



The SCBWI Tokyo Newsletter

Spring 2005

Carp Tales is the bi-annual newsletter of the Tokyo chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). The newsletter includes SCBWI Tokyo chapter and member news, upcoming events, a bulletin board of announcements relating to writing and illustrating for children in Japan, reports of past events, featured illustrators, author profiles, industry trends, interviews with authors and illustrators and other articles relating to children's literature. For inquiries or submissions of news, articles, announcements, illustrations, or comments, contact info@scbwi.jp. The submission deadline is May 1 for the spring issue of *Carp Tales* and November 1 for the fall issue. All articles and illustrations in *Carp Tales* are © SCBWI Tokyo and the contributing writers and illustrators. For more information about SCBWI Tokyo see www.scbwi.jp.

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Chapter News

SCBWI Tokyo has launched a new website, www.scbwi.jp. This new site features information about SCBWI Tokyo, an online Gallery, a Speakers Directory, a Member Books section, FAQs, a volunteer page, Listserv information, useful links for writers and illustrators, lists of upcoming SCBWI Tokyo events, and this newsletter. Bookmark the site and come back again and again!

In February the chapter reorganized and Linda Gerber stepped down as Regional Advisor. We thank Linda for all her time and effort in establishing the new chapter of SCBWI Tokyo. Naomi Kojima and Holly Thompson now serve as Co-Regional Advisors, and John Shelley continues to serve as Illustrator Coordinator.

SCBWI Tokyo is always seeking new volunteers to help with events, contributions to this newsletter and publicity. If you can help in any way, contact info@scbwi.jp.

SCBWI Tokyo Member News

Linda Gerber's book *The Fifteenth Stone*, a lighthearted account of an exchange student's adventures in Tokyo and Kyoto, has been bought by Puffin as part of their SASS (Students Across the Seven Seas) series.

Koji Ishikawa's photos of paper dogs and cats created for Asahi Shimbun's magazine *Kurashi no Kaze*, will be shown together with paintings inspired by his travel photographs at KS Gallery, Harajuku, Tokyo, July 20-30, 12:00-19:00 daily. Visit www.kojiishikawa.com for more information.

Suzanne Kamata's short story "Throwing Beans" was recently accepted for publication in *Ladybug*. Another story, "The Rain in Katoomba" will appear in the September/October issue of *Cicada*.

Naomi Kojima's classic *Utau Shijimi* (The Singing Clams) originally published by Libroport in 1984, is back in print, published by Kaiseisha, in April.

John Shelley's most recent release is a 4-volume series of Hans Christian Andersen tales to celebrate the 200th centenary of his birth this year. Newly translated from the original Danish by Professor Yoichi Nagashima of Copenhagen University, the books are published in Japan by Hyoronsha. Artwork for these Hans Christian Andersen books will be displayed in a 2-week exhibition at the new Maruzen Bookshop in Marunouchi, on the 3rd floor, June 20 – July 3.

Kiyo Tanaka's picture book *Okiniiri* will be shown on NHK Educational television (Channel 3) on June 21, 7:30-7:35 a.m. Also, her black and white etchings "Images of the Stories by Hans Christian Andersen" will be shown at Galerie Malle, 4-8-3 Ebisu, Shibuya, Tokyo (www.g-forum.com).

Bulletin Board

Printmaking/Etching Workshop Illustrator Kiyoko Tanaka will teach a printmaking and etching workshop at the Annual Summer Workshop of the Pin Point Gallery in Minami Aoyama, Tokyo, August 23-24, 11:00 -17:00. Applications will be accepted from June 10-July 15. For details visit www.pinpointgallery.com.

Editing in Japan Workshop The Society of Writers, Editors and Translators (SWET) workshop on Editing in Japan will feature panelists Phil Ouellet, Lynne Riggs and Ginny Tapley at Sophia University, Tokyo on Saturday June 25, 2:00-5:00. Reservations required. For details visit www.swet.jp.

Workshops at RBR, the New Center for Creative Arts RBR offers the following creative art workshops: RIGHT BRAIN 5-day Workshops - July 16,17,18,23,24 and August 12, 13, 14, 15, 16; MIXED MEDIA - Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:30; WATERCOLOR - Fridays, 1st & 3rd week of the month, 2:00-5:30 PM & 7:00-9:30 PM; FIGURE DRAWING SERIES - 3rd Saturday of each month; VISUAL JOURNAL - Wednesday evenings and Friday mornings; DRAWING ON THE WRITER WITHIN, creative writing workshops - July 14-Sep 1, 2005 - 8-week "Initiation" course, Sep 15-Nov 3, 8-week "Exploration" course (for students who have completed the Initiation course). For more information on these and other workshops, see www.rbr-art.com or stop by RBR, 1-5-15 Moto Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo (tel. 03-5475-6171).

