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Greetings

Every year in July, I visit downtown San Francisco, with its sloping hills, cable cars and morning mist. It is in the middle of July that SEMICON West is held at Moscone Center in San Francisco. SEMICON West is one of the largest exhibitions for semiconductor manufacturing equipment and process materials on the globe. I have been attending SEMICON West for over 10 consecutive years.



When I visit SEMICON every year, I am able to grasp a sense of the trends in the semiconductor industry's business by just seeing the booths, and the glint in the exhibitors' eyes. At this year's SEMICON it seemed that, due to continuous industry growth through diversification and expansion of semiconductor device applications, the equipment and materials business has reached a state of stability never seen before.

It is certainly my great pleasure to meet with the people I see every year during SEMICON. I have been involved with the industry for more than 20 years, and I have met and known many people in the US and Japan. This year a lot of Japanese people visited SEMICON from Japan. This demonstrated that the Japanese semiconductor industry is also thriving this year and will continue to do so in the near future.

In general, the trend of the exhibition showed that activity in the US has not been strong when compared with what it used to be. I noticed that the total number of exhibitors dropped from last year. If other companies, such as various service providers of the semiconductor industry, were encouraged to participate in the show, I think SEMICON would receive more exhibitors and booths. For instance, at SEMICON Japan, which I also go to every year, I see many more exhibitors and visitors there than at SEMICON West. Because SEMICON Japan has more of a variety of businesses that participate in the show, the show itself is more thriving and lively than SEMICON West.

At a previous SEMICON Japan show, I found two translation company booths. I myself have just sent the booth application form to SEMICON Japan for the upcoming SEMICON Japan in December '06. Although we are not in the semiconductor industry, our major clients are and we are proud of having served this enormous industry for such a long time. My staff gets to know this industry and its people through our direct business relationships with semiconductor related clients.

My staff and I always heartily wish for this industry's continued success and technological developments for

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the long-term basis.

Ken Sakai
President

◉ Honyaku Kotohajime



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President

"Honyaku Kotohajime" (Beginnings of Translation) - No. 50 "Website Translation and Japanese Localization"

When I began writing Honyaku Kotohajime, I never thought that I would make it to the 50th issue. If I remember correctly, I began writing Honyaku Kotohajime in May of 2002, which means that the project is entering into its fifth year. I am actually a little amazed that I have been able to keep writing for such a long time without running out of topics. I feel the world of translation is very profound, and thus there are a limitless number of things to write about. Moreover, there are endless problems in the translation world that are worth engaging.

For this month's issue I would like to explore the topic of website translation. However, because I am not a software engineer, there may be some technical places about which I will only possess a laymen's knowledge. At this point I will cede to the experts in that field, and stick to the subject of website translation processes and outlines. I will also look at areas where basic questions appear in translations or English issues arise.

Recently the number of US companies that have adopted Japanese websites is on the rise. For this reason, we have received more requests from clients asking our company to implement Japanese localization of websites from English. For website translation our clients usually send us HTML files (although not always), and once we receive the files we will analyze them using TRADOS, a translation memory software tool. When we have finished the analysis we then send a price quote to our client. By using TRADOS we are able to divide and count the number of repetitions (repeated words) in the files.

Once the client has approved the quote our company will begin translation, and we usually use TRADOS for our translations. When the translation is completed our in-house proofreaders compare the Japanese translation to the English source in the bilingual TRADOS file. (Both the translators and proofreaders are NJSs, or Native Japanese Speakers.) When the proofreading is finished the bilingual file is put through a 'clean-up' process (the English source language is removed) so that only the Japanese translation remains.

In addition, we check the document for link codes that may have been corrupted during the file conversion process. For these things a final check is conducted, and HTML code and tags are confirmed. At the end, the completed project is presented to the client. Considering how many complex processes are implemented, the Japanese localization of websites is not simply a translation operation but can correctly be referred to as a "project".

I would like to discuss the client's point of view in regard to website translation. I am sorry to say that within many industries, private companies have yet to localize their websites into Japanese, whether this is due to the (excess) costs that arise from the undertaking, or perhaps simply not being aware of the need for such a project in their daily routine, I cannot be sure. However, if we do a 180 degree flip and look at it from the other point of view, a website translation can be extremely effective and highly efficient investment for a company. So, why not look at it strategically? With that in mind, I recall the following story.

Mark Spencer Hotel, a local hotel of long standing in downtown Portland, Oregon, established a Japanese website in their homepage (www.markspencer.com). They soon had success in gaining the patronage of businesspeople and tourists from Japan who were in search of lodging. One of my clients, who is the head of the sales department at a Japanese semiconductor materials manufacturing company, tells me that, because of the comfort he feels with the Japanese webpage, he always stays at the Mark Spencer Hotel when he visits Portland. After I heard about this Japanese website from the sales department head, I began to introduce my clients coming to and from Japan to the hotel and its website that offers services in Japanese. Most of the clients that I introduced to the hotel to have since become regular guests there.

In this manner, with the Japanese language link on the hotel website, it becomes possible for Japanese guests (who, up until now, were mostly unable to access the website unless they knew English) to be guests of the hotel. It is certain that there was a cost associated with Japanese localization of the hotel's website, but with the gain of Japanese guests being able to access the website, the costs can soon be recovered. In short, the cost of the Japanese language addition to the website is a splendid investment for the hotel. Furthermore, the quick recovery of costs is plain and simple. It goes without saying that anytime an investment is made, a thorough cost-benefit analysis, as well as an evaluation of the size of the market (in this case the tourists and businesspeople visiting), should be done in advance.

I have another example to present. In the case of a website for a company extending over many diverging industries, it is advisable to first translate the division which has an opening in the Japanese market. To start with, put the division and its products in Japanese. It may be necessary to make the Japanese site more detailed, in comparison with the original English site. Just simply translating an English language site isn't enough to get new users in Japan to enter the site. I am sorry to say it, but 99% of websites translated into Japanese are not geared to the Japanese market.

Thus, investment in translation without localization is invalidated. Such an investment will not have the same ability to recover its cost. I have always felt that this problem is actually a very serious one, and I will continue to convey the details of this matter in the next issue of Honyaku Kotohajime. My intention is to once again discuss and expand on the themes of investment, as opposed to cost, in website localization, as well as the issues that are associated with such projects. This includes how to catch problems as they arise, as well as making continuous improvements. By all means, please read along as I continue to explore this fascinating topic.

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Pacific Dreams
recommends...



The Haiku Apprentice: Memoirs of Writing Poetry in Japan

Abigail Friedman

The Haiku Apprentice is a memoir of Abigail Friedman, a remarkable woman who lived as a diplomat in Japan for two years. In her book, the journey of a woman in Japan writing, discovering and exploring the ancient Japanese art of Haiku poetry is laid out in a style accessible to any reader. I highly recommend this book for anyone with even a passing interest in haiku or Japan.



I was immediately drawn to this book simply by the title. *The Haiku Apprentice* conjures up the image of a remote sanctuary; the student living side by side with the teacher, exploring the depth of their self identity and their passion for their art. And though this romantic image is somewhat different when finally compared to Abigail Friedman's honestly scripted experience, I think that parallels can be drawn between the image and the reality.

One thing that I appreciate about this book was that Friedman could have chosen to write a fascinating memoir simply about her experience as an expatriate and a diplomat in Japan. Her life story seems to be very unique, full of travel and adventure and she could have chosen to write about her experience from any number of fascinating aspects. However, she chose to tell a story via her very specific experience with haiku. By doing so, she brings haiku to the reader in a way that doesn't feel like a textbook or a lecture on the intricacies of an archaic art form. In fact Friedman lets the reader know that Haiku is an art form very much alive in contemporary Japan.

