

Issue 2
Autumn 2013

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The Israeli Association for Japanese Studies Newsletter is a biannual publication that aims to provide information about the latest developments in the field of Japanese Studies in Israel.

We welcome submissions from IAJS members regarding institutional news, publications, and new researches in the field of Japanese Studies. Please send your proposals to the editor at: iajs.newsletter@gmail.com.

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The Israeli Association of Japanese Studies (IAJS) is a non-profit organization seeking to encourage Japanese-related research and dialogue as well as to promote Japanese language education in Israel.

For more information visit the IAJS website at: www.japan-studies.org

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Friends of IAJS,

It is with great pleasure that we present the second issue of the IAJS Newsletter. This time we will take a close look at the state of translation of Japanese literature in Israel.

Across the world, scholars and practitioners share their passion for Japanese culture through the translation of literature. Israel is no exception. According to a survey conducted by Dr. Doron B. Cohen (Dōshisha University), no less than eighty three books of Japanese literature have been translated into Hebrew over the past sixty years—a remarkable number bearing in mind that less than ten million people actually speak Hebrew! The recent international success of Murakami Haruki, in particular, has stimulated the interest of Israeli readers and publishers in works written by other Japanese authors.

In spite of the relative success of Japanese literature, the majority of translations, especially the early ones, are from English; only a small number have been translated directly from Japanese. In addition, while most of Murakami's books have been translated into Hebrew, the works of many important writers—such as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Higuchi Ichiō, and Nakagami Kenji—remain relatively underrepresented. With a growing number of Israelis proficient in Japanese, we hope that this situation will gradually change. There is still much to be done, and IAJS plans to be at the forefront of promoting the translation of more Japanese literature to Hebrew.

In this issue we bring the voices of five Japan scholars who share their experiences, thoughts, and insights on translating Japanese: Dr. Doron B. Cohen on his extensive research of trends in the translation of Japanese literature into Hebrew; Mr. Erez Joskovich on his translation of

Nosaka Akiyuki's *Sensō no Dōwa Shū* into Hebrew; Mr. Eitan Bolokan on the role of academia in the professional and practical education of future translators; Dr. Lena Baibikov on the translation of



modern, cutting-edge Japanese prose into Russian; and Dr. Shunit Shahal-Porat on the role of a translator as an “invisible hand,” helping the words on their journey from one culture to another.

The newsletter also includes reports of three international conferences organized this year by the IAJS: the First IAJS Conference titled “Urbanity, Urban Space, Urban Culture: Economical, Political and Cultural Perspectives on Japan, Past and Present” which took place on May 5 at Haifa University; an international workshop titled “Passages: Continuity and Change in Edo Art” which was held jointly at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and the Tikotin Museum for Japanese Art in Haifa on May 26-31; and an international workshop titled “Travelling Food and Beverages: In and Out of Japan” which took place at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on November 3-5.

In addition, as part of our commitment to the support of promising scholars, this issue also features an interview with Mr. Danny Orbach, a PhD candidate at Harvard University whose research deals with radical violence in the Japanese military from 1858 to 1930.

We hope that you will find interest in this issue, and we wish you all a productive and exciting academic year.

Irit Weinberg
IAJS Newsletter Editor

Congratulations to Our Members and Colleagues

Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation to Dr. Roni Bornstein and Mr. Arie Kutz

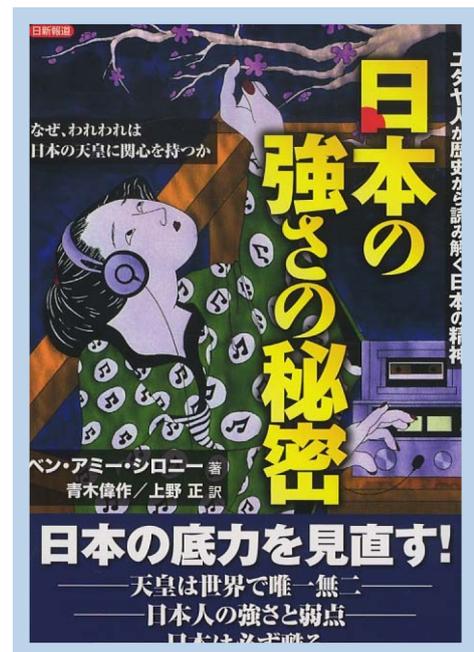
IAJS extends congratulations to Dr. Roni Bornstein, the chair of the Israel-Japan Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Arie Kutz, the chair of the Israel-Japan Friendship Society, on being awarded the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the deepening of mutual understanding and friendship between Israel and Japan.

“The Foreign Minister's Commendation is awarded to individuals and groups of outstanding achievements in international fields, to acknowledge their contribution to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries. The Commendation also aims to promote the understanding and support of the Japanese public for their activities.”



