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On Other Pages

Cultural Highlights

From the Japanese Press (November 1, 2001–February 28, 2002) 7

Research Reports

Studying a Foreign Language:

A Heart-to-Heart Understanding 10

The Body in Avant-Garde

Theater in Japan 12

Book Reviews

Books in Other Languages 16

The Heart Remembers Home

Eileen Kato

Naeshirogawa. The name is like a bell, far off but ever so persistent, calling me for twenty years and more. I first heard the name after my husband's return from a working trip to Seoul around the early 1970s. As a Kyushu place name, it was even then no longer on the map. It is now called Miyama. Others have taken the road to Miyama, but the place that calls to me is Naeshirogawa.

My Introduction to Ryōtarō Shiba One name is conspicuously missing from the acknowledgments page of my translation of Ryōtarō Shiba's (1923–96) *Kokyō Bōjigataku Sōrō*, which I rendered as *The Heart Remembers Home* (Japan Echo, 1979). That is the name of my late husband, Yoshiya Kato, who insisted that acknowledging a spouse's help would be odd in Japan. But, acknowledged there or not, his influence, encouragement, and help were paramount. He was unusually well read in four languages, and Shiba was one of his favorite modern Japanese authors. He had a very broad range of serious interests, and one he passionately pursued—and drew me into with him—was a love for ceramics, especially East Asian. He was deeply attracted by Korean works, whether Koryō-dynasty (918–1392) celadons, Yi-dynasty (1392–1910) iron-oxide designs and blue-and-white ware, or the humbler-seeming bowls so prized by devotees of Chadō, the Way of Tea, especially devotees of the austere beautiful *wabi-cha*, imbued with an acutely palpable but verbally inexpressible sense of beauty informed by a Zen philosophy.

In Seoul, after the day's work was done, he was invited to a traditional barbecue restaurant by his Korean counterparts, and over their meal the conversation turned to ceramics. One of the Korean gentlemen asked if he had read Shiba's *Kokyō Bōjigataku Sōrō*, an account of Korean potters who had been taken to Japan in the sixteenth century. In spite of being an avid reader of Shiba, he had not.

He returned from Seoul with a number of pieces of Korean pottery, mostly modern but including a couple of small pieces of old Yi-dynasty blue-and-white ware. One of the first things he did after his return was to get the above-mentioned book, the title work in a collection of three short pieces (Bungei Shunju, 1968). My husband read this title story in one evening, and I shall never forget his excitement and emotion over this reading. He kept stopping and saying: "Listen to this!" and would then read aloud passage after passage. He was anything but a crybaby, yet he was a man of real feeling and when he finished this reading he was in tears, and so was I. He said: "You must translate this. Whatever else you translate, you *must* do this. I will help you, but you must do it."

At the time I was hopelessly engaged in my number one hobby of trying to translate Noh plays and just then working on a very beautiful and untranslatable play by Zeami (1363–1443). I promised to do the Shiba story when that Noh play was finished.

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It took time! Then we were assigned to Paris for some four years, and life was very busy indeed. Finally, after our return from Paris, I seriously got down to work. It was late 1979 when the work was at last published, with the aid of a grant from the Japan Foundation, and we were in Beijing on our new posting when I received my copy of the book in early 1980. My highly esteemed former professor at Columbia University and our good friend, Donald Keene, kindly wrote an introduction for the book. Donald Keene was also a close personal friend of Ryōtarō Shiba.

I had translated only the title story, since that was the only one that my husband felt had to be done. Even that much was hard going. Like all worthwhile writers, Shiba is a constant joy to read in his own original words but a tremendous challenge to translate. Of course, he is not difficult in the same way as the late-tenth- to early-eleventh-century writer Murasaki Shikibu, for example, but he has his own difficulties and they are daunting. Some of these special difficulties are referred to by Professor Theodore Goossen in his review of my version of *Drunk as a Lord* [*Yotte Sōrō*] (Kodansha International, 2001) in the *Japan Foundation Newsletter* (Vol. XXIX, No. 1). I find, however, that I cannot agree with his opinions on editorial policy.

I have tried and will continue to try to give as direct a translation as possible of the original, keeping what Professor Goossen calls “creative editing” to an absolute minimum; and where that is resorted to, I feel the translator is best qualified to make final decisions, being best acquainted with the work and its challenges. That does not alter the fact that I am profoundly grateful to my editors, but officious editing, no matter how well meant, is hardly a good idea. Professor Goossen says kind things about my efforts and those of Juliet Winters Carpenter, the translator of Shiba’s *The Last Shōgun* [*Saigo no Shōgun*] (Kodansha America, 1998), but adds: “Yet, in the end, their versions fall far short of the Japanese originals.” I am sure that Juliet Winters Carpenter would be the first to agree with me that no one is as acutely aware of that as ourselves, but trying to write with a particular foreign readership in mind can lead one down strange paths. “Abroad” is a huge and very diverse territory, and many segments of the international audience will not have the same attitudes as North Americans, for example.

I feel I can only go on trying to render the original writer as faithfully as possible and let the reader have the fun and rewards of investigating the background and whatever else he or she needs to know to understand more fully. There is no need to spoonfeed the reader. I now think it was a mistake on my part to have provided a long afterword to *The Heart Remembers Home*, to fill in the reader on Japanese history of the period and on Japanese ceramics and their development. When I did this work a quarter century ago, it seemed useful to provide some

such information; now it is hardly necessary, so much more is known to westerners than was the case back then.

For years after I translated *The Heart Remembers Home*, my husband and I kept planning and postponing a visit to Kagoshima and Naeshirogawa. His work was very demanding and we were abroad a great deal. We thought we could finally go in 1990, but that trip was postponed because of his hospitalization. From his hospital bed he used to say that as soon as he got discharged our first trip would be to Naeshirogawa, but that was not to be. He died unexpectedly in early 1991.

Once in the 1980s we had met the Naeshirogawa potter Chin Jukan XIV, when he had an exhibition-sale at a big Tokyo department store. We had very little time with him, but it was an unforgettably pleasant time. It was like meeting an old friend. He was just the kind of man described so warmly by Shiba. But he was surrounded by admirers and customers, and we got no opportunity to talk to him as we would wish. He has almost certainly forgotten that he ever met us.

The Heart Remembers To return to the book: it is the story of one family in one village of ethnic-Korean Japanese. There are many such families and villages in Japan, particularly in the south and west, but it was the Chin family in Naeshirogawa that had the good fortune to be visited by Ryōtarō Shiba, historian, humanist, and superlative raconteur. Today we hear and read a lot about *zainichi* Koreans, the families of Koreans who came to Japan, either freely or under coercion, during the early-twentieth-century occupation of their country by the Japanese. This Japanese colonization of Korea lasted some thirty-five years, and many Koreans still harbor very bitter feelings over that unfortunate episode of their history. Memories of it still bedevil relations between the two countries, but there are welcome signs—even glimmerings of hope in the separated North—that people of goodwill in both countries are beginning to let history retreat into history and look to the future.

The Koreans of the pottery villages have had a very different history, no less painful; but sufficient time has elapsed for them to have dropped their resentments, and they identify themselves as Japanese, though forever conscious of their roots in Korea. Although totally different from theirs, my own situation gives me a clear perception of how one can be totally loyal to and happy in an adopted country and yet the heart will go on faithfully remembering home. The heart that could forget home would hardly be able to love an adopted country.

Shiba gives a very brief history of the so-called pottery wars—as the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s (1537–98) invasions of Korea are often styled—which the Koreans know as the Imjin Wars. The first invasion was in 1592, the second in 1597. These, too, even with such a long lapse of time, have left deep scars on the Korean psyche. It was

during the second invasion, the Keichō War, that the ancestors of the Naeshirogawa potters were carried off. They had taken refuge in the fortress of Namwon, which, lying at the junction of many major routes, controlled Chōlla Province and was the base for the armies of Ming-dynasty (1368–1644) China then fighting in Korea. Shiba cites the early-seventeenth-century *Jingbirok*, the Korean history of the invasions, as recording that the Japanese besieged this fortress on the first day of the eighth month of the second year of Keichō (September 12, 1597).

Although masterfully narrated, the story of the first arrival of the Naeshirogawa group of Korean potters is rather vague. There are no detailed records, and memories grow dim after a few generations. But all the families have handed down a traditional telling of being forcibly carried off after the fall of the fortress of Namwon and of enduring great hardship in the early years of their uprooting from their homes and homeland. They drifted ashore at an uninhabited strand called Shimabira, a little south of the Kyushu fishing port of Kushikino. The group comprised people of seventeen surnames, including two separate Chin families writing their name with different ideograms. Why they drifted ashore at that particular place remains unclear; that they did so is undisputed. The first of these families to change its name to a Japanese one was the Boku, which took the name Tōgō, later made famous by the World War II-era Foreign Minister Shigenori Tōgō. They kept not only their names but also their Korean manners and customs for many generations.

An interesting passage describes how Tachibana Nankei, a physician from the central Honshu province of Ise (modern Mie Prefecture), visited the Satsuma domain and Naeshirogawa in the 1780s. He made an entry in his travel journal:

Some seventy leagues west of the castle city of Kagoshima, there is a place called Noshiroko [Naeshirogawa] with a community of Koryō people. . . .

They preserve without change their Korean manners and customs. Their dress and speech are also Korean. They increase and multiply by the day and already number some few hundred families.

In his introduction Donald Keene cites the poet and patriot Rai San'yō, who in 1818 made a tour of Kyushu, composing Chinese-style poetry about sights and events on his way. Keene translates a stanza from a poem describing a village of ethnic-Korean potters:

On the road I met some descendents of Korean prisoners;
They made a living as potters in a village of their own.
How touching to think they can mold from Japanese clay
The Kōrai [Koryō] bowls they fashion in our time.



Eileen Kato and Chin Jukan XV before a stone inscribed “Kokyō Bōjigataku Sōrō [The Heart Remembers Home], Ryōtarō Shiba” (courtesy of Eileen Kato).

It seems to have taken them some time, however, to find Japanese clays and glazing materials suitable for their work.

One cannot condone the forcible kidnapping of a numerous workforce of potters; but the results of this wartime coercion were so wonderful, it is difficult not to be pleased it happened. The Naeshirogawa case gives much food for thought. Whole families were carried off. This surely made it easier for the potters to settle down and get on with their work. It also made it possible to preserve the community traditions, the language, the dress, all that is described above. It also speaks well for their new lord, Shimazu Yoshihiro (1535–1619) of the Satsuma domain, that he so sagely allowed them to be themselves and set a wise precedent for his successors. Yet time inevitably brings changes, and the Naeshirogawa Koreans and their counterparts in other potting villages gradually melted into the Japanese population. By the end of the Edo period (1603–1868), they had become more Japanese than the Japanese themselves in many ways.

