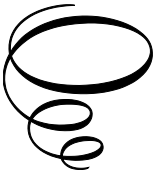
Translating Modern Japanese Literature by Female Authors

Translating Modern Japanese Literature by Female Authors

By

Richard Donovan

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



Translating Modern Japanese Literature by Female Authors

By Richard Donovan

This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-0364-4218-7
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-4219-4

For Jo, Peter, Sarah, Rosa, Sylvie,
Noriko, Yasuharu, Emi, Lisa, Masahiro, Haru, Aki,
Mika, Milly, Sophie—and our new arrival, Annie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Why I wrote a sequel[1]

Since *Translating Modern Japanese Literature* was published in 2019, Generative Artificial Intelligence has burst onto the scene, if anything making the role of the literary translator even more imperative. In my opinion, what AI cannot (yet, if ever) achieve in the realm of translation largely comes down to what Spivak (1993) terms *rhetoricity*—in essence, overall literary style. Hartman (in Washbourne & Van Wyke 2019) defines rhetoricity as "the poetry, poetics or artistry of a text, or the way it engages these at least, and how it uses its own language to express these, with an eye to this language's histories, cultures and literary traditions" (210).

AI's limitations are particularly salient when translating from a language like Japanese into a language like English. As a so-called 'reader-responsibility language' (Hall 1976), Japanese elides elements that the reader is expected to infer from the context, including subjects, objects, speakers, some conditionals (such as the conjecture about an unreal state that is indicated by the past perfect conditional in English—'I would have gone there if I'd had time'), and plurals. As an inheritor of the *zuihitsu* style of essay writing that began with Sei Shōnagon's 『枕草子』 *Makura no sōshi* (*The Pillow Book*), modern (and contemporary) Japanese prose often contains non sequiturs, lacunae in the presentation of temporal, spatial and other logical relationships, and other *apparent* forms of discohesion that require explanation, modification or indeed omission when converted to standard

[1] I developed some of the ideas for this book while on sabbatical in New Zealand. This research was financially supported by the Kansai University Fund for Domestic and Overseas Research, 2022.

English.[2]

Another thing that AI is currently bad at is globally synthesising a translation, since the 'large language model' works via word-by-word prediction of what an 'authentic' text might say about a given subject (though new 'reasoning models' may be superior). While translating between languages presumes access to a source text, which actually helps generative AI 'stay on the rails', its inability to understand the totality of content partly explains the lack of 'voice' its writing often exhibits.[3] It can be prompted to write a passage in an ironic tone, but its diction is superficial, limited to little more than a shuffling of phrases that its language model tells it are often associated with irony, rather than an understanding of the overall concept. In deliberate counterpoint to this simulated eloquence, I have decided in this Introduction to employ Japan-related idioms to demonstrate the persuasive power of (context-specific) metaphor to contribute to the inimitable richness of culturally embedded discourse.

The idea for an overriding image for this collection came to me when I was helping my father install a bamboo pole as a handrail on a slope in my parents' garden. He handed me a freshly cut bamboo pole about two metres in length and some ten centimetres in diameter. I immediately found myself comparing its light-green circumference to an anonymous vermilion-painted wooden pillar of one of the thousands of *torii* gates that line the stepped paths at Fushimi-Inari Shrine in southern Kyoto. My photograph of this pillar features on the cover of the first book in this series. I used it as a symbol of modern Japan, at once vibrant and mysterious in the way that it disappears into the darkness on its leftmost edge. Furthermore, this pillar retains a subtle wood grain under its shiny red veneer that is visible to those who take the time to look beneath the surface.

A bamboo pole, or hollow trunk, shares not only the pillar's vegetal origins but also its uneven yet smooth surface, punctuated as it is by the nodes that, like growth rings in trees, are a visual record of its stages of growth—though of course bamboo is notorious for growing at a much more rapid pace. I long ago

[2] See Chapter 4 of the previous book in this series for an in-depth discussion of textual cohesion in Japanese–English translation.

[3] See Chapter 1 of my previous book for a discussion of voice.

decided that my follow-up book would rectify a glaring weakness in the original: namely, the absence of writing by female authors. On this sunny day in the garden in my hometown in New Zealand, I suddenly realised that bamboo would make a fitting symbol for a collection of Japanese women's writing: associated with the East, bamboo is also often a symbol of flexibility, versatility, quiet strength, and vivacity. Further, its generally light-green hue could be considered to symbolise freshness and newness—much as women's writing in the middle of the twentieth century was finding innovative forms of expression and broaching new topics, despite its roots stretching all the way back to Heian-period diaries and novels.

Then after some time I wondered if the overriding image of bamboo might be applied to aspects of each story in the collection. I had a hunch that if I researched bamboo-related terms in Japanese I would come across idiomatic expressions to match each story and/or author. The power of metaphor is that it enables us to find newfound relevance for existing images, sometimes by resuscitating the original sense, but equally sometimes by updating meaning for a new generation. Like bamboo itself, the metaphorical image is evergreen, constantly self-renewing, flexible yet resistant.

With most of the new book written, I travelled to Arashiyama's famous Bamboo Grove, where, I had felt, I would be able to find an appropriate image for the new cover. It was approaching the end of the interminable summer of 2024. Though it was near sunset, sweat-drenched tourists with selfie sticks infested the lanes, and the bamboo trunks themselves looked etiolated and dry after months of extreme heat. I worried I might not be able to find a trunk with a suitably vibrant green for my metaphor. But as the light dimmed into twilight, the temperature still over thirty degrees and the humidity punishing, I found what I had been looking for. Once again, the cover image is pillar-like, its vertically striated yet placid surface, with a bloom of summer dust, gradually fading into obscurity on the left side, perhaps, like its predecessor, recalling Tanizaki's 1933 essay on Japanese aesthetics,『陰翳礼讃』*In-ei raisan*, *In Praise of Shadows*.

Source-text report

While literary translation may be inspired by metaphor, it is constrained by the pragmatic exigencies of the craft. In a new feature in this book, these issues are crystallised in a report that characterises the main features of the source text (ST) as I saw them. Compiling such a report is an especially useful exercise for students, but it can also be salutary for experienced translators when it helps make explicit a number of assumptions that inform the translator's approach to the ST, revealing how they categorise aspects of the text on the page. Before undertaking their translation, students should ideally fill in the report sheet and then compare their analysis with mine. However, I would recommend reading the entire text through once before conducting your analysis—if not, indeed, doing a first draft of the translation itself—to avoid interfering with your initial response to the text as literature.

Apart from this caveat, I believe such analysis is compatible with an intuitive approach to translating a literary text. As I have just implied, it is perfectly valid to write the first draft of a translation as a 'prime reader' responding to the source text with your interpretation of it. In fact, that is often the approach I take myself, as I outlined in the Introduction to the first book. However, taking the time to examine the features of a text may ultimately help to create a more representative, inclusive translation in subsequent drafts. It will certainly help you become more intimate with some of the issues central to Translation Studies itself, particularly those relevant to Japanese–English literary translation.

I have printed the basic analysis rubric on the following page so that it can be photocopied and written on. However, you will likely find that the space for items in each category is too limited, or that some of the categories are irrelevant to a particular source text. Thus you may wish to create your own version.

Below the rubric I provide examples of textual features in each general category. But also feel free to look through the reports for each text in this book that appear at the beginning of the Commentary section in each chapter: they may give you some inspiration for lines of enquiry to follow in your own analysis.

ST Title:		
(a) Sociolinguistic Features		
No.	*Feature*	*Example(s)*
- Typography		
- Lexis		
- Syntax		
- Layout		
(b) Literary Features		
- Narration and voice		
- Rhetorical devices		
- Characterisation		
- Plot structure		
- Themes		

As mentioned, the rubric above is only the bare bones of topics for analysis. Responding to each text will produce a different list of items depending on what the reader finds. Below I shall list certain sub-elements that you may want to explore in constructing your analysis.

1. Sociolinguistic Features

a. **typography**: kanji (use of period kanji, use or absence of *furigana*); kana (use of period kana, archaic pronunciation); *okurigana*; fonts; emphases (underline, bold, italics, 傍点 *bōten* (emphatic marks like dots or commas placed above text).

b. **lexis**: Culturally Specific Items (CSIs); field-specific terms (jargon or terminology); period (historical) terms (including slang and colloquialisms); regional terms; register level (polite/formal, neutral, intimate/informal, pejorative, offensive); lexical ambiguity.

c. **syntax**: sentence length and complexity, including punctuation; ordering (word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph); elision (explication vs. implication; implicature[4]); structural ambiguity.

d. **layout**: paragraphing (association among sentences); sectioning; titles.