Promotion of International Understanding Award to Prof. Ben-Ami Shillony

IAJS would like to congratulate Prof. Ben-Ami Shillony whose book *Yapan be-Mabat Ishi* (Japan As I See It) was published by Nisshin Hōdō Co. earlier this year under the title *Nihon no Tsuyosa no Himitsu* (Japan's Secret of Strength) and who received the Kokusai Rikai Sokushin Shō (Promotion of International Understanding award). The prize is awarded once a year by the Sendai-based International Foundation for Promotion of Languages and Culture for the book best promoting international understanding.



Establishing Closer Collaboration

On July 31, 2013, IAJS Chair Dr. Nissim Otmazgin met with Mr. Shimomura Hakubun, the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. During this meeting Dr. Otmazgin briefed the minister about Japanese studies in Israel, explained some of the difficulties we are facing (e.g., the lack of digital research and teaching materials in Japanese, the need for more scholarships for our students), and conveyed our hope for increased collaboration with Japanese scholars and universities. Mr. Shimomura was surprised to hear about the scale of interest in Japanese studies in Israel and emphasized his office's commitment to assisting the promotion of Japanese studies around the world.



Japanese Language Proficiency Test

The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), organized jointly by IAJS and the Culture Section of the Embassy of Japan in Israel, will take place on December 1, 2013 at Haifa University. This is the second time the JLPT will be held in Israel after its successful launch last year.

The test, first held in 1984, is a standardized criterion-referenced test to evaluate and certify Japanese language proficiency for non-native speakers and is often used as an indicator and a requirement for entering Japanese academic institutions and companies. This year approximately **seventy people**, most of them university students, have registered. We wish them all good luck!



Meeting of Japanese language instructors

PAST EVENTS

A Summary of Japan-Related Academic Events in Israel

The First IAJS Conference: “Urbanity, Urban Space, Urban Culture: Economical, Political and Cultural Perspectives on Japan, Past and Present”

The first annual conference of the IAJS took place on May 5-6, 2013 at Haifa University under the guidance of Dr. Michal Daliot-Bul, IAJS Council Member and Chair of the IAJS Academic Committee. The aim of the conference was to explore the complexity and changing functionality of urbanism, urban space, and urban culture in Japan from historical and synchronic perspectives, allowing for unique viewpoints on economic, political, social, and cultural processes.



Prof. Yoshimi Shunya, Tokyo University

In his fascinating keynote speech, Prof. Yoshimi Shunya of Tokyo University discussed the social formation of urban visuality in postwar Tokyo, with a special focus on the expansion of movie theaters. The four ensuing panels discussed the concept of urbanity from a variety of angles, such as representations of urbanity in Japanese cinema

and literature, urban spaces as an arena of political struggles, and urban dynamics and changes in contemporary hyper-technological post-March 2011 Japan.

The general assembly of the IAJS was held during the conference. Dr. Nissim Otmazgin, the chair of IAJS, presented the initial achievements of the association and highlighted some issues related to its debut. The budget was presented and an outline for future projects was discussed.



*Attending the panel
“Urbanism as a Space for Socio-Political Struggles”*

For more information and abstracts of the papers presented at the conference visit:

<http://www.japan-studies.org/Conference.html>

PAST EVENTS

A Summary of Japan-Related Academic Events in Israel

International Workshop: “Passages: Continuity and Change in Edo Arts”

In May 2013 the IAJS, with support from the Japan Foundation, the Asian Studies Department and Mandel School of Advanced Studies in the Humanities at The Hebrew University, organized an international workshop at which scholars from around the world were asked to reinterpret changes taking place in Japanese arts during the Edo period. Organized by Dr. Shalmit Bejarano (Hebrew University), sixteen scholars from Japan, North America, and Europe joined Israeli scholars and students for a week of scholarly sessions and museum visits.



Reception at Rabin Building, Hebrew University

Titled “Passages: Continuity and Changes in the Edo Arts,” the workshop's concept was informed by new trends in the field of Japanese art history. While the popular image of Japanese premodern art emphasizes lasting traditions and conservation, scholars in the field enjoy (and are often puzzled by) the plethora of new images and concepts and the sophisticated refashioning of traditional forms found in the visual arts created in seventeenth to nineteenth century Japan. Key to recent scholarship are printed illustrated books known as *ehon*. As with popular media today, main

stream artists of the Edo period looked at, contributed to, and were in turn inspired by images that appeared in these relatively easy to obtain books.



Keynote Speaker, Prof. Joshua Mostow of UBC

Several of the papers addressed the subject of illustrated books. For example, the keynote speaker Prof. Joshua Mostow (University of British Columbia) concentrated on the first illustrated edition of *Ise Monogatari*, rereading the illustrations as innovative interpretations of the classical literary work. Speakers were influenced by recent exhibitions or newly discovered artworks, such as the screens of Kanō Sanraku and Kanō Sansetsu that were exhibited this summer at the Kyoto National Museum. An edited volume of the symposium's papers is underway.

