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*momiji* leaves

falling in the autumn mountains,  
please stop falling for a while  
as I want to look upon the place  
where my wife is seeing me off.

秋山に散らふ黄葉しましくは  
な散り乱ひそ妹があたり見む

Kakinomotonon Hitomaro

(650?-705?)

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## Donald Richie Tells His Fifty-Year "Tokyo Story" *The Japan Journals* to Be Published This Fall

The Japan Foundation met with prolific author and film critic Donald Richie in July to discuss the forthcoming publication of *The Japan Journals 1947-2004* (Stone Bridge Press, Fall 2004), an intimate record of both a nation and an evolving expatriate sensibility.

**JF:** What was your intention in writing these journals?

**Richie:** I wanted to find some sort of pattern in my life. I was not looking at larger events but at the particulars of everyday life. I handle the big subjects through very small forms. That's very Japanese, like *ikebana* or *bonsai*.

**JF:** Can you talk about some of the ways Tokyo has and hasn't changed over 50 years?

**Richie:** A lot of it is apparent—a sprawl has developed, classes have evolved, the economy has gone up and down. But beyond that is another kind of change, one completely different from what I found when I came here in 1947. Then, Japan was still traditional, despite 100 years of modernization, despite 10 years of war. Among what I would call the good things is that the Japanese

had an attitude toward nature that I admired very much, which was symbiotic; they knew they were a part of nature, but they also knew that it was a part of them. As more people inhabited this archipelago, nature was exploited. I used to live near Roppongi in the 1960s, and there was a great big tree where they wanted to build a wall, so they made a hole in the wall to accommodate the tree. Now, they cut down the tree because it is cheaper. They tear things down very soon here for style and fashion. You no longer have that symbiosis between the natural and the man-made. This is not traditional in Japan. This is one of the things I regret.

**JF:** In your more than fifty years here, was there one particular time that was the most interesting?

**Richie:** In the 60s, there was a tremendous resurgence in all the popular arts—you could go see the new play by Terayama or Karajuro, or the beginnings of *butoh* with Hijikata, or the new Oshima film, or read the new poetry. There were new forms and new thoughts, and a very definite expression of dissent. A vast number of people were insisting upon individuality.



*At the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, July 27, 2004*

*Donald Richie: Film critic, writer, cultural observer. Born in 1924 in Ohio. In 1946, came to Japan where he was film critic for the Pacific Stars and Stripes. Has lived in Tokyo over fifty years and has written a number of books, including A Hundred Years of Japanese Film, The Films of Akira Kurosawa, and Ozu.*

**JF:** Who are some of the individuals who have had the most impact on your life here?

**Richie:** My teachers, like Daisetsu Suzuki, the Zen philosopher, and Yasunari Kawabata, whom I was fortunate to meet quite early, and Kafu Nagai, whom I unfortunately did not meet, and Ed Seidensticker, who translated both authors. It was through them all that I learned alternative ways of thinking. It didn't occur to me that there were things beside linear, rational, Socratic thought. In the West, it is an insult to say, "But that's illogical!" Here, if you want to devastate a person, tell him he's *ronri-teki*—too logical. One of the main ways of communication in Japan is through associative thought. In Japan, something that is too logical is stiff, unnatural, stilted.

**JF:** Another author you met was Mishima. Your journals describe that friendship at length.

**Richie:** I met him quite early, during his first trip to America in 1951 before he became famous. We kept in touch until he died.

**JF:** Were you surprised by his suicide?

**Richie:** I don't think anyone was surprised. He talked about it so often. When he did it, we all had this feeling of closure. Then we realized that it was like the third act of a play. Mishima was a first-class stage director.

**JF:** Is it true that he could articulate very complicated or ambiguous feelings in a very logical manner?

**Richie:** Yes. He had mastered logic, in a way. He'd read enough, he'd been abroad, and his English was fluent. When you speak another language you have another system of thought. And he prided himself upon the fact that he could proceed linearly through a subject. But he preserved this ancient Japanese associative, emotional way where he could take Amaterasu Omikami and connect her to the Emperor. I think he had two modes. If you look at his death, you'll find that it is a mix of both ways of thought. He planned it like it was the perfect murder. So he really had to be logical, but at the same time, the reasons why he did it were inchoate, emotional.

**JF:** Can you talk a little bit about your evolution as a writer?

**Richie:** I had always wanted to be a writer, and I wanted to do something with film long before I came here, so the question was how to realize these aims in an environment like Tokyo in 1947, which was extremely loose and fluid. We were the Occupiers, with no precedent for our actions. So, I managed to get into the *Stars and Stripes* with one article about a homeless man. That gave me my first boost. My life here has been watching rules being formed that I have to more or less take into account, or break.

**JF:** One of the rules you broke was that you weren't allowed to "fraternize with the indigenous personnel."

**Richie:** Yes. If we were caught, we were threatened with being sent home. We thought we were doing good here; we believed we were "democratizing" Japan, and we didn't want to get sent home. So we had to break the rules cleverly. I remember

sneaking into the subway in Ginza, and then getting into the car and being stared at, and then getting off at Asakusa and finding a theater. I didn't know any Japanese, and I didn't have any money. I tried to hand the lady at the ticket box scrip, and she just waved me in. I'd stand in the dark and watch, having no idea what I was seeing.

**JF:** As a child, weren't you sent to the movies to be kept quiet by your parents?

**Richie:** Yes. I was put in a theater at a young age, and simply

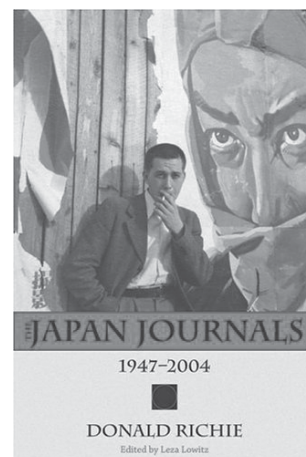
left there. It was a tremendous education to see a film many times, to compare what I thought the first time to what I felt the next. One of the ways I had chosen to understand the world was through film. And what I noticed here was not so much what the stories were about, but composition—the use of emptiness and the use of timelessness. I'd only seen Hollywood films, and these were entirely different. That inspired me, and that is what I wanted to find out more about. I still do.

**JF:** And you helped Westerners understand Japan by writing about Japanese film. They used to watch Ozu, Kurosawa, Mizoguchi. Now they watch Miyazaki Hayao and Kitano Takeshi.

**Richie:** This is ironic, because what Japan was giving the world in the '60s and '70s was a kind of alternative to Western modernist civilization. It gave us things that are now stereotypes, things like temple gardens, Zen, quietude. Japan was regarded as an exporter of these "spiritual intangibles." As the economy grew, Japan shifted to an exporter of the material. Now, it is becoming known as a major exporter of trendy mass entertainment like *anime* and *manga*. Just in my lifetime, these three tsunami have changed Japan and the way it appears to the world.

**JF:** What is your favorite Japanese film?

**Richie:** "Tokyo Story." Ethically and morally, it is impeccable. Aesthetically, it is one of the most balanced structures in the history of cinema. Technically, it is made of absolutely nothing at all. It is an exercise in economy and conciseness. Having all of these things in one picture is extraordinary. It came out in 1953 and I saw it in 1954. I've seen it 25 times. I don't think one ever tires of it. The only difference is that I cry earlier and earlier with each screening. Remember that marvelous scene at the end when the daughter-in-law is going back to Tokyo and says to the younger sister, "Isn't life disappointing?" And Hara Setsuko says, "Yes, it is." And the audience just stops in its tracks. It's stunning. I can't think of another movie that has truth like that written into it at the end.