Adapting to a New Home In some of the Korean-potter villages, traditional styles and methods were faithfully adhered to and are to this day. Many new styles evolved in Naeshirogawa. It is said the customer is always right, but the patron is even more so. The Koreans of Naeshirogawa put all their skills at the service of their lord and gradually evolved new types of ware that might strike some as being very un-Korean, but only the most highly skilled potters could achieve them. Chin Jukan XII won considerable fame for his superb wares, especially those sent to Europe for the great international exhibitions of the late nineteenth century. Several Chin Jukan XII pieces are in the holdings of the Museum of the Imperial Collections (Sannomaru Shōzōkan), in Tokyo, which occasionally puts them on view for the general public. When Japan

resumed free foreign trade in the mid-nineteenth century, huge quantities of every kind of ware began to be sent abroad. Alas, it must be admitted that a lot of rather tasteless colored wares went out from the Satsuma domain; but at their best, color-glazed Satsuma ceramics are of a rare and unrivaled beauty.

Naeshirogawa continued to produce plain black Satsuma wares down the generations, including the very special wares called *gozen-guro*, which were formerly for the use of the daimyo and the aristocrats only. They were made by a secret process handed down from father to son in secret teachings, a custom that is not unknown in the Western world but is very typical in the world of East Asian arts and crafts. An unfortunate break in the chain of transmission occurred when Chin Jukan XII died before he could pass the teachings on to his son. Though highly gifted, Number XIII never managed to achieve *gozen-guro*. The story of how Shiba's Chin Jukan, the fourteenth of his line in Japan, was ordered by his father to make this splendid black ware shot with golden glints, and his eventual success, is one of the most interesting episodes in the book—and the one my husband found most appealing.

Shiba is well known for his ironic wit. Never cruel, he nevertheless can be very amusing at the expense of his characters; but in *The Heart Remembers Home* he keeps his penchant for irony well under control. Maybe it was out of courtesy, so as not to upset the ethnic Koreans in any way, but he never says the slightest thing that could possibly offend them. It was not in his nature to be racist or exclusivist, but it must have been a little hard for him to keep his irony at bay. This shows a bit in the above-mentioned episode.

He permits himself to be witty at the expense of Hekaku, the “old crank of a country samurai” who owned the land that yielded the particular type of iron-rich clay needed for the *gozen-guro*. Old Hekaku seems to have been of native Japanese ancestry. Is that why Shiba freely directed irony at him? Yet, Hekaku, too, is a most engaging character. The story of how he helped the youngest Chin Jukan find the vein of iron-bearing clay, how he rode on the young man's back as if Chin were a horse and then sat all day giving what seemed like futile directions in terrain changed unrecognizably by the passage of the years, until finally, at the end of the day, the exhausted Chin struck the right vein, is a joy to read. Chin's troubles were far from over, and it makes very interesting reading to follow him through his many failed experiments until at last, by chance or by grace of the fire god, a full kiln firing of black ware yielded just a few scattered pieces of the quasi-miraculous *gozen-guro*. Old Hekaku then said his *nunc dimittis* in his own Japanese way.

A few other episodes greatly appealed to my husband, and to me, too. There was the episode of the boy's first day at middle school, where his Korean name attracted

undue attention from the school bullies. They dragged him up onto the flat roof of the school and gave him a typical bullies' beating. Badly bloodied but unbowed, he made his way home, only to find to his amazement that his father and mother were waiting for him in the road outside the gate, as if they had known what would happen to him that day. They had indeed, for the same thing had happened to his father, Number XIII, on *his* first day of middle school. His father was unusually kind and gentle with him, helping him get cleaned up. The battered boy decided then and there that he would go to school no more, but his father got him to understand that he must take a more positive attitude, and he did. He took on “in fair fight,” as my boy contemporaries used to say in Ireland, all the bullies in his class and the class above until he had bested every one of them, even the ones much stronger physically than himself. That helped him realize that the blood in his veins was as good as theirs and that it is not blood that matters anyway. It took him longer to come to terms with their taunts that he was not a Japanese, for that, too, he felt himself to really be.

Then there was the account of this fourteenth Chin Jukan's visit to South Korea, when he was invited to speak to the students of Seoul National University. He was introduced to them under the Korean form of his name, Sim Su Gwan; but he had long since become Chin Jukan, the Satsuma native, and he behaved like a Satsuma man. He was saddened, it appears, to find the students and so many other young people he had talked to still so resentful over the thirty-five years of Japanese colonial oppression and took it upon himself to teach them a more forward-looking attitude. He urged them not to get stuck in the past, looking only backward, but to look to the future, always advancing steadily forward. He told them that if they must insist on their thirty-five years, then he must say that for him it had been three hundred and seventy years. The students did not applaud when he had finished speaking and he thought that he might have offended them, but then, as one, they suddenly burst into song, a catchy tune that was then very popular in South Korea. There was no mistaking it: this roar of song was their way of showing their approval of and liking for him.

A later passage describes both his frustration with the strictures imposed on him by his special position as heir to the *iemoto*, or grand master, of the Chin potter family and his conversation with his father shortly before the death of Number XIII. Chin Jukan soon-to-be Number XIV wanted to make pieces for exhibition like the more independent potters following the newest trends in their art, but his father would not hear of it. Number XIII defended the *iemoto* father-to-son tradition, saying that he saw all the succeeding generations as a mountain chain. Although at first view it might seem that each was merely

carrying on and passing down a tradition, on closer examination it was clear from their works left behind that each had his own individuality and personal touch. The successive *iemoto* were like the great peaks cresting a chain of mountains, no two alike but each a grand link in the chain. He suggested that rising to such a height in the range was a glorious destiny for any man, but his son was not satisfied. He could not see this as a goal he wanted to live for. He wanted something that would give more meaning to his life. He begged his father to tell him what that might be. Then Chin Jukan XIII said just a few words. Shiba puts it: "But for Old Man Thirteen, all the joys and sorrows of his entire lifetime must have been boiled down into that concentrate of words. 'Make a good potter out of your son,' he said. 'That's all the role that I have played in life, and that is all that you can hope for either.'" Number XIV came to some understanding of that. The episode helps the reader also to understand something of the problems and strengths of the *iemoto* system that governs so many traditional arts and crafts in Japan and the rest of East Asia.

Another moving episode is the account of Chin Jukan XIV's visit to the graves of his ancestors in Ch'öngsong in North Kyöngsang Province, South Korea, almost four hundred years after the Japanese branch of the family had been carried off. There, instructed by his continental kinsfolk, who pronounced their name Sim, he performed the memorial rites according to Korean Confucian ritual. "When he had finished and looked up again, he saw that all the faces of all the Sims were beaming with the same delighted smile."

The Heart's Legacy This short account, only sixty-five pages in the original Japanese publication, is told in a quiet, understated way, but is so evocative, so full of genuine feeling, that the reader cannot but respond deeply. I had had some interest in Korean ceramics and the Korean contribution to the development of Japanese ceramics before knowing this story, but it was the stimulus that started me on years of more serious study that to this day occasions me many hours of delighted discovery and appreciation. Just recently I was able to see two exceptionally fine exhibitions of tea-ceremony utensils, with outstanding exhibits of Korean and Korean-Japanese pieces, especially *ido* ("well," meaning "deep") teabowls. The Chadō-*wabi-cha* debt to Korea is altogether incalculable. The wares of Naeshirogawa did not figure in either of these exhibitions, but that would be no reason to disparage or underestimate them. They have their own proud place.

The March 12, 2002, *Japan Times* carried an interesting article on various aspects of Japan-Korea cultural interaction down through recorded history. It outlines three great waves of Korean immigration: (1) at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century; (2) from the late

fifth to the beginning of the seventh century; and (3) the late seventeenth century, featuring "droves of people fleeing from warfare and political upheaval on the Korean Peninsula." Mention is made of Hideyoshi's invasions at the end of the sixteenth century, but only in conjunction with the 1910–45 period, as one of the historical episodes that marred Japan-Korea relations. No mention whatever is made of "pottery wars" or a kidnapped workforce of Korean potters in the very late sixteenth century. Pottery, together with silk harvesting and horse breeding, is mentioned only with the first great wave of immigration at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. This seems a very strange lacuna.

With the third wave, we are well into the Edo period. Was *sakoku*, the "closed country" policy, not yet in force? How did "droves" of refugees find such easy entry into Japan at that time in history? But many ceramic artists and humbler workers must indeed have come.

Before going to Beijing in the first days of 1980, I was full of my reading of Shiba and others and had given insufficient thought to the enormous Chinese contribution to the development of Japanese ceramics. Conversations with Chinese friends soon made me very much more aware of this. The evidence is plain to be seen from a very early period. The common Japanese designation for continentals was *tōjin*, literally "Tang person," denoting Chinese origin but used indiscriminately for Koreans, also. Did some of the seventeenth-century "droves" come from China? What happened in Jingdezhen at the fall of the Ming dynasty, in 1643? Were not "droves" of highly skilled artisans out of work, and did they not know that their skills would be appreciated in Japan?

Chinese friends told us that great numbers of workers from Jingdezhen went to Japan and were employed at various kilns there, producing the kind of colored wares, using sophisticated techniques, for which the great Chinese manufactory was famous. They told us that was the secret of the great Japanese takeoff in the production of overglaze-enamel colored wares in the seventeenth century. I have even met descendents of such Jingdezhen potters in Japan who make no secret of their resentment of the way they are ignored (as some of them see it) by commentators on Japanese ceramic development. Even for the tea ceremony, their wonderful contribution is often ignored or understated.

Tea itself was first introduced to Japan from China as early as the eighth century; but from the time of Eisai (1141–1215) and Dōgen (1200–1253), the two great pioneers of Chan, or Zen, Buddhism in Japan, tea drinking took on a special importance in Japan, and Chinese ceramic works were inseparable from it. Song-dynasty (960–1279) celadons, other monochromes, black *tenmoku*, and iridescent *yōben* (fire-changed) or *yuteki* (oil-spot) bowls were prized. Little by little a veritable cult of tea was established, but gradually the superbly crafted wares of China

gave way to the simpler-seeming wares of Korea. The man known as the “father of the tea ceremony,” Murata Jukō (1422–1502), is credited with the famous saying “Teabowls are Korean.” This way of thinking and seeing led to *wabi-cha* and the evolved Zen aesthetics of Sen no Rikyū (1522–91), recognized as the greatest master of the tea ceremony.

