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Alisa Freedman

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# Introduction to the Special Issue in Honor of Kyoko Selden

Alisa Freedman

This special issue offers examples of Kyoko Selden's literary translations and writings that span Japanese history and literary genres. These poems, stories, novellas, essays, plays, memoirs, and biographies—drawn from her more than twenty books and fifty short works—exemplify Kyoko's belief in the humanizing power of literature and art, concern for the human toll of historical events, and gentle humor. They reveal new dimensions of established authors while ensuring that marginalized voices are heard. The selections highlight Kyoko's emphasis on women writers and her interlocking themes: war and peace, classical culture, Ainu traditions, Okinawan literature, atomic cataclysm, music, education, and childhood, among others. We have prioritized texts that have not been published and those that were first circulated in private venues; we have completed translations that Kyoko did not have a chance to finish before her untimely passing in January 2013. Interspersed are Kyoko's photographs, artworks, and original poems, providing glimpses of her rich personal life and artistic range and sensibility.<sup>1</sup>

Kyoko Selden—educator, translator, editor, calligrapher, painter, and poet, among other talents—was born in Tokyo in 1936; her father Iriye Keishirō was a journalist and later professor of international law. As detailed in her memoir, Kyoko experienced war as a child, first at her family's home in Tokyo and then in the Nagano countryside with her brother Akira and other schoolmates who were relocated to safety from bombings. She attended secondary school in Tokyo and graduated with a degree in English from the University of Tokyo in 1959. With the help of a Fulbright Fellowship, she studied English literature at Yale University, becoming one of the first Japanese people to travel abroad in the postwar period, before passports became more easily available in the 1960s. Kyoko earned a doctorate in English literature in 1965 and in subsequent decades demonstrated her ability to translate into both Japanese and English. At Yale, she met

Mark Selden, whom she married in 1963; for fifty years, Kyoko and Mark partnered in projects combining social activism, literature, art, and translation. She also became friends with Mizuta Noriko (whose preface is included here), with whom she prepared anthologies of Japanese women writers. Kyoko taught at Dean Junior College, National Taiwan Normal University, Tsuda College, and Washington University before Cornell University, where she taught modern and classical Japanese language and literature as a lecturer and later senior lecturer. Kyoko helped foster generations of scholars in Japanese literature, history, and the social sciences through collaborative projects, as evidenced by the many joint translations in this issue, and by designing teaching materials, such as her book series *Annotated Literary Gems* (Cornell East Asia Series, 2006 and 2007 with additional volumes in progress). It is no exaggeration to say that Kyoko helped shape the American canon of Japanese literature and the field of translation studies. The Kyoko Selden Memorial Translation Prize in Japanese Literature, Thought, and Society was established in 2013. (See announcement included in this special issue.) As Kyoko's Cornell colleague Brett de Bary elaborates in her preface, "Kyoko appears to be one of those people whose outlines emerge so overwhelmingly at the moment of death. How quietly powerful and prolific she was!"

This issue opens with Kyoko's work on classical warrior tales and poetry. In the 1980s, Joan Piggott (Gordon L. MacDonald Chair in History, University of Southern California) and Kyoko began translating and annotating sections of the fourteenth-century *Taiheiki: The Chronicle of Great Peace*, Chapters 13 through 19 (out of forty), picking up where Helen Craig McCullough's seminal *The Taiheiki: The Chronicle of Medieval Japan* (first published by Tuttle in 1979) left off.<sup>2</sup> These initially provided materials for their interdisciplinary *Taiheiki* course, first taught at Cornell University in 1992 and still offered at the University of Southern California today. Excerpts from Chapters 13 and 14, published for the first time here, dramatize events of 1335 and exemplify the gory battles, alluring subplots, cultural allusions, and character sketches that comprise the *Taiheiki*. They are paired with *renga* (linked verse) by the *basara* (flamboyant) warrior Sasaki Dōyo (1295?-1373) selected from the *Tsukubashū* (Tsukuba Anthology, 1356-57), the first of two official medieval *renga* collections, and the *Hinin Taiheiki*, or *The Paupers' Chronicle of Peace* (co-translation with Joshua Young). One of many Edo-period (1600-1868) *Taiheiki* parodies, the *Hinin Taiheiki* is unique in its inclusion of actual poverty, unrest, and famine. In this mock-heroic tale based on historical events of 1681, Osaka beggars attempt to drive famine refugees from the countryside out of the urban areas they have deemed their own territories.