The workshop also aimed to expose the international community to Japanese artworks in Israel. In collaboration with Israeli curators, visits took place to the Asian collection of the Israel Museum, the Tikotin Museum of Japanese Art in Haifa, and also to the National Library in Jerusalem. This combination of tourism and scholarship helped to foster a good atmosphere and, hopefully, to further future international cooperation.

For more information on the talks and contributors visit:

<http://www.japan-studies.org/Schedul.html>

PAST EVENTS

A Summary of Japan-Related Academic Events in Israel

International Workshop: “Travelling Food and Beverages: In and Out of Japan”

On November 3-5, 2013, an international workshop titled “Travelling Food and Beverages: In and Out of Japan” took place at the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, organized by Dr. Helena Grinshpun (Hebrew University).



The intense globalization of Japanese cuisine during the past three decades, which has continued despite the long stagnation in the national economy served as the background for this workshop. Along with manga, anime, fashion and other harbingers of “soft power,” Japanese food and beverages have been incorporated into world culinary culture, serving as cultural ambassadors and intermediaries of taste. Moreover, due to the development of transnational networks of food production, distribution, and consumption, the Japanese culinary milieu itself has undergone a major transformation. In order to comprehend the dynamics of globalization in general, and the role

Japan plays in it in particular, it is essential to determine how everyday commodities such as food and beverage “behave” in the state of intercultural contact.



The workshop brought together twenty five Israeli and international scholars and practitioners to explore political, economic, and cultural aspects of the globalization of Japanese cuisine and to discuss a variety of issues on how food and beverages have “travelled”—circulated, flowed, interacted and transformed—both within Japan and globally. The papers examined the movement of food and beverages through several interrelated themes: food as a culinary soft power, food safety and regulation, development of taste and culinary expertise, dynamics of food indigenization, food and nationalism, food and media, the transnational flow of knowledge and material culture, and warfare and food insecurity.



PAST EVENTS

A Summary of Japan-Related Academic Events in Israel

The workshop also hosted a special panel of practitioners working with Japanese food and beverages in Israel and Europe who explained how Japanese food and beverages are introduced and marketed abroad. This included two special sake workshops where participants both learned about and tasted various kinds of sake.



The workshop was supported by the Embassy of Japan in Israel and the Louis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies. A special thanks to Mr. Joël Fresco and Mr. Simon Hofstra for sponsoring the sake workshops.

The complete program is available at:

http://asia.huji.ac.il/files/84426c0d4623ddf04493bdd553778c19/Traveling%20food_program.pdf

Special Issue

“Japanese Studies in Israel as a Micro-Cosmos of Japanese Studies in Other Parts of the World”

A Special Issue based on the lectures delivered at the Israel-Japan Symposium (May 7-9, 2012, Hebrew University) was compiled and edited by Dr. Helena Grinshpun, Dr. Shalmit Bejarano, and Dr. Nissim Otmazgin. The papers are organized around three clusters: “Political Encounters” examines the historical and diplomatic dimensions of Japanese-Israeli relations since the late nineteenth century and discusses the value of comparing certain aspects of the political and international conduct of both countries; “Social Crossroads” analyzes important socio-cultural developments characterizing the relationship between Japan and Israel concerning collective memory, popular culture, media, and urban space; “Betwixt and Between” examines Japanese-Israeli connections through the lenses of literature, translation, and language, showcasing productive interactions within the Japanese and Israeli academic and cultural spheres.

To view the Special Issue visit:

<http://www.japan-studies.org/Special-Issue.html>

SPECIAL FEATURE

On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

Five Israeli scholars talk about the art and importance of translation, sharing their personal experiences and insights.

Dr. Doron B. Cohen

On Translating Japanese Literature



I always wanted to translate literature, but apart from some juvenile beginnings, it took me a very long time to get started. What finally gave me the necessary push

was reading Murakami Haruki's *Norwegian Wood* while studying for my MA in Japan. I knew immediately that this book would appeal to Hebrew readers and that it should be translated, and I thought I could probably do it. Still, it took several more years for me to pluck up the necessary courage and to find a publisher interested in the translation. At the time, 1999, Murakami was hardly known in Israel, and it was impossible to imagine the popularity his work would gain within just a few years, with fifteen of both his major and minor books already translated. I was fortunate enough to receive the author's generous assistance; he was helpful both in securing the rights for the translation and in solving some of my translating dilemmas, answering my questions by email and later in person. This translation experience was, therefore, a source of both anguish and pleasure, and

getting the job done finally gave me the confidence to go on to translate the work of other authors as well.