But tea was not all *wabi-cha*, and Chinese wares continued to be used. Chinese blue-and-white wares, especially the category called Shonzui, were much prized. Indeed these seem to have been made mainly for the Japanese market. I have also been told by Chinese friends that some of these blue-and-white wares were deliberately made defective, in shape or otherwise, because there is a certain Japanese rejection of what the great English diplomat and historian George Sansom calls the “uninteresting finality of perfection.” China had vast deposits of kaolin of the purest kind and easy import of the best Middle Eastern cobalt, styled Mohammedan blue, for the most limpid and perfect blue wares. Korea had a poor supply of cobalt and used what it had more sparingly, producing the famous Yi-dynasty blue-and-white wares, less purely perfect than Chinese wares, but indescribably attractive in their own more subdued way.

With time, the immigrants of whatever provenance became ethnically and culturally assimilated with the Japanese. The latter were apt learners and quickly acquired all the skills of their foreign mentors, adding their own unmistakable Japanese touch to whatever they were doing. They are all too often, too unthinkingly branded as mere imitators. This is a foolish opinion. Those who can will imitate, and to do so is perhaps the highest form of appreciation. Every type and form of ceramic product made in China or Korea has been successfully produced in Japan, too, either by immigrant artisans and their descendants or by native Japanese, second to none in skill and artistic gifts but stymied for a long time by a dearth of suitable materials. Even after kaolin was discovered in quantity in Japan, it was not of the good quality of Chinese clay; but gradually the importation of the best kaolin became possible. Like the Koreans before them, the Japanese made a virtue of their lack, and with the clays at hand made wares of surpassing beauty. Who, seeing the rich, creamy body of a Satsuma bowl, could regret that it is not pure white China?

There are those who take issue with certain Korean-Japanese potters, Chin Jukan included, for not remaining truly faithful to their old Korean tradition. I do not see it that way. Sclerosis is the worst thing that could happen to any art. There should be innovation and evolution, but this has to be carried out by the most experienced and very best artist-craftspeople, following the highest possible standards. That way they are being truly faithful to the best in their original tradition. This world of the Korean-derived art of pottery in Japan is quite

well known to ceramic experts, but insufficiently so to others. I would like to see full studies made of it. This would surely be to the greater honor of both peoples. The aggregate of Korean-founded kilns would be like yet another mountain chain, with the separate family kilns standing tall as great peaks linking the chain. In that range of mountains, too, the Chins and their Naeshirogawa kiln would soar high and proud. But also, I think, we need a fuller, fairer account of the tremendous Chinese contribution, especially since the seventeenth century. Then, too, we must not forget the great influence these three East Asian potter nations had on the ceramic arts of the whole Western world. In pottery, as in everything else, cross-fertilization of cultures is a fascinating field of study.

This year a momentous event is to take place. It is “only sports,” if you will, but World Cup Soccer is something very special. There are encouraging signs that it will do much to help heal wounds, real or imaginary, and on both sides of the fence dent the unfortunate prejudices and animosities that are a holdover of military oppression and colonialism. It will even bring isolated North Korea into the brightening picture.

Some time ago, in October 1998, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung came to Japan as a state guest. That successful visit, marked by the enlightened goodwill of President Kim and his hosts, did much to advance the cause of reconciliation. One evening during his visit, I turned on my television in the middle of a news program, and there on screen, before my delighted eyes, were President Kim Dae Jung and Chin Jukan XIV. President Kim, in spite of a grueling schedule, made a point of visiting the Naeshirogawa kiln. I thought this highly significant, a building block in the rising edifice of reconciliation. However, it occurred to me that such an auspicious visit would probably never have taken place if Ryōtarō Shiba had not spread the word by writing his heartwarming story about the ethnic Koreans of that place, his story becoming as well known in Korea, where my husband first heard of it, as in Japan. I derived great satisfaction from that thought.

After my husband’s death, I put aside for years all thought of going all alone to Kagoshima and Naeshirogawa. But one cannot live on grief alone and now again I feel I want to go. Yes, some day soon now, I will at last go to Naeshirogawa.

Epilogue The miracle has happened. In spring 2002, thanks to the exceptional kindness of Kagoshima friends, I was at last able to fulfill my long-held dream and visit Naeshirogawa. It more than lived up to my expectations.

I was all but overcome with emotion as I stood for a photograph in the shade of the roof of the great “samurai

Continued on page 9

From the Japanese Press

(November 1, 2001–February 28, 2002)

AWARDS

Autumn Honors

The Japanese government announced the names of 783 people to be honored in the autumn 2001 conferment of decorations. The list includes 126 women. Twenty-three people will receive the Medal with Purple Ribbon for original contributions to scholarship or the arts. Notable among the recipients are theater director Yukio Ninagawa for his highly innovative interpretations of classics, including plays by Shakespeare, Greek tragedy, and pieces by the Edo-period (1603–1868) playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1724); film and stage actress Fujiko Yamamoto; internationally acclaimed graphic designer and painter Tadanori Yokoo; and *manga* (Japanese comics) artist Leiji Matsumoto, whose works include the animated science-fiction film *Uchū Senkan Yamato* [*Star Blazers*].

(A, M, N, S, Y: Nov. 2)

Yamagata Bantō Prize

The 20th Yamagata Bantō Prize, named for a late-Edo-period (1603–1868) Osaka merchant-scholar and given by Osaka Prefecture to a researcher who has helped promote Japanese culture abroad, was awarded to John W. Dower, Elting E. Morison Professor of History at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for his book *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. Professor Dower is one of the foremost scholars of Japanese history and culture in the United States. In *Embracing Defeat*, he uses a vast and impressive array of historical documents to explore the impact of occupation policies on modern Japanese political and economic life.

(A, N: Dec. 28)

Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winner of the 126th Akutagawa Prize for belles-lettres by new writers was Yū Nagashima for *Mō-supīdo de Haba wa* [Mother at Full Speed], which appeared in the November 2001 issue of *Bungakukai*. The joint winners of the 126th Naoki Prize for popular fiction by more established writers were Ichiriki Yamamoto for *Akane-zora* [Crimson Sky], published by Bungeishunjū Ltd., and Kei Yuikawa for *Katagoshi no Koibito* [Lovers over the Shoulder], published by Magazine House, Ltd. *Mō-supīdo de Haba wa* is an account of an energetic single mother, told from the viewpoint of her only child, a boy in elementary school. The novel *Akane-zora*, set in the Edo period (1603–1868), is about a Kyoto tofu maker who starts a business in the Fukuagawa district of Edo (present-day Tokyo) and the numerous trials that his family weathers in the process. *Katagoshi no Koibito* depicts the contrasting ways of life of two twenty-seven-year-old women who have been close friends from childhood.

(A, M, N, S, Y: Jan. 17)

HISTORY

Late-Edo-Period Japanese-Dutch/ Dutch-Japanese Dictionary Found

Parts of the manuscript of a Japanese-Dutch/Dutch-Japanese dictionary compiled by the Dutch physician Jan Karel van den Broek (1814–65)—who served at the Dutch East India Company's trading post on the artificial island of Dejima in Nagasaki Harbor in the late Edo period (1603–1868)—were discovered more than one hundred and thirty years after his death in the public library in Arnhem, the Netherlands, where he lived

as a young man. Although the dictionary was known to have been compiled, it was thought to have been lost. One section of the Japanese-Dutch portion of the dictionary and twelve sections of the Dutch-Japanese portion were found, together with ten other printed works, including two volumes of sketches by the celebrated Edo-period woodblock artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). The van den Broek dictionary contains words not found in any dictionary published around the time of its compilation and is a priceless contribution to the history of cultural exchange between Japan and the Netherlands.

(A: Jan. 19)

MISCELLANEOUS

Shakespeare to Be Performed in Japan's Oldest Kabuki Theater

Arrangements are proceeding for an agreement between Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London and the Kanamaru-za Kabuki theater in Kotohira, Kagawa Prefecture. The modern Globe Theatre is built on the site of the original Globe Theatre, for whose stage William Shakespeare is thought to have written some of his greatest tragedies, including *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. The Kanamaru-za, built in 1835 and designated an Important Cultural Asset, is Japan's oldest extant Kabuki theater. The two theaters aim to sign contracts in 2003 and have members of the Shakespeare's Globe Theatre company perform in the Kanamaru-za in spring 2004.

(S: Nov. 1)

Asian Manga Summit Organizing Committee Established

On November 6, an organizing committee was established for the Asian

Manga Summit, a convention for *manga* (Japanese comics) artists from China, Japan, South Korea, and other East Asian countries. Takashi Yanase, creator of the beloved children's cartoon character *Anpanman*, accepted the post of chair of the committee. The committee plans to work to revitalize *manga*, which are suffering a slight recession due to competition from video games and *anime* (animated films), to broaden the base of the summit's participants, and to work for the international diffusion of the culture of *manga*. The next summit is scheduled to be held in Japan in October 2002. (M, S: Nov. 7)

Documents on Modern Asian History Now Accessible Online

The Web site of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) has launched online access to Japanese government materials on the modern history of relations between Japan and its neighboring Asian countries. Documents are being made available from collections of the National Archives of Japan, the Diplomatic Record Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Library of the National Institute for Defense Studies of the Japan Defense Agency. The database of over 100,000 items available thus far includes diplomatic documents dating from the Meiji era (1868–1912) to the closing years of World War II, materials belonging to the Imperial Japanese Army and the Imperial Japanese Navy, and internal documents from the former Japanese colonial governments in Taiwan and on the Korean Peninsula. JACAR's URL is <<http://www.jacar.go.jp/>>.

(A, M, N: Nov. 30)

Contemporary Art Museum Opens on the Internet

The Internet Museum of Art (IMA), an online museum of art devoted to month-long exhibitions by contemporary artists and designers, has been launched. The museum's first exhibition, *Chintai Uchū* [*Universe for Rent*], featured the work of its curator, the photographer and editor Kyōichi Tsuzuki. After being on display for one month, exhibi-

tions are transferred to the museum's permanent collection, which visitors can access at any time. Moreover, artists can augment and revise their exhibitions whenever they choose, distinguishing this museum as one whose collection constantly changes and grows. Visitors can purchase digital passes that give them access to various exhibitions for periods between seventy-two hours and one month. The Museum's URL is <<http://www.so-net.ne.jp/ima/>>.

(A: Jan. 7)

Newsletter for Cultural Volunteers Launched

The Japanese government's Agency for Cultural Affairs has begun publishing *Bunka Borantia Tsūshin* [Culture Volunteer Newsletter] both on its Web site <<http://www.bunka.go.jp/>> and in its printed monthly report to foster networking among volunteers in culture and the arts. The newsletter is the idea of Hayao Kawai, a renowned Jungian psychologist and educator, who took up the post of Commissioner for Cultural Affairs of the Agency in January 2002. The publication aims to provide a forum both for groups involved in cultural projects and activities in different regions of the country to advertise events and attract participants and for organizers to exchange information. The newsletter will be published at intervals of one to two months. (A, S: Feb. 8)

OBITUARIES

Ryūichi Yokoyama, 92, *manga* artist, November 8. A pioneer in *manga* (Japanese comics), he created the four-panel comic strip *Fuku-chan*, whose eponymous main character won an enduring place in the nation's heart. Yokoyama first started publishing comics in the late 1920s. In January 1936, his comic strip *Edokko Ken-chan* began serialization in the *Asahi Shimbun*, but the protagonist Ken-chan's sidekick Fuku-chan proved so popular with readers that in October 1936 the strip was relaunched with Fuku-chan as the focus. The strip continued after World War II and became one of the

longest-running ever, moving to the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper in 1956 and continuing until 1971, with a total of more than 5,500 strips published. Yokoyama started painting in the 1970s and leaves a great number of Western-style paintings and ink paintings. He was named a Person of Cultural Merit in 1994.

(A, M, N, S, Y: Nov. 8)

Nekohachi Edoya III (born Rokurō Okada), 80, actor and traditional vaudeville mimic, December 10. The sixth son of master performer Nekohachi Edoya I, he began performing professionally while still a child. Taking the professional name of Nekohachi III in 1950, he became especially well known for his consummate imitations of roosters, crickets, and various animals and for introducing into his monologues a new type of anecdote, dubbed Nekohachi-banashi (Nekohachi Stories), that dealt with the life of his father and his own life as a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. As an actor, he appeared in films and on television. He also wrote a number of books, including one titled *Wagabai wa Neko dewa nai* [I am Not a Cat]. (A, M, N, S, Y: Dec. 11)

Takashi Asahina, 93, music director of the Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra and the world's oldest active conductor, December 29. While a law student at Kyoto University he played violin in the university orchestra; he later studied conducting under the orchestra's conductor, Emmanuel Metter. He established the Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra (the present Osaka Philharmonic) in Osaka in 1947 and built it up to its present distinguished position in Japan's music world. He conducted mostly works of composers associated with German Romanticism. Known for his profound interpretations, he conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony 251 times, more than any other conductor in the world. He was named a Person of Cultural Merit in 1989 and received the Order of Culture in 1994. (A, Y: Dec. 30; N: Dec. 31)

Ikkō Tanaka, 71, graphic designer, January 10. One of the eminent figures in

Japanese graphic design, Tanaka had a distinctive style—a blend of Japanese aesthetics and simple, bright, modern designs—that gained him renown both in Japan and abroad. Apart from creating distinctive corporate logos, posters, wrapping paper, and the like, he designed the largest exhibition space at the 1970 World Expo in Osaka (the Japanese government pavilion) and the symbol for the 1985 Tsukuba International Science and Technology Expo. In 1997 a large-scale retrospective of Tanaka's work was held with his cooper-

tion at the Contemporary Art Pavilion in Milan. He was named a Person of Cultural Merit in 2000.

(A, M, N, S, Y: Jan. 11)

Tomiko Inui, 77, author of children's literature, January 16. A postwar pioneer of children's literature, Inui worked first as a preschool teacher. In 1950 she joined Iwanami Shoten as a children's-book editor and eventually started writing children's books. In 1970 she left Iwanami Shoten to write full time. Her book *Nagai Nagai Penguin no Hanashi* [The

Long, Long Tale of Penguins], a lengthy children's story that incorporates considerable scientific information, won her the Mainichi Publication Culture Award in 1957. Her other well-known works include *Kokage no Ie no Kobitotachi* [The Little People of the House in the Shade of the Tree], an antiwar story that blends elements of Japanese folk tales with European children's stories, and *Hikari no Kieta Hi* [The Day Darkness Fell], an account of her wartime experience as a student teacher for children.

(A, N, S, Y: Jan. 18)

Continued from page 6

gate," backed by the inner, second defensive wall, described by Shiba. Inside, much was just as in Shiba's pages, but the old wares on the terrace are now shielded by wooden bars, and I saw no sign of the bantam fowl. The "sleeping dragon plum" still crawls around the garden pond.

I had not presumed to announce my coming, but friends had done so, and our little group was received most warmly and courteously by Chin Jukan XV, the present head of the family, and his charming wife. Shiba's Number XIV was absent, in Tokyo. Rather than being disappointed at this, we were happy to know that his health had improved enough to permit him to make such a trip.

I was deeply impressed by Chin Jukan XV. Ruggedly handsome, totally unaffected and natural but exuding a quiet dignity and authority, he was just what I expected a Chin Jukan would be. In his generation, once again, the line had produced only one son, but I was told he himself has two fine sons. That can only be good for the family. His father is usually described as the strong silent type. Number XV is clearly strong, but a great talker. The impressive thing, however, about this highly articulate man is that he never wastes a word. I am still remembering and pondering over the many fascinating things he told us that day, especially what he had to say as he stood by the *nobori-gama* climbing kiln.

He talked of how, during a firing, he and another highly experienced man must stand for three days and two nights by the climbing kiln without a wink of sleep. Especially toward the end, the most accurate, expert judgment is required, but the man who must make it is by then in a near stupor of sleeplessness, seeing not just double but sometimes quadruple, incapable of summoning his wits about him. In those terrible moments of feeling "I can't go on! What'll I do? I'll go on!" he feels powerfully that somebody, something is upholding him and urging him to get on with it and get it right. His heart



Eileen Kato and Chin Jukan XV (courtesy of Eileen Kato).

is "boro" (in tatters); his strength has been sucked out of him by the power of the fire, the lack of sleep, the terrible sweating, the pressures; but he feels helped and attributes this help to his ancestors. He feels in all his being the power of the heredity of his forebears alive in him and his debt of responsibility to them. He spoke with great feeling about his potter ancestors. He also spoke with true respect and feeling of his workers. He said pottery is a *bungyō*, a collective work, and even the most-menial-seeming part of it is essential to the making of a good product. He pointed out a Korean apprentice among others.

As we listened enthralled to this and many other things told so unaffectedly but so convincingly, a whole tribe of *uguisu*, bush warblers, poured out a rich chorus of throaty song. For me, a totally unforgettable day.

The advice given by Chin Jukan XIII to Number XIV was "Make a good potter out of your son." This he has indeed done. But this does not lessen the individual merits of Number XV, worthy son of a worthy father, and I am confident that he in turn will make a good potter out of at least one of his sons.

Studying a Foreign Language: A Heart-to-Heart Understanding

Tatiana Gurevich

In Russia the teaching of foreign languages in general and of Japanese in particular is undergoing extensive changes, with values being reassessed and not only teaching materials but also the tasks, goals, and methods of instruction being reviewed. Russia's swift entrance into the world community in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the changes in relations between Russians and foreigners, new goals of communication, and other demands of the times pose new problems for the theory and practice of foreign-language teaching.

In such circumstances, it is extremely important to teach the Japanese language, for example, as an essential component of national culture, comparing it with the native language and culture—offering students a look at themselves from outside, as it were—to determine what we have in common with and what makes us different from those who speak the language that is being taught. All nuances and depth of intercultural communication become more visible and even understandable when the foreign language is compared with the native language. A native-speaking teacher who does not know the students' language cannot understand many difficulties that are obvious when the foreign language is taught through comparison with their own language and culture.

Sociolinguistics, foreign-language-and-area studies, and linguistic culture studies have raised the question of studying national mentalities first through

foreign languages. Yet a foreign language is more easily absorbed if one has an understanding and awareness of similarities and distinctive features in its native speakers' perception of the world around us. Moreover, a native-speaking teacher who does not know the students' language will be unable to sense that the thing meant, the place, and the functions of a given word or grammatical phenomenon are quite different for the native speaker and the foreign students. This is why an increasing number of experts now agree that foreign teachers of a second language have a great advantage over native-speaking teachers of that language.

Knowledge of the meaning of words and the rules of grammar is clearly insufficient not only for using a language as a means of communication but also for understanding and translating a Japanese text, for instance, since an adequate translation sometimes requires lengthy explanation of nationally specific components. Methods of teaching conversation, discussion, and public speaking should be developed to enable students to overcome psychological barriers to ethnic self-awareness introduced through irrelevant ethnic stereotypes.

Modern Teaching Methods

Fortunately the teaching of Japanese has already matured beyond the simple reading of texts and memorization of vocabulary. Although each lesson traditionally consisted of texts and exercises, it should be noted that texts, which serve mainly lexical and grammatical informative functions, are now frequently situational dialogues illustrating natural communication in the language being studied. This can be seen in both new Russian textbooks and textbooks pub-

lished in Japan. Thus students have the opportunity to develop not only reading but also speaking abilities—two of the four skills of language mastery (reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension).

The use of video materials in the learning process helps students understand the characteristics, additional nuances of meaning, and political, cultural, and other connotations of language and speech units. Modern methods of teaching foreign language should accommodate (1) ethnopsychological factors (national character, ethnic stereotypes, national identity, the nature of the native and foreign languages); (2) ethno-linguistic factors (language background, national and cultural components in language semantics); and (3) ethnopedagogical factors (national teaching traditions to which students are accustomed).

The consideration of two (and particularly of more) languages reveals most of the difficult problems of teaching active speech-production skills, among them questions of the linguistic compatibility of spoken words and communication syntax. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the structure of a language influences the thought and behavior of its native speakers. Different languages shape the perception of reality in different ways, dissecting it and modeling it in distinctive ways. For example, researchers studying English believe that, with the aid of grammatical articles, native speakers of English divide the world into two parts in terms of definiteness/indefiniteness. Japanese speakers, by their own admission, have a lot of trouble mastering this grammatical category. It also presents a problem for native Russian speakers.

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Many works have been written about the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese language, psyche, and behavior. Contemporary textbooks for Japanese as a foreign language published in Japan clearly illustrate the ethnic and cultural self-identification of the Japanese, highlighting the most significant traits and features of the national character together with their manifestation and expression in language. Linguistic and cultural comparisons are usually made with English and behaviors in the Western world, most often in America. Familiarizing oneself with Japanese and English textbooks makes one feel again that the Russian language and worldview lean toward the Eastern, rather than Western, perception.

For a Russian teacher of Japanese as a foreign language, the reality could be that students conditioned by various comments about the complexity of the Japanese language and the incomprehensibility of the Japanese mind may be able to learn the language better and faster if they are taught to think that people living on those faraway Eastern islands are hardly more different from us than we are from the British or the Americans. It is not accidental that people in the West speak about the “mysterious” Russian soul.