The Takarazuka *Concise Madame Butterfly* (Shukusatsu Chōchō-san) by Tsubouchi Shikō (1887-1986) exemplifies Kyoko's attention to historical adaptations and the intersection of literature and other media. This charming Japanese version of the 1903 Giacomo Puccini opera *Madame Butterfly*, told from the perspective of the female protagonist, was performed by the Takarazuka all-female revue in August 1931. It is part

of Kyoko's project with Arthur Groos (Avalon Foundation Professor of the Humanities, Cornell University) on the history of Italian opera in Japan.

A goal of Kyoko and Mark's work has been to ensure that the trauma of war, particularly the perspective of civilian victims, never be forgotten. This is evident in their edited book *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (M.E. Sharpe, 1989) and numerous articles and literature for the open-access electronic *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* that provided a home for many of Kyoko's translations. Reprinted here are *Masks of Whatchamacallit: A Nagasaki Tale* (Nanjamonja no men, 1976), an evocative story of women's emotional and physical experience of radiation sickness by Hayashi Kyōko (1930-), the outstanding Nagasaki chronicler of the bomb and its legacies, and haiku by Mitsuhashi Toshio (1920-2001) about war memory and atomic bombings, among other topics. Mitsuhashi was a member of the Shinkō Haiku (Newly Rising Haiku) movement that the Japanese government in the 1940s deemed a threat to "national polity" (*kokutai*) and silenced. The themes of these texts are further expounded in Kyoko's vivid memoir of childhood during war in Tokyo and Nagano, with an afterword written by her brother Akira.

Also represented in this issue are Kyoko's interest in Ainu oral traditions and contemporary Okinawan stories that creatively use language to provide deeper understanding of these embattled cultures and their past and present on the peripheries of the Japanese empire. Included are two examples of Ainu *kamuy yukar*, epic songs of gods and demigods, one of three main genres of Ainu literature, in which a human chanter impersonates a deity. "The Song the Owl God Himself Sang 'Silver Droplets Fall Fall All Around'" (Kamuichikap kamui yaieyukar, 'Shirokanipe ranran pishkan') was translated from Ainu into Japanese by Chiri Yukie (1903-22) and published in 1923 by Kyōdo Kenkyūsha, a press presided over by the ethnologist Yanagita Kunio. "The Goddess of the Wind and Okikurmi" (Ainu no min'wa: kaze no kami to Okikurmi) was retold in modern Japanese by Kayano Shigeru (1926-2006) and published as a children's book with illustrations by Saitō Hiroyuki in 1999. Both *kamuy yukar* sing of gods who protect and teach humans; they demonstrate how Chiri and Kayano worked to preserve Ainu culture and language and to make that literature accessible.

Two Okinawan stories draw on themes of childhood and aging to comment on social and political issues. Uehara Noboru's (1947-) short story "Our Gang Age, 1970" (1970-nen gyangu eiji, 1982) is told from the perspective of children who, like the author himself, grew up near U.S. military bases where the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement protected American servicemen from prosecution by the Okinawan police. Sakiyama Tami's (1954-) *Swaying, Swinging* (Yuratiku yuritiku, 2003) portrays an imaginary, legend-rich island, all of whose residents are older than eighty. In this novella, comprised of stories within stories, Sakiyama embeds multiple Okinawan languages in her prose to depict the lives of islanders in connection with the spirit of the sea that surrounds them and voices from the past.

