

## **Translation and Publishing of Japanese Literature in Hebrew: Tendencies and Episodes**

**Doron B. Cohen**

Ten years ago, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Israel, I had the honor of reading a paper at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, with a title somewhat similar to the one I have the honor of reading here today, on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Preparing my paper this year, I found that some of the tendencies I was speaking about a decade ago have been strengthened, and some have remained unchanged. At the time I was able to locate merely 49 books that constituted the body of Japanese literature translated into Hebrew; during the past decade 34 more books have been added to that body (see Table 1).<sup>1)</sup> Compared with the number of books translated into Hebrew from English, French, German, Russian and a few other languages, 83 books translated over a period of more than 60 years is still a marginal number, but there is no doubt that readers and publishers in Israel manifest a growing interest in Japanese literature.<sup>2)</sup> In my paper today I wish to present both the anecdotal and the principle; I will look into some specific cases, will point out some general tendencies, and along the way try to solve some minor literary puzzles.

Taking another look at Table 1, it is apparent that until the 1980's the number of translated books was extremely small, indicating a lack of interest among publishers of Hebrew books, first in Europe or in Mandatory Palestine and later in the State of Israel. Another reason was the lack of translators or indeed of anyone familiar with Japanese culture, although once the publishers wished to translate a certain book of which they had become aware this would not have been a hindrance, since they could rely on translators from a second language, usually English and sometimes German. This situation began to change in the 1980's, because by then there were several Israeli students who had been to Japan on scholarship, and, on becoming competent in the Japanese language and culture, were able to suggest and initiate the translation of certain books. This tendency increased in the following decades, and contributed to the constant growth in the number of translations, together with a greater interest demonstrated on the part of publishers and readers. Unfortunately, for commercial reasons the practice of translating from a second language has still not disappeared, as can be seen in Table 2. Only a little more than half of the books translated into Hebrew so far have been translated directly from Japanese.

## **I. The Earliest Translation**

As can also be seen in Table 2, the very first book, and the only one to appear in Hebrew before the establishment of the State of Israel, was translated from Japanese, more-or-less directly, as it turns out. The book is *Mukashi Banashi: Legends from Times of Old*, which was published in Jerusalem in 1944.<sup>3)</sup> The translator was Immanuel Olsvanger (1888–1962), who was born in Poland, studied in Germany and Switzerland, and was a noted folklorist and Zionist activist. He settled in Jerusalem in 1933, and translated world classics from several languages, including the *Bhagavad Gita* from Sanskrit, Dante's *La divina commedia* from Italian, Goethe's poetry from German and several books from Spanish.

Olsvanger was reportedly at home in 18 languages including Esperanto, of which he was a devoted promoter, believing its use would lead to world peace, but one of the most famous anecdotes concerning him has to do with silence, rather than language. He was friends with another seminal figure, the Hebrew poet Avraham Ben-Yitzhak (1883–1950), who is admired by many Hebrew readers to this day although he published no more than 12 poems in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The two friends used to meet in Café Hermon in Rehavia, the Jerusalem neighborhood populated mainly by Jews of German origin. They would sit in silence on either side of the table until one time Olsvanger—or so the famous anecdote goes—broke the silence saying: “We have been profoundly silent on one problem. Let's now be silent on a different problem.” I believe that Japanese Zen masters would have understood and appreciated these two Polish-German-Israeli-Jewish men of letters.

The book *Mukashi Banashi* contains 30 short legends, and the note on the title page indicates that they were translated from Japanese. However, to what degree was Olsvanger proficient in the language? With honesty and modesty he wrote in his preface to the book: “My friends, this book of mine is now in front of you, and if you do me the honor of reading it, do not consider me an expert in the Japanese language. I cannot even say that I know it, but a basic knowledge of its grammar is sufficient for translating easy stories written in the spoken language”.<sup>4)</sup> He indicates that he used German books that had some of the stories written in *rōmaji* (Latin alphabet) and some in *katakana* (Japanese syllabary). Still, considering his high standards, it is possible that Olsvanger's Japanese proficiency was better than he was willing to admit. It is particularly interesting to note that the book was published in 1944, at the height of the Second World War, in which Japan was a close ally of Nazi Germany. This fact did not deter Olsvanger from translating these stories, nor his publisher, Achiasaf, from publishing them. Since not a word about it is said in the preface, I can

only speculate that they must have considered the stories part of the shared human heritage that transcends variable political realities.