Friedman meets a member of a haiku group who invites her to join the group to see for herself what it is like. Despite her uncertainty Abigail's adventurous spirit guides her. Traveling to a part of the country she has never been to before she meets Momoko, the group's resident haiku master, and discovers that there is more to this coveted art form than a 5-7-5 syllabic structure. She starts to see haiku differently than before, and her understanding of this art form takes shape. As she describes her struggles learning to find the perfect *kigo*, or seasonal word, to make her haiku just right, the reader passes through the Japanese landscape along with her.

The book is organized in what seems to be a series of separate, but related, anecdotes or journal entries. I enjoyed this style because it gave me a sense of the reality from which the book came, that these were real memories from a real person. And in that sense, it felt as though I was being brought closer to the writer.

The haiku that are strewn throughout the book are written by a variety of people, from the old, revered Japanese masters such as Basho and Issa to Mrs. Friedman herself; she even includes a wonderful anecdote about a caption she read on the side of the bus. She writes "Well, I knew it was an advertising jingle, but still, wasn't it an advertising jingle haiku?" As she encounters more haiku and begins to learn more about it, Friedman also gains a deeper understanding of Japanese culture.

It is intriguing to read how Abigail's first impression of haiku is challenged as she uncovers more about this once elusive poetic style. Her story is charming and relatable, with tales about her work and life with her family mixed into her account of private meetings with her haiku and calligraphy teachers. She tells us about her experiences; her joys and frustrations while living in the foreign land and her personal relationship with haiku seems to thread through all aspects of her life, grounding her experience in Japan.

Anyone can appreciate this book, having traveled to Japan or not. So, order a copy today, and then be the first one in the neighborhood to start your own haiku group!



Now you can order *The Haiku Apprentice* for only \$14.95 US, plus shipping and handling. We can ship your order right away. To order, visit our [web bookstore](#) or call us at 503-783-1390. You may also e-mail us at bookstore@pacificdreams.org.

News

Learning a Foreign Language

On September 15, 2006, Mr. TOMINAGA, Shintaro will provide a seminar entitled, "Communication and Negotiation with Japanese Business People". In preparation for the Portland seminar he has started writing seven short essays on communication and culture from the standpoint of win-win business results between the US and Japan.

He contributed a message before he began writing short essays as follows:

To Start with, Let's Learn a Foreign Language for Win-win Results.

Japanese business people face a lot of difficulties in countries outside Japan where they want to carry out business. Among all these difficulties, the most significant one might be the fact that great majorities of non-Japanese do not understand Japanese language; therefore Japanese business people who want to do business abroad are compelled to study very hard to learn English. It is because of this, that English is considered the de facto international language around the globe. Thus, many Japanese who are engaged in international business spend a lot of time learning English. They make efforts to use English in negotiating with non-Japanese business people for whom English is their mother tongue, especially in the US.

On the other hand, to my great surprise, many native English speaking business people come to Japan often want to use their native English to carry out business with Japanese business people. It seems to be a possibility that native English speakers regard English as a communication tool for gaining good results from discussions and negotiations with Japanese business people.

Because English is the de facto international language, I can understand why native English speakers might assume that Japanese people should speak English to discuss and negotiate with native English speakers even in Japan.

I never want to say that such attitude is wrong. Yet from the practical, win-win business standpoint, it seems obvious that a native English speaker, who comes to Japan alone, should learn Japanese rather than expecting so many other Japanese to have diligently studied English. English is a very foreign language for Japanese, and thus it is very difficult for Japanese to become fluent in speaking and writing it. On the same note, Japanese language is very difficult for native English speaking people. But, as the famous proverb goes, "When in Rome do as the Romans do."

I am very certain that a native English speaking businessperson can have a lot of success in Japan if they work hard and study Japanese just as Japanese business people, who are relocated to the US, make every effort to learn English.

This is Golden Rule No. 1 in carrying out business abroad for both Japanese and Americans. Beyond learning a foreign language, however, there is another hurdle of learning a foreign culture. This can be just as difficult as learning a foreign language.

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