2. Literary Features

a. **narration and voice**: person (first, second, third); subjectivity; tone.

b. **rhetorical devices**: figurative devices (metaphor, simile, personification, symbols, etc.); sonic devices (alliteration, assonance, rhythm, etc.); rhetorical structures (inversion, periodic sentences, repetition, etc.).[5]

c. **characterisation**: depiction of character through description, action, dialogue, thought.

d. **plot structure**: main and additional storylines.

e. **themes**: overarching ideas that seem to bind together the story and/or give it a moral or philosophical dimension.

How such elements bear on the TT—the translated text—will be discussed in detail throughout this book. Some items may at first glance seem near-irrelevant to literary translation—be it because they are so thoroughly mundane as to seem unworthy of

[4] What the author is presumed to imply: see Chapter 4.

[5] See Chapter 3 for a list of rhetorical structures.

consideration, or because they are so language- or culture-specific that they appear impossible to translate—but as we will see, just about any ST feature deserves consideration when creating the TT as part of a global response to the text. The rhetoricity is in the details.

Some people may find filling in a table a staid, static exercise that fails to capture the dynamic interplay of various features. If so, you may instead wish to use the above as a series of cues and then write paragraphs that give your impressions of the literary qualities of the source text. Indeed, continuing this train of thought, we can venture that one way to look at literary translation itself is to regard it as an intuitive activation of literary analysis. A target text then becomes a meta-text of the source text: a commentary on the source text that takes the form of an interlingual version of the source text. This reminds me of the option that one of my professors offered for the final essay in his undergraduate class on the modern novel: a pastiche of a literary work. I chose to write a follow-up to James Joyce's *Ulysses* (which can itself of course be regarded as a commentary on Homer's *Odyssey*) in the form of a short story that speculated on what Harold and Molly Bloom did the next day. It tried to capture the punny, stream-of-consciousness prose of the original while picking up on some of the main themes and preoccupations of the novel.

In one sense, a literary translation is an interlingual pastiche of the source text, if we take the *Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English* definition of 'pastiche' as "an artistic work in a style that imitates that of another work, artist, or period". Such a characterisation of a translation acknowledges both that it is a derivative work and thus not an exact equivalent of the source text, and that it is a *creative* effort on the part of the translator.

Whether a literary translator is also a scholar of literature or linguistics (and surely the vast majority are not), literary translators and academics share a lot of the skills and knowledge bases that enable them to represent a literary work, whether it be in the form of a translation or an analysis of that work. We should harness these so-called 'competencies' to enhance our translations.

The source texts

Once again this collection contains four short literary works and my translations thereof, but with a greater variety of text types. There are two short stories, one collection of diary entries, and one set of essays. All but Hirayama Chiyoko's essays have been taken from the online repository Aozora Bunkō (aozora.gr.jp). Hirayama's texts come from her posthumous collection, which is out of print. All texts are out of copyright.

I have lightly edited the texts in two ways. First, the occasional archaic or rare kanji character cannot be represented as originally printed, so I have substituted the standard characters. Second, where difficult characters don't already have *furigana* readings, I have added such readings in square brackets for convenience. All other *furigana* are as provided. In Miyamoto's text, Aozora Bunkō has labelled several apparent errors with the *furigana* comment ママ ('stet'). If you prefer, you can of course access the original texts online at Aozora Bunkō.

I shall now briefly introduce the texts featured in this collection. The two short essays that constitute Hirayama Chiyoko's offering in **Chapter 1** represent the pinnacle of her brief life as she takes the entrance exams that will determine whether or not she makes it into university, which is her heart's greatest desire. Tragically, Hirayama never had a chance to live her dream, due to her untimely death at 18, but her ardency lives on in the words that her parents shared with the world a decade after her passing.

I came across the archaic expression 節の間 *setsu no ma*, which literally means the space between two bamboo nodes: given their rapid growth, this figuratively connotes 'a short time'. The paradoxical brevity and vigour of life are bound up in this phrase, and thus how appropriate it is for Hirayama.

We use her two short pieces to discuss the issues of pre-reform orthography and the representation of emotional affect. Hirayama's and Hayashi's pieces are here presented in their original orthography (kanji and kana): these differ considerably from present-day writing, which was modernised and standardised after World War II. Kana usage was particularly different, with archaic characters such as ゐ, use of the full-size つ instead of today's *chiisai tsu* (っ) and confusing insertions of

katakana numbering among the many unfamiliarities you will encounter on your first reading. Rather than gloss each instance, as I did for Miyazawa Kenji's short story "Tani" in Chapter 1 of my previous book, here I outline the overall differences as a guide for the modern-day reader to tackle the source texts by themselves in Chapters 1 and 2. While this is not strictly a Translation Studies issue, it is an added hurdle for the translator and invites misinterpretation, which is always to be avoided when translating.

I chose to focus on the representation of emotions and emotional states as the second issue in Chapter 1 because Hirayama's pieces run on emotion. This is not to say her essays lack analytical acuity—far from it; rather, the emotions that well up guide her through her experiences, and hence are important signposts for the reader, too. Thus they must be translated with considerable care.

In **Chapter 2**, Hayashi Fumiko, one of the most famous Japanese women writers of the 20th century, provides a snapshot of the privations of post-war Tokyo through the eyes of a small group of young men and women in her short story *Ai suru hitotachi* and via its signal event, which is the sale of a volume of poetry. The text is filled with allusions and figurative language such that its significations are as palpable as the implacable materiality that determines the parameters of their routine subsistence. It is as much an authorial *crie de cœur* as it is a clear-eyed observation of the inescapable realities of life in a war-ravaged shell of the city of Tokyo.

Given the significance of the literary and cultural references in the story, the first issue we address is intertextuality—the way that all texts are palimpsests of previous texts—and how to address such pervasive referentiality when translating. The second issue—the lesser-known *intratextuality*—is clearly related as its obverse: it denotes the way a text references itself through repetition and parallelism, but also sets up comparisons and emphases through its use of both established and novel figurative language.

Talking of which, the bamboo-related expression that to my mind perfectly encapsulates the spirit of this story is 筍生活 *takenoko-seikatsu*—that is, selling off one's belongings one by one in order to live, like peeling off the layers of a tender bamboo shoot.

This poignant image reveals that Japanese culture is no stranger either to penury or the evocative use of images drawn from daily life to describe it. Hayashi demonstrates how the cognitive act of figuration not only helps humanity deal with adversity but also is a defining and enduring aspect of our humanity.

In **Chapter 3** we return to a young author—the youngest, in fact, in the collection. Miyamoto Yuriko was only 14 when she began her sporadic diary writing in 1913, but she made her literary debut a mere three years later and went on to write some of the representative works of proletariat fiction that rank her literary stature alongside her friend Hayashi Fumiko. Here, right back at the beginning of her literary journey, the expression 青竹 *aodake* 'young bamboo', or 'neophyte' (which itself literally means 'newly planted') seems eminently applicable, but also for another reason: a common theme in her writing is an appreciation for the wonders of her family garden. Miyamoto turns to the flora and fauna in her backyard both for inspiration and for the refreshment of her preternaturally weary soul.

Also like Hayashi's story, Miyamoto's diary entries are replete with literary references from both East and West. Miyamoto was already a voracious reader, a diligent student and a prolific writer at the point she began recording her thoughts. But here I have taken a different tack in terms of translation issues, first attempting to address the overarching idea of authorial style and how it might start to manifest itself even in such early and private writings. Secondly, I revisit the topic of external sources that I raised in Chapter 2, reframing them as influences on the young Miyamoto, observing how she imitated her sources as much as referenced them, and then considering how one might go about conveying such conscious mimicry in the translation.

The book concludes in **Chapter 4** with the most ambitious stylistic exercise of the four pieces, Yada Tsuseko's short story-cum-stage play "Wana o tobikoeru onna". Written for a literary competition in 1930, which it won, Yada's piece is a biting social critique that pits young against old, employee against employer, and, most significantly, female against male, on "a battlefield where no gunshots were heard"—a workplace that is the epitome of the dog-eat-dog capitalism Japan had adopted from the West.