*"One of the ways I had chosen to understand the world was through film."*

## The Japan Foundation's Activities

### “JIKI: Japanese Porcelains 1610-1760” Tours in Three European Cities

113 Imari Pieces of Shoguns and European Royalty Exhibited

Imari porcelain was first produced in the 1610s and was widely imported in Europe, soon becoming the most famous of the Japanese ceramic arts. This exhibition, “JIKI: Japanese Porcelains 1610-1760,” sponsored by Japan Airlines, features 113 Imari pieces, including one Important Cultural Property. The exhibition will be held at the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza, Italy, until November 7th in cooperation with The Japan Foundation, the city of Faenza, and the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza.



*Lidded large jar with underglaze cobalt-blue design of pine, plum and bamboo (1720-70s). Collection of the Iwao Engineering, Iwao Taizan Kiln.*

The exhibition will then travel to the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris (from November 26th, 2004 to April 2nd, 2005), and the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels (from April 2005 to August 2005).

In the 1610s, Imari pottery was created by Korean ceramists brought to Arita (Hizen province) by Nabeshima forces who had invaded the Korean Peninsula with Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Army. In 1644, civil unrest in China led to a reduction in the export of Chinese porcelains, opening the door to these ceramics from Hizen, which soon dominated the Japanese market and were exported to Europe by the Dutch East India Trading Company. These porcelains were called Imari because they were shipped from the port of Imari. Diverse wares were made in response to the worldwide market, and a difference between 'eastern' and 'western' type is apparent,

clearly intended to reflect differences in lifestyle and taste. This can be especially seen in the case of Nabeshima porcelain, which was made both as gift items for the Tokugawa shogunate, and on commission for European royal and noble houses. Porcelain is the most technologically advanced ceramic, and was enthusiastically sought by European merchants, first in China and then in Japan. It was produced for the first time in Europe in the 18th century, at Meissen (Germany), and rapidly copied, but always retaining its original Chinese and Japanese influences.



*Moulded dish in shape of hare with underglaze cobalt-blue detailing with dotted lines (1660-80s). Collection of the Kyushu Ceramic Museum (Shibata Collection).*

This exhibition shows the history of Imari from its beginnings over 400 years ago to its golden age. It focuses on the origins of Imari, how different designs and forms reflect Japanese and European tastes, and how Imari influenced European ceramics, giving visitors a deeper understanding of the global history of porcelain in the seventeenth century and beyond.

### China to Publish Japanese Academic Masterpieces

Beijing Center for Japanese Studies is publishing *Translations of Selected Japanese Studies Texts* to introduce important Japanese academic works in China. As part of this activity, selected Japanese academic masterpieces in economics and sociology are being published in translation. The Center plans to publish 10 books in each subject by the spring of 2005. The main works to be translated are the following:

Economics: *A Study of Barnard's Organizational Theory*, by Haruki Iino, translated by Wang Liping, Lin Xinqi, and Shen Shuzi; *Environmental Economics*, by Kenichi Miyamoto, translated by Piao Yu.

Sociology: *Meritocracy and Company Society*, by Makoto Kumazawa, translated by Huang Yonglan; *The Establishment and Demise of the Modern Family*, by Chizuko Ueno, translated by Wu Yongmei.

Beijing Center for Japanese Studies, funded by The Japan Foundation, was established cooperatively by The Japan Foundation and the Ministry of Education P.R.C in 1985 to support individuals engaged in Japanese-language education, studies on Japan, and the Japan-China relationship.

## Amon Miyamoto Directs *Pacific Overtures*

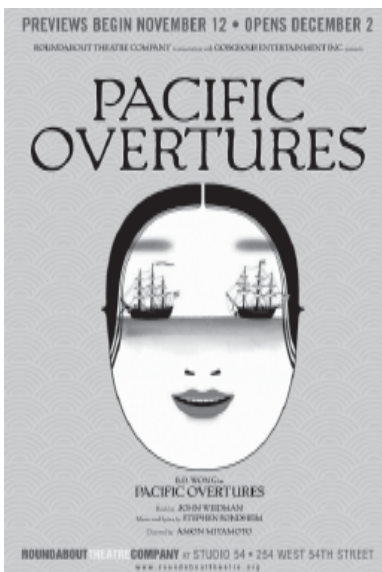
Broadway Run Begins  
November 12th

The musical *Pacific Overtures*, directed by Amon Miyamoto, will begin its Broadway run at New York's Studio 54 Theater this November. The Japan Foundation has offered special assistance for this event, which is being held in commemoration of the 150-year anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Amity and Friendship signed in 1854.

*Pacific Overtures*, featuring lyrics and music by Stephen Sondheim and book by John Weidman, had its original Broadway debut in 1976. The musical depicts life in mid-nineteenth century Japan, a dramatic era that experienced the transformation from isolationism (*sakoku*) to opening (*kaikoku*), spurred by the 1853 arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's "Black Ships."

The dynamic direction and high production values were appreciated by audiences, and the show ran for 193 performances. In 1976, *Pacific Overtures* was nominated for nine Tony awards and received two that year.

In October, 2000, Miyamoto directed *Pacific Overtures* in a Japanese translation at the New National Theatre of Tokyo. Mr. Sondheim was in the audience and was said to have of-



fered the highest praise. In 2002, the show traveled to New York, where it played at the Lincoln Center, and then to Washington, D.C., where it ran at The Kennedy Center. The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both gave it stellar reviews.

Miyamoto was honored to be the first Asian director on Broadway. "This is an important turning point, opening the biggest door of my life," he said. This production of *Pacific Overtures* will star B.D. Wong, who received a Tony Award for his work in *Madame Butterfly*. Junko Koshino will design the costumes, and Rumi Matsui will be Art Director.

The musical previews November 12th to December 1st, with its official opening on December 2nd.

## Otaku Pavilion at the Venice Biennale

The Japanese pavilion brings the concept of *otaku* (geek) to the Venice Biennale's 9th International Architecture Exhibition, whose theme is "METAMORPH." The exhibition will be held until November 7.

*Otaku* have long supported the Japanese subculture of *manga*, *anime*, and video games, which are now global commodities. Though the distinguishing features of *otaku* persona developed from these common sub-cultural interests, they have now begun to change the urban landscape.



"Arina Shinyokohama in Akihabara" produced by Yuuki Ooshima and Kaiyodo. Photo: Kaichiro Morikawa.

The theme of the Japanese pavilion, sponsored by The Japan Foundation, is "*Otaku: Persona=Space=City*." Presented in the *hakoniwa* (miniature box-garden) style, the exhibition depicts *otaku* at home, also showing scenes from Comiket *manga* bazaars, "Electric Town" Akihabara—where *otaku* congregate to buy video games and DVDs—and a "net space" where *otaku* communicate with each other. The *otaku* culture is displayed as a genre- and border-crossing phenomenon from an urbanologist's perspective.

The commissioner of the Japanese pavilion is Kaichiro Morikawa, Professor of Kuwasawa Design School. Participating artists are Kenzo Tange (architect), Toshio Okada (author), Kaiyodo (model production house), and Yuuki Ooshima (figurine prototypist), among others.

## Russia to Publish Anthologies of Contemporary Japanese Literature

### From Contemporary Haiku to Historical Fiction

In Russia, a series of contemporary Japanese literature anthologies which began publication in 2003 will be completed at the end of the year. This series has been co-organized with Russian publisher Inostranka and consists of four volumes: “contemporary prose,” “contemporary poetry,” “contemporary science fiction,” and “historical fiction.” The final volume, entitled *The Eye of the Tiger*, will be published at the end of the year.

This series was planned as one of The Japan Foundation’s activities to introduce contemporary Japanese culture overseas. In 2001, in collaboration with The Japan Foundation, Inostranka previously published the two-volume anthology of modern Japanese short stories, *He* and *She*.

In Russia, Japanese classic literature has been widely studied and translated, but very little modern Japanese literature has been introduced. Since 2000, the last few years have seen a boom in the popularity of Haruki Murakami’s novels in Russia, spawning an increased interest in modern Japanese literature.

