



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 13

July-September 1999

Number 3

Mark Twain in Japan

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This summer when I went to Japan to lecture on Mark Twain, I had only a vague idea of Mark Twain scholarship there. I was overwhelmed by what I found. Mark Twain studies in Japan are not just alive and well: (as Twain himself would have said) they're "booming."

My introduction to the topic of "Mark Twain in Japan" was a 1963 article by that title in the *Mark Twain Journal* by Prof. Shunsuke Kamei, professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo and Japan's pioneer Americanist. When I met Prof. Kamei at a reception in Kyoto, he was kind enough to bring me a copy of his 1997 article, "Mark Twain in Japan, Reconsidered," that expands on and updates his earlier piece, summarizing the history of when and how Twain's works were translated into Japanese, assessing the relative success and failure of these efforts, and providing a brief overview of critical writing on Twain in Japan. (This essay is of particular value to English-speaking Twain scholars since the two book-length studies of Twain in

Published at *The Citadel*

Japan by Yoshio Katsuura remain untranslated, as does Professor Kamei's article, "Mark Twain and Japanese Fiction," and his books on Twain, the most recent of which came out in 1995.)

There is an increasingly large body of Twain criticism written by Japanese scholars in English. Indeed, two of the most illuminating articles that exist on "A True Story" were written in English and published in Japanese journals by two eminent Japanese Twain scholars, Prof. Makoto Nagawara (emeritus, Ritsumeikan University) and Professor Toshio Watanabe (Japan Women's University). I had known about the first of these essays previously (and cited it in the appropriate volume of *The Oxford Mark Twain*.) But I had not known about Prof. Watanabe's article until he handed me a copy (along with an excellent piece he published on Twain's autobiography). I would certainly have my graduate students read both of these articles when I teach "A True Story" in the future.

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American literature specialists from Japan, China and Korea at the Literature Section of the Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, July 31, 1999.

Sitting: (left to right) Ki-



yohiko Murayama, Yoko Mitsuishi, Masako Notoji, Hiroko Sato, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Masago Igawa, Shunsuke Kamei, Toshio Watanabe, Yorimasa Nasu; **Standing:** (left to right) Tetsuya Ishidou, Satoko Ito, Chiyo Yoshii, Naboru Yamashita, Keiko Nakagawa, Chulwon Cho, Masao Tsunematsu, Takako Takeda, Tsuyoshi Ishihara, Yashiko Takita, Zhu Shida, Jung Min Choi, Masahiro Oikawa, Takashi Sasaki, Ryo Waguri, Tomoyuki Zettsu, Kazuhiko Goto, Hiko Morishita

I was brought to Japan by Ritsumeikan University, the Fulbright Commission, the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission, and the Japanese Association of American Studies, to give a keynote talk at the Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar, an annual conference of about a hundred Americanists from Japan, Korea, China and Indonesia. The focus of the literature section this year was Mark Twain, and a number of fascinating papers were presented in the three sessions following my keynote address (which, at the suggestion of my hosts, focused on Twain's writing around the turn-of-the-century—principally *Following the Equator*, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic (Brought Down to Date)," "My First Lie and How I Got Out of It," etc.) At Twain sessions chaired by Professor Watanabe, Professor Masahiro Oikawa (Ritsumeikan University), and Professor Kamei, the following papers were presented: (1) Professor Kiyohiko Murayama (Tokyo Metropolitan University), "A Response to Professor Fishkin's Keynote Address"; (2) Kazuhiko Goto (Rikkyo University), "Mark Twain's Sense of an Ending: A View on His Attitude Toward Writing at the Turn of the Century"; (3) Yoko Mitsuishi (Tokyo University Junior College), "Mark Twain's Ever-Growing Curiosity and Vision at the Turn of the Century: Stories Without an Ending"; (4) Masago Igawa (Science University of Tokyo), "The Outrage of Young Satan: Mark Twain's Views on the Imperial Age"; and (5) Ryo Waguri (Koka Women's College), "*Following the Equator*: Twain's Maturity." All of the papers were stimulating and well-written. Several contained startlingly fresh insights. I learned something from each of them, and each provoked a lively discussion.