Murakami no longer needs an introduction and his books are a huge commercial success, but I believe it is the duty of academics who specialize in Japanese studies to promote the translation of classic and modern literature which would otherwise never get published. We can be seen as two-way ambassadors, able to introduce the best of each culture—both our own and the field of our specialization—to the public of the other. In the case of Japanese literature, a rich mine of stories, novels, poems, and essays await translation. It may be difficult to find a publisher for these gems we would like to bring to the Israeli public, but like elsewhere in the world, university presses should rise to the challenge.

The existing body of translations from Japanese into Hebrew is still quite limited, but in recent years the Israeli reading public seems to have demonstrated a growing interest in Japanese literature, due partially to the “Murakami syndrome” as well as to better awareness and access to what Japan has to offer. If more capable translators could be recruited and trained, they would assuredly find an appreciative audience for their hard work.

Dr. Doron B. Cohen has translated four books from Japanese to Hebrew and also translates from Arabic and English; his translation of *Norwegian Wood* won him Israel's Minister of Culture Prize for Translators (2001). He lives and teaches in Kyoto.

The full text of the paper, “Publishing of Japanese Literature in Hebrew: Tendencies and Episodes” presented by Dr. Cohen at the 5th CISMOR Conference on Jewish Studies at Dōshisha University in Kyoto, can be found at [following link](#).

SPECIAL FEATURE

On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

Erez Joskovich

Reflections on the translation of Nosaka Akiyuki's



I do not consider myself a translator. Though I had long been a student and enthusiast of the Japanese language, I had barely considered translating a book from Japanese to Hebrew. However, ever since my first encounter with Nosaka Akiyuki's *Sensō no Dōwa Shū* (*A Collection of War Tales for Children*) I felt as if this book had been written for me, for us; Israelis who have been long accustomed to seeing armed soldiers strolling the streets, who consider gas masks, rockets, and shelters a part of our daily routine. Indeed, Nosaka's stories bring to mind images of suffering, death, and distraction known all too well to anyone who was raised in the Middle East. Thus, I undertook the translation in the hope that perhaps one day my children, like Japanese children, could learn about the futility of war from stories alone.

Like any other translation, this work encompassed many difficulties stemming from linguistic and cultural differences. *Children's War Stories* was originally published in a serial format in the *Fujinkōron* magazine during the early 1970's. Although Nosaka uses the familiar format of children's tales, he compresses much detailed information into his stories, details such as poems, sweets, manga, etc., which were likely to have been familiar to the contemporary reader. One of the major difficulties of translating this work was how to bring this abundance of information to the Israeli reader without damaging the simple, at times

simplistic, style of the work. War-related terms such as blackouts, bombs, and various kinds of weapons are, unfortunately, well known to the Israeli reader and needed no further clarification. Another major source of difficulty was the way Nosaka describes the inner world of his hero as an inseparable part of the main storyline. While in Japanese this might sound natural, due to the obscurity of the sentence subject, in Hebrew this could cause misunderstanding and confusion. While, at times, a great source of frustration, working through these difficulties was a fascinating experience which taught me a lot about both Japanese and Hebrew.

Looking back on the project, I realize that it was harder than I had first anticipated. As anyone who has translated even a single sentence from Japanese to Hebrew knows, it requires a complete re-wording, sometimes even re-invention. The lack of translations from Japanese to Hebrew, especially when it comes to classical works, proves its cost-benefit ratio to be rather low. For the majority of translators, our work is more of a passion than an occupation. While some may argue that this situation is unfortunate, as my case clearly indicates, passion is often the strongest of all human motivations. I hope that the desire to share with others the fascinating world of Japanese literature will eventually gain momentum and that we will see many more translations from Japanese in the future.

Erez Joskovich is a scholar of Japanese Buddhism, currently teaching at Tel Aviv University. He has recently completed his PhD dissertation on the modern development of Zen as a practice for laypeople and has already published several articles on the subject. His research interest includes Zen, Japanese culture and religion.

SPECIAL FEATURE

On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

Eitan Bolokan

Learning (in) the Context of Translation



What does it take to “do justice” to a translated text? My experience has taught me to consider any translation as only an option—a literal proposal offered to the readers who, for their part, put their trust in the translator’s knowledge, experience, and

sense of judgment to provide the best possible rendering of the original text. This is why I feel that any translation should be carried out with the utmost respect for the author and the original text, while also applying the artistic presumption that a solid bridge can indeed be built between two different languages. It is this feeling of utmost humility, accompanied by a creative conviction, which nourishes the roots of the work. The translator should be extremely audacious, yet deeply respectful.

Translating from Japanese into Hebrew is, naturally, an extremely complex task. This complexity does not simply arise from the sheer grammatical and syntactical differences between the two languages, but mainly because of the diverse cultural, religious, and social components which make each language a mirror of the historical context in which it evolved. And indeed, this problem of hermeneutics, text, and context can only be effectively met if the translator is intimately acquainted with the subtle nuances of the given text.