I had trouble choosing one bamboo image to represent this work, so shall proffer two. The first is the more straightforward:

破竹の勢い *hachiku no ikioi*—'(with) great vigour' or 'irresistible force'—from the way splitting bamboo goes all the way to the bottom of the cane. The protagonist Makiko is just such a force of nature, going toe to toe with her oleaginous boss in an icily polite battle for the soul of society as she sees it. The second expression, on the other hand, is suitably oblique in its old-world sexism, capturing the ironic undertone of much of the story: 夜目遠目笠の内 *yome-toome kasa no uchi*: 'women appear the most beautiful when viewed from afar, in the dark, or when wearing a bamboo hat'—in other words, 'seeing less is more'. The fact that such expressions claim universal knowledge about the nature of the female individual echoes the boss's casual air of superiority, which Makiko has shattered by the end of their encounter.

The issues I address in this chapter are tone and dialogue. Tone is about the author's—and potentially the characters'—attitude to the material, and the ironic tone of the piece is not only the vehicle for its parody but also its whole, performative, point. Irony is about undermining the conventional and the taken-for-granted, and that act is embodied in Makiko. Furthermore, the contest of ideas takes place mostly in the form of dialogue, which forms the majority of the text. Central to a successful translation of this piece is control of the way the characters' utterances feed off each other, and in this case the cadences of polite Japanese speech come to the fore. The Japanese are not especially known for their irony, but in fact the hierarchical and compartmentalised nature of their speech, with its rigid conventions about level of politeness based on one's relationship to the interlocutor, relative status, gender, age, and other factors requiring the speaker to select appropriate language throughout a conversation, is ripe for parody. Yada plays with these conventions to spectacular effect, and it is the translator's challenge to reflect such subtleties since they are central to the portrayal of the conflict.

Using this book

Each chapter of this book has the same format. It begins with an introduction to the author and text and to the related issues to be discussed. The reader is then encouraged to read and analyse the source text and produce a report if desired. Then they are invited

to translate the ST and subsequently compare their translation with mine. Next, in the Commentary section, the reader can read my ST report and the analysis of two ST- and translation-related issues. However, the order is entirely up to the reader. Some people, for example, may find it useful to read my report and/or translation before undertaking their own—or even before reading the ST. The order will depend to some extent on the Japanese and translatorial abilities of the reader, as well as on what they want to get out of the materials.

Differences to the previous book

This book differs in its approach to the first book in the series in the following ways:

1. As already mentioned, the Commentary section in each chapter begins with a report on the features of the source text.

2. I wanted to give additional guidance on translation process, so in certain chapters I provide excerpts from my first draft (which I label TT0) and compare them with my final draft (labelled TT), offering comments on the differences between them and my rationale for the changes made. It is my hope that such comparisons will provide insight into the cognitive processes involved in translating and demonstrate how translation is a series of iterations that often fluctuate between intuitive responses to the ST and more reasoned adjustments to the TT based on re-examinations and re-evaluations of the ST as well as careful consideration of how the TT represents, and should represent, the ST to the anticipated TL readership. Another reason for this comparison is to show that translations almost never emerge from the mind of the translator fully formed, and that translators do sometimes misinterpret the ST in their initial drafts and then correct this in later iterations.

The reader may want to emulate my process by snapshotting their own first and final drafts so they can later analyse how their translation has evolved. This can easily be achieved by switching on the Track Changes function in the document file *after* completing the first draft. This ensures that every subsequent

modification, addition and deletion is recorded in the file.

Note that as last time, I sometimes make use of so-called 'direct translations', my term for a ST-orientated translation with few TL concessions; this is preferable to the ambiguous term 'literal translation'. Direct translations can help make it more obvious where the TT0 and/or TT diverge significantly from the ST.

3. I have eliminated the Further Questions section at the end of each chapter, leaving it up to the student and/or instructor to raise their own questions after working through a chapter. The ST report could be a useful resource for generating such questions.

4. In keeping with the theme of growth contained in the overarching bamboo metaphor, I take a somewhat more experimental approach to the analysis in this new book. I try to test the boundaries of Translation Studies as they relate to Japanese–English literary translation, as well as those of my own analytical powers. This has possibly resulted in a less-structured final product that may take a while for readers to grasp, but I hope it will inspire students of translation to innovate their own approaches to the subject.