## II. The Intriguing Case of Tasaki Hanama

The following decade, the first after the establishment of the state, saw the publication of four books: a second volume of legends (by a different translator), a collection of short stories (in a series of volumes from world literature), a collection of traditional poems and a contemporary novel. However, apart from these four volumes, there was also another novel published in 1958, which ten years ago puzzled me greatly. The book's title in Hebrew was *Hageisha* (The Geisha), and the author was Tasaki Hanama<sup>5</sup>); it was originally published in Boston in 1952 under the title *The Mountains Remain*.<sup>6</sup> Earlier, in 1950, another novel by the same author was published in Boston under the title *Long the Imperial Way*,<sup>7</sup> to which the publisher added the following note: "This book is based on the author's experiences in the Japanese Imperial Army during the three years he served in China as a private. It is not a translation, and is published just as he wrote it." How could a Japanese soldier write a novel in clear and idiomatic English? The fact that the name "Hanama Tasaki" does not appear in any encyclopedia, online or off, or in any textbook or lexicon dedicated to Japanese literature, led me to believe it must be a pseudonym of an American author. But how could such an author be so familiar with the life of Japanese soldiers fighting in China? Recently I was able to solve this puzzle and realized that I had overlooked an obvious explanation: the author was a *nisei*, i.e. a second generation Japanese born in America. Tasaki was born in 1913 to Japanese parents in Hawaii where he grew up. He studied at Oberlin College in Ohio, and went to Japan in 1936, where he was conscripted and served for three years in the Japanese army in China. On returning to Japan he became a journalist, but was again conscripted during the Pacific War. All the above information comes from the blurb of his first novel, as I have still been unable to obtain information about him from any other source.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the two novels which he published after the war, Tasaki's name also appears in a book published during the war (1942), in this case as a translator. He translated into English a short book by the famous journalist and nationalist thinker Tokutomi Sohō (1863–1957), *The Imperial Rescript: Declaring War on United States and British Empire*, in which Tokutomi explains and defends Japan's policy in launching the Pacific War (called here "The Greater East Asia War").<sup>9</sup> It seems that in spite of his American birth and upbringing, once in Japan Tasaki had no qualms in adopting the nationalistic spirit which was flaunted against the country of his birth, although his two novels,

published in English after the war, reflect a different spirit altogether. Both novels are interesting, although somewhat journalistic in nature, with a great amount of details creating tangible reality. *Long the Imperial Way* depicts the life of a Japanese infantry company, fighting its way through rural China in the late 1930's. Most of the soldiers are conscripted peasants, whose only dream is to return home to their village, and who among themselves often criticize the army and the official nationalistic dogma. The brutal reality is depicted in true colors, including the burning of a Chinese village, the falling of comrades, brothels in which Japanese women must serve 30 to 40 customers per day, and so on. The novel ends with the return of the main protagonist to Japan, where his thoughts are filled with alienation and contempt for the "top brass" and officials back home.<sup>10</sup> *The Mountains Remain*—or "The Geisha" as it is called in the Hebrew translation—depicts the harsh realities of post-war Japan, including shortages, the black market, profiteering, criminal gangs and racism against minorities (in particular Koreans, who are not mentioned by name, perhaps for reasons of censorship). The story of the geisha Ko-ume, who commits suicide after being rejected by her lover in favor of a more respectable and wealthy bride, is only one of the sub-plots of the novel, which ends on an optimistic note with Ko-ume's brother and his wife expecting their first child and experiencing spiritual revival, having become ardent Christians. Indeed, Christian revival was another reality of the post-war years, albeit a short-lived one. However, unlike the first novel, which was written in hindsight after the defeat and must have been influenced by it in its attitudes, the second novel depicts the realities of the time in which it was written.

Tasaki is not mentioned anywhere in the annals of Japanese literature presumably because he wrote in English, although he was a Japanese man writing in Japan, and *Long the Imperial Way* appeared also in the author's own Japanese translation. To the publishers in Israel who published his second novel this would have made no difference, as the book was translated from English anyhow, but since it was not written in Japanese I did not include it in my tables. Still, although it may have been a transgression from our topic, I felt that the fascinating story of this apparently forgotten author should be told here, albeit briefly.

### **III. The Role of Moshe Sharett**

It is interesting to note that the blurb of *Long the Imperial Way* opens with the following statement: "Just as *All Quiet On The Western Front* was the first literary bridge between Germany and America after World War I, so *Long the Imperial Way* is the first between Japan and America since World War II". Erich Maria Remarque's famous novel was also compared to another book

coming from Japan, which also happened to be the first truly Japanese novel to be translated into Hebrew: *Nobi* (野火, 1951) by Ōoka Shōhei (1909–1988), translated into English as *Fires on the Plain*.<sup>11)</sup> It is the story of a Japanese soldier in the Philippines during the last months of the Pacific War, when the military framework disintegrates and the isolated and desperate soldiers are driven to cannibalism. The story of its Hebrew translation is connected with an important figure in Israel's history, and to a certain degree also in Israeli-Japanese relationships, the first foreign minister and the second prime minister of Israel, Moshe Sharett.

Sharett, who replaced David Ben-Gurion as prime minister in January 1954, was relieved by him in November 1955. In June 1956 he was ousted by Ben-Gurion from his long-held position as foreign minister as well. He then went on a long tour abroad on behalf of the foreign ministry and his political party, Mapai, which took him to eleven Asian countries over a period of two and a half months. Among other countries Sharett also visited Japan, probably the first senior Israeli official to do so. His visit was somewhat eventful; whereas he was granted a rare 30 minutes audience with Emperor Hirohito, he was also invited to a geisha party, but the geisha's traditional Japanese music and games failed to entertain him, and he found the party boring; however, being a good sport, he did his best to entertain the geisha himself. On returning to Israel he found that Ben-Gurion was still refusing to mend fences with him, so he had to seek some other occupation outside government (he was still a member of the Knesset, but was not interested in its work). Sharett was a cultured man, who spoke eight languages fluently, loved literature and translated some poetry. Reluctantly though, he accepted the position as general manager of 'Am 'Oved publishing house, then belonging to the Histadrut, the Israeli trade union organization, which in the 1950's was still a very powerful body involved in every aspect of life in the country. Nevertheless, 'Am 'Oved was in financial trouble, and Sharett had to assume the thankless task of rejuvenating it. His bitterness at falling in one year from the leadership of a state to the managing of a debt-ridden publishing house is understandable, to say the least, and he indeed gave ample vent to his frustration in his diary, published posthumously by his son; but as Sharett was a conscientious man, he took his new task seriously and searched vigorously for books to publish.<sup>12)</sup>

It so happened that the first book with which Sharett dealt in 'Am 'Oved was *Fires on the Plain*. In April 1957 he was informed that a reviewer at the London *Observer* had written that Ōoka's novel was destined to become for the Second World War what Remarque's novel was for the First; what a German writer accomplished then, a Japanese novelist has accomplished now. Sharett acted quickly, and within a week he already had a copy of the book flown in from London, and was informed that the writer wished his book to be translated from Japanese. Since no translator from

Japanese was available, Sharett was able to secure, with the help of the Israeli envoy in Tokyo, the novelist's agreement that the book be translated from English. Sharett slotted the book for publication in a new series, *Sifriya la-'am* (popular library), which was indeed destined to become the most popular series of books in Israeli publishing history. The design of the books in the series was unabashedly stolen from the popular design of the Penguin paperbacks. Even before reading the novel fully himself Sharett announced its publication in a newspaper advertisement, describing it as: "the shocking story of an individual on the terrible events that befell him when the Japanese army disintegrated at the end of Second World War. The confession of the conscience of the Japanese human being who for the sin of igniting the war his people were punished with an atomic catastrophe. A book that has been compared with *All Quiet On The Western Front* by Remarque". Sharett's text is political and didactic, and refers only partially to the contents of the book itself. When he eventually got around to reading the book, he wrote in his diary that "essentially it is not a story but a deep soul-searching, and it is doubtful whether it will be marketable here". Still, having announced its publication, Sharett could not discard the book, and it appeared as one of the twelve volumes in the first yearly batch of *Sifriya la-'am* in 1959. On the back of the book is stated: "The book was translated for 'Am 'Oved from English, and in order to verify the accuracy of the Hebrew translation, the English translation was compared with the Japanese original by Dr. A. Regensburger of Tel Aviv". Apparently the said doctor, whose exact identity remains obscure, was insufficiently proficient in Hebrew, although he must have been proficient in English and Japanese.

Despite the promising beginning, Japanese literature did not find a place of distinction in *Sifriya la-'am*, which continued to publish 12 volumes per year, half of them originally Hebrew and half translations from literature in many languages and from many countries. Among its more than 650 titles there is only one more Japanese novel, *The Young Lovers*, by Nobel laureate Kawabata Yasunari, which was translated from German and published in 1972.<sup>13)</sup> Even when Japanese literature became relatively more popular in Israel towards the end of the last century, 'Am 'Oved as well as several other distinguished publishers took a very long time to show some interest in it.

#### **IV. Translations During the Past Three Decades: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**

During the 1960's and 1970's the number of translations remained minimal, but in the 1980's something was beginning to stir. Out of the nine books published during that decade, five were still translated from English, but the other four were translated from Japanese, two each by two

#### PART IV : On Translation from Japanese to Hebrew

distinguished scholars and authors. One was Yoel Hoffmann, a scholar of philosophy and Zen Buddhism, who would later become a major Hebrew writer of distinct poetical prose; he published a book of *haiku* poems and Zen stories in Hebrew translation, and another of Japanese death poems (which he also published in English). The other was Yaacov Raz, who translated novels by Natsume Sōseki and Endō Shūsaku and would later also translate poetry and Zen stories, and write several books about his experiences in Japan. Both were university professors, Hoffmann in Haifa and Raz in Tel Aviv.

In the following decade, the 1990's, the number of published books doubled, and included short stories, novels and traditional as well as modern poetry. Another translator with an academic background, Shunit Shachal-Porat, became active, and would translate four volumes of prose by leading Japanese authors, before giving up this activity. But the surge in the number of translations also had a less auspicious reason: the emergence of "Astrolog", a small publisher of mainly New Age books. Astrolog published mostly books of which the copyrights had expired, and employed inexperienced translators who worked mainly from English and produced mediocre results to say the least, reflecting their ignorance of the cultural background of the books they had been given to translate. Between 1999 and 2002 nine books published by Astrolog seem to belong to the realm of Japanese literature; some very clearly do so, such as four books by Edo Period's most famous writer, Ihara Saikaku, and two by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century master Natsume Sōseki. But there are also some less clear-cut cases, such as an erotic book attributed to no less a grand figure than Sei Shōnagon and titled, *The Pillow Boy of the Lady Onogoro*, with a cover caption claiming it to be "The famous Japanese erotic novel!"<sup>14)</sup> Those familiar with Japanese culture will recognize Sei Shōnagon as the 10<sup>th</sup> century court lady who wrote the celebrated *Pillow Book*, a cornucopia of observations, poems, lists, complaints and gossip (but very little erotica) from the imperial court in Kyoto at the zenith of its cultural refinement, which has been translated into several languages, including at least three times into English. But how did *The Pillow Book*, turn into *The Pillow Boy*? It seems that in this case Astrolog extended its dubious practices even further than usual. It turns out that in 1994 a Scottish poet and novelist named Alison Fell published a book by a similar title which gained some rave reviews and went into several editions.<sup>15)</sup> Fell used the literary trick of presenting an ostensible translation of an ancient book, complete with a scholarly introduction by an imaginary professor.<sup>16)</sup> Astrolog either fell for the trick and decided that since it was an ancient manuscript they could publish it without worrying about the copyrights, or they may have been aware of the facts, but still went ahead and published the book with the supposedly prestigious attribution to Sei Shōnagon, whose name and original title are mentioned in Fell's introduction to

her own book. In any case, the result is regrettably misleading and considerably unethical.<sup>17)</sup>

Dubious practices aside, the next decade—the first of the new millennium—witnessed another surge in translation with 32 books, and the tendency seems to continue with 12 books already published in the first three years of the current decade. One of the main reasons for this surge is what may be named the “Murakami Syndrome”: not only the drive by the publishers to translate all major and some minor books by the most internationally celebrated Japanese author ever (even taking into account two Nobel laureates and a famous *hara-kiri*), but by extension, the drive to publish other Japanese authors on whom some of the said celebrity may rub off. In fact, two books by Murakami Haruki were translated from English and already published in 1999: a collection of short stories (*The Elephant Vanishes*), and his seventh and one of his shortest novels (*South of the Border, West of the Sun*). Still, when I approached two major publishers around the same time with the offer to translate Murakami’s *Norwegian Wood* from Japanese into Hebrew, I encountered little interest. Eventually, an editor at another major publishing house, Keter, was willing to take the risk, and I commenced the translation while communicating with the author, and completed it in early 1999.<sup>18)</sup> In fact, *Norwegian Wood* became one of Keter’s best-selling translations ever, with many tens of thousands of copies sold, and to this day it has never been off the bookstores shelves. Consequently, Keter became enamored with Murakami and has published 10 out of the 15 titles by the author translated into Hebrew so far, including his book on running. In some cases Keter even went into fierce competition with other publishers for the right to publish certain of his books. Unfortunately, impatient to publish as many new titles as possible, it sometimes had Murakami’s books translated from English rather than wait for a translator from Japanese to be available for the job (Table 5). In fact, Keter and the other publishers are unwilling to cultivate translators or even compensate them fairly for their efforts, and therefore there is always shortage of translators from Japanese. However, another reason for the recent surge in translations is the appearance of a committed translator, Einat Cooper, who has already translated 13 books in 12 years, including 7 by Murakami (Table 6). She is the first translator from Japanese not to come from an academic background; Cooper studied Japanese at a language school while working in Tokyo. However, unlike academics who are busy with their careers and tend to be picky in their choices and therefore produce relatively few translations, Cooper would apparently translate any book offered to her (including, for example, a romantic bestseller by Katayama Kyōichi), thus increasing substantially the number of translated books. Still, even such a prolific translator has to support herself with another job. The publishers still pay translators as little as they possibly can, a fact that most probably discourages more Hebrew speakers with a good knowledge of Japanese from taking up

translation as a vocation.

So which other Japanese authors are translated apart from Murakami? First, as Table 3 reveals, although there is a clear preference to translate works of modern prose, there is also a substantial number of poetry translations, both traditional (*haiku* and *tanka*) and contemporary. As can be seen from Table 4.a, several authors have more than one book in translation, some with as many as four, including, on the one hand, Nobel laureate Kawabata, and on the other, contemporary popular writer Yoshimoto Banana, who was in vogue in Israel before being cast aside by the advent of Murakami (her books were translated mostly in the 1990's, with the latest translation in 2003). Among the writers with one book only so far (Table 4.b & 4.c), there are some who were selected by the translators (for example, Enchi Fumiko, selected and translated by Michal Daliyot-Bull), and others selected by publishers, who became aware of their books through their English translation (such as Katayama's book translated by Cooper). Besides classic *haiku* poets such as Matsuo Bashō and Kobayashi Issa, there are books by contemporary poets, such as Tanikawa Shuntarō and Tawara Machi. Still, there are many more Japanese novelists and authors who deserve to be introduced to Hebrew readers, or with whom Hebrew readers should become familiar, and if the current tendency continues, perhaps they will. However, although knowledge and understanding of Japanese language and literature in Israel has made considerable steps forward in the past two or three decades, some of the negative tendencies continue: the limited number of capable translators, the reluctance of the publishers to invest in promoting such translators, and their willingness to resort to translations from a second language, a practice which must be repeatedly condemned until it disappears.

## **V. Translations of Hebrew Literature into Japanese**

Finally, what about the other way around, namely translations of Hebrew literature into Japanese? The data on these translations which I was able to obtain may be incomplete, and in any case, would require a separate study, but perhaps a few tendencies can be pointed out briefly.<sup>19)</sup> The number of translations from Hebrew into Japanese appears to be even smaller than the other way around, with about 70 volumes altogether (including several volumes of political essays by leading writers of literature), most of which were translated from English and not directly from Hebrew. Translations began to appear sporadically from 1968 (with one earlier volume, one of the Holocaust novels by Ka-Zetnik, published in 1956, and under a different title in 1963), slowly increasing in number in the 1970's and 1980's, and peaking in the following two decades. Generally speaking,

Hebrew and Israeli literature are not to be seen on the horizon of the Japanese reading public, and there is no Hebrew writer who occupies a similar place in Japan to that of Murakami Haruki in Israel. Only a limited number of Hebrew authors have been introduced to Japanese readers so far (Table 7.a). Modern Hebrew literature's greatest figure, S. Y. Agnon, is represented in Japan by only a single volume of stories, which came out as an obligatory volume in a series of translations from the work of Nobel laureates. While there are many Israeli writers who gained substantial and even outstanding popularity in Europe and America, none of them is familiar to Japanese readers; only a few were ever translated, and very rarely was any of them introduced through media interviews. Our distinguished guest to this conference, A. B. Yehoshua, has only recently had two of his short novellas translated into Japanese.<sup>20)</sup> Another prominent writer, Amos Oz, had four of his novels (including two for children or adolescents) translated, but with a very small circulation; he also had four of his political essay books translated. A third leading writer, David Grossman, had 3 of his books of political essays translated into Japanese as well as his analysis of the biblical story of Samson, but none of his numerous novels. Indeed, this is one difference in the tendencies of translation between the two languages: while no book on Japanese politics or history was ever translated from Japanese into Hebrew, several such books were translated from Hebrew into Japanese (usually via English). The interest in Israel, as far as it goes in Japan, is mainly political rather than as a source of world literature. Still, there are some surprises: humorist Ephraim Kishon used to enjoy some popularity in Japan, and several of his books were translated during the 1980's. Two of Batia Gur's detective novels were translated, and some single books by a very few other writers. Another difference in translation tendencies is that in recent decades a substantial number of Hebrew books for young children and adolescents were translated into Japanese (Table 7.b); this includes no less than 11 books by Uri Orlev, and 6 by Alona Frankel (although most of those by the latter were translated from English). The recent surge in translations is mainly due to the dedication of a single translator with a good knowledge of Hebrew, Ms. Motai Natsuo, who has translated at least 25 books since the early 1990's, for both adults and children. Another outstanding translator is Prof. Murata Yasuko, who translated 7 books, including several by Amos Oz as well as poems by Yehuda Amichai. Still, compared with the amount of books translated from Hebrew into European languages, and recently even into Chinese, the presence of Hebrew literature in the Japanese language is extremely limited. It is also noteworthy that while 18 volumes of Japanese poetry, both classical and modern, have been published in Hebrew translation, only two volumes of modern Hebrew poetry have been published in Japanese.

## VI. In Conclusion

I believe that literature is one of the best windows we have into each and every culture. To quote the great Mexican writer Octavio Paz: “Each civilization, each soul, is different, unique. Translation is our way to face this otherness of the universe and history.” Through the reading of its literature we familiarize ourselves with what occupies the minds of the members of a foreign culture, perhaps even venture into its sub-consciousness. For the sake of better understanding one another, we are in great need of more translations, and especially translations of good quality. Through translation, Israeli and Japanese cultures have taken some tentative steps towards each other during the past six decades or so, and it is our duty to see that more such steps are taken.

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### Tables

#### 1. Number of Japanese Books Translated into Hebrew, by Decade

1940–1949	1
1950–1959	4
1960–1969	5*
1970–1979	3
1980–1989	9
1990–1999	17
2000–2009	32
2010–2012	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>

\* One book contains only two stories taken from an earlier volume.

#### 2. Language Translated from

Decade	Japanese	English	German	Not indicated
1940–1949	1			
1950–1959		3		1
1960–1969		2		3
1970–1979		1	1	1
1980–1989	4	4		1
1990–1999	8	6	1	2
2000–2009	20	12		
2010–2012	9	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>

\* In most cases where the language from which the book was translated is not indicated, it is believed to have been translated from English.

### 3. Translated Books by Genre

Legends ( <i>Mukashi-banashi</i> )	3
Classical & pre-Modern prose	6
Classical & pre-Modern poetry	15
Modern prose: anthologies of stories by various writers	4
Modern prose: novels, collections of stories or essays by a single writer	52
Modern poetry	3

### 4. Translated Writers and Poets

#### 4a. Writers with More than One Book Translated (10 novelists and two poets)

村上 春樹	Murakami Haruki	15
川端 康成	Kawabata Yasunari	4
夏目 漱石	Natsume Sōseki*	4
井原 西鶴	Ihara Saikaku*	4
吉本ばなな	Yoshimoto Banana	4
三島由紀夫	Mishima Yukio	3
桐野 夏生	Kirino Natsuo*	3
谷崎潤一郎	Tanizaki Junichirō	3
遠藤 周作	Endō Shūsaku	2
吉村 昭	Yoshimura Akira	2
松尾 芭蕉	Matsuo Bashō	2
良寛 大愚	Ryōkan Taigu	2

\*All 4 of Saikaku's and 2 of Sōseki's books were translated from English and published by Astrolog, and one more of Sōseki's books was also translated from English (published by Yaron Golan); all 3 books by Kirino were also translated from English (published by Modan).

#### 4b. Novelists with a Single Book Translated (12)

紫 式部	Murasaki Shikibu
芥川龍之介	Akutagawa Ryūnosuke
大岡 昇平	Ōoka Shōhei
安部 公房	Abe Kōbō
大江健三郎	Ōe Kenzaburō
大庭みな子	Ōba Minako
円地 文子	Enchi Fumiko
野坂 昭如	Nosaka Akiyuki
宮本 輝	Miyamoto Teru
片山 恭一	Katayama Kyōichi
小川 洋子	Ogawa Yōko
川上 弘美	Kawakami Hiromi

**4c. Poets with a Single Book Translated (4)**

小林 一茶	Kobayashi Issa
山口 誓子	Yamaguchi Seishi
谷川俊太郎	Tanikawa Shuntarō
俵 万智	Tawara Machi

\*In total 28 Japanese novelists and poets are represented by full books; many others are represented in anthologies of poetry and short stories.

**5. Murakami Haruki's Translations by Source Language and Publisher**

Decade	From Japanese	From English
1990's		Am Oved 1
		Machbarot Lesifrut 1
2000's	Keter 6	Keter 1
	Kineret/Zmora-Bitan 1	Zmora-Bitan 1
2010's	Keter 3	Keter 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**6. Translators Directly from Japanese with More than One Book**

Einat Cooper	13
Yaakov Raz	5
Shunit Shachal-Porat	4
Doron B. Cohen	4
Michal Daliyot-Bull	3
Yoel Hoffmann	2
Israel Tamari	2
Akiko Takahashi & Amir Or	2

\*There are 8 other translators from Japanese with one book each; there are also 2 or 3 others with translations published in magazines, including translations of classical plays (by Uri Epstein and Tzvika Serper).

## 7. Translations from Hebrew into Japanese (the data may be incomplete)

### a. General Literature

Author	Books
Amos Oz	8*
Ephraim Kishon	5
David Grossman	4**
Aharon Apelfeld	2
Batya Gur	2
Ka-Tsetnik	2
S. Y. Agnon	1
Moshe Smilansky	1
David Shahar	1
Avraham B. Yehosua	1
Yitzhak Ben-Ner	1
Shulamit Lapid	1
Zeruya Shalev	1
Amos Kolek	1

\* Including four books of political essays, two novels (*My Michael* and *Black Box*) and two stories for children or adolescents (*Sumchi* and *A Panther in the Basement*).

\*\* Including three books of political essays and his interpretation of the biblical story of Samson.

\*\*\* There are also two books of translated modern poetry: a volume of various poets (from Bialik to Wieseltier), and a volume of poems by Yehuda Amichai.

### b. For Children or Adolescents

Author	Books
Uri Orlev	11
Alona Frankel	6
Galila Ron-Feder-Amit	4
Tamar Bergman	3
Dorit Orgad	3
Dvora Omer	2
Daniela Carmi	1
Meir Shalev	1
Michal Snunit	1
Etgar Keret	1
Tami Shem-Tov	1
Dalya B. Cohen	1

**A list of Japanese books in Hebrew translation, 1944–2012<sup>21)</sup>**

- מוקשי בנשי: סיפורים מימי קדם, מיפנית: עמנואל אולסבנגר, אחיאסף, 1944 (קריית ספר, 1959)  
 נ. קאטו, יפעה בת הירח: אגדות יפניות, תרגום [מאנגלית?]: י. כושית [רות ארן], צ'צ'יק, 1951 [?]  
 דונאלד קין (עורך), מבחר הסיפור היפני, מלקט [משתי אנתולוגיות אנגליות]: דוד שחר, הדר, 1957  
 [האנאמה טאסאקי, הגישה, תרגום (מאנגלית): אורי רפופרט, עמיחי, 1958 – אנגלית במקור]  
 שיקא: שירים יפניים, תרגום (מאנגלית וגרמנית): איתמר יעוז-קסט, עקד, 1959  
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 זמורת דובדבנים: אנתולוגיה של שירים יפניים קלאסיים, תרגום [מאנגלית?]: אוריאל עקביא, מחברות לספרות, 1960  
 איסא, עולם הטללים, תרגום [מאנגלית?]: אוריאל עקביא, מחברות לספרות, 1962 [?]  
 אייבון מוריס (עורך), סיפורים יפניים בני זמננו, תרגום מאנגלית: אהרן אמיר ואריה חשביה, עם הספר, 1963  
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 [?] (מהדורה מהודשת 1972)  
 יאסושי אינואה, אנגו סאקאגוצ'י, רובה הצייד; האידיויטית, תרגום מאנגלית: אהרן אמיר, תרמיל, 1965 [התרגומים  
 נלקחו מהקובץ סיפורים יפניים בני זמננו הנזכר לעיל]  
 מורסקי שיקיבו, מעשה גנז'י, תרגום [חלקי] מאנגלית: דן זקס, שוקן, 1971  
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 סקורא: אנתולוגיה יפנית, תרגום [מאנגלית?]: אוריאל עקביא, יזרעאל, 1978 [קובץ של תרגומי הייקו וסנריו. עקביא  
 כותב בהקדמה שהשתמש בתרגומים לאנגלית ולשפות נוספות, ושגם למד קצת יפנית].  
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 שוסאקו אנדו, הר געש, תרגום מיפנית: יעקב רז, זמורה ביתן, 1984  
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 שוסאקו אנדו, סמוראי, תרגום מאנגלית: רות דורון, זמורה ביתן, 1990  
 ראי הירח: סיפורים יפניים מן המאה ה-20, תרגום [מאנגלית?]: פורת קשתאי, עקד [כולל 11 סיפורים של מחברים שונים]  
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סוסקי נטסומה, **בוצ'ן**, תרגום מאנגלית: תלמה הלוי, אסטרולוג, 2000  
יהרה סייקן, **חיי אישה אוהבת**, תרגום מאנגלית: ליאורה כרמלי, אסטרולוג, 2000  
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סוסקי נטסומה, **אני התול (שני כרכים)**, תרגום מאנגלית: ליאורה כרמלי, אסטרולוג, 2001  
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אקירה יושימורה, **על תנאי**, תרגום מיפנית: עינת קופר, שוקן, 2006  
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הרוקי מורקמי, **ריקוד האדמה**, תרגום מיפנית: מיכל דליות-בול, כתר, 2008  
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- הרוקי מורקמי, לרקוד, לרקוד, לרקוד, תרגום מאנגלית: כרמית גיא, כתר, 2010  
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נאטסואו קירינו, עולם אמיתי, תרגום מאנגלית: בועז וייס, מודן, 2012  
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## Notes