Such challenges are particularly evident within Japanese religious literature, my chosen field of reference. To understand the poetic imagery of the fifteenth century monk Ikkyū, for example, a study of his historical and personal context is indispensable. The translator must, therefore, be well-versed in modern and classical Japanese, Sino-Japanese, as well as the unique Buddhist and Zen Buddhist vocabulary (*Bukkyō-yōgo, zengo*) used throughout Ikkyū’s writings. In many cases the original text is so obscure that the aide of commentaries (*kaishaku, chūshaku*) and of modern renderings of the classical text (*gendai-yaku*) are also essential, as these can shed additional light on the vocabulary choices made by Ikkyū in his poems. In this, as in many other examples, a faithful translation is not possible without a deep feeling of familiarity with the contexts, histories, and linguistic traditions surrounding the original text.

This is where the traditional role of academia remains as significant as ever. Such familiarity, after all, can only normally be achieved through having studied diverse courses on Japan’s history, religious history, and classical and modern literature. The same also holds true for modern texts. While translating medieval Zen Buddhist scripture is completely different from translating the subtle language of twentieth century Japanese authors such as Kawabata Yasunari, this does not mean that modern language translators would not benefit from immersing themselves in the author’s own landscape of artistic work and expression. Only then can they begin to build solid bridges between these very different languages and cultures.

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On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

Translation is but an option, yet there is little doubt that when trying to articulate foreign ideas and feelings in a coherent manner, a deeper exploration of the original meaning would serve the translator well. The role of academia in the professional and practical education of future translators lies in providing a foundation for this thorough exploration of original meanings.

Eitan Bolokan is a PhD candidate at Tel Aviv University and teaches Buddhist philosophy in the Department of East Asian Studies. His doctoral research, begun at Komazawa University in Tokyo, deals with the manifold aspects of nonduality in the thought and writings of Eihei Dōgen. He has published several translations of classical and modern Japanese poetry, including the first Hebrew anthology of poems by the Zen monks Dōgen and Ryōkan entitled *Within the Thin Snow*.

Dr. Lena Baibikov

Translation and Selection of Texts: Japanese Literature Translated into Russian



Within the framework of the publishing industry, the freedom to choose what to translate is rarely given to a literary translator. The task of text selection is usually done by a publisher, and Russian translations of Japanese literature are no exception.

I began my path as a literary translator as a fourth year undergraduate student with a translation of Yoshimoto Banana's *Tokage (Lizard)*. I went on to translate Suzuki Koji's *Ring* and *Spiral*, followed by a full-length novel by Murakami Ryū and two volumes of *Amrita* by Yoshimoto.

As an undergraduate student, I enjoyed translating such popular authors, but once I moved to Japan and began working on my doctoral thesis, which focused on Japanese translations of Russian literature, I realized that this was not what I wanted to be doing.

I believe that a translator's task—namely, the transferring of a text from one language to another—is ideally a multilayered enterprise in which the translator acts simultaneously as a reader, editor, researcher, and, finally, as a *Kulturträger* who carefully selects and introduces into the target culture some relevant (in the translator's opinion) elements of the source culture. It took me about a decade to fulfill my dream to become a translator who actively engages in the process of text selection.

Let me share a brief outline of the special Japanese issue of *Foreign Literature* (also known as *20th-21st Century Japanese Literature Mini-Anthology*)—a volume I edited and published last year in Moscow with the support of the Japan Foundation. This outline tells a lot about my rationale for the selection of texts.

Entitled *World in a Raindrop*, the Japanese issue had three main objectives. The first was to introduce to readers the wider range of literary genres and authors existing in modern Japanese literature. For this purpose, “unfamiliar” examples were chosen, with the exception of a story by Murakami Ryū which was included as an illustration of the ideological and stylistic shifts in the recent writings of the familiar author. The second objective was to emphasize literary continuity.

In order to achieve these objectives, we chose to present “unfamiliar” authors from different generations who are formally united by hierarchical links. Thus, the authors of

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On the Translation of Japanese Literature in Israel

the younger generation are winners of literary prizes named after the writers of the older generation. For example, we introduced Yasutaka Tsutsui who was awarded the Izumi Kyōka Literary Prize, Murakami Ryū, the winner of the Hirabayashi Taiko Literary Prize, and Yoriko Shōno who received the Itō Sei Prize.

The third objective was to help readers to reconstruct, or at least to get a taste of, the cultural context of twentieth and twenty-first century Japan. Consequently, we included several articles and essays that serve as a cultural commentary, for example, essays on the hybridity of Japanese culture and on literary prizes in Japan. We also introduced some non-fiction writings of Hyakken Uchida, a remarkable author of the mid-twentieth century, forgotten but then rediscovered in the early twenty-first century. Finally, we presented the concept of tradition and innovation in modern Japanese poetry by focusing, on the one hand, on the classics of modern poetry, and on the other, “linked verses” co-created in the microblogging service Twitter by eighty Japanese speaking users.

