



Spring 2009 Japanese Titles

CRIME, MYSTERY, THRILLER

MADE IN JAPAN by Akira Kuroda

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Kawade

MATERIAL: English synopsis and sample translation

PUBL DATE: November 2001

BLURB: A novel about a group of Japanese who spend their childhood abroad and come back to Japan as teenagers. They indulge in drugs, watch snuff films, and experiment with homosexuality. One day, one of them gets it into his head that he wants to experience what it would be like to kill someone. His target is a member of the group itself.

Akira Kuroda won the Bungei Prize for *Made In Japan*.

JOURNEY UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN by Keigo Higashino (mystery/crime)

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha

PUBL DATE: August 1999 (Japan)

MATERIAL: English synopsis, translation of the first five chapters

BLURB: An epic mystery novel, perhaps the greatest masterpiece of this bestselling Japanese author.

JOURNEY UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN has been nominated for the Naoki Prize, made into a television drama series and enjoyed tremendous and enduring popularity. Sales of copies were in excess of 1,200,000 as of April 2007 and show no signs of abating.

The story begins in an abandoned building in Osaka where a murder has been committed. We focus on the lives of the two central characters, Ryoji, the son of the victim and Yukiho the daughter of the suspect as they grow up in the shadow of the violence of this one act. In an inimitably pithy style, Higashino paints these children's lives as if deprived of the warmth of the sun's true light, condemned to walk only in the murkiness of *the midnight sun*.

INTER SEX by Housei Hahakigi

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha

