



JAPAN XII. TRANSLATIONS OF PERSIAN WORKS INTO JAPANESE

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Japanese scholars in the late 19th century began to embark on Oriental studies outside the traditional fields (out of fashion after the Meiji Restoration of 1868) of Chinese literature and Confucian learning. Some were attracted to Persia, initially by its literary heritage. Thus Japanese readers were introduced to the Persian classics with translations of 'Omar Ḳayyām's *Robā'iyāt* and Ferdowisi's *Šāh-nāma*, and these works still serve as the primary representatives in Japan of the field of Iranian literature.

Classical Persian literature. The *Robā'iyāt* attributed to 'Omar Ḳayyām was first introduced to Japanese academia by the teacher and scholar Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), the celebrated Japanologist and author of many works on Japan and Japanese subjects, in a lecture at Imperial University of Tokyo in September 1896 (cf. the school lecture in Hearn, 1926). Kambara Ariake, who was present at the lecture, was so fascinated and moved by the *Robā'iyāt* that he translated into Japanese six pieces from Edward FitzGerald's (1809-83, q.v.) version of the quatrains and published them in 1908. Another translation of



FitzGerald, by Shun Ōsumi and Shōfu Ōsumi, was published the same year in Tokyo. There followed other translations, mostly based on FitzGerald, by Bunkichi Katano (1914), Shigeru Araki (1920), Sofu Taketomo (1921 and 1947), Hōjin Yano (1935 and 1938), Ryō Mori (1941 and 1948), Ryōho Horii (1947), Ryōsaku Ogawa (1948), Tetsuo Nagiri (1949), Eizō Sawa (1960), Reiichi Gamō (1964, 1973, and 1983), Tsuneo Kuroyanagi (1973), Toshihiko Ōgata (1984), Riō Mori (1986), Katsuyuki Yamaji (1988), and Toshinaga Ida (1989). Katano rendered the *Robā'iyāt* in Japanese from the English translation of Justin H. McCarthy (*Rubaiyat*, London, 1889). Ogawa was the first to translate the *Robā'iyāt* from the original Persian, and this version is admired for its eloquence and beautiful expression. Yano in his translations rendered the quatrains with beautiful and poetic expression in the *tanka* form of classical Japanese verse (five lines, 5 + 7 + 5 + 7 + 7 syllables). Ryō Mori used a simpler, more easily understandable language in the second translation. Taketomo's translation became the source of several quotations in the works of the popular novelist Osamu Dazai (1909-48).

Ferdowsi (q.v.) was the next Persian poet to attract the attention of Japanese writers and authors. A number of translations were made of sections of his *Šāh-nāma* (*Ō-sho* in Japanese), beginning with those that were readily available in 19th-century English, French, German, and Italian versions (on which, see s.v. *ŠĀH-NĀMA* at iranica.com). The first and most frequently treated episode was the tragedy of *Rostam o Sohrāb*. The heroes of the *Šāh-nāma*, with their adventures and tragic fates, hold an appeal for the Japanese, who can find in them a close similarity to the ill-fated heroes of their own mythology and history. The *Šāh-nāma* was introduced to the literary world of Japan in 1916, when Bunmei Tsuchiya (1891-1990), himself a poet, published an abridged translation from English versions. This work, *Perushia shinwa* (Legends of Persia), served as a model for Akijirō Soma's *Perushia no densetsu to rekishi* (Legends and history of Persia, 1922) and Masaharu Higuchi's translation of *Rostam o Sohrāb* (1941). Tsuneo Kuroyanagi was the first to publish abridged tales of the *Šāh-nāma* translated directly from Persian (1969), followed by Emiko Okada's similar work (1999). Abridged translations of stories from the *Šāh-nāma* are also found in Shigeru Araki's literary history of Persia (1922).

Sa'di, like Kayyām and Ferdowsi, has attracted a number of Japanese scholars, who have worked primarily on the *Golestān* (in Japanese, *Bara-en* "Rose garden"). Among them, Gamō and Sawa are notable for the elegance of their



translations. Araki (1922) quoted excerpts of Sa'di's works. Asatori (Chōka) Katō rendered the *Golestān* in beautiful Japanese (1922); Katō is known as one of the first Japanese who converted to Islam and made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Kowashi Takase's translation of *Golestān* was published in 1948. Ryōtan Tokuzawa's *Iran monogatari* (Stories of Iran, 1948) contains an introduction to, and translations of, parts of the *Golestān* (pp. 137-55). Sawa produced an authentic and beautiful, but abridged, translation of it. R. Gamō, having previously published excerpts of his translation of the *Golestān* in several literary journals, was the first scholar to produce a complete translation (1963); it has since been reprinted many times. Gamō's abridged translation of Sa'di's *Bustān* was published in 1964. Kuroyanagi's translation of *Golestān* was published in 1985.

Gamō was the first scholar to publish (1955) a general survey on the life and time of Hafez (q.v.) and his work, with many references to selected verses of his poems. He was followed by Sawa, who translated selected pieces of the work (1966). Gamō's main source was the *Divān* of Hafez edited by Ḥosayn Pežmān-e Bakhtiāri (Tehran, 1936). He also refers to a *Ḥayāt-e Ḥāfez* (in Urdu?) by Šebli No'māni as well as E. G. Browne's *A Literary History of Persia*. Gamō makes further reference to Hafez in his work on Persian lyric poetry (1964). Kuroyanagi published a complete translation of the *Divān* of Hafez in 1976, basing his rendering on a more authentic edition of the work by Moḥammad Qazvini and Qāsem Ġani (Tehran, 1941). In 1988 he published a more elaborate translation of selected *ġazals* of Hafez, with annotations.

Of Islamic, mystical, and philosophical works, translations by the scholar of Islam and other Eastern religions, Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-93), stand out for their authenticity and elegance; those of Jalāl-al-Din Moḥammad Rumi's *Fihī mā fihī* and Mollā Šadrā's *Ketāb al-mašā'er* (both in 1978) are notable. R. Gamō was first to publish an introduction to the *Maṭnawī* with examples of its contents (1964). Akiro Matsumoto produced an elaborate translation of 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi's *Lawāyeḥ* and Šarīf Jorjāni's *Resālat al-wojud* (2002). Kazuo Morimoto of Tokyo University published (2007) a translation of Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Ṭabāṭabā'i's *Šī'a dar Eslām*, together with the appendices of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's English translation. Kazuo Morimoto of Tokyo University published his annotated translation of Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow's *Safar-nāma* in four parts in issues of the Scientific Journal (*Shihō*) of Hokkaido University (2005 and 2006). In the area of wisdom literature (*andarz*, q.v.), Neẓāmi Aruẓi's *Čahār maqāla* and 'Onṣor-al-Ma'āli Keykāvus b. Eskandar's *Qābus-nāma* were



translated by Kuroyanagi and published together (1969).

The name of Emiko Okada is associated with translations of lyrical poetry, and she has also produced several elegant examples of the romantic narratives of Neẓāmi Ganjavi's *Kosrow o Širin* (1977) and *Layli o Majnun* (1981), and Faḡr-al-Din As'ad Gorgāni's *Vis o Rāmin* (1990). Translations of Neẓāmi's *Haft peykar* (q.v.) were published by Takeo Nono (1962) and Kuroyanagi (1971).

Many selections from Persian classics have been translated and included in Japanese textbooks for Persian language study, for example, those by Kuroyanagi. Persian proverbs and maxims were introduced, with annotations and examples of their usage, by Takeshi Katsufuji and Hashem Rajabzadeh (1993).

Contemporary Persian literature. Interest in Persian contemporary literature, especially among younger generations, is increasing in Japan, although that interest may often be driven more by current events than by pursuit of literary values. Translation from Persian into Japanese, with its different way of expression, remains difficult. But there is promise in an emerging generation well versed in Persian as well as Japanese, who are open-minded and positive, and who appreciate and enjoy their acquaintance with the works of Iranian writers.