Ritsumeikan University will be publishing the conference proceedings. Libraries and individuals interested in ordering the volume should contact Center for American Studies at Ritsumeikan University: ml-ritscfas@ml.ritsumei.ac.jp or yone@lt.ritsumei.ac.jp.

I was happy to learn about the plethora of new Twain translations that have recently appeared in Japan and to meet the scholars responsible for them. The most ambitious of these is the series of twenty volumes that

Sairyusha Publishing Company is bringing out. Fourteen of the books have appeared within the last two years or so, and the remaining volumes are due out next year. Many include translations of the afterwords or introductions from the Oxford Mark Twain. (Professor Yoshio Kanaya (Kanagawa University), for example, is translating and editing the 1910 edition of *Mark Twain's Speeches* with Hal Holbrook's OMT introduction). In addition to the Sairyusha volumes, other Twain books are being translated as well. For example, Prof. Keiko Nakagawa (Sonoda Gakuen Women's College) and Prof. Mitsuko Miyamoto (Kobe Gakuin University) just published their translation of Dixon Wecter's *Mark Twain's Love Letters* this summer.

The high quality of the papers I heard at the conference, the animated and engaged nature of the discussions, Sairyusha's translation project, and the energy and commitment on the part of the faculty and graduate students I encountered suggest that Twain scholarship in Japan will continue to thrive during the coming years. (I strongly urged the members of the group to submit papers to the next international Twain conference in Elmira, and I look forward to their contributions.)

Why are the Japanese so fascinated by Twain? Surely part of Japanese scholars' enthusiasm for him is related to their sense of him as somehow being particularly "American." (This is, after all, a country that also adores baseball and consumes vast quantities of Coca Cola.) But it is more than that: Japanese scholars are deeply engaged by the moral struggles Twain explores, the philosophical dilemmas he ponders, the social ills he exposes, the stylistic innovations he experiments with, his efforts to come to terms with the challenges of modernity, and his puckish determination to disrupt our complacency with laughter when we least expect it. In short, they are probably attracted to Twain for many of the same reasons scholars in the U.S. are: Twain is an amazingly rich and intriguing writer whose works continue to enthrall and excite even after multiple rereadings.

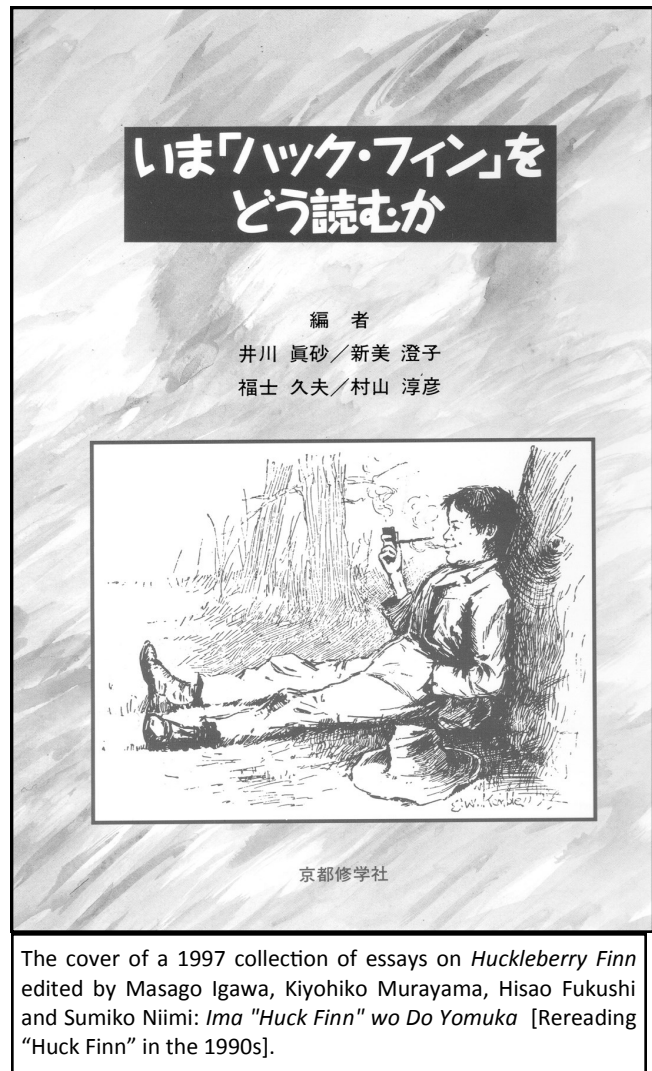
Virtually none of the articles written in English by Japanese scholars appear in Twain bibliographies published in the U.S. This vacuum is particularly distressing since there is no language barrier excuse. Also disturbing

