



Pacific Dreams, Inc.

Select your language:



HONYAKU *talk*

June 2003 - No. 13

[PDI HOME](#) > [HONYAKU TALK HOME](#) > [JUNE 2003](#)

In This Issue:

- ▶ Honyaku Kotohajime #13
- ▶ Observations from recent business trips
- ▶ Employee Profile: PDI's newest team member
- ▶ Book Review: Economic Issues in Contemporary Japan

● Honyaku Kotohajime

Ken Sakai
President

"Honyaku Kotohajime" (Beginnings of Translation) - No. 13 Publication of Modern Japanese Authors in Translation

As I have written many times in the past, the translation work done by my company consists mainly of what is called "business translation", which includes technical translation. However, among the translators of the world, there are also many esteemed individuals who translate works of literature. Matsuoka Yuko, translator of the internationally best-selling *Harry Potter* series and president of Say-zan-sha Publications Ltd., the company that published them, has recently enjoyed a great deal of limelight. However, up until now, most of the translated literary works in publication have been books from overseas that have been translated into Japanese. According to statistics, the ratio of literary material that is imported into Japan relative to the quantity that is exported is a whopping 20 to 1. These figures come from the Japan Foundation, which has endeavored to support the publication of Japanese books in translation for the last thirty years. They highlight the discrepancy between the huge number of foreign books that come into Japan and the tiny number of books that leave. In this article, I would like to discuss the diminutive minority that constitutes attempts to publish Japanese literary works into English.

Up until now, Japanese literature that has undergone translation has consisted primarily of high literature; recipients of the Nobel Prize for Literature Yoshinari Kawabata and Kenzaburo Oe, as well as such authors as Yukio Mishima and Junichiro Tanizaki. Perhaps some of you remember Japan's great pride when Edward Seidensticker, Professor Emeritus of Columbia University, translated *The Tale of Genji* into English, thereby making it known to the world that the oldest novel in history originated in Japan. However, as high literature constitutes only a small percentage of the books published in Japan, it is clear that the scope of Japanese publications that have been translated and introduced overseas has been quite narrow.

Recently, a newly launched Japanese publishing company in New York called Vertical Inc. (www.vertical-inc.com) announced plans to publish English translations by four popular Japanese authors. The four books are *Ring* by Koji Suzuki, *Twinkle Twinkle* by Kaori Ekuni, *Ashes* by Kenzo Kitakata, and *The Leopard Mask*, book one of the Guin Saga by Kaoru Kurimoto. The selection of books is fresh and original, and each book is of a genre—horror, romance, crime, and science fiction fantasy—that is high in entertainment value. Once this attempt succeeds in demonstrating its effectiveness, I have no doubt that it will become a trailblazer for the publication of Japanese popular fiction, and more and more companies will follow in its footsteps.

Last year, Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs announced a plan to subsidize the English translation of contemporary Japanese authors. I think it is wonderful that a Japanese governmental organization has finally dragged itself to its feet and acknowledged the crucial need to undertake projects to deal with the great wealth of Japanese literature—besides *The Tale of Genji*—found in contemporary Japan that has no outlet to the outside world. For Japan, which has recently lost ground to China in the field of manufacturing, I believe that the highly entertaining works produced by Japanese contemporary authors present a unique opportunity to raise Japan's international standing by propagating Japan's rich cultural heritage abroad. I also look forward to the emergence of a new generation of superb J-E translators whose skills will be necessary to translate the contemporary authors that constitute that cultural legacy. I sense that the day is not far off when the successors of translator greats like Edward Seidensticker and Donald Keen will appear in our midst.

● News

Ken Sakai
President

Observations from my Recent Trips to Japan and New Orleans

This trip to Japan was my first visit in half a year, and this month I would like to talk about one aspect of my observations of Japan and the U.S. During my visit to Japan, I was surprised by the number of people conducting e-mail on their cellular phones on commuter trains, subways, and bullet trains. Last year, the phenomenon seemed mostly limited to young people such as university students and high school students. This time, however, I noticed everyday, not-so-young salary men completely absorbed in sending e-mails. At the same time, the number of people reading books on the trains seemed to have dropped dramatically. I found myself growing deeply concerned about the Japanese publishing and bookselling industries.

In contrast, on my domestic flight to New Orleans and in airport waiting rooms, it seemed to me that the number of Americans reading books had increased. I think that this might be related to the impact of cell phones in Japan. I remember once hearing a theory that Americans have less time to read books than Japanese since they commute exclusively by car, but I couldn't disagree more. Recently, cell phones with e-mail capability have finally appeared on the American market. Does that mean that America will soon witness the same phenomenon as Japan? I don't want to jump to conclusions, but somehow I can't imagine cell phone e-mail really catching on with Americans. I don't mean to stereotype, but I think Americans are less inclined to spend hours tapping out messages on a tiny keypad.

