp relief. During his final years, Tezuka would often say to his assistants, "Don't be an artist. Be an artisan." Torn between artistry and popular appeal, Tezuka himself must have tasted great bitterness in his own struggle. One comes to realize just how profoundly isolated was this genius who led the whole manga world of postwar Japan.