Twain scholars at dinner hosted by the Kansai Mark Twain Forum in Kyoto, July 31, 1999. Front: Ryo Waguri; First row (from left to right): Yoko Mitsuishi, Masago Igawa, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Mariko Watanabe, Masao Tsunematsu, Tsuyoshi Ishihara, Yori-masa Nasu, Hiko Morishita. Second row (from left to right): Keiko Nakagawa, Naomi Nakahira, Yuko Kawasaki, Mitsuko Miyamoto, Mitsue Umeda. Back row (from left to right): Takashi Sasaki, Tetsuya Ishidou, Jung Min Choi, Zhu Shida Hiroaki Ichikawa, Akiko Yamamoto, Chulwon Cho, Bobby Fishkin, Satoko Ito, Kazuhiko Goto.



is the exclusion of Asian scholarship from the last two volumes of *American Literary Scholarship: An Annual*. The most recent volume, *American Literary Scholarship: 1997*, edited by Gary Scharnhorst (University of New Mexico) and published by Duke University Press, contains 75 pages on "Scholarship in Languages Other than English." I welcome the informative essays on American literary scholarship from France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Spain, Costa Rica, Cuba, Peru, Argentina, and Mexico. Yet these 75 pages on "Scholarship in Languages Other than English" have no space for any criticism published in Japan—or in China, or Korea for that matter

From 1975 to 1995, readers of *American Literary Scholarship* had the pleasure of reading overviews of Japanese contributions to American literary studies written first by Akiko Miyake (Kobe College) and later by Keiko Beppu (Kobe Jogakuin University) or Hiroko Sato (Tokyo Women's Christian University). But in 1996 this section was inexplicably missing, and it was still missing in 1997. That's a real loss to all Americanists, but particularly to Twain scholars—and not only because Twain, in his characteristic lucidity, has helped sensitize us to the dynamics involved in implicitly dismissing the creative and intellectual achievements of people of another race as undeserving of our attention. Since 1995, the last year that Japanese criticism appeared in *American Literary Scholarship*, a wealth of Japanese Twain criticism has been published. I am now personally aware of as many as twenty-two critical articles published in Japanese journals and books in 1997 alone by Japanese Twain scholars on works such as *Huck Finn, No.44, The Mysterious Stranger, Connecticut Yankee*, and "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed." The list includes new essays on *Huckleberry Finn* by Hiko Morishita, Hisao Fukushi, Fumiko Goto, Masago Igawa, Yoko Mitsuishi, Kiyohiko Murayama, Yoshinobu Nakajima, Sumiko Niimi, Okoshi Takashi, Hidekazu Tachizaki, and Noboru Yamashita, many of which appeared in a Japanese anthology of criticism on *Huckleberry Finn* in 1997 co-edited by Professor Igawa with Professors Kiyohiko Murayama, Hisao Fukushi, and Sumiko Niimi (I welcome the news that a number of these essays will be noted in the checklist of scholarship on Southern literature prepared by Prof. Yasuhiro Yoshizaki (Kita-kyushu Univ.) in the forthcoming *Mississippi Quarterly Supplement*, due out later this fall). Twain research by Japanese scholars continues to appear; 1998 and 1999 have brought many additional publications, including two articles by Tsuyoshi Ishihara on *The Innocents Abroad*. When *American Literary Scholarship* again includes work by Japanese scholars I understand that plans are under way to do so in the next volume, the 1998 annual. I hope that research published during the "missing" years (1996 and



1997) will be included, as well.