Under the supervision of M.G. Tehkhartichvili, a suspense writer known as Boris Akunin and translator of Mishima, and Mitsuyoshi Numano, a Russian scholar and Tokyo University professor, Japanese literary works from various genres

and eras were selected and translated to introduce a wide range of modern Japanese literature in Russia. The four volumes are:

An anthology of contemporary Japanese poetry, *The Strange Wind* (selected by Junko Takahashi), which contains 18 contemporary modern poets such as Gozo Yoshimasu and Takashi Hiraide, 28 contemporary tanka poets such as Kyoko Kuriki and Machi Tawara, and 25 contemporary haiku poets such as Yuko Masaki and Amari Oki.

An anthology of contemporary prose, *Catastrophe Theory* (selected by Mitsuyoshi Numano), which contains the works of 9 contemporary writers such as Taeko Kono, Eimi Yamada, and Masahiko Shimada.

An anthology of contemporary science fiction stories, *The Gordian Knot* (selected by Takayuki Tatsumi), which contains 12 modern and contemporary writers such as Shinichi Hoshi, Sakyō Komatsu, and Yasutaka Tsutsui.

An anthology of historical fiction, *The Eye of the Tiger* (selected by Kazuo Nawata), which contains 12 modern and contemporary writers such as Shugoro Yamamoto, Shuhei Fujisawa, and Shotaro Ikenami.



*Anthologies of Contemporary Japanese Literature in Russian.*

### Life in Japan: *Shichi-Go-San*

If you are in Japan around November 15, you will invariably encounter children in bright kimono attending the *Shichi-Go-San* ceremony with their parents. “7-5-3” is a time for children of those ages to accompany their parents to shrines and temples. The children receive *chitose-ame*, “thousand-year candies” in bags decorated with cranes and turtles. The animals and the long candies symbolize the parent’s wish for the child’s longevity.

While the ceremony is popular today, the origins of *Shichi-Go-San* might not be so widely known. Its history can be traced to three Heian period aristocratic ceremonies. One was *Kamioki*, in which three-year-olds were finally allowed to let their hair grow long instead of having it shaved. (The practice was believed to lead to more beautiful hair.) The second ceremony was *Hakamagi*, in which five-year-old boys were first allowed to wear *hakama* trousers and *haori* jackets, or formal attire, in public. The third ceremony was *Obitoki*, when seven-year-old girls were al-

lowed to tie their kimono with beautiful embroidered *obi* instead of simple belts. The *obi* is one of the most important elements of formal kimono style, and the *Obitoki* was the girl’s version of the *Hakamagi*.

It wasn’t until the eighteenth century, however, that these three distinct ceremonies were combined. The third Shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, had a personal interest in such an occasion, as his own son was weak and often fell ill. Iemitsu wanted to create one single important ceremony to pray for children’s health and happiness, and “7-5-3” was born.

Today, many three-year-olds already grow their hair, and many five-and seven-year-olds have worn *hakama* or *obi* before this occasion. But the origins of this autumn festival are eternal and universal, as all parents wish for a healthy, happy future for their children.



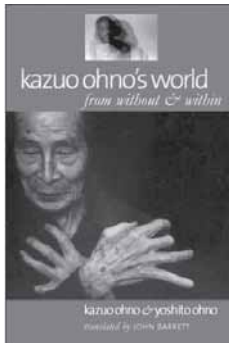
*Photo: Yomiuri Shimbun*

## Books in Other Languages

Subsidized Under The Japan Foundation Translation and Publication Support Program

### The Life and Spirit of *Butoh* Master

Kazuo Ohno



#### *Kazuo Ohno's World*

#### *From Without & Within*

by Kazuo Ohno, Yoshito Ohno  
Translated by John Barrett  
Introduction by Toshio Mizohata  
Middletown: Wesleyan University Press,  
2004. ISBN: 0819566942  
343 pp. 154 illus.