SCBWI Tokyo Listserv

SCBWI Tokyo maintains an English-language Listserv (communal e-mail group) through Yahoo. Via the listserv, participants are able to join a network that links members and supporters of SCBWI across Japan in an active online community.

Members of the listserv receive up to date information on SCBWI Tokyo, announcements of activities and upcoming events as well as items of news and discussions on children's literature in general. Everyone is welcome to post comments and questions of interest to the SCBWI Tokyo community. Membership of the listserv is open to both members and non-members of SCBWI. Please e-mail SCBWI Tokyo for an invitation at info@scbwi.jp.

Upcoming Events

June June 18, 2005, Saturday, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Guest speaker: *Illustrator Kiyo Tanaka*



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Born in Kanagawa in 1972, Kiyo Tanaka studied oil painting and print making at Tama Art University in Tokyo. Her first children's book *Mizutama no Chihuahua* (text by Areno Inoue) was published in 1997 (Fukuinkan Shoten). Since then she's enjoyed considerable success as a children's book author and illustrator while continuing to produce and exhibit print works throughout Japan. She has participated twice in the illustrators' Exhibition at Bologna Book Fair (Italy) in 1995 and 1996, as well as the Biennial of Illustrations in Bratislava (Slovakia) in 2001 and 2003. For her illustrations she uses a technique of copper plate printing on Japanese paper. Visit the Kiyo Tanaka website at www.oyikakanat.com. Admission ¥1,000 SCBWI members and RBR students and teachers; ¥1,500 general admission. At the RBR New Center for Creative Arts, a seven-minute walk from Azabu-Juban Station on the Toei Oedo or Namboku Lines (for a map, see www.rbr-art.com/sitemap/map.html).

July July 9, 2005, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Guest speaker: *Illustrator Gregory Myers*



© 2005 Gregory Myers

Born in Sydney, Australia, Gregory Myers studied at the Canberra School of Art in the Graphic Investigation Workshop under Czech printmaker Petr Hereł. After working as a designer/illustrator producing educational materials, Myers came to Japan on a Monbusho Research Scholarship and studied under Akira Kurosaki in the Printmaking Department at Kyoto Seika University. Since then he has been working freelance as an editorial illustrator, working mainly with scraperboard and pen and ink. His work can be seen monthly in the JAL in-flight magazine (international flights). In 1987 he was awarded an Encouragement Prize in the 5th Noma Concours for Children's Picture Book Illustrations (UNESCO) and his work was shown in Tokyo and Bratislava. Myers will discuss various influences on his work and demonstrate scraperboard technique. Admission ¥1,000 SCBWI members; ¥1,500 general admission. At the Tokyo Women's Plaza in Shibuya (next to the Children's Castle and United Nations University—for a map in Japanese, see www.tokyo-womens-plaza.metro.tokyo.jp/contents/map.html).

September

September 19, 2005, Monday. Details TBA. Dinner with *illustrator Lucy Cousins*.

October

Details TBA. Q&A with *Author Gail Carson Levine*

November

November 12, 2005, Saturday, 3:00-5:00 p.m. *Manuscript and Illustration Exchange*.

December

December 10, 2005, Saturday, 3:00-5:00 p.m. *Magazine Writing for Children with Suzanne Kamata*.

For further details on all SCBWI Tokyo events,
contact info@scbwi.jp or visit www.scbwi.jp.

Trends

The 12 Most Popular Picture Books Translated into Japanese in 2004

Following is the list of The 12 Most Popular Picture Books Translated into Japanese in 2004, according to the 2005 edition of *Kono E-Hon Ga Suki* (The Picture Books We Like, published by Besatsu Taiyo, Heibonsha). The books were chosen based on a questionnaire sent to 116 children's book related people in Japan (children's bookstore owners and managers, librarians, museum curators, illustrators, writers, scholars, editors, designers and book reviewers) who were asked to choose three of their favorite translated books published between January and December 2004.

1. ***The Dot***
by Peter H. Reynolds
Publisher: Asunaro Shobo *Translator: Shuntaro Tanigawa*
2. ***Elsie Piddock Skips In Her Sleep***
by Eleanor Farjeon, illustrated by Charlotte Voake
Publisher: Iwanami Shoten *Translator: Momoko Ishii*
3. ***The Sad Book***
by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Quintin Blake
Publisher: Akane Shobo *Translator: Shuntaro Tanigawa*
4. ***Erika's Story***
by Ruth Vander Zee, illustrated by Robert Innocenti
Publisher: Kodansha *Translator: Kunio Yanagida*
5. ***The Indoor Noisy Book***
by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Leonard Weisgard
Publisher: Holp Shuppan *Translator: Kaori Ekuni*
6. ***The Fast Sooner Hound***
by Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, illustrated by Virginia Lee Burton
Publisher: Iwanami Shoten, Translator: Misao Fushimi
7. ***Mary Smith***
by Andrea U' Ren
Publisher: Mitsumura Tosho *Translator: Shigeki Chiba*
8. ***What!***
by Kate Lum, illustrated by Adrian Johnson
Publisher: Shogakan *Translator: Chihiro Ishizu*
9. ***Otto***
by Tomi Ungerer
Publisher: Kodansha *Translator: Tetsuo Kagami*
10. ***Der Club***
by Helme Heine
Publisher: Tokuma Shoten *Translator: Haruki Amanuma*

11. **The Golden Egg Book**

by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Leonard Weisgard
Publisher: Dowakan Translator: Shigeo Watanabe

12. **The Big Ugly Monster and the Little Stone Rabbit**

by Chris Wormell
Publisher: Tokuma Shoten Translator: Kyota Yoshigami

Writer and book reviewer Akira Ono made the following comments on the 12 chosen books:

“**The Dot**, is about a grumpy girl who doesn’t like to draw. **The Sad Book** is about a man who has lost his beloved son. **Erika’s Story** is about a baby who was tossed out of a train window bound to Auschwitz, a desperate parent’s gamble to save the child’s life. **Otto** is about a teddy bear torn away from its child when the family is taken to a concentration camp. **The Big Monster and the Little Stone Rabbit**, is about the ugliest and loneliest monster in the world.

“Five of the twelve books carry a heavy and serious theme. There is hope and salvation in each book, but at the same time, the book forces one to deeply reexamine the ways of the world (the world meaning mainly the U.S. and Europe). Picture books with social themes are an established genre in the field of children’s books in the U.S. and Europe, and it is impressive to see many such books on the list. It is significant that the Japanese publishers chose these books to be translated and to be delivered to their readers. The publishers believed and hoped that their readers would welcome and accept these books. Although there are Japanese picture books like **Sekai no Kodomotachiga 103 (All The Children of the World 103)**, which was written as an active hope for peace, few Japanese picture books published in 2004 deal up front with the themes of these translated books.

“Many foreign picture books follow a long span of time. **Elsie Piddock Skips In Her Sleep** follows the life of a girl from when she is born until she becomes a very old woman. So, too, with **Erika’s Story**. **Otto** takes place during a span of twenty to thirty years before and after World War II. **Der Club** and **The Big Monster and the Little Stone Rabbit** depict a long span of time up until the death of the main character. In **Der Club** even a coffin appears in the story. Depicting a long span of time is one of the characteristics of European and U.S. picture books, and this may be why these books are on this list.

“This year again, most of the translated picture books were from the U.S. and Europe, and in fact, all of the books on this list are from the U.S. or Europe. The reason may be simply that the majority of books are published in the U.S. and Europe. Moreover, ‘a list of favorite books’ compiled through a questionnaire only suggests a tendency. However, books from other countries should certainly be read more widely and be given more support. Picture books from Korea are translated consistently every year, and picture books from Africa such as **Le Chant Des Genies** and **Frische Fische**, and from Mongolia such as **The Black Hair of Mongolia**, are beautiful books which were also translated in 2004.

“Three books on the list are from the 1940’s, considered the Golden Age of American picture books: **The Indoor Noisy Book**, **The Golden Egg Book**, and **The Fast Sooner Hound**. Picture books from this era have a special warmth. There are still many books from this time period that have not yet been translated, so we may look forward to seeing more in the future.”

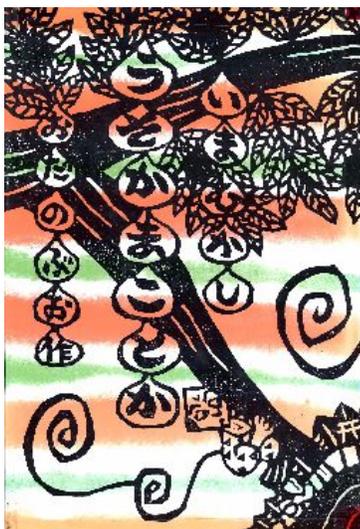
Excerpted from “The 12 Most Popular Picture Books Translated in Japanese in 2004” by Akira Ono in Kono E-Hon Ga Suki (*Besatsu Taiyo, Heibonsha, 2005*).