According to popular belief, one of the most characteristic and little understood traits of the Japanese national character and, hence, of the language is the “Japanese politeness.” English speakers, too, are generally considered to be more polite than Russians.

First, one should note that what is regarded in the West as the outward “impoliteness” of Russians is often in fact the emotionality inherent in Russian speech, the well-known conflict between the so-called overstatement in Russian-language behavior and understatement in English. In the East, meanwhile, people frown upon an assertive manner of communication, the tendency to speak rather loudly, clearly, and without mincing words. Russians, in their turn, often interpret a calm, correct manner as indifference, detachment, coolness, disregard, disinterest (so many

synonyms, and all of them with a negative connotation). In Japanese, politeness is expressed as a certain reserve, as undertones in remarks; it finds its expression in quite different spheres of language functioning.

Lexical and Grammatical Parallels

Let us consider some aspects of grammar that people are usually not even aware of but which on the one hand play a role in forming the personality and on the other hand typify national character. To express actions in the first and second person in modern English, it is usually sufficient to use the always capitalized “I” and the formal and official “you,” which has only one form. Japanese, however, has numerous pronouns both for the first person singular and for the second person singular.

The Russian language has one pronoun for the first person singular, lowercase *ya* (“I”), and two for the second person singular, *ty* and *ty* (“thou” and “you,” respectively). When the second person plural pronoun *vy* is used to refer to a single person, it is capitalized, emphasizing a polite, respectful attitude toward the partner in communication. Putting oneself forward by writing “I” with a capital letter goes against the Russian character and temperament; it seems immodest, indecent, and unnatural.

In both Russian and Japanese, the appropriate pronoun for a given situation is determined by the social status, age, education level, and gender of both speaker and listener, as well as by the specific circumstances of communication. In the two languages, a pronoun as the subject of a sentence (either expressed or implied) always agrees with the verb in level of politeness. Not only in Japanese but also in Russian some special verbs have survived for expressing second- and third-person actions. It should be noted that in both Russian and Japanese there is currently a trend toward a shift to a simplified, neutral style of speech. Many words that had been used only in polite speech are being replaced by neutral or even stylistically coarse equivalents, especially in young people’s speech.

In general, the situation in Russia now resembles the one in Japan in the past, especially around the middle of the nineteenth century. The opening of the country (Japan in the nineteenth century, Russia now) to the world was marked, first of all, by a torrent of foreign words that flowed into our language and our life together with realities of a new life—business, computers, the Internet, and a great variety of video products.

Dictionaries of borrowed words are regularly published in Japan; we in Russia have published dictionaries of new words, dictionaries of perestroika, management dictionaries, etc., all of which reflect contemporary lexical tendencies. With time, borrowings not only expand, but go deeper, affecting morphology, syntax, and inflection.

We can find many interesting parallels between Russian and Japanese in the naming and perception of various phenomena of our reality. For instance, the semantic content of the words *soul*, *kokoro*, and *dusha* is about the same, although the Russian *dusha* and Japanese *kokoro* are used more widely and more frequently than the English *soul*. Also curious is an observation regarding words that denote the country of one’s birth. For the single English word *country* (the words *motherland* and *fatherland* are not used about one’s own country), Russian has *rodina*, *otechestvo*, *otchizna*, and *rodnaya storona*, and the Japanese has *kuni*, *sokoku*, *bokoku*, *kokoku*, *umare kokyō*, *seichi*, *kokyō*, and *furusato*.

Much in the Japanese character is quite familiar and understandable to a Russian person, and through such understanding it would be natural and easy to approach a simpler comprehension of the grammatical structure of Japanese. Let us, for instance, consider so-called impersonal sentences, which are typical of Russian.

In cases in which impersonal syntactic models are used in Russian, Japanese also uses various impersonal or passive-voice constructions, whereas English uses personal forms. An accepted view holds that richness and variety of impersonal constructions reflect a tendency

to regard the world as the fruit of a combination of events that defy human understanding.

In English, a person (“I” with a capital letter) takes both an action and the responsibility for it. In Russian and Japanese, the action is impersonal (as is the responsibility for it); the individual is lost in a group, in nature, amid the forces of nature, amid undefined forces. Both Russian and Japanese conceal the person as an active doer behind passive and impersonal constructions. One of the explanations for such syntactic sympathies in these languages is a com-

munity-oriented, group mentality, an unwillingness to see oneself as an active individual (which, incidentally, absolves one of responsibility for the results). Given such an attitude toward the word and the person, the existence of a “suffering passive voice” (*meiwaku no ukemi*) seems very natural.

Native Russian speakers are also familiar with the “spontaneous action,” a state experienced by a person regardless of his or her will. How well we can understand the feelings *kanjirareru* (roughly “it was felt”), *shinobareru* (“it was remembered” or “it felt sad”), and

omowareru (“it was thought”). Actually, Japanese surpasses Russian in its elusiveness. For example, in the present/future tense, passive voice, Japanese verbs of thought sometimes express the opinion of the speaker; at other times this form is chosen precisely to avoid using the first person pronoun.

Many other similar features of the national character of the Russians and the Japanese facilitate the comprehension of one another’s grammar, making the languages much easier to learn without relying on comparison with English models.

The Body in Avant-Garde Theater in Japan

Adam Broinowski

*There are two ways of spreading light: to be
The candle or the mirror that reflects it.*

—Edith Wharton, *Vesalius in Zante*

Currently, theater is confronted with the problem of how to define and maintain its function and audience in a world dominated by other media. Most actors and theater companies work to communicate meaning through the languages of gesture and expression. The closer a representation conforms to societal behavior, roles, and rituals, the better the actor and theater are considered to be. Audiences pay to understand, to perform empathy. As a consequence, the drama of what is actually occurring and the experience of the present moment are actively ignored and deliberately concealed by both actor and audience to suspend disbelief and create the illusion. Can theater be content with the presentation of illusions and expect audiences

to suspend their disbelief, or can it find an alternative strategy?

My work as a researcher and performer in Japan has been to explore the possibilities of “active thought” through process and performance, to challenge my assumptions, break theatrical habits, and learn something new. The subject of my research has been the human body in the avant-garde theater of Gekidan Kaitaisha (Theatre of Deconstruction) and Daisan Erotica (The Third Erotica).

Representation and Experience

Gekidan Kaitaisha and Daisan Erotica make theater of uncommon depth and range, cultivating intellectual and theatrical traditions, passionately pursuing fundamental problems of existence, and confronting current political issues of historical amnesia, violence, and control.

Takeshi Kawamura (b. 1959), the director and playwright for Daisan Erotica, is a satirical critic and prolific dramatizer of contemporary social issues. His plays are set in the near future and are known to be uncannily prophetic. He works with a core script and a large chorus of mostly younger actors, with a few main roles for more experienced actors. He approaches rehearsals

loosely, making organic changes through repetition until the opening night. In his scripts, the body (or types of bodies) is represented via a figurative metaphor: the clone body in *HamletClone* (2000) and *The Straw Heart* [*Wara no Shinzō*; 2000]; the body as a gun in *The Lost Babylon* (1999); the grotesque/abject body in *Grand Guignol* (1994) and *Freaks* (1987); the politicized and collective body in the group-devised *Tokyo Trauma* (1995); and the android body in *Nippon Wars* (1984).

Nippon Wars, first written in 1984, was remounted at Daisan Erotica’s Tokyo rehearsal space in August 2001 as their millennial contribution. An “innocent” with amnesia wakes up in a submarine. He has been kidnapped by a renegade army called the United Capitalist Republic of Nichiren. The UCRN is united to fight Sue Ellen, the hologram of a body wrapped in bandages floating in space that speaks with a voice of benevolent, all-knowing, and jaded serenity. Sue Ellen is literally the illusion of power.¹ But the man with amnesia refuses to join the army and tries to salvage his memory. However, each recovered scrap of identity—childhood recollections, loves, favorite food, most personal moments—is already known

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to others in the army. The army's human-emotion drills, telepathy sessions, and exercises in supernatural phenomena suggest a reality with unstable foundations. The amnesic man is living a waking dream in a submarine where war equals peace, violence means antiviolence, and revolution is antirevolution. Things are not as they should be. During the play's catharsis, as the army defeats Sue Ellen with collective-mind power, the amnesic man sits at a table with a loaded gun. If he is human he will die, if he is not he will live and his world becomes a dream. He shoots himself and lives.

Is the body human, android, or humanoid? Is the human a machine? The amnesic man is forced to accept that his body and its "humanity" are neither secret nor unique. His struggle to define his human subjectivity fails. The impossibility of suicide shifts the play into a dreamlike reality with no exit. He is left with no choice but to join the army. All that was "him" is predictable, repeatable, and programmed. "War is essential for human beings. You have been made for war," says the Sergeant to the army. Kawamura suggests, as he does in other works,² that the programming of the notion of individuality is to be rebelled against. Kawamura advocates that the body we consider as "human" is constructed by a system of illusions that have been consumed as truth since birth.

Shinjin Shimizu (b. 1956), the direc-

tor of Gekidan Kaitaisha, also engages with the notion of the body as a programmed machine, as "the hyper-megaterminal directly linked with the human brain to produce the monstrous body."³ And yet, rather than have performers simply act or move like a cyborg, Kaitaisha invented the "skin-neuro-discipline." Briefly, this process is the performing (enhancing) of the body's *shinkei* (nervous system) function. The audience commonly associates this movement with cyborgs and techno-futurism.

In the opening scene of the newest Kaitaisha production, *Bye-Bye: The New Primitive* [*Baibai: Mikai e*; 2001], for example, performer Hiruko Hino, with white powder on her body and wearing a white body-corset and bathing cap, silently crosses an empty stage, first on all fours, then drawing her torso up onto two legs, then on her toes. Twitching in shocks and jolts, she appears to rise off the ground, phosphorescing in the pitch black. The scene holds the audience in a powerful silence. Rather than a cyborg, she seems to me to be the illuminating and electrifying manifestation of thought itself, within the dark cavity of the mind.

Influenced by post-structuralist thinkers, Shimizu defines performers as "political bodies,"⁴ often analyzing "the body as cultural construct and therefore a documentary reality."⁵ He sees Kaitaisha's actors as the "raw material

who have to live through the aphoria of the age."⁶ The performer in Kaitaisha engages in a process of discovery of his or her peculiar body. The often "breathing, pummeled, bloody, and sweating"⁷ body in Kaitaisha, is clearly nonfictional. While Kawamura's central theme in *Nippon Wars* is the impossibility of the real body, Shimizu's aim is to free the body through performance. Outside the theater, however, Shimizu shares the view that the body is "mediatized," saturated by and floating in the unreal glow of all-pervasive media reality.