To conclude this Introduction, I would like to express my heartfelt hope that you find the source texts as inspiring and challenging translation material as I did. As Japanese female authors in translation continue their ascendancy in the world fiction market, it is timely to look back to some of the pioneers of modern literature from the previous century, many of whom struggled to make themselves heard in a male-dominated domain. But like a stand of bamboo stirred by the winds of change, their legacy of literary innovation, East–West sensibilities and insight into the human condition continues to reverberate in the 21st century.

CHAPTER 1

平山千代子　「入学試験」「発表」

HIRAYAMA CHIYOKO,

"NYŪGAKU-SHIKEN", "HAPPYŌ"

Introduction

Hirayama Chiyoko died of pneumonia at the age of 18 in August 1944 after more than two years of illness. In a posthumous collection of her writings published 10 years later, her father partly attributes her death to the wartime conditions in Tokyo:

> 戦争たけなはなる頃、千代子は女学校の五年生で、勤労奉仕に始めは武器蔵、次は造幣局へ行つて、おさつの勘定をしてゐたのだが、運悪く風邪を引いた。総長をしてゐた千代子は、学校は休まないで勤労奉仕を休んだら相済まないと、考へたのだらうと思ふ。三十八、九度の熱を親にかくして、造幣局に通つてゐた。その無理の結果が肋膜[炎]となり、遂に取り返しのつかぬ結果となつてしまつた。然し、その時でも尚、千代子を救ける方法はあつたのだ。 [中略] 何とかして滋養分をとらせたいと、あらゆる手をつくしても、牛乳は手に入らず、闇のルートを知らぬ自分には、玉子も容易に手に入らなかつた。もつとも大事な時に、看護婦も派出婦も女中も見当たらず、二歳の赤ん坊をかかえた母親は、専心、病人を看護する訳にも行かなかつた。(Hirayama 1954, 283–284)
>
> At the height of the War, Chiyoko was a fifth-year high school student, and when students were seconded as volunteers for the war effort she first worked at an armoury and then the Japan Mint, counting banknotes, but unluckily she caught a cold. She was the head of her group, and, committed as I believe she was to

> fulfilling her obligations, she didn't take any time off from school or work. She commuted to the mint while keeping a fever of thirty-eight or -nine degrees a secret from her parents. As a result she came down with pleurisy, and ultimately there was no way back from it for her. But at the time she could still have been saved. … We wanted to obtain nutritious food for her, but no matter what we tried we couldn't get hold of any milk, and as I didn't know anything about the black market, eggs were also hard to find. At the critical time, there were no nurses, housekeepers or maids to be found, and there was no way her mother, nursing a two-year-old, could devote all her energies to caring for an invalid. (Donovan trans.)

The collection is entitled 『みの・美しいものになら』 *Mino: Utsukushii mono ni nara*, named after the beloved family dog, while the subtitle is a quote from a poem by Tachihara Michizō, who also died young, of tuberculosis, at the age of 24, in 1939. Mino herself features in two pieces in the collection, one about the dog's death in an accident, and another about the time she came to live with the family. What is notable about the former in particular is the clear-eyed, unsentimental way in which Hirayama describes the dog's passing. It is not without emotion, but it captures the events in a way that does justice to its subject, demonstrating Hirayama's potential as a writer. In a series of vignettes, some never shared with her family before her death, Hirayama displays the nascent skills she never had a chance to develop. One reason I have chosen to represent her in this book is that I wanted to make her existence, however fleeting it may have been, known to the world. The two short pieces that appear in this chapter are a salutary reminder that the written word has the power to transcend temporal and geographical boundaries and give us insights into what would seem unknowable—even, perhaps, an individual's soul. Despite their modest scale, Hirayama's work deftly balances personal and societal insights.