Translated by Naomi Kojima

Event Wrap-up

Sharing our Works in Progress May 21, 2005

At the SCBWI Tokyo Manuscript/Illustration exchange on May 21, we were honored by the brief appearance of painter, woodblock print artist and picture book author and illustrator Nobuo Oda of Kochi Prefecture, Shikoku, as well as his editor Akio Oikawa of Mokuyosha. Oda shared with us a wood block print scroll version of a story *Ima Mukashi—Usoka Makotoka (Now and Long Ago—True or False?)* that had been featured at the exhibition, “Japanese Picture Books-What Pictures have Expressed,” which toured Germany in 2004. The book had been bound in the old style, with folded pages threaded with string, and Oda explained that the story developed from thinking about words with opposites. In the scroll form of this book each playful scene flowed into the next. Oda shared with us several other picture books he’d written and illustrated—*Janken Jarasuke (Jarasuke, Rock, Paper, Scissors Boy)* about a boy who loves to play *janken* (rock, paper, scissors), *Hentekotowaza (Funny Proverbs)* and Aesop’s Fables, all illustrated with wood-block prints; and *Zusetsu Hikonyumon (Introduction to How to Fly)* done with fountain pen strokes.

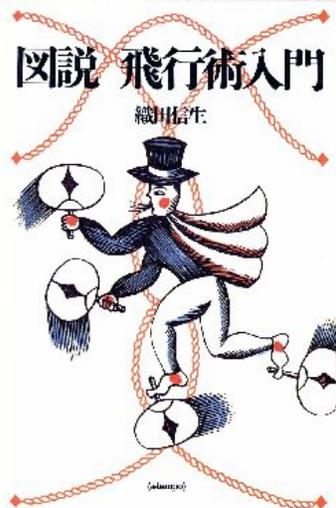


Cover of *Ima Mukashi—Usoka Makotoka (Now and Long Ago—True or False?)* by Nobuo Oda

Oda mentioned how difficult it is to make a living by just being a picture book author and illustrator when living in a rural area. He pointed out that he has another job teaching art to children and hospital patients and that he also does design work. Emphasizing that it takes great patience and perseverance to make picture books, Oda said he chooses his picture book assignments

carefully these days.

One lucky assignment had Oda exploring the Kochi countryside, painting a picture and writing a short



Cover of *Zusetsu Hikonyumon (How to Fly)* by Nobuo Oda

essay for a newspaper each week; he managed to keep this up for two years, for a total of over 100 paintings and musings about the places discovered. He said that the deadlines and the discipline required to paint a picture a week enabled his work to improve significantly, and although he’d agreed to the job because it sounded like something he’d

enjoy doing, he was pleased to see clear improvement in his craft and technique as a result. In parting, Oda emphasized that to draw and paint everyday is the way to improve.

After Oda and Oikawa’s visit, the manuscript and illustration exchange got fully underway. Brave participants shared picture book dummies, text for a children’s picture book, and an older children’s magazine story. These were discussed until we ran out of time, with the meeting running well beyond the two hours scheduled. Criticism was supportive and lively, and SCBWI Tokyo looks forward to making this a regular event feature.

These face to face Manuscript/Illustration Exchanges are open to both writers and illustrators, published and unpublished. Writers of children’s and young adult literature may also join the SCBWI Tokyo online critique group (those interested should contact info@scbwi.jp for an invitation).

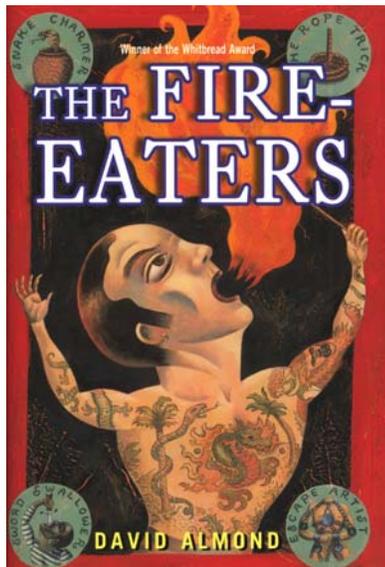
Holly Thompson

Event Wrap-up

A Reading and Talk by David Almond April 5, 2005



Award-winning author David Almond of northern England joined SCBWI Tokyo at the Iwanami Seminar Room in Jimbocho, Tokyo on April 5th. Almond was in Japan visiting international schools and making public appearances for the recent Japanese publication of his novel *The Fire Eaters*.



The Fire Eaters, by David Almond

finding “him” in a garage on a Sunday afternoon, he realized without yet knowing what the story was about, that it was a story for young people. The “him” turned into the now famous character of Skellig, and with the 1998 publication of *Skellig*, David Almond gained sudden and spectacular public recognition. Since then Almond has published numerous award-winning and bestselling novels for young adults, including *Kit’s Wilderness*, *Heaven Eyes*, *Secret Heart*, *The Fire Eaters*, two plays, a collection of short stories *Counting Stars*, and a picture book *Kate, the Cat and the Moon*.