A reader unfamiliar with the principles of Japanese *butoh* dance might think that the static nature of text is an odd medium with which to capture the essence of one of its founders and masters, Kazuo Ohno. After all, *butoh*—the dance of darkness—is a contemporary form that attempts to connect the interior and exterior worlds through movement. Yet, with its unique narrative structure and abundant use of photos, *Kazuo Ohno's World From Without and Within* provides a vibrant portrait of this radical dancer. This fluid translation by John Barrett, who participated in Ohno's workshops and acted as a sound technician, combines two Japanese books: *Food for the Soul* by Ohno's son Yoshito, and *Workshop Words*, lectures given by Ohno at his Yokohama studio. Photographs bind the two together. The manner in which the visual representations of Kazuo Ohno connect the text to his dance produces the same effect as a still-life painting. The moments simply refuse to hold still.

Born in Hakodate, Hokkaido in 1906, Kazuo Ohno trained with two Japanese modern dancers, Baku Ishii and Takaya Eguchi, who had studied *Neue Tanz*. However, it wasn't until Ohno met and collaborated with Tatsumi Hijikata in the 1950s that he began to reject traditional ritualized dance forms. Though *butoh* initially embodied a rejection of both the rigidity of Japanese dance and the Westernization of postwar Japan, it later developed into its own powerful art form. *Butoh*, the style these two men were integral in shaping, revolutionized dance in the last century.

Just as *butoh* strives to merge physical actions with representations of the inner being, in *Food for the Soul*, Yoshito Ohno attempts to show how his father's spirit is embodied in his eyes, feet, back, hands, and expressed through movement. Kazuo Ohno's movements are unencumbered by intellectual

concerns; his falls are deliberate and natural, his stillness inhuman. The son repeatedly gives examples of his own limitations in dance to illustrate his father's mastery of the form, and, while this is useful, visual comparisons of their techniques might also have been instructive. *Workshop Words* is a collection of Kazuo Ohno's shared meditations about dance, the body, spirituality, and physicality; among the themes explored here are life, death, femininity, masculinity, and squalor. These lectures were not intended to be read quickly nor while sitting on a sofa, but rather to be taken as directives to guide thought and body during movement. Just as the stages of a flower show its relationship with life and death, in Ohno's words, *butoh* is a way "to move in twists and turns between the realms of the living and the dead." Our smallest outward movements reflect our spiritual journey between the two realms.

It is hard not to marvel at Kazuo Ohno's passion. His dance career began at 43, an age when many think only about retirement and quieter pastures. After a ten-year hiatus, Ohno had his first solo performance in 1977 at the age of 71 with the debut of "Admiring La Argentina," which earned the Dance Circle Critics Award. A tribute to the Spanish dancer Antonia Merce, who had first inspired Ohno to become a dancer in 1929, this piece marked Ohno's return to the stage and propelled him decisively into the international arena. The show opens with "Divine's Death," in which the dancer is initially seated in the audience. His progression to the stage chronicles the last moments of Divine, a dying male prostitute. The vulgarity of Divine's physical existence is juxtaposed with a spirituality that blooms only when death arrives and the stage falls dark. The show then unfolds out of this darkness.

Unless the reader is familiar with Ohno's performances and career, the book might occasionally be frustrating—something partially ameliorated by the reference notes. Regardless, the father-son explorations of the darkness of *butoh* are likely to be illuminating to dancers and non-dancers alike. Furthermore, the delight, whimsy, and abandon with which Kazuo Ohno has lived his life might provide readers with an appreciation for their own aging processes, not to mention their approach to freedom and creativity.

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Kazuo Ohno's *World From Without & Within* is reviewed by Bonnie Lee La Madeleine, a translator and science writer for RIKEN Brain Science Institute of Japan who is also a longstanding researcher into dance and movement.