- 1) The number of books mentioned in the current version of this paper and the appended tables has been updated to include books published until the end of 2012.
- 2) Seemingly, 85 books were translated and published, but as will be shown below, two of those were originally written in English.
- 3) *Mukashi banashi: sipurim miyemei kedem*, translated from Japanese by Immanuel Olsvanger, Jerusalem: Achiasaf, 1944; second edition: Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1959.
- 4) Quotations from Hebrew texts, here and later, are in my own translation.
- 5) Hanama Tasaki, *Hageisha*, translated by Uri Rapoport, Tel Aviv: Amichai, 1958 (hard cover, one volume); also in the "Yalkut" series issued by Haifa's Workers' Union (paperback, two volumes).
- 6) Hanama Tasaki, *The Mountains Remain*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1952); London: V. Gollancz (1953). The title is the second half of the book's motto: "Though a nation crumbles, the mountains remain", which is based on the first line of a celebrated poem by the great 8<sup>th</sup> century Chinese poet Du Fu.
- 7) Hanama Tasaki, *Long the Imperial Way*, Tokyo: Itagaki Shoten (1949); Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1950); London: V. Gollancz (1951); reissued: Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press (1970); Japanese translation, by the author: 皇道は遙かなり (*kōdō wa harukanari*), Tokyo: Getsuyō Shobō (1950) (surprisingly, in the Japanese translation the title page has the English title, and the Japanese title appears only further inside; unlike the English original, in the Japanese version the chapters have no titles).
- 8) The only other mention of Tasaki in print which I was able to unearth is a review of *Long the Imperial Way* in the American magazine *Saturday Review* of August 12, 1950, pp. 8–9, titled "All Quiet' of the Eastern Front" by Merle Miller. To the review is appended a biographical note, based on communication with the author. As on the blurb of his book here too Tasaki says that his main occupation is not writing but rather "raising the best hogs in Japan".
- 9) Iichiro 'Soho' Tokutomi, *The Imperial Rescript: Declaring War on United States and British Empire*, Translated by Hanama Tasaki, Osaka: The Osaka Mainichi & Tokyo: The Tokyo Nichi Nichi, 1942.

- 10) Incidentally, although the author's English is excellent, he often translates Japanese colloquial expressions more or less literally, for example, "put strength into you", "excuse me for going first", "be careful of your body", "hard work!" etc.
- 11) Shohei Ooka, *Fires on the Plain*, translated from the Japanese by Ivan Morris, London: Secher & Warburg; New York: A. A. Knopf (1957) (later editions Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle). In Hebrew: *Esh ba'amakim*, translated from English by G. Arioch [pseudonym of Gentile Broido], Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1959.
- 12) The stories of Sharett's travel in Asia, his visit to Japan and work at 'Am 'Oved are told in greater detail and with the necessary references in the relevant chapter of my Hebrew-language book *Yesh lecha mashehu likro? (Have you Anything to Read?: Reviews and Articles on Books and Writers)*, Jerusalem: Carmel, 2003, pp. 94–98.
- 13) Yasunari Kawabata, *Hane'ehavim hatse'irim*, translated from German by Tsvi Arad, Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1972.
- 14) In Hebrew: *Na'ar hakar shel hagvira onogoro*, translated by Dana Agmon, Hod Hasharon: Astrolog, 1999.
- 15) Alison Fell, *The Pillow Boy of the Lady Onogoro*, London: Serpent's Tail (1994); New York: Harcourt Brace (1996); Harvest Edition (1997). For a rather dismissive review see Edmund White, "A Thousand and One Japanese Nights", *The New York Times*, March 3, 1996. Indeed, anyone familiar with Japanese culture will find ridiculous errors on almost every page of this book.
- 16) "Geoffrey Montague-Pollock, St. Antony's College"; in "his" introduction the name of a "translator" is also mentioned, "Professor Arye Blower"; both names can be found on an Internet search as additional authors of the book, as if they were real persons. The introduction was not translated in the pirated Hebrew version.
- 17) In a clear breach of international practice, Astrolog did not indicate the title of the original book on the back of the title page, nor did it supply any copyright information except its own. Even if the original book was indeed a translation from Japanese into English, the rights of the translator should have been acknowledged.
- 18) Haruki Murakami, *Ya'ar Norvegi*, translated from Japanese with notes and afterword by Doron B. Cohen, Jerusalem: Keter, 2000. A few short notes regarding the translation, and the text of a long interview conducted with Murakami in 2000, can be found in my above-mentioned Hebrew language book (note 12), pp. 70–90.
- 19) I rely mainly on material accumulated by members of the cultural department at the Israeli embassy in Tokyo, to whom I am grateful for their help in this matter.
- 20) 『エルサレムの秋』 アブラハム・B・イエホシユア著：母袋夏生訳 東京：河出書房新社, 2006. 11
- 21) The list has 85 items, 83 of which were included in the above tables; in square brackets are two books which, as explained above, were originally written in English, and are therefore not counted among the translations from Japanese.