Meaning

Shimizu argues tirelessly that there is no intended message in Kaitaisha.⁸ He contends that if it had one, he might as well write what he thinks on a piece of paper and give it to the audience to read instead of presenting a performance. And yet, when the raw material is interpreted, much conflict is raised, which paradoxically I suspect is an aim. For example, in the "Blood and Earth" section of the 2001 production *Bye-Bye: The New Primitive*,

One rolls on the floor handcuffed.

One, with a high-pitched whine, becomes a dog-human.

One hides in a corner, clamping headphones to his ears and twitching.

One begins to howl a tune with no words.

They all line up. They form a clump of bodies like a globe.

One is left out. He calls "Come" into the void of black space three times, and the globe breaks apart.⁹

While Shimizu may not intend to communicate a message, his work provokes a very strong desire to interpret meaning. For example, in an earlier part of the "Blood and Earth" section,

[The sole] Caucasian man hits the back of a seminaked, Mars-helmeted, mouse-tailed, grey-painted Japanese woman. Each time she is struck, she utters the name of a Japanese emperor.¹⁰

Shimizu describes being in the "stream of history," a history indispen-

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Daisan Erotica, Nippon Wars (revival version), Sai Studio, Tokyo, August 2001.



Gekidan Kaitaisha, Bye-Bye: The New Primitive, Morishita Studio, Tokyo, June 2001.

sable to his theater that “documents functional political disorder with authentic emotions and movements to create the drama of human bodies.”¹¹

Kawamura also provokes interpretation. With a title like *Nippon Wars* is he imagining a near-future civil war? Does the amnesic man’s amnesia reflect society’s historical amnesia? Does his amnesia define contemporary Japan as a floating culture disconnected from its past? Is the power of Japan’s leadership, ghost-led by North America, symbolized by a transparent vapor called Sue Ellen? Does Japan have no tangible core leadership, no solid foundation at the national seat of power? The UCRN is group-oriented, capitalist, and Nichiren Buddhist. Its members have de-programmed themselves of Western

individualism and the primacy of Self. In rejecting the subjective “I,” is independent collectivism the future vision of Japanese national identity? Or is the UCRN a parody of homogenous Japan, its rebellion following instructions of programmed nationalism?

The man with amnesia gradually becomes aware that he is not human, perhaps not even “awake.” Kawamura provocatively holds a mirror up to the audience. Audience members empathize with the amnesic man’s doomed search; they question their own beliefs, the sources of those beliefs, and their existence. Ideally the search has begun for them too. *Nippon Wars* leaves few assumptions and beliefs intact. “The earth is moving; that’s all there is.”¹²

The verbal and fictional nature of

RESEARCH REPORTS

Kawamura’s work means his plays are always detached, whereas Kaitaisha’s work deals with the raw material. In *Bye-Bye*,

A clump of bodies shiver and clutch themselves as they hunchback across the stage.

At the back of the theater is a projection of collaged war footage.

Bombs, soldiers, trenches, flags.

The music is a pounding nightmare.

The bodies begin writhing, limbs shooting out in all directions on the floor.¹³

Many critics acclaimed *Bye-Bye* as a powerful theater of war where the performers are war machines whose bodies are battlefields.¹⁴ Of the negative writers, always more interesting, one American criticized this scene as not “believable” because it was not “what [war] is like” and “these scenes of violence and terror provoked shudders but cannot compete with the scale of recent events [the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C.].”¹⁵ Agreed, war is impossible to represent on stage, as a performance in a theater. Nor will nor should a theatrical performance compete with real war. Another critic described *Bye-Bye* as “agonizing . . . and seat-squirmingly nasty,” concerned with the “brutality of the twentieth century as visited on the body.”¹⁶ While denying the affect of meaning, their descriptions of strong physical reactions are evidence of the success of the production. The scene used images of war and shellshocked bodies to communicate strongly through the body to the audience members’ bodies. The energy of this scene *transformed* the theater into the magnetic stillness of the next scene.

Transformation

Both Kawamura and Shimizu aim for their theater to transform, to change things. Shimizu’s desire to reveal a “second skin”¹⁷ could be either an attempt to return to the pre-expressive or a critique of the inscription of power on the passive body. Arguably, Kaitaisha’s methods free the performer’s body from

cultural constraints of meaning. The actors are very rarely asked to “act,” simulate, or pretend; conditions already present in their bodies are, through extreme conditions and intense focus, brought to the surface and experienced by an audience.

Kawamura attempts to transform his mostly younger audiences by challenging them to *think*.¹⁸ He employs the strategy of unlearning tacitly accepted codes of perception. He begins *Nippon Wars* with an innocent, the amnesic man, a character who has unlearned everything, a body akin to Shimizu’s “New Primitive,”¹⁹ and yet the two pieces progress in opposite directions. *Nippon Wars* gradually destroys innocence, whereas *Bye-Bye* opens out to it. Both seem to arrive together, in the void.

In preparation for a Kaitaisha rehearsal, the breathing exercise called *bas-sei* is performed. Performers exhale their “insides out” and let the outside come streaming in. The everyday self is shed the way a snake sheds its skin, to become fresh and empty, moved by sensation, reflex, and urge. The skin, or *surface identity*, is invigorated. It bristles, alive, dilating from the inner to the outer atmosphere. The room is electric. One’s arms feel like “phantom limbs,”²⁰ like amputated limbs, shadowy and formless yet still felt. This is a state of intensified sensitivity and corporeal honesty, of taking cues from the quiet voice of the body. In this state, “I” disappears. The body becomes a “thing,” an essence, other than “human.” It is in effect transformed perception. The actor’s body loses “self-consciousness” and yet is highly “aware.” With the disappearance of Self, multiple selves and the nonself are discovered.

The notion of multiple selves is not new. One self watches as the other self performs. Noh founder Zeami’s (1363–1443) concept of *hana*,²¹ Ankoku Butoh originator Tatsumi Hijikata’s (1928–86) *bakusei*,²² and French originator of the Theater of Cruelty Antonin Artaud’s (1896–1948) *double*²³ are performance theories that reflect this idea. The Kaitaisha exercise called *bakobi* is described as putting one’s spirit in front of the

body. The body becomes the shell that follows.²⁴ By “peeling” away layers of social conditioning to reveal a “second skin,” Kaitaisha performers enter a zone of uncertainty. The performers prepare and wait in *the special nature of passive creation*,²⁵ an über-conscious zone where control is surrendered.

There are similarities between the performance process and shamanic spirit-possession rituals,²⁶ considering the actor as the medium, the director as the ascetic, shaman, or priest. The medium is “emptied” to make room for the spirit, which comes and takes possession of the medium’s empty shell; thus the spirit is appeased and released. The actor donates his or her body by removing constructs of Self for the experience of transformation. The end use of these similar processes is the distinguishing factor. In *Nippon Wars*, the emptied body is incorporated in the army, freed of the virus of individualism.

Kaitaisha’s process of transformation is practical and sensate at the cellular level. The body is emptied to reveal the purely individual nature of the body, to become itself. “Psyche” for Shimizu becomes a life substance like blood and breath. Kawamura regards the psyche and self as a field of mind, a vaporous image, a conceptual framework that can be eternally replaced in the body’s “hard drive” like a software package. For both Shimizu and Kawamura, the transformed body is an empty body. And both critically regard the empty body as the state of being in urban society in Japan (though on Shimizu’s part this is a deliberate paradox).²⁷

Conclusion

From the perspective of a performer and writer whose native language is grounded in Western philosophical and scientific traditions, it seems that logocentric materialism and positivism have devalued, degraded, and systematically occluded those impulses or energies that precede ideational thought and verbal expression.

It is strangely radical in jaded times to naively attempt intangible and

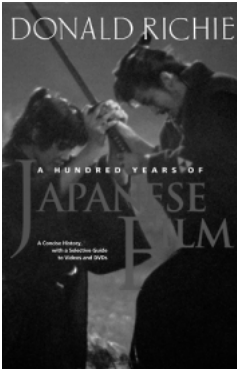
unquantifiable transformation in the theater. Such transformation occupies territory of the irrational. Coupled with a desire to experience, ultimately both actor and audience take responsibility for uncovering the body from the rubble of information, conditioning, and cultural images via highly sophisticated technology. The body is the site where barriers of culture, language, identity, and Self are overcome.²⁸ Kawamura’s uncompromising cultural critique of perception, and the Theatre of Body of Gekidan Kaitaisha, establishes the theatrical body as the central location for contemporary thought and the theater as its laboratory.

Notes

1. Sue Ellen says, “I am inside all of you.” Takeshi Kawamura, *Nippon Wars* (Tokyo, 1984), 20.
2. This idea of Self is considered in depth in Takeshi Kawamura’s *The Straw Heart* [*Wara no Shinzō*] (Tokyo, 2000).
3. Shinjin Shimizu, flier for *Zero Category II* [*Zero Category II*] (Tokyo, 1998).
4. See, for example, program notes on the flier for *Zero Category II*.
5. Shinjin Shimizu, quoted in Carol Martin, “Action Speaks Louder,” *New York Times*, September 23, 2001.
6. Shinjin Shimizu, flier for *The Dog: People in a Foreign Land* [*The Dog I: Ikyō no Ko ra*] (Tokyo, 1993).
7. Klaus Witzeling, “Wie uns die Japaner die Globalisierung um die Ohren hauen: Gekidan Kaitaisha” [How the Japanese Bring Us Face to Face with Globalization: Gekidan Kaitaisha], *ballet-tanz*, October 2001, 49.
8. “Shimizu can only ask himself and the audience questions.” Tadashi Uchino, quoted in Marie Yereniuk, “The Violence of the Body Globalism in Kaitaisha Theatre,” *Columbia Daily Spectator* (New York City), October 11, 2001.
9. My description of Shinjin Shimizu’s *Bye-Bye: The New Primitive* [*Baibai: Mikai e*], performed July–October 2001.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Gekidan Kaitaisha (1991–2001)/Theatre of Deconstruction: Kaitaisha (1991–2001)* (Tokyo: Gekidan Kaitaisha, 2001), 99.
12. Takeshi Kawamura, interview by me, Tokyo, April 11, 2001.
13. My description of *Bye-Bye*.
14. Witzeling, “Wie uns die Japaner,” 48.
15. Jack Anderson, “An Experimental

Continued on page 20

Books in Other Languages



A Hundred Years of Japanese Film. Donald Richie.

Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001. 311 pp. ISBN 4-7700-2682-x.

A Hundred Years of Japanese Film

In film circles, Donald Richie's name precedes him. The foremost Western critic of and writer on Japanese cinema, he is far more than an academic or curator of its history, having been almost single-handedly responsible for bringing Japanese cinema to the attention of westerners. Among Richie's ten or so works on the Japanese cinema, his highly compositional works on two directors little known in the West at that time, the great auteur Yasujiro Ozu (1903–63) and Akira Kurosawa (1910–98), are arguably among the finest director profiles ever written.

A definitive history, his new book, *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*, is also a retrospective of Richie's own work, a review of his representation of film for the last half-century, a season that has turned him into a storied figure himself. As always with this most precise and thoughtful writer, the reader is the beneficiary of Richie's erudition. Richie writes of the creative choices facing the contemporary director, that he is "in the position of having to modernize his traditions or traditionalize his modernity." The same applies, perhaps, to the critic or art historian. Rather than simply rework older texts, Richie subjects his ideas, his ongoing commentary on Japanese film, to a series of forensic tests to see if they are still up to muster.

Richie, a not inconsiderable filmmaker himself, draws from already complete bodies of commentary on the Japanese cinema. When he writes of traditional Japanese products that yakuza films were similarly "constructed of modules, one attached to another," or the ambitious notion that the "differences between the seventeenth-century garden of the Katsura Rikyu Imperial Villa in Kyoto and the computer game Dragonball are manifest, but their similarities should not be overlooked. . . . the taming of nature, the idealizing of the environment, and the making of everything into what it ought to be rather than what it actually is," we know these are considered views, ones deriving from the cultural milieu in which Richie has lived for over half a century, rather than simply the images on the one-dimensional screen he describes.

While very little early Japanese film has sur-

vived, Richie reconstructs the archival fragments that exist, smidgens of a once-vibrant industry, with the patience and passion of an archaeologist or paleographer. Richie shares the curator's concern that nothing more should be lost. We therefore learn about the working methods of Heinosuke Gosho (1902–81), Hiroshi Shimizu (1903–66), Sadao Yamanaka (1909–38), and other directors all but forgotten by the Japanese. In the same way that time has conferred an appealing patina of age or an arcaneness on some of the older film titles in this book, consigning others to an obscurity from which they are unlikely to emerge, some directors have seen their work canonized. Ozu is the supreme example of a director whose coin has steadily risen. In the same way that Japanese stone gardens have been elevated to the level of art installations, Ozu's films are now seen as the epitome of Japanese film art. Ozu's desire, perhaps, was to direct without proscription, an approach that even now has critical opinion finding him both a conservative (the "most Japanese of all directors") and a radical modernist.

The extraordinary influence of cinema in Japan is hinted at when Richie writes that, in the early years of the industry there, the "nation's culture—which means its way of accounting for, of constructing, of assuming—was still its own." The accelerated genesis of film in Japan perhaps benefited from the fact that the medium, though initially interpreted in a different manner, was a new form for both East and West, its advent in Japan only slightly later than elsewhere.

The Japanese certainly seem to have taken to film with an extraordinary alacrity, to have instinctively understood the medium. Porous to new ideas in literature, the arts, and the transformation of its legal, political, and military institutions at the time, Japan was also remarkably receptive to cinema techniques and styles. Challenging expressionist films from Europe were embraced, and styles "considered advanced or difficult in the West were readily accepted into the Japanese mainstream." Japan was soon producing its own expressionist work, such as Teinosuke Kinugasa's (1896–1982) demanding 1926 feature *A Page Out of Order* [*Kurutta Ippēji*].

Richie is careful to point out the essential dif-

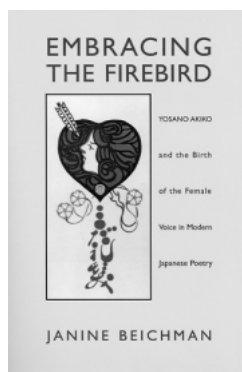
A Hundred Years of Japanese Film is reviewed by Stephen Mansfield, a freelance photojournalist and a contributing writer for leading English-language newspapers and magazines produced in Japan. His major publications include *Japan: Islands of the Floating World* (Singapore: Times Editions, 1998).

ferences in the interpretation of what might have seemed an identical form. “The Japanese audience,” he tells us, “perceived film as a new form of theater and not (as in, say, the United States) a new form of photography.” Our attention is also drawn to the parallels between early Western and Japanese cinema and their most outstanding figures. The emotions liberally exploited by Chaplin, for example, such as bathos, despair, and slapstick hilarity, were familiar to Japanese directors and their audiences as elements in presentational forms of drama.

Not content to present simply a retrospective of Japanese cinema, Richie brings us up to scratch on the current independent cinema as practiced by the likes of Kiyoshi Kurosawa (b. 1955) and Shunji Iwai (b. 1963); a fascinating cast of documentary directors, such as Kazuo Hara (b. 1945) and Shinsuke Ogawa (1935–92); and a number of advanced animators of the caliber of Hayao Miyazaki (b. 1941) and Hideaki Anno (b. 1960).

Black and white stills appear on almost every page, a complementary visual text propelling the written one forward, providing a sense of motion, of the motion pictures themselves. The stills, like chemical fixer, help prevent the narrative chronology from dissolving. The book is complemented by a useful bibliography and glossary. Mindful that the reader, stimulated by the text, will likely wish to view a sampling of the titles mentioned, the writer has provided a selective guide to videos and DVDs, the majority with English subtitles.

Richie’s book is also notable, through no fault of his, for its almost complete silence on the subject of films by women directors. Only one female, Naomi Kawase (b. 1969), known for her documentary approach in films like *The Weald* [*Somauo Monogatari*; 1998] and the 2000 feature *Hotaru* [*Hotaru*], gets a mention. Hopefully, women will have a more prominent place in the next hundred years of Japanese cinema. S. M.



Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry. Janine Beichman.

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. x + 339 pp. ISBN 0-8248-2208-0 (hardcover); 0-8248-2347-8 (paperback).

Embracing the Firebird: Yosano Akiko and the Birth of the Female Voice in Modern Japanese Poetry

In this literary biography of Akiko Yosano (1878–1942), one of the greatest women writers of modern Japan, Janine Beichman presents a portrait of the poet in her youth. The first three parts take us from Akiko’s birth up to the age of twenty-two, when she published her first and most famous tanka collection, *Midaregami* [*Tangled Hair*; 1901]. The fourth part is a study of *Midaregami* itself.

The introduction explains that many myths have grown up around Akiko, including the one that she never wrote a poem until inspired by Tekkan Yosano (1873–1935) and *Myōjō* [Venus], the literary journal that he launched in 1900. However, as chapters 3 and 4 show, Akiko was aware of her poetic talent early on and consciously nurtured it despite an unreceptive family environment. By the time she met Tekkan, she was poised for flight, both literally and figuratively. One of the highlights of the book is the narrative of the poetry workshop that took place shortly after Akiko and Tekkan’s initial meeting in August 1900. In the space of the following fourteen months, Tekkan became Akiko’s editor, then her lover, and finally her husband. (Women’s studies specialists will find material of interest in these chapters, including the author’s introduction of the hitherto-undiscussed ideal of *tada no onna*, “ordinary woman.”)

The source materials that tell this story are

organized so that events are seen from multiple perspectives. For example, after quoting unpublished letters (from the spring of 1901) that show Akiko at a pitch of anxiety while waiting for Tekkan to take her to Tokyo, some of the most daring and sensual poems of *Midaregami* are introduced. Beichman notes that although the poems were initially published in *Myōjō* at the same time as the despairing letters were written, their voice is that of another being entirely, close to the “delphic, dulcet tones of a high priestess of love” (p. 169).

The fourth part of the book focuses on *Midaregami* as a work of art in itself. Through the presentation and close readings of numerous poems (given in translation and romanization, with kanji texts in the appendix), chapter 10, “The Variety of *Tangled Hair*,” demonstrates that there is a profusion of speakers, settings, and themes. One of the highlights of this chapter is the presentation of evidence that Akiko knew the nude paintings of the Italian Renaissance painter Titian, including those of the goddess Venus, and almost certainly alluded to them in several of the poems in *Midaregami*. Readings of a number of other poems challenge accepted interpretations, including some about girl children on the cusp of puberty. (The latter will be of interest to students of childhood, as will chapters 1 and 2.)

Chapter 11, “The Shape of *Tangled Hair*,” considers the principles according to which the poems of *Midaregami* may have been arranged.

Beichman shows how, after their original publication in magazines and newspapers, the poems were sifted, recontextualized, and supplemented with new poems, and argues that their new arrangement in *Midaregami* makes good sense if analyzed according to the methods of traditional linked verse. Evidence is given for the *Myōjō* poets' interest in linked verse and its later variations, and then a close reading of a dozen contiguous poems, explaining their links, demonstrates the thesis. This chapter will be of interest to comparativists who study the ordering of poetry anthologies and collections, as well as specialists in medieval Japanese poetry, who may see in *Midaregami* an example of how the tradition of linking verses inspired modern Japanese poetry.

Chapter 12, "The Originality of *Tangled Hair*," examines Akiko's own later repudiation of *Midaregami* as no more than an imitative pastiche of the *shintai-shi*, or new-style poetry, of Tōson Shimazaki (1872–1943) and Kyūkin Susukida (1877–1945). After comparing their poems with Akiko's, Beichman concludes:

"The use Akiko made of Tōson's and Kyūkin's new-style poetry cannot be captured by words like 'influence,' or the 'imitation' and 'borrowing' of which Akiko later accused herself. On the contrary, *Tangled Hair* is a brilliant moment in the long and venerable tradition of literary hybridization that is essential to the periodic renewal of Japanese poetry (and perhaps to all artistic renewals everywhere). Like a wolf in sheep's clothing, the early Akiko was an innovative new-style poet clad in the delicate modesty of the tanka form, its colors heightened by infusions from several other genres and arts, including, as earlier chapters have shown, Chinese poetry, Greek myth, Western painting, Heian fiction, and Tokugawa period linked verse. From within that hybrid world, the female for whom Tōson and Kyūkin had been singing stepped forth and sang in her own voice, her words more defiant but also more tender and, at times, more sublime than anything her erstwhile poetic mentors could have imagined" (p. 259).

The book contains translations of 270 poems.