David Almond had been writing short stories for years and had struggled unsuccessfully to market a novel for adults. Then one day when he had just mailed off the manuscript for a collection of stories to a publisher and was ready for a break from writing, the first lines of a new story came to him “like a gift.” Later, as he wrote down the words about

(Visit www.davidalmond.com for more details.)

Almond spoke of his love for the printed page, dating back to early childhood visits to his uncle’s printing press, and how he has long loved the look of the printed word. Visiting the local library in his native Felling-on-Tyne outside of Newcastle as a child, he’d always dreamed of having his own book

published, and he talked of the enormous satisfaction on finally returning to his hometown library and seeing his book on the shelves and his name in print. Almond’s love of black print on white paper resulted in the purchase of Japanese books during his visit to Japan; although he is unable to read *kanji*, he loved the look of the characters on the page.

Almond explained that with *Skellig* he felt a new sense of freedom in writing for children. Although at the time he was described as an overnight



David Almond in Tokyo

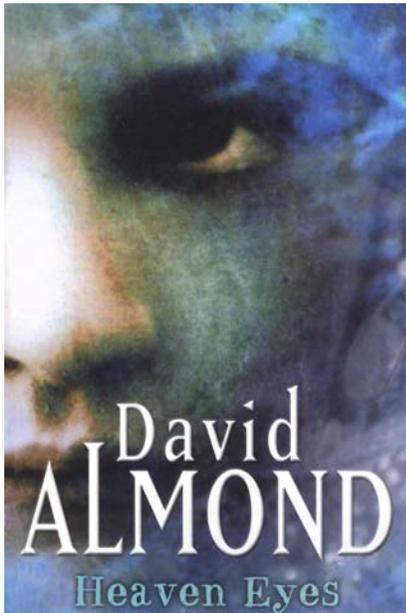
sensation, he likes to remind people that he’d been writing seriously for more than fifteen years. He believes that the process of working on writing all those years led to the final pay-off of success. He also credits his success to the fact that he had cut down from a full-time job to a part-time teaching

position, realizing that he needed to balance income with time to write. It was after several years of part-time teaching and writing that the first lines

of *Skellig* came to him, he said, as if someone were speaking into his ear. After the publication of *Skellig*, he realized that with young adult literature he could let his imagination take over and found great satisfaction in this age-group switch.

“The writer’s job is to be a good liar because writing fiction is to tell lies from start to finish.”

Almond brought copies of his various novels and story collection to the Tokyo event and discussed the writing process for each one, reading selections from many of them. He mentioned that it is important for writers to always try something new, hence his personal challenge to write from a girl’s



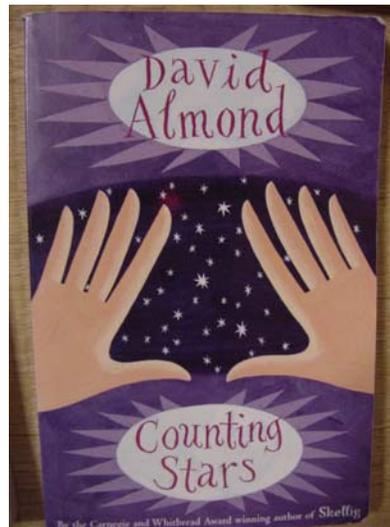
Heaven Eyes, by David Almond

point of view in *Heaven Eyes*. He explained that the writer’s job is to be a good liar, because writing fiction is to tell lies from start to finish. He held up a copy of *Heaven Eyes*—“A pack of lies,” he emphasized. “It’s all a pack of lies.”

Almond related the value of using personal experience as a starting point,

such his own childhood incidents that sparked the plot of *The Fire Eaters*—directly feeling the tension in northern England during the Cuban Missile crisis, watching an escapologist, and struggling under an unpleasant teacher. His collection of linked short stories, *Counting Stars*, contains tales based on his childhood near Newcastle, and he described once

gathering his adult brothers and sisters to share their memories to help generate more stories.



Counting Stars, by David Almond

Almond also revealed to the audience the premise for his novel *Clay*, due out later this year, in which a character models clay figures that come to life.

As for advice for writers, David Almond insisted that doggedness and persistence are the most important qualities.

Almond explained that he’d found Japan fascinating place, and that he’d even written a manuscript for a children’s book set in Japan during his three-week visit. SCBWI Tokyo looks forward to seeing the results in print one day!