## On *Kabe*: The Transient Wall

Vinayak Bharne

In Western architecture, a wall is an element of resistance shutting out light, heat, and noise while simultaneously protecting the occupants from intruders. But in Japan, the functions traditionally associated with a wall are rather ambiguous. With sliding *shoji*, *fusuma*, and *amado* panels separating rooms, the idea of a transient, movable infill replaced the conventional wall as a static barrier. For lack of a better word to express this entity, I call it *kabe*—the Japanese word for “wall.”

Like a balloon, a traditional Japanese room could ‘inflate’ itself by opening its ‘elastic’ walls. Space extended through a horizontal additive process, with walls as mere interruptions that could be taken away. Traditional Japanese space—like an organic void—had no beginning, middle and end.

To separate one room from another, you would slide an opaque *fusuma* wall or bring in a *byobu*; a portable folding wall with decorative paintings to express a particular occasion. But in the early Nara era, such opaque boards used as room dividers started to become increasingly translucent to bring in light, with *washi* (rice paper) stretched across a wooden grid. Thus evolved the latticed *shoji*, light as a Japanese chopstick, where two or more layers would slide within a single sill with the push of a finger. It also gave birth to the *shitomido*, a latticed wall used over built-in desks that could be propped up into the outer corridor to control light and ventilation, depending on its angle. And binding all these flexible walls along the outer boundary were the opaque wooden *amado* panels that could be closed to protect the interior from rain.

Japanese walls were flexible because they were free from structural constraints. In stone construction, with walls carrying the roof weight, there were structural limits to the room size and the number of rooms determined the size of the house. But in Japan, the roof was always erected first during the construction process and the space beneath articulated later. The Japanese word for partition—*majikiri*—clarified this tradition; *ma* referring to the intervals between the supporting posts as well as the space under the roof, and *jikiri* or *shikiri* implying the subjective division of this space freed from structural obligations. And so contrary to most cultures where the house began from a single room, in Japanese architecture the house ‘evolved’ into a single room by virtue of its transient walls. As urbanism, the wall continued the flexible idea outdoors through vague delineations of privacy and publicness.

Unlike the static Western street wall, the Japanese one—with sliding *shoji* and *amado*—was malleable, transforming itself to sustain the diurnal and seasonal rhythms of place. During the day the *shoji* screens slid open to allow the street space to

interpenetrate the private space of the households. By night the *amado* were brought up and shut for a private nightlife.

This diurnal beat formed part of a larger palette of seasonal rhythms. In the hot summers, the *shoji* remained open, facilitating cross-ventilation for the homes and displaying their various trades by providing glimpses into the *machiya* (townhouse) interiors. During the day a curtain or *noren* would hang in the entrance, marking the shop boundary, shading it from the harsh summer sun, bearing the family crest, and adding a soft kinetic element to a buzzing streetscape. And when the torrential rains would set in, the *amado* would be brought up, securing the interior against the harsh weather. The street would now assume repose until summer would set in and the walls would change once more.

Amidst such rhythms, the urge for public communion was refreshed during seasonal festivals and religious gatherings. Such gatherings were always full of movement, continuously meandering through the wide thoroughfares and narrow alleys of the community. On such occasions—such as *Gion Matsuri* still celebrated every July in Kyoto—the wooden walls making the street boundary were completely removed, extending the street space deep into the house interiors. With their walls gone, the otherwise linear street spaces now together seemed like one larger, amorphous public space interspersed with roofed pavilions, festive lanterns, and fetishes sustaining the colorful crowds parading age-old floats and follies. Thus, if Japanese architecture was about the ‘inflating room,’ then Japanese urbanism was about the ‘inflating street’—its traditional equivalent of the Western plaza.

The transforming qualities of the Japanese wall were as much the offspring of an open architecture to endure the hot summer heat and humidity as the product of Shinto and Buddhist notions. For the idea of the flexible wall was at its core the idea of *mujo*—the transience of all things. In architecture, the room was a transient place, just as in urbanism, the street was a transient room, both evoked through the momentary dispositions of their walls. *Kabe*—the transient wall—represents one of Japan's most distinct and ingenious architectural traditions. Its current position needs to transcend mere cultural symbolism. It deserves to be recognized as a significant climatic tool and design element in contemporary Japanese architecture and urbanism.