Dodonæus in Japan: Translation and the Scientific Mind in the Tokugawa Period

This collection of essays, the fruit of an October 1998 international symposium organized by the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, and the Section of Japanese Studies of the Katholieke Universiteit

The majority of them are by Akiko, and of those, a fair number are of poems that were omitted from *Midaregami* but which Beichman, as she explains in the introduction, values for various reasons. The first and third of the poems below are from *Midaregami* but the second was omitted:

Purple dawn of
love's dominion, the fragrance
of my hands
A scented breeze rises in
my wake, streams long behind
*Murasaki no / waga yo no koi no / asaborake /
Morode no kaori / oikaze nagaki* (p. 205).

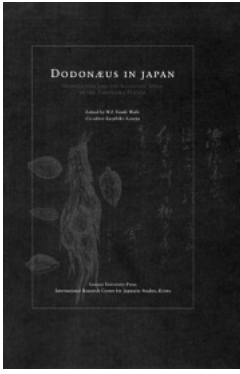
In robes of black
he comes, that god, and they
call him Death
The breeze of spring is blowing
through Miyako—the pain of it, the pain
*Kinu kuroki / kami no sono na wo / shi to ieri /
Miyako no haru no / kaze tsuraki tsuraki* (p. 186).

Here, now, I stand
and turn to look behind
and see my passion then
was like one blind who does not fear
the dark
*Ima koko ni / kaerimi sureba / waga nasake /
yami wo osorenu / meshii ni nitari* (pp. 106–7).

The book is generously illustrated and attractively produced. Its cover is enhanced by a reproduction of the original cover of *Midaregami* itself, and the frontispiece is an illustration, from the collection, of a mischievous Cupid about to loose an arrow aimed straight at the reader.

This volume is the first book-length study of Yosano Akiko's early life and poetry. It joins two other recent works on Akiko, Claire Dodané's *Yosano Akiko: Poète de la passion et figure de proue du féminisme japonais* [Yosano Akiko: Poet of Passion and Leading Figure of Japanese Feminism] (Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, 2000) and Gillian Gaye Rowley's *Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000), perhaps signaling the start of a new era in Akiko studies.

Leuven, Belgium, is poised at the intersection of two perspectives: the study of the translation of science and that of the science of translation. The fifteen authors endeavor to demonstrate how Western herbals—notably the *Cruydt-boeck* (or *Crujideboeck*) by the famed Flemish physician and botanist Rembertus Dodonæus (Rembert



Dodonæus in Japan: Translation and the Scientific Mind in the Tokugawa Period. W. F. Vande Walle and Kazuhiko Kasaya, eds.

Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001. 383 pp. ISBN 90-5867-179-8.

Dodoens; 1516/17–85), first published in 1554—contributed to the articulation of the modern scientific mind in Tokugawa-period (1603–1868) Japan. This process involved translation and adaptation efforts of great linguistic and iconological complexity. Because the translation phenomenon was neither limited to Japan, being equally prominent in European cultural history, nor limited to texts as such, necessarily involving broader cultural contexts as well, this volume's editors made a deliberate effort to cultivate a comparative viewpoint, bringing together historians of early modern Japan and experts on Western herbals and botany.

Collectively, the writers' contributions bear out a parallelism between Renaissance Europe and Tokugawa Japan in the development of herbal studies, botany, and natural history. In both cases, development went hand in hand with a departure from the classical mold and with the adoption of a more empiricist attitude, fostering in its turn a more outspoken cultural particularism and extensive use of vernaculars. Dodonæus's work was in the vanguard of this new development in European cultural history. He was an exponent of a methodological shift initiated by German botanists, who criticized the classical *materia medica*. Not only did he espouse their empirical method but he also contributed to transforming pharmacology into botany. As its editors explain, this collection of essays contends that Dodonæus's herbal was linked to a similar development in Tokugawa Japan: it was one of the sources that inspired the handful of savants who went beyond the merely utilitarian ends of traditional *materia medica*, raising it to the level of botany, and eventually natural history. This detached, no longer utilitarian, observation of nature was the hallmark of the modern scientific mind.

The first of this work's four parts contains a bio-bibliographical overview and a group of essays that place Dodonæus in the European context and assess his contributions to the development of modern science. Robert Visser's essay evaluates Dodonæus's position in the history of science in Europe, while Mauro Ambrosoli pays special attention to the interaction between botanical practice and agricultural demands in seventeenth-century Europe. Helena Wille presents an investigation into the network of botanical collectors in the Low Countries. Her identification of the authorship of a collection of botanical drawings owned by the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, deserves special mention.

The second part of the book turns to Tokugawa

Japan to assess the impact of Dodonæus's herbal on the articulation of that country's modern episteme via a process of transmission, which in turn was predicated on translation. Taking systems theory as its major frame of reference, Michael Schiltz's article presents a theoretical analysis of the concept and function of translation in society. W. F. Vande Walle focuses on the issue of translation from the viewpoint of the history of linguistics, comparing cultural attitudes toward translation in China and Japan. Shigemi Inaga's essay addresses issues underlying the communication of foreign visual-arts techniques and works to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan. He explores the transcultural validity of such artistic practices as linear perspective in the West and illustrates the ways in which the indigenous "pictorial language" accommodated novel influences. Kazuhiko Kasaya's essay on the Tokugawa government's policies for the domestic production of medicines establishes an important link between the transmission of Dodonæus's *Cruydt-boeck* and the broader dynamics of national policy.

Part three comprises articles dealing specifically with the reception and rendition of Dodonæus's work in Japan. Kiyoshi Matsuda's article presents a thorough bibliographical study on the *Cruydt-boeck*, covering the introduction of the herbal's first copies in Japan and the translation of the original Dutch text into Japanese. Timon Screech's essay assesses the effect that pictorial representations in Dodonæus's work had on Japanese arts and visual representations. Tōru Haga's contribution centers on the naturalist Hiraga Gennai (1728–79), who saw the *Cruydt-boeck* as a book of natural history, promoted the empirical spirit in his country, and contributed to redrawing the intellectual boundaries of Tokugawa Japan. Yōzaburō Shirahata's essay describes how pharmacopeia not only evolved into natural history but also had an offshoot in horticulture.

The book's fourth part concentrates on issues pertaining to Rangaku, or Dutch Studies (that is, Western studies), which provided the framework in which Dodonæus's work was studied. Harmen Beukers focuses on the Dejima surgeons (ship's surgeons who served the Dutch East India Company's trading post on the artificial island of Dejima, in Nagasaki Harbor, Kyushu) and gives an account of their role as mediators transferring Western natural history to Japan. Gabor Lukacs's article shows the extent to which Dutch translations served as a channel for introducing French science into Japan.

Catharina Blomberg analyzes observations made by the scholar Carl Peter Thunberg during his stay in Japan (1775–76). Thunberg introduced the Linnaean system of binomial nomenclature in Japan, thus enhancing the development of botany and natural history there. Frederik Cryns's article, which investigates the influence of the medical theories of the great Dutch physician and educator Hermann Boerhaave (1668–1738) in Japan, highlights the epistemic challenge the Rangaku scholars faced in communicating concepts entirely new to the framework of medical practice in Japan.

This work is the first book-length study to assess the significance of Dodonæus's herbal in the development of the scientific mind in early modern Japan. Beautifully produced, it contains more than one hundred striking illustrations, most in full color, and an index of names. The kanji for Japanese terms, names, and book and manuscript titles are printed in the page margins near their transliterations in the text, making it easy for readers to locate particular words. Altogether this collection of essays offers many new insights on the cultural history of Tokugawa Japan.

Important Notice from the Editor

Since its first publication in 1973 *The Japan Foundation Newsletter* has provided information on Japanese Studies and international cultural exchange for individuals and organizations. To continue issuing a publication that delights our readers and meets their needs, we have decided to review the *Newsletter's* content and format. For this reason, we will suspend publication for a year. We welcome your ideas for the new *Newsletter*. Please tell us which parts of the current *Newsletter* you find helpful and suggest columns or information that you would like to see in the new version. Comments (in Japanese or English) should be addressed to:

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Continued from page 15
Work, Overwhelmed by Topicality," *New York Times*, October 9, 2001.

16. Alexis Soloski, "Bodies of Evidence," *Village Voice*, October 10–16, 2001.

17. My notes from rehearsals with Shinjin Shimizu, Tokyo, April 2001. This process is not unlike that of the Butoh pioneer Tatsumi Hijikata (1928–86) with his dancers, whose work Shimizu and Kaitaisha have conscientiously reinterpreted in a current context. The performer is inspired to create an unknown state of body by combining verbal descriptions of physical conditions.

18. Takeshi Kawamura, interview by me, Tokyo, June 21, 2001.

19. "The New Primitive" is the body that can no longer be seen by the gods. One New York critic, Randy Gener of BroadwayOnLine.com, wrote on October 18, 2001, that "Bye-Bye drew its unusual strength from its desire to bring anti-war theater back to a primitive state of innocence" ("Sex, Body, War Crowd Japanese

Theatre of Deconstruction" <<http://www.broadwayonline.com/news/public/newsbrief.asp?newsid=4672>>).

20. "Phantom Limb" is the title of one of the sequences performed by members of Kaitaisha.

21. Toyochirō Nogami, *Zeami and His Theories on Nob*, trans. Ryōzō Matsumoto (Tokyo: Hinoki Shoten, 1955), 65.

22. Shimizu's interpretation of Hijikata's sequence of *bakusei* ("taxidermied" body) in Hijikata's unpublished Butoh notes (1984).

23. See Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double* [1938], trans. David Rattray, in *Antonin Artaud Anthology*, 2d ed., rev., ed. Jack Hirschman (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1965).

24. My notes from rehearsals, June 2001. Shimizu acknowledges Hijikata's (and subsequently, the Ankoku Butoh dancers Yōko Ashikawa's [b. 1947] and Natsu Nakajima's [b. 1943]) *kokōtai* (carried body) as the source of this reinterpretation.

25. "Aru tokushu na judōsei," according to Hiruko Hino, Gekidan Kaitaisha performer, in conversation, Tokyo, June 25, 2001.

26. See Sue Jennings, *Theatre, Ritual, and Transformation: The Senoi Temiars* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

27. Shimizu is quoted by Peter Eckersall as saying Japanese bodies' actions "are zombie-like as they move towards the new wave of culture . . . like empty vessels ready to be filled with the newest imported ideas" ("The Body and the Problematics of Representation in the Theatre of Gekidan Kaitaisha," in *Japanese Theatre and the International Stage*, ed. Stanca Scholz-Cionca and Samuel L. Leiter [Leiden: Brill, 2000], 325).

28. Shimizu, quoted in Martin, "Action Speaks Louder," says, "The only reality . . . the only remaining document with the ability to tell the truth, is the body . . . the only medium capable of communicating the density and contradictions of lived experience in the twenty-first century."