While readers of *American Literary Scholarship* have been deprived of two years of publications by Japanese Twain scholars, they have *never* had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with publications on Twain or other American writers by their colleagues in China. Between 1979 and 1989 alone, Chinese scholars published some three hundred thirty articles on American literature in Chinese journals (Yang). To the best of my knowledge, not one of these articles—nor any of the hundreds of articles published in China during the last ten years—made it into *American Literary Scholarship*. The same is true of the hundreds of articles on American literature published in Korea.

Americanists in the West have cut ourselves off from important primary as well as secondary sources through our insularity. Thirty years before he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Japan's Nobel laureate, Kenzaburo Oe, wrote an important essay on *Huckleberry Finn* that is well-known in Japan but remains untranslated. Americans lose out when we're deprived of a Nobel Prize winner's extended meditations on *Huckleberry Finn*, just as we lose

out when our bibliographies omit the two excellent articles in English on "A True Story" by Japanese scholars.

In her 1998 Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, Janice Radway pondered whether the association should change its name; the current name struck her as perhaps too arrogant and imperialistic. (When I asked the Literature Section of the Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar what they thought of the possibility she raised, hands shot up from professors from Korea and China. A professor of American Studies from Korea was aghast. "Don't do it," he warned. "If you do, a lot of us will be out of jobs!" The professor from Beijing expressed puzzlement: "In my University we have Japanese Studies, Chinese Studies, American Studies. What's the problem?") The American Studies community in the U.S. may well have a problem on the arrogance front, but not one that can be solved by a name change. It would be more productive to target what Maureen Montgomery (University of Canterbury, New Zealand), chair of the International Committee of ASA, has called the "one way only" flow of ideas. It would be more constructive to pay more attention to valuable work in the field that is being done in parts of the world that scholars in the U.S. tend to ignore.

The Longfellow Project at Harvard has recently pioneered in recovering literature written within the geographical borders of what is now the United States in languages other than English. The most recent publication to come out of the project, *Multilingual America; Transnationalism, Ethnicity and the Languages of American Literature*, edited by Werner Sollors, features essays

about American novels, poems, stories and plays written in Spanish, Yiddish, German, Japanese, Chinese, etc. Given Radway's fears that "American Studies" as a field needs to beware of indulging in imperialistic arrogance, and given the Longfellow Project's recognition of the existence of American literature in languages other than English, giving more attention and respect to work in American literature by scholars outside the U.S., and in languages other than English would seem to be a logical next step.

As Twain scholars, we need to develop strategies for making sure that more of this interesting work by Japanese scholars (in both Japanese and English) finds its way into Twain bibliographies in the future. And as American literature specialists, we need to encourage the editors of *American Literary Scholarship* to open its pages on a regular basis to work published in Japan, China, and Korea. There is no shortage of qualified scholars who could do the job. Indeed, many of them appear in the photos in this *Circular*.

Works Cited

(Works with asterisks have not been translated into English. What follows is of necessity only a very abbreviated and partial listing of the voluminous scholarship on Twain in Japan. I am grateful to Tsuyoshi Ishihara for his assistance.)

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Letter from the Hannibal Historic District Development Commission

Dear Mark Twain Scholars:

The Hannibal Historic District Development Commission (HDDC) is seeking your help. We are charged by the City of Hannibal with supervision of the historic district, which includes the boyhood home of Mark Twain. (As many of you undoubtedly know,

the home is the original structure on the original site, as are all other buildings in the historic district except for the John Clemens office, which was moved to the present location.)