Holly Thompson

Event Wrap-up

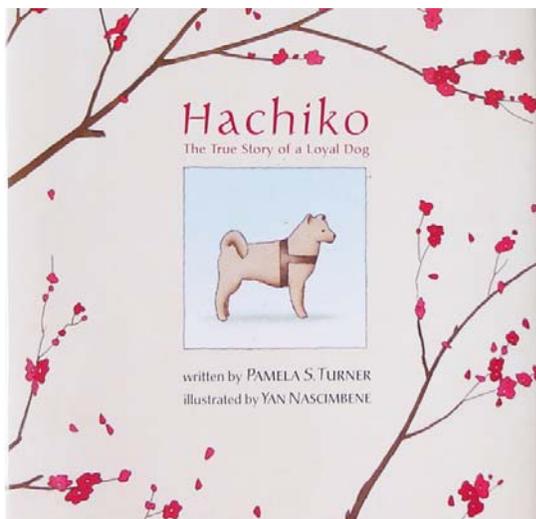
Pamela Turner Breakfast April 23, 2005

SCBWI member and 2004 Golden Kite winner Pamela Turner joined us for a breakfast gathering at the Garden Café of the Tokyo American Club prior to her book signing at the TAC library. Author of *Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog*, Turner shared stories of the research and writing process for her award-winning picture book. SCBWI Tokyo surprised her with a copy of the Japanese translation of *Hachiko*—“surprised” because Turner had not yet been informed that a Japanese edition was out. Interestingly, although in English *Hachiko* is published as a children’s picture book, in Japan it is marketed as a picture book for adults.

Although Turner had lived in Japan for six years, often walking past the statue of Hachiko by Shibuya Station, she wrote *Hachiko* while living in California. She showed us a copy of a book that the station master of Shibuya Station had given her during a Tokyo visit, containing actual photos of the dog Hachiko, pre-war Shibuya Station, and Hachiko the dog standing next to the original statue erected in his honor. Photographs in this book from the station master served as models for some of the illustrations in *Hachiko* by Yan Nascimbene, and the volume provided Turner with some critical Hachiko facts.

In addition to discussion of *Hachiko*, Turner spoke of her travels to Africa to work on her book *Gorilla Doctors, Saving the Endangered Apes*, due out this May. Pam Turner plans to be back for more visits to Japan, and SCBWI Tokyo hopes to catch up with her again the next time she is in Tokyo.

Holly Thompson



Hachiko, by Pamela S. Turner



SCBWI Tokyo members and Pam Turner (seated, second from left)

Author Profile

Author Profile: Pamela Turner

A few things are very clear when you meet Pam Turner. First, she loves kids. Second, she loves animals. Third, she is one fascinating woman.

Turner will tell you that the first thing she can remember wanting to do when she 'grew up' was to write and illustrate children's books. With *Hachiko, The True Story of A Loyal Dog*, she became a not only a children's book author, but an award winning one at that. *Hachiko* earned a Golden Kite Honor Award for picture book text, Henry Bergh Honor Award, a Parents' Choice Silver Award and numerous book list nominations.

Even more impressive is the list of experiences and accomplishments Turner tallied on her journey to children's book authorship. While in college, she spent a year in Nairobi, Kenya, as an exchange student before earning a B.A in Social Science and a Masters in Public Health. She has worked as an aide to a California congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives and as an international health consultant, and she and her family lived in the Marshall Islands, South Africa and the Philippines before her six-year sojourn in Japan. Turner notes, "I think having lived in several different countries gives me a really broad perspective on the things I write about, not to mention an endless stream of ideas!"

Turner began writing for children long before *Hachiko* was published, penning her first article for *Odyssey Magazine* in 2001. She is a prolific contributor, drawing on her love for animals and her wealth of professional and life experience to regularly publish science and nature articles in such publications as *Odyssey*, *Calliope*, *National Geographic Kids*, and *Highlights for Children*. Turner also frequently writes science and nature articles for adults. "Having a public health background helps a great deal when I am writing science and nature pieces, either for children or adults," Turner says. "I understand the research

process and the kind of attention to detail science demands. But it's not like I have an academic background in the things I write about. I believe in writing what I want to know, not what I know. I am pretty good at digging into academic journals and educating myself to the point where I can have an intelligent conversation with a specialist."

In 2003, she was able to draw on her extensive public health experience and her love for mountain gorillas when she visited Rwanda and Uganda to research her latest book, *Gorilla Doctors*. The book chronicles efforts by the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project to save the gorilla population in an increasingly hostile environment. *Gorilla Doctors* is part of the Houghton-Mifflin Scientists in the Field series. Released this spring, it has already earned a Junior Literary Guild Selection and a Kirkus starred review. As for new work, Turner explains, "Currently I am writing a feature article for National Wildlife on sperm whales and working on my next children's book, "Life's Edge," about a NASA astrobiologist who investigates microbes that live in extreme environments on earth. I stumbled across the topic during a web search and was hooked!"