I chose these two pieces because they portray perhaps the high point in Hirayama's short life: her entry into university. The first, "Entrance Exams", matches a comical depiction of Chiyoko's blithe attempts to convince a women's college to give her entry with some shrewd observations about the process itself. The second, the follow-up "Results Day", briefly outlines the intense feelings she and her mother experience when they return to the

campus to discover whether or not she has passed. The entrance-exam process for young women of the time may seem laughably relaxed to present-day readers, particularly those familiar with the unforgiving nature of the current system in Japan, but that is part of its charm, offset as it is by the disarmingly self-deprecating observations Hirayama makes about how she participates. Despite the quaint anachronisms, though, her vacillation between moments of unfounded self-confidence and stomach-churning anxiety will still resonate with young people today. And her wider critique of education systems designed to eliminate rather than truly evaluate candidates is more relevant now in the cut-throat environment of Asian institutions of higher learning than it was when she penned it.

The two issues I address regarding these pieces represent useful starting points when translating any work of literature. The first concerns comprehension of the source text, while the second involves how it is represented in the target text.

Firstly, as noted in the Introduction, three out of four of the pieces treated in this book retain their original orthography. Modern-day use of kanji and kana began in 1946 with the post-war reforms. The number of kanji required for daily use was reduced to 1945 characters, a few archaic kana were removed, and the use of the remaining hiragana and katakana syllabary was standardised. While the structures and vocabulary in Hirayama's pieces are the easiest to comprehend among the texts presented in this book, readers unfamiliar with modern-era orthography will need some time to get used to such things as the absence of the っ *chiisai tsu* or glottal stop, since the full-sized つ was still used for glottal stops when Hirayama wrote. Similarly, much okurigana will look unfamiliar, such as 考へ for 考え. However, once you are used to it you will notice how modern-sounding much of Hirayama's teenaged writing is. Rather than attempting to gloss every archaic orthographic element, as I did with Miyazawa Kenji's short story 「谷」 in my first book in the series, I here outline the main differences in the text, a list that will be relevant to the other piece presented in this book that uses 旧文字 *kyū-moji* (Hayashi's short story in Chapter 2).

Secondly, the formulation of the way a text is presented in a translation begins long before it is written. It starts with the

selection of the source text itself. In choosing Hirayama's pieces, I have deliberately highlighted her work over that of countless other authors, and these particular pieces over many others featured in her collection. In part I have based my choices on what I consider to be the *skopos*, or purpose(s), of this book (Reiß & Vermeer, 1984). These purposes not only informed my choice of texts but also went on to influence the way I have translated them, how I introduce them in this collection, and the very issues I raise about them in my commentary (a translator's 'paratext'). These are all issues of *contexualisation*.

One way to help contextualise a literary text is to create a brief report that characterises its main features. As I mentioned in the Introduction, such a report will be our starting point for the four literary works I treat in this collection.

The report, at the beginning of the Commentary section below, suggests that an important aspect of the work is its I-narration. Chiyoko comes across as painfully naïve at times, but not only is she aware of this, often portraying herself in a humorously self-deprecating manner, she also leverages this innocence in a measured assessment of what she sometimes perceives as a cynical educational system, as embodied in the 'villain' of the piece, G School, which is limned as purposefully cruel in trying to 'shake off' unwanted applicants rather than establish those who might be suitable. Thus what at first glance appears to be a straightforward narrative requires careful handling of her voice.[1] An examination of a few key scenes in the first and final drafts of my translation may provide insights into how I modulated voice in response to my evolving understanding of the narrator.

Perhaps the key to interpreting these texts is the word 'emotion'. While there are few unique figurative images, those there are concern the 'warmth' of professors at the women's college versus the 'coldness' of the interrogation at G School. And among the idioms, 気-based phrases are particularly frequent, correlating with 気持, which itself appears a number of times, along with 心 and 感 in various forms. Whether expressing the depths of despair when she thinks she may have failed to get in,

[1] See Chapter 1 of *Translating Modern Japanese Literature* for an in-depth analysis of voice.

or the heights of joy when she realises she has passed, narrator Chiyoko exhibits a visceral response to the world around her, one which, far from preventing her from analysing society at large, in fact lends a keen edge to her incisiveness. Thus an important part of representing the text to a TL audience lies in appropriately rendering its emotion-related expressions and idioms.

Exercise 1

Translate the essays 「入学試験」 and 「発表」 into English, paying special attention to how the narrator portrays their emotions. Then compare your translations with mine. Optionally, you may use the Report template available in the Introduction to analyse the key features of the writing, comparing it with mine before you translate.