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*Vinayak Bharne (vbharne@hotmail.com) is an Architect and Urban Designer, and a former recipient of the Asia Pacific Development Commission Traveling Award to Japan. He currently lives in Los Angeles.*

## Cultural Highlights

### (July-August, 2004)

#### LITERATURE

##### Akutagawa and Naoki Prizes

The winner of the 131st Akutagawa Prize for belles-lettres by new writers was Norio Mobu for *Kaigo Nyumon* (Novice Caregiver), which appeared in the June issue of *Bungakukai*. The 131st Naoki Prize for popular fiction by more established writers was awarded to Hideo Okuda's *Kuchu Buranko* (Trapeze) published by Bungeishunju Ltd., and Tatsuya Kumagaya's *Kaiko no Mori* (The Forest of Chance Encounters) published by Bungeishunju Ltd. *Kaigo Nyumon*, written in the Hip-Hop style, is about a pot-smoking young man who takes care of his elderly grandmother. *Kuchu Buranko* is about an eccentric psychiatrist who uses an unorthodox method to treat strange patients such as a yakuza with a phobia of sharp objects, and a trapeze artist who continually falls off the trapeze. *Kaiko no Mori* portrays the dramatic life of a young *matagi* (hunter) living in the harsh natural world of northern Japan in the Taisho and Showa eras.

##### Donald Keene Translation Award

The Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University has selected Lawrence Rogers, professor of Japanese and chairperson of the Languages Department at the University of Hawaii, as the winner of the 2004 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Translation Award for *Tokyo Stories*, published by the University of California Press. The book is a selection and translation of stories about Tokyo by well-known

writers such as Soseki, Akutagawa, Kawabata, and Mishima, as well as lesser-known writers such as Ineko Sata and Kuniko Mukoda.

#### OBITUARIES

Michio Morishima, 80, economist, professor emeritus of London University and Osaka University, July 13. Internationally recognized for his mathematical analysis of Marx's *Das Kapital*. Professor at London University from 1970 to 1989. Major works include *The Theory of Economic Growth* and *Capital and Credit: A New Formulation of General Equilibrium Theory*.

Koji Nakano, 79, novelist, scholar of German literature, July 16. His 1992 book *Honest Poverty* became a best-seller, striking a chord in the post-bubble era. In 2000, he received the Japan Academy Award Imperial Prize for *Ryokan in the Wind*, and *The Words of Seneca, Roman Philosopher*. In 1982, he launched an anti-nuclear war appeal with other novelists and literary critics. He also translated Kafka and Gunter Grass.

Hajime Kijima, 76, poet, translator, scholar of English literature, creator of the international poetry form "linked quatrains," August 16. Joined the poetry group *Retto* in the 1950s. His books include *The Collected Poems of Kijima Hajime* and numerous works in English, including the anthology *The Poetry of Postwar Japan*. Also translated American poets Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes.

#### Notice from the Editor

We are pleased to announce that *The Japan Foundation Newsletter* has resumed publication with this issue (XXX/No.1 October-November, 2004) in a new format to appear every two months. The new *Newsletter* will feature reports on current Japanese issues, interviews, reviews of books on Japan and Japanese books in translation, cultural highlights, and information about The Japan Foundation's activities. Each issue will also feature a contribution from a reader and/or Japan Foundation Fellow. We welcome your submissions and particularly want to hear from readers and Fellows in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America. Please send English articles of no longer than 800 words and a brief bio to: [jfnl@jpf.go.jp](mailto:jfnl@jpf.go.jp). In order to present detailed and current information, updates will also be posted on our website. In addition, we will send out an e-mail magazine every two weeks. If you would like to be sent our electronic magazine, please let us know by email.

For further information, please visit our website: <http://www.jpf.go.jp>. Thank you for your readership and for your continued support.