Excerpts from three longer works represent Kyoko's explorations in art history and aesthetics. First, Kyoko translated the extensive catalogue on *Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture, 1185-1868*, held at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. in 1988 and 1989, the first exhibit anywhere, including Japan, to present the artistic legacy of *daimyō* (regional lords) from the rise of warrior rulers in the twelfth century to the dissolution of the feudal system in 1868. Second, in his "Ukiyo-e Landscapes and Edo Scenic Places" (*Ukiyo-e no sansuiga to Edo meisho*, 1914), author Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) offers a wealth of information about ukiyo-e artists, schools, and movements. This lyrical essay, which appeared in the December 2012 issue of the *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* (vol. XIV), epitomizes many of the themes of Kafū's literature and his faith in the ability of artists to capture the tenor of their times and the power of art to shape the ways people view urban daily life. Third, Cho Kyo (Professor, Meiji University) presents a cultural history of female beauty in China and Japan in his *The Search for the Beautiful Woman: A Cultural History of Japanese and Chinese Beauty* (*Bijō towa nanika: Nitchū bijin no bunkashi*, 2001). Kyoko's complete translation of this book, an excerpt of which is included here, was published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2012.

For over thirty years, Kyoko was involved in the Talent Education (*Sainō kyōiku*) movement, as a parent of three children learning to play violin and cello, and as a translator of major works of the Suzuki Method, which became popular in postwar Japan and then, from the early 1960s, spread throughout the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world. Created by violinist Suzuki Shin'ichi (1898-1998), whose biography *Nurtured by Love* (*Ai ni ikiru*, 1966) is excerpted here, the Suzuki Method teaches children classical music while fostering their motor skills, concentration, and character. *Nurtured by Love*, one of Kyoko's many co-translations with her daughter Lili Selden, displays her interest in biography as well as music and childhood education.

Among Kyoko's last translation projects was *Wandering in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* (*Dainana kankai hōkō*, 1931) the best-known novel of author Osaki Midori (1896-1974). This fragmented story, which I co-translated, is replete with inventive use of language, heightened sensory perceptions, parodies of psychology, and cinematic narrative styles. It represents the culmination of Osaki's modernism and her creation of female protagonists, who like the author, were attempting to make lives for themselves in Tokyo. This story of four youths—a woman, her brothers, and childhood sweetheart who live together, passionately pursue their studies, and are obsessed with romantic love—was Osaki's final publication before she retired to her home in the remote Tottori countryside. As exemplified by *Wandering in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, Osaki's literature is marked by an anti-realist, anti-worldly imagination, which conjures a fantastic realm beyond the everyday. Osaki displayed a writer's individuality within a social milieu that restricted the expressive practice of women. The rediscovery of *Wandering in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* by literary critics in the 1960s led to a reevaluation of Osaki's work and her influence on female authors.

This special issue, first proposed by Mizuta Noriko, was made possible with the help of many people with whom Kyoko collaborated. We, the guest editors, are indebted to Lili Selden and Hiroaki Sato for their literary, translational, and editorial expertise throughout the entire process of preparing Kyoko’s translations for publication. Their contributions are particularly notable in the translations of the *Hinin Taiheiki*, *renga* by Dōyo, haiku by Mitsuhashi, and the introductions to these selections. Joan Piggott was generous with her knowledge of the *Taiheiki* and *renga*, among other areas. Miya Elise Mizuta (a superb managing editor), Mizuta Noriko, and members of the editorial staff of the *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*—Professor Haga Kōichi (Assistant Editor), Natta Phisphumvidhi (Production Editor), Tajima Miho (Editorial Assistant), and Nara Hiroe—went to great lengths to obtain the rights to translate and publish texts and facilitated all aspects of publication. We also appreciate support from the Jōsai International Center for the Promotion of Art and Science. Mizuta Noriko, Arthur Groos, Brett de Bary, and Akira Iriye contributed original writings. I first met Kyoko while I was a Mellon Fellow at Cornell University. One day Kyoko stopped by my office with a photocopy of Ogawa Yōko’s short story “Transit” (Toranjitto, 1996), which she thought I would enjoy. I worked with Kyoko translating a range of fictional works for nearly a decade, and I treasure the many discussions about literature and nuance we had in sidebar comments on drafts and in emails. I have learned a great deal from Mark and Kyoko about the role of the scholar in the world. A forthcoming tie-in special issue of the *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* will make available a number of Kyoko’s translations, including many from this issue of the *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, and other works.

(Guest Editor: Alisa Freedman, with Mark Selden)

Notes

1.	2.	
The published texts included here have been revised and edited for this special issue.	In this special issue, some translators and authors have chosen to transcribe Chinese words in Wade-Giles, while	others have used Pinyin. We have maintained the use of both romanization systems as the translators have suggested.