When asked what has helped prepare her for writing for children, Turner replied, "Most of all, *reading*. I am a voracious reader, and I remember the utter joy of finding books I loved when I was a child. When I write for children I am always writing for the 5 or 10 year old version of myself. I still read lots of children's books. I try to seek out the best fiction and nonfiction and figure out why the books work."

You can hear from Pamela Turner directly at the 2005 Annual SCBWI Conference in Los Angeles, August 5-8, where she will present workshops on magazine article queries and science writing for kids (see the events page of www.scbwi.org). To read more about Pamela Turner, see www.pamelasturner.com.

Linda Gerber

Event Wrap-up

Writing and Illustrating for Children With Yurika Yoshida, Japan Foreign-Rights Centre February 26, 2005 Co-Sponsored by the Society of Writers, Editors and Translators (SWET)

This first co-sponsored event by the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and SWET (Society of Writers, Editors and Translators www.swet.jp) featured an introduction to SCBWI as well as a talk by literary agent Yurika Yoshida from the Japan Foreign-Rights Centre which specializes in introducing Japanese books abroad.

The event opened with a general explanation of the SCBWI (www.scbwi.org) by the SCBWI Tokyo chapter's representatives: Illustrator Coordinator John Shelley, and Co-Regional Advisors Holly Thompson and Naomi Kojima. Explanation of SCBWI was followed by an introduction to SCBWI Tokyo. Although an Okinawa chapter has been active since the early 1990s, SCBWI Tokyo was recently established in early 2004. SCBWI Tokyo has already held a number of events for writers and illustrators and aims to regularly feature guest speaker events, workshops, one-day conferences, critique sessions, illustrator exhibits, shop talks, informal gatherings and more. SCBWI Tokyo also maintains a listserv open to members and nonmembers and recently launched a new website (see www.scbwi.jp).

Shelley explained that SCBWI members include professional writers and illustrators as well as students and people trying to break into children's writing and illustrating. "As it's the largest children's book writers' and illustrators' organization around the world, it tends to be an umbrella for everybody involved in children's books." He described the various benefits of SCBWI membership, pointing out that while the Tokyo chapter is still small, it is linked to a worldwide organization that offers extensive opportunities. "Anyone who's interested in the world market, any writer or illustrator looking at the big picture, will find that SCBWI is an extremely helpful organization." Kojima attributed her early success in publishing two picture books to SCBWI: "They helped me so much with information

about how to publish and how to make a dummy, and once I was published in the United States, then Japanese publishers were interested in me." Shelley added that the organization serves professionals, but is also "particularly supportive to people just starting out in publishing, people who are new writers and illustrators just breaking into the industry." Although SCBWI is an enormous, worldwide organization it remains quite flexible, and chapters are encouraged to run events that suit the local region.



Yurika Yoshida, second from left, with SCBWI Tokyo members and some of the books discussed at the February event.

Following the SCBWI overview, guest speaker Yurika Yoshida, literary agent with the Japan Foreign-Rights Centre (JFC) was introduced. Yoshida explained that JFC was begun in 1984 by three people: Managing Director Akiko Kurita from Japan UNI Agency; Yumiko Bando from the foreign rights department of publisher Fukuinkan Shoten, and one additional staff member. Kurita's dream was to introduce Japanese literature in other countries, and Yoshida joined the company in 1987 soon after graduating from university. JFC was a small company but unique in its approach; shareholders include Gakken, Kaisasha, Kodansha, Iwasaki Shoten, Shinchosha and others—over 20 Japanese publishers, and although there are more

than ten literary agencies in Japan, JFC is the only one that focuses on introducing Japanese books abroad as its center role of business, whereas other agencies focus mainly on introducing foreign titles into Japanese market.

JFC handles most Japanese publishers' books, and Yoshida has been attending the Bologna Book Fair since 1989 and the Frankfurt Book Fair since 1991. JFC exhibits approximately 200 Japanese titles at each fair and holds meetings with foreign editors. In twenty years, JFC has successfully sold over 3,000 Japanese children's titles abroad. More than 75 percent of those titles have been sold to countries in Asia, with significant numbers also going to publishers in the United States and France.

Naturally, it is often easier to sell Japanese titles in Asian countries. With non-Asian countries Yoshida has encountered three potential barriers to marketing Japanese titles abroad: culture, language and economics.