The Mark Twain Home Foundation, which owns and operates the home, is proposing to build new buildings in the historic district in the immediate vicinity of the Home. (The foundation members include one historian, bank presidents, real estate developers, an attorney, and manager of the local cement company and the newspaper publisher). The foundation's immediate plan is to construct a church and a school. (We understand that there is a desire

Calls for Papers Mark Twain Circle

American Literature Association 2000 May 25-28, 2000, Long Beach, CA	Modern Language Association 2000 December 27-30, Washington DC
1. Panel topic: Mark Twain on Race and Ethnicity. Send papers/proposals to Joseph B. McCullough [joemcc@nevada.edu]. 2. Panel topic: Mark Twain and Native Americans. Send papers/proposals to Lauren Muller [lsmuller@uclink4.berkeley.edu]. 3. Informal roundtable topic: Why I Work on Mark Twain. Send summary paragraphs to John Bird [birdj@access1.net]. DEADLINE FOR ALA PAPERS/PROPOSALS IS DECEMBER 1, 1999	1. Open panel topic: any aspect of Mark Twain's work/life. 2. Panel topic: "Mark Twain's Literary Daughters" Con women writers who were influenced by Twain, or whose fiction is implicitly or explicitly in conversation with Twain. Send papers/proposals (both sessions) to Shelley Fisher Fishkin [sfishkin@mail.utexas.edu]. DEADLINE FOR MLA PAPERS/PROPOSALS IS FEBRUARY 1, 2000

MTC Executive Committee

The April-June 1999 *Mark Twain Circular* included an erroneous report of current members of the Executive Committee of the Mark Twain Circle for which I, as the responsible party, apologize. The list should be as follows: Jim Zwick (Syracuse U), Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua (Harvard U), Jeff Steinbrink (Franklin and Marshall C), and Michael J. Kiskis (Elmira C; ex-officio as immediate past-president).

CJim Leonard, Circular Editor

later on to construct a printer's shop.) These structures will not comply with HDDC guidelines because they are not structures that actually existed on the location, or for that matter in Hannibal. They are "fictions," if you will-ersatz reconstructions of old-looking structures that were never there. These buildings will comprise a village in the immediate area around the boyhood home to the north and east. Actual structures in the proposed area in Twain's time included a grocery store Orion operated for a while, a hotel and an unspecified commercial structure. The HDDC does not oppose careful reconstruction of these buildings.

The Foundation has been reluctant to state why they believe the church and school would be appropriate, except that they wish to "honor" Mark Twain. The Foundation has indicated that the local Baptist college has been consulted and services can be held in the church on Sundays for tourists and that Twain went to two churches in Hannibal. No reason has been offered for the school except that Twain has been widely read in schools and one-room schools are associated with him. The HDDC was told at a city council meeting that the school building could be used as a meeting place for bus tours.

The city council has instructed the Foundation to go to the Zoning Board for a variance. We are to express our opinion to the Zoning Board as well. Our concern is simple; the proposed constructions are not history. They are tourism. We would like your help in our efforts to articulate why history should matter to Hannibal, and how respecting history can actually be good for tourism. We are woefully unprepared to address the Twain issues. Therefore, we would like your opinions on the following issues:

1) How important is historical accuracy in Han-

nibal's depiction of Twain and the town? And what affect would efforts to preserve the historical integrity of this area have on your decision to visit or return to Hannibal as a tourist?

2) What was the role of the church in Twain's life and is the construction of a church an appropriate way to honor him?

3) What were the schools Twain attended? What was the role of school in Twain's life and is the construction of a school appropriate?

4) Should the Foundation build ersatz structures or should money be put into the rehabilitation of existing mid-19th Century building stock? (There are many such buildings in the Historic District.)

6) What are the risks of a reconstructed village to people's experience of history?

7) How can Hannibal best honor Mark Twain and simultaneously promote tourism?

Your thoughtful replies would be most appreciated. If the decision regarding these structures is made on a strictly political basis, the result is a foregone conclusion. Please mail or email your replies to:

Terrell Dempsey, Secretary

Hannibal Historic District Development Commission

City Hall, 300 Broadway

Hannibal, Missouri 63401

Fax: 573-221-2808

email: tdempsey@nemonet.com

Dates to Circle

November 4-6, 1999. South Atlantic Modern Language Association; Atlanta, GA. Mark Twain Session: Mark Twain and Culture Influence. Chair: Janet Gabler-Hover (Georgia State U).

December 27-30, 1999. Modern Language Association; Chicago, IL.

May 25-28, 2000. American Literature Association; Long Beach, CA. See "Calls for Papers," p. 5.

December 27-30, 2000. Modern Language Association; Washington, DC. See "Calls for Papers," p. 5.