● News

Employee Profile: Doby Finn

The newest member of the Pacific Dreams team in our Salem, Oregon office adds rich life experience to our translation staff. Born in Peoria, Illinois, Doby Finn has lived Syracuse, New York and abroad in Switzerland and Japan, as well as traveled to Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, and France. In fact, he spent much of his early childhood in Geneva, Switzerland. "I am told that I spoke French during that time," Doby recounts. Although his time in Geneva was several years ago, he still retains basic French skills and attributes his much of his studies and interest in linguistics to his time in Geneva. "Language is incredibly fascinating for me, perhaps as a result of my early experiences."

Newly graduated this month from the University of Oregon with a Bachelors of Arts, Doby majored in Japanese Studies and minored in Biology. He also has studied at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, where he studied Japanese language, business, and culture. In way of working with languages, Doby also has worked as an English language tutor, a transliterator, and an English teaching assistant. However, his professional experience is not limited only to linguistics; he also has worked as an IT consultant, a marketing assistant, and an electrical test technician, operating and maintaining printed circuit board test equipment.

Some of his more colorful experience includes washing dishes in the basement of the state capitol, agricultural work in the state of Washington, and insulation installation. A self-proclaimed bibliophile, Doby also has done volunteer library work, helping with the shelving of library materials and assistin

Subscription Info:

- ▶ Sign up
- ▶ Unsubscribe

Previous Issues

- ▶ June 2003, No. 13
- ▶ May 2003, No. 12
- ▶ Apr 2003, No. 11
- ▶ Mar 2003, No. 10
- ▶ Feb 2003, No. 9
- ▶ Jan 2003, No. 8
- ▶ Dec 2002, No. 7
- ▶ Nov 2002, No. 6
- ▶ Oct 2002, No. 5
- ▶ Sep 2002, No. 4
- ▶ Aug 2002, No. 3
- ▶ July 2002, No. 2
- ▶ June 2002, No. 1

HT Archive:

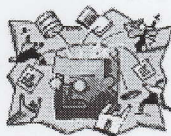
- ▶ Company News
- ▶ English Book Reviews
- ▶ Ken's Monthly Column: Honyaku Kotohajime
- ▶ HonyakuTALK Japanese Edition Archives

patrons.

Among his many pursuits, Doby has studied Okinawan Karate, Japanese calligraphy, and Kendo. As evidenced by such interests, his life has been greatly influenced by Japan, even from an early age, as he attests, "My early life was steeped in elements of Japanese culture, though I was not aware of it at the time." In addition to those interests he also enjoys travel, fencing, scuba diving, digital art, marine biology, and electron microscopy. With such a wide variety of experience and language abilities, PDI is happy to have Doby join our growing translation team.

News

Pacific Dreams
Recommendations...



Economic Issues in Contemporary Japan

by authors Naoyuki Yoshino, Masaharku Kuhara, Michael Lacktorin, and Rochelle Kopp



Achieving This book presents an introduction to the major issues surrounding the current state of Japanese economics. The book written in the taiyaku style, with Japanese and English versions printed on facing pages and keyword meanings given at the bottom of the page, and is ideal for intermediate/advanced students of Japanese interested in acquiring an understanding of the Japanese economy while mastering the vocabulary necessary to discuss it.

Part One, Money, discusses the convention of household saving and its significance, and then goes on to explain Japan's financial system and the Asian financial crisis. Part Two, Banking, addresses unique characteristics of bank management in Japan, their overseas expansions in the 80s and retreat in the late 90s, and an analysis of the future of Japanese banking. Part Three, Foreign Investment, discusses the state of foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign direct presence (FDP) in Japan.

The economic content is written largely on an introductory level, and should be easy to understand for readers with no particular economic expertise. At the same time, all of the economic terms used in the descriptions are noted at the bottom of the page with their translations, so that students can acquire a strong vocabulary of economic terminology without spending hours scanning through specialized dictionaries. Once you have mastered such terms as 信用割当 (capital rationing), 内部留保 (internal reserves), 規制緩和 (deregulation), and 不良債権 (bad loans), you will be well equipped to understand news reports and articles about Japanese finance.

The four authors include two native speakers of English and two Japanese. They are all respected authorities on Japanese business and economics.

Economic Issues in Contemporary Japan is available for purchase from Pacific Dreams, Inc. To order, please call (503) 588-7368 or e-mail pacific.dreams@viser.net.

Pacific Dreams, Inc.
21 Oaks Professional Building, Ste 230
525 Glen Creek Rd., NW
Salem, OR 97304 USA

TEL: 503-588-7368
FAX: 503-588-7549

Send HonyakuTALK
to a friend!

Know someone who might like to subscribe? [Send](#)
HonyakuTALK to a friend!



If at any time you wish to unsubscribe, simply click [here](#) and enter your email address into the field provided. If you would like to receive the Japanese version of HonyakuTALK, click [here](#)

© Copyright 2002-2003 Pacific Dreams, Inc., All Rights Reserved