In the category of the novel and short story, Bozorg 'Alawi's *Kā'en* was among the first to be translated (Ichirō Nono, 1959). Several works of Jalāl Āl-e Aḡmad (q.v.), including *Nefrin-e zamin* and *Jašn-e farḡonda*, have been introduced to Japanese readers. Sādeq Hedāyat's *Buḡ-e kur* was first translated by Eishō Horii in 1976. In the 1970s and 1980s more than twenty works of Hedāyat were translated by Kiminori Nakamura and published in several literary journals, starting with *Āyena-ye šekasta* (1977 and 1983). Nakamura published his translations of selected works of Hedāyat in one volume in 1984. Moḡammad-'Ali Jamālzāda (q.v.) is also among Nakamura's favorite writers, from whom he translated *Fārsi šekar ast* and *Rajol-e siāsi* (1980), followed by a collection of his selected works (1987). Other translators of Hedāyat's works include E. Okada (with *Dāwūd-e guḡpošt*, 1977) and Sachiko Takayasu (*Ābji Kānom*, 1982). A translation of Šamad Behrangī's *Pesarak-e labuḡorūš* by Takashi Iwami was published in 1983. Yuko Fujimoto of Osaka University of Foreign Studies published translations of a number of contemporary literary works, including Šamad Behrangī's *Bist o čahār sā'at dar kvāb o bidāri* (1983) and *Māhi-e siāh-e kučulu* (1984), Simin Dānešvar's *Šahri čon behešt* (1984), and Goli Taraqqī's



Bozorg-bānu-ye ruḥ-e man (1991). Her latest published translation is Zoyā Pirzād's "Hastahā-ye ālbālu" (2007).

Modern Persian poetry has been introduced by a few works of some literary figures including Aḥmad Šāmlū and Foruḡ Farroḳzād (Kiminori Nakamura, tr., 1984). Kimie Maeda (Onuma) has introduced several works of Šāmlu and Sohrāb Sepehri.

Other translations. Kametarō Yagi (1908-86)'s translation of the book *Jang*, written in the last years of Reżā Shah (1938) by Aḥmad Naḳjavān, a deputy in the Ministry of War, shows a parallelism between the political cultures of Iran and Japan in the years leading up to World War II. The author tries to justify war as an unavoidable means to provide mankind with qualifications to achieve perfection and a real civilization. He sees the world as a scene of continuous struggle among nation states for hegemony and national goals in which relations are regulated by power and strength and not by fairness and justice (pp. 4-5).

In the field of folklore, translations of Šādeq Hedāyat's *Neyrangestān* (tr. Shunsuke Okunishi) and K̄vansari's (d. 1713) '*Aqāyed al-nesā*' (tr. E. Okada) were published in one volume (1999). Translations of Persian folktales have mainly introduced the work of Abu'l-Qāsem Enjavi Širāzi, including pieces of his *Qeṣṣahā-ye irāni* (tr. Okunishi and Yuko Hamahata, 1983-86). Other such translations include *Jamšid Šāh* by Mehrdād Bahār (1979) and F. Ṭāyerfar's *Mājarā-ye Aḥmad o Sārā* (2006), the fourth of a series translated by Keiko Ikuo. In historical linguistics, Kazuya Yamauchi published a translation (1997) of Aḥmad Tafāzzoli and Žāla Āmuzgār's *Pahlavi; adabiyāt wa dastur-e ān*.

Another work dealing with Persian culture is Yoshifusa Seki's beautiful translation into Japanese of *Golestān-e kiāl* (Flower garden of imagination, Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization, Tehran, 1988), titled *Yume no hanazono* (Tehran, 1997). The book displays selected works of painting and miniature art, book decoration, calligraphy, wood carving, tiles, glazed vases and vessels, coins, and other art objects preserved in Iranian museums and other public collections.



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