入学試験

ショボ／＼と雨がふつてゐて、三月とは云へ、まだうすら寒い日、私はお母様にくつついて始めて女子大の門をくゞつた。

下着から靴下迄すつかりきれいにし、靴もみがいて、お祖母様から背中に大の字をかいて頂いて来たのだつた。

玄関で傘と下足を預け、上に上がつたと思つたら、もう直ぐ隣がお母様方の控へ室で、私はお母様と別れなければならなくなつた。

「ぢやあ落ち着いて、しつかりやつていらつしやい」とお母様はさうおつしやつた。

何だか心細かつたけれど、元気よくコックリをして上級生のあとについて行つた。

今思ふと音楽室だが、小学校の小さな唱歌室をみてゐた私は、随分ひろいんだなあ、と感心して呟いた。

私は八時に十五分ほど前に着いたのだが、まだ後から来る方は沢山ある。

随分ゐるもんだとは思つたが、競争相手としての意識や不安は少しも持てなかつた。

第三小学校から受けるものは私一人だから、囲りは皆知らない顔ばかりである。

でもその中にすぐお友達になつて、他愛もないことを云つたり、問はれたりしてゐた。

控へ室は、さういふおしやべりで大分にぎやかである。中には「あやとり」などをして、はしやぎ出す人さへあつた。九十何番あたりに河村順子さん（xx 歌手の）が来てゐた。

その内に考査が始まつて、一番から順に呼び出されて行つた。

私は七十一だから、大分待たせれてからやつと呼ばれた。後の戸口から出ると、眼鏡をかけた面白さうなおぢいさんの先生が、

「何番！」と云つては首へ札をぶら下げて下さる。

寒い渡り廊下を通り体操室へ行つた。中に這入つてみたら、高い跳び箱があるので苦手な私は、困ッたなと思つた。

始めはラヂオ体操の第二、覚えといてよかつたとおもふ。少し前まで、第二は知らなかつたのだから。－－女の先生だつたせいか、とても楽な気持で、固くならなかつたのは幸せだつた。

次は、肋木［ろくぼく］へ上がつて前をむいてブラ下がる――これもわけないので楽々とやつてのけた。

最後にトビ箱の所へ導びかれたので、馬トビでもさせられるのかとヒヤ／＼してゐたら、只手をついて飛び上がつて、上へのぼつたら、端迄歩いて飛び下りる。それ丈のことだつた。一回練習があつたが、その時は、なーんだ、こんなことかあ、と思ひながら、オチャノコで飛び下りた。

いよ／＼ほんとの時、たつた一人でするのが少しきまりが悪かつたが、さして上りもせず気持よくスタートした。

かけて跳び箱の所迄行つたが、飛び上らうとした時に、どうしたはずみか、はつ！　と気が挫[くじ]けて手はついたのにとび上れなかつた。ウフッ、失敗しちやつた。さう云ひたい様な気持で私がにや／＼と笑ふと、先生もにこ／＼しながら、「そのまゝで結構ですからつづけてして下さい」とおつしやつた。

後はわけなく飛び下りた。

つゞいて身体検査があつて、今日の考査はおしまひだつた。

私は飛んでお母様の控室へかへつた。ドアをあけたら、不安さうに、沢山のお母様の眼が一せいにごちらをみた。その中に家のお母様をみつけて、私は急に嬉しくなつて、走りこんだ。「どう?どうだつたの?」とお母様は半ば嬉しさうに、半ば心配さうにおきゝになつた。

「う、ん、なんでもなかつたわ。とてもやさしいのばつかりだつたの……」次々ときかれるままにいろ／＼と私は答へた。

跳び箱を失敗したことも何でもない様に、すら／＼と報告した。

お母様は「さう、さう」とおきゝになるだけで、何ともおつしやらなかつたが、私は一人で気をよくしてゐた。上級生がみんなとても親切で、気持が好い方ばかりだし、お友達にもなれちやつたし、試験なんか何でもないや、試験勉強の方がどんなに苦しいかわかんない、などと大に元気が出た。

あとで伺つたのであるが、トビ箱を失敗したといふから、これは駄目だつたかなと、お母さまはお思ひになつたさうである。