As for cultural barriers, JFC markets mostly children's books, yet though a book may be successful in Japan, in a foreign editor's eyes that same book may not be at all appealing. Yoshida referred to *Inai Inai Baa*, by Yuichi Kimura, as an example; this title has been wildly successful in Asian countries, but JFC was unsuccessful in selling to a single European publisher. Sometimes the items in the illustrations or story are seen as too Japanese; tatami, futon and kimono can be problematic as can scenery or settings that might not be understood in a global market. Other times, to foreign editors, Japanese stories seem to be too feeling-oriented rather than containing a clear, practical plot line. European editors always request strong story lines and a main character with whom readers can empathize. Foreign editors often point out that Japanese story content seems weak. As such, occasionally foreign editors love the illustrations of a Japanese title but are not satisfied with the text; at times they request an adaptation. In the past as well, illustrations in some Japanese books were criticized for being too comic book-like. However, Yoshida pointed out that these cultural barriers do seem to be fading to some extent, in part due to the recent success of Japanese *manga* and anime abroad.

Yoshida noted that foreign editors always say, "I know my market," and never say yes easily to

Japanese titles. Writers need to be willing to make adaptations and to accept adaptations with the translations. As an example, *Hiroshima no Pika* was published in 1985 by Syros, and this spring a new French edition for the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing will be published with a new cover design, different end paper, and new page layout. Nowadays, Japanese publishers carefully compare each and every detail of an original edition with new editions, and this, Yoshida has found, can become problematic. But, she explained, sometimes it is important to simply look at the new version without comparing—the new French edition really is a beautiful book. The original editor of *Hiroshima no Pika* even admitted that twenty years before when he initially edited that book there were no art directors or book designers for children's books, but to be successful in today's market we need to make changes, and eventually he agreed that the French publisher's ideas were quite good.

"We need to send more Japanese literature abroad, and not just manga."

The second major obstacle to marketing Japanese books abroad is the language barrier. Japanese is a minor language, rarely spoken or read by European editors themselves, so JFC must always provide a translation before a book can be considered by foreign publishers. Of the 3,000 children's titles JFC has sold, most are picture books, successful largely because the pictures themselves could talk. In addition, with most picture books, a full translation can easily be provided at low cost to JFC because of the short text. Yoshida pointed out that they still find it difficult to market older children's literature. In recent years, more and more bilingual editions are appearing in Japan, and sometimes this makes promotion overseas easier. However, European editors always want to read by themselves and judge for themselves, so it is easiest to market to European publishers after an English edition has already appeared. This was the case with Kazumi Yumoto's book *Natsu no Niwa*, translated by SWET member Cathy Hirano and published in English as *The Friends*. Once the English edition had appeared, JFC could sell to Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Brazil, France, the U.K. and elsewhere.

Parenthetically, Yoshida added that JFC is often asked for permission by translators to translate a particular book, but she said they urge translators to contact publishers directly, then let the publishers contact JFC. Volunteer translators have no protection whatsoever, making it difficult for translators who wish to translate one specific title or author. JFC works with publishers, not artists and illustrators.

Regarding adaptations for other markets, prior permission needs to be granted by the author, of course. In Kazuo Iwamura's series of *Fourteen Mice*, the Japanese edition has very short text and the editors therefore prepared adaptations to create stronger story lines. At one point the author realized a translated edition was quite different from the original; considerable changes had been made without consulting the author. What's more, in the French edition, the mice were given names; the French editors felt that using numbers for names was strange and inappropriate. But Japanese culture has Ichiro, Jiro, Saburo, which are essentially numbers, so in Japan that concept was not considered strange at all.

Of course, Yoshida noted, it is difficult to find worldwide successful authors; each country and culture has its own tendencies. Some titles that are successful in the U.S., for example, do not sell well in Europe.

The third barrier to marketing Japanese titles to foreign publishers is economic. On the production side, for example, Chinese publishers have published much Japanese children's literature, but

they have always been reluctant to publish picture books because of the high production costs. However with recent digital and scanning technology there are now more possibilities, and production costs are dropping without compromising quality. There are still problems with piracy, however.

Another economic barrier is referred to as Chosakuken Business. After recent manga successes abroad, each publisher now tries to make a high advance, and therefore more risk is imposed on publishers. Yoshida stressed that cultural development needs to be in harmony with the business rate.

In conclusion, Yoshida lamented that the number of Japanese titles purchased abroad is still relatively small. "We need to send more Japanese literature abroad, and not just *manga*. We need to publish Japanese books abroad in more variety and in greater numbers and we should concentrate in particular in publishing as many Japanese children's books abroad as possible."

There were a number of questions raised following Yoshida's talk: with regard to the sample translations needed to provide to foreign publishers (JFC often uses the translation company Transnet in Hiroshima); about market trends in various countries; and about the effects of *manga* on young adult literature.

Holly Thompson



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