Dr. Elena (Lena) Baibikov is a translator of Japanese modern literature and an independent scholar in the field of translation studies. She is the author of many scholarly and journalistic articles published by academic journals and the mass media in the US, Netherlands, Russia, and Japan. In 2012 she served as the compiling editor and translator of the special Japanese issue of *Foreign Literature*, a Russian monthly literary journal dedicated to translated world literature. She lives and works in Jerusalem.

Dr. Shunit Shahal-Porat



Writing at length about Japanese translations and translating from Japanese seems to me a contradiction in terms. The first lesson I learnt from translating is that every syllable counts, especially those that are left untranslated. The

second lesson is that I cannot explain my choices and preferences very well; I am aware of what I am doing but am not so analytical. I see every sentence which is reborn in Hebrew as a small miracle for which I thank my luck, hoping to make it to the end without either text (Japanese or Hebrew) suffering too much damage. In this respect, I'm a total pagan. I treat a literary text as a living organism. I don't want to hurt it.

This is the reason why I always translate texts that I like, and I like two kinds of writers: the subtle and refined writers whose presence is almost transparent, like Kawabata, and the writers who have an extravagant and well-felt personality like Banana or Mishima.

In the first case, I know that I have to be the shadow of a shadow, so I do my best not to be noticed. In the second case, I have to leave a large space for the writer's personality. After all, it is his or her show.

A good way to hide myself is to imitate the musicality of the original text, so that if you read the text aloud, it will sound more or less the same both in Japanese and in Hebrew. This is not just because literature started from Man's attempt to cast a spell over God and humankind. It

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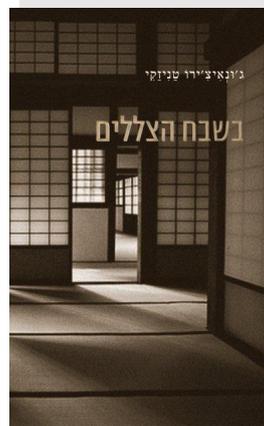
is also a good way to prevent mannerism in translation: you may stay the same person, with the same known abilities, but you dance to somebody else's tune. And if you listen carefully to the music of the text, the readers will do the same. They will be attentive to the heartbeat of the text.

In my opinion, translators in the West seem to bring too much ego to bear. Some even claim to "aid the writer" or "contribute to the text." I have no such aspirations. I see myself as a humble servant who wishes to be skillful in order to serve better. Words come from afar, crossing long bridges to reach us. We are not the bridge and nor did we build the bridge or create the words. We are there to give a helping hand.

One thing is very clear to me and that is the challenge of translating a text in which almost every word calls out for a footnote that embraces the whole of Japanese culture, without using too many footnotes which might alienate the reader who just wants to read a good story.

Dr. Shunit Shahal-Porat has a wide range of occupations and vocations in life. She is a scholar of Japanese literature, a translator from Japanese, the mother of an exceptional boy with communication difficulties, and a teacher for people with learning disabilities. Among her translations are works by Kawabata Yasunari and Ōe Kenzaburō.

Selected Translations from Japanese to Hebrew



Tanizaki Junichirō, *In'ei Raisen* (*In Praise of Shadows*). Trans. Doron B. Cohen



Kawabata Yasunari, *Mizūmi* (*The Lake*). Trans. Shunit Shahal-Porat



Nosaka Akiyuki, *Sensō Dōwa Shū* (*A Collection of War Tales for Children*). Trans. Erez Joskovich



Within Thin Snow: Zen Poetry of Dōgen and Ryōkan. Trans. Eitan Bolokan



Tawara Machi, *Sarada Kinenbi* (*Salad Anniversary*). Trans. Jacob Raz



Enchi Fumiko, *Onna men* (*Masks of Women*). Trans. Michal (Miki) Daliot-Bul

IAJS Grads Workshop

IAJS Grads is a network of graduate and research students supported by IAJS. Their activities are initiated by students for students, with the supervision and support of leading scholars in the field of Japanese studies in Israel.

The mission of IAJS Grads is to promote research domains that are not addressed by existing academic frameworks. IAJS Grads offers a forum for debating research topics, assisting in locating bibliographical sources, advancing academic connections, providing information on studying abroad, and more.

The 2nd Methodology Workshop

The biannual IAJS methodology workshops are forums for networking and the exchange of ideas among graduate and research students, providing, in addition, an opportunity to interact with and receive feedback from leading scholars.

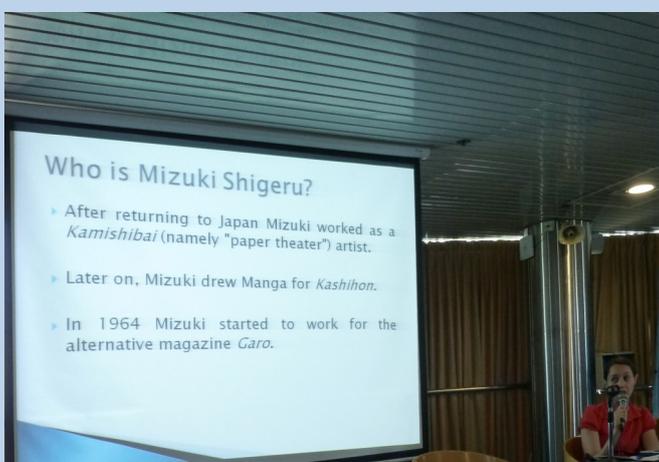
The 2nd IAJS Grads methodology workshop was held at Haifa University on June 6, 2013. The first part of the workshop was devoted to student presentations and discussion; in the second part, Professor Christopher Pokarier of Waseda University shared his experience and gave useful tips on how to give an effective academic presentation to an international audience.



Discussion following Ms. Nama Eisenstein's presentation

Two MA students at different stages of their research presented their papers in English and received feedback with a special focus on the style and mode of their presentation. Ms. Smadar Katan (Haifa University) presented a paper titled "From Autobiography to Popular Culture: Remembering the War in Contemporary Japan through Mizuki Shigeru's Eyes," while Ms. Naama Eisenstein (Tel Aviv University) presented "Representing Place: Nachi Waterfall in Pre-Modern Japanese Painting."

The workshop was held in English and was broadcasted via Skype, allowing the participation of fellow students currently conducting their research abroad.



Ms. Smadar Katan presenting her paper

IAJS GRADS

The discussion following each presentation provided a unique opportunity for the students to hear comments and suggestions from their peers, as well as from established scholars about their research. This lively conversation, exchange of opinions, and brainstorming was beneficial not only for the presenting students but for all participating students at different stages of their research.



Prof. Christopher Pokarier, Waseda University

Next Workshop

The next Grads workshop will take place at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on January 19, 2014. This workshop will focus on the subject of planning and executing field research in Japan.

IAJS Grads Journal

IAJS Grads have launched an international academic journal, *Innovative Research in Japanese Studies*, which is dedicated to articles by research students in the field of Japanese studies.

The journal aims to become a pioneering international journal, showcasing outstanding papers on Japan written by graduate students. It is one of the few existing publications of its kind. The journal accepts original articles

from all academic disciplines pertaining to Japan, including but not limited to politics, international relations, economics, history, literature, cultural studies, anthropology, and the arts. Papers submitted to *Innovative Research in Japanese Studies*



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NEW SCHOLAR IN FOCUS

Danny Orbach

PhD Candidate Harvard University

As part of IAJS's commitment to promoting new scholarship, in each issue we will introduce an emerging scholar. In this issue, we interview Danny Orbach whose research focuses on illegal, radical political violence in the Japanese army from 1858 to 1930.

What inspired your interest in Japan?

I guess it is almost clichéd to say that I was interested in Japan from a very young age, but, in my case, this is indeed true. Two things had brought me to the subject as a school boy: historical novels and Zen Buddhism. By middle school, I was already fascinated by *Shogun* and the other historical novels of James Clavell. It did not matter to me at that time (nor even at the present time) that the books are not historically accurate, because they enlivened the world of Japan for me like nothing else could. The ups and downs of Blackthorn among the samurai in early seventeenth century Japan brought the subject alive for me like no scholarly article could do—it made pre-modern Japan a living reality. Later, in high school, I was very interested both in karate and Zen Buddhism and practiced both arts in traditional dōjōs. In the end, however, I moved to the military side of the spectrum: the history of the military disobedience, rebellions, and political assassinations of modern Japan.

Can you tell us about your academic studies?

As usual with me, the path to my current dissertation research was very winding and somewhat unusual; I tend to wander off and get interested in many things beyond the normal academic scope.



At Tel Aviv University, I was engaged in historical research, writing a paper about the German resistance to Hitler, namely, the military underground who tried to assassinate the Nazi dictator twelve times from 1938 to 1944. This study took about twelve years, and I finally produced a book about the subject. This brought me into the world of political assassinations and clandestine networks of conspiracy which I have studied over the years in such varied cultural settings as Japan, China, Germany, and Egypt.

After finishing my studies in Tel Aviv, I moved to Japan with a *Monbukagakushō* (Japan's Ministry of Education and Culture) scholarship and lived for two years in Tokyo. In Japan I combined my Japanese and German interests and engaged in some research on the image of Japan in Nazi Germany. In addition, I used my time to travel thoroughly throughout Japan, China, and other Asian countries, and I must say that no book or map quiz have taught me as much about the geography of a country as travelling there did. My travelling during these two years was "research" for me, no more or less than the formal, library-focused studies I did in Tokyo.

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Toward the end of my stay in Japan, I was admitted to Harvard University where I am now working on my dissertation on the history of rebellion and disobedience in the modern Japanese army.

Can you explain more about your research?

The title of my prospective dissertation is the “Culture of Disobedience: Rebellion and Disobedience in the Japanese Officer Corps, 1858-1930,” and it focuses on the entanglement of loyalties that troubled officers in that period. Why did many young Japanese officers resort time and again to means of direct action, political violence, and sheer disobedience to their superiors? How can one explain acts of disobedience such as the unauthorized Taiwan expedition (1874), the Saga and Satsuma Rebellions (1874 and 1877, respectively) the assassination of Queen Min (1895), the assassination of Zhang Zuolin (1928), and the waves of assassinations of prime ministers, in quick succession from 1930 to 1936? These questions are especially intriguing due to the common perception of the Imperial Japanese Army, by both contemporary and later observers, as a bastion of blind obedience to authority.

Instead of dwelling on the better known assassinations and rebellions of the 1930s, my research focuses on the earlier, lesser known periods, from 1858 to 1930, in which the “culture of disobedience” of the Japanese Imperial Army developed and took shape. The first two chapters begin with the development of conspiratorial networks in the fencing schools of the late Edo Period through the development of samurai networks of rebels and assassins in the years prior to the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The rest

of the study follows the migration of these conspiratorial patterns into modern Japanese history and their development up to the threshold of the violent decade of the 1930s. In my dissertation I hope to add a unique point of view to the field of Japanese military studies. Good scholarly literature on the Imperial Japanese Army has been written both in Japanese and other languages, most notably English and German. Nevertheless, though many of these studies do cover some major manifestations of disobedience, a comprehensive history of rebellion and disobedience in the Japanese Officer Corps has yet to be written. My purpose is not to survey the history of the Japanese army nor to merely retell the stories of specific conspiracies but to reconstruct the social, cultural, and intellectual contexts in which they made sense. What perceptions of legitimate authority did rebellious Japanese officers hold in the Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa periods? How did they justify their deeds to themselves and to others? What intellectual, cultural, and social constructs permitted these officers to rebel in the name of the Emperor while practically ignoring his will? Why did these rebellions evolve so differently from their counterparts in other countries, such as China and Germany?

Specifically, I examine several factors which helped create the “culture of disobedience” that prevailed in the Japanese Officer Corps during the 1930s. My discussion focuses on the fatal loopholes in the Japanese polity and especially in the Meiji Constitution which painted political legitimacy in highly ambiguous colors. As part of this research, I follow the development of two central keywords for active disobedience in the army from the 1870s to the 1930s: *tosui ken* (the independence of military command under the emperor) and *dokusan senkō* (operational freedom).

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Central to my argument is the examination of the interaction between formal-hierarchical (vertical) and voluntary-conspiratorial (horizontal) military networks as the basis for military rebellion, as well as the role of political optimism in picking a revolutionary strategy. In addition, I inquire into the subtle relationship between military and non-military actors, such as civilian political ruffians (*sōshi*) and nationalist secret societies, as well as into the failure of the Japanese justice system to fight these illicit connections effectively.

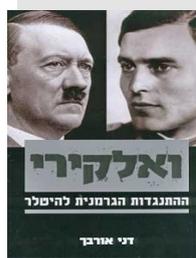
Methodologically, my dissertation is based on an integrated empirical-theoretical approach. I examine primary source material in multiple languages (Japanese, English, Russian, German, and Chinese) in order to better illuminate the phenomena described above. However, in order to avoid a study that is merely descriptive, I use a variety of theoretical tools taken from the fields of military history, criminal law, social network analysis, and social psychology. The result should be a new history of military disobedience in Japan with theoretical insights which exceed the boundaries of the subject matter.

What are your plans for the future?

My guiding principle is to focus on radical circumstances. In the future, I hope to continue my study of rebellion and disobedience in Japan while expanding it to other countries for a comparative perspective. I hope to cross the narrow boundaries of regional studies in order to construct comparative models which will enhance our understanding of the way in which human beings operate in difficult conditions, in the military, and elsewhere. I may, of course, go on to study other subjects which have already caught

my interest, some of which I have already written about: messianic mass rebellions in China, irregular warfare in feudal Japan, and the international history of the concept of “illegal orders.” Many scholars are interested in the mundane and the everyday, I, on the other hand, am interested in the unusual and the extreme.

Danny Orbach is a PhD candidate in the Department of History, Harvard University. To date he has published a book titled *Valkyrie: Ha-Hitnagdut ha-Germanit le-Hitler* (*Valkyrie: German Resistance to Hitler*) and fifteen articles on a range of historical topics. He also shares his ideas in his blog “The Owl,” which has both [Hebrew](#) and [English](#) versions.



Valkyrie: Ha-Hitnagdut ha-Germanit le-Hitler (*Valkyrie: German Resistance to Hitler*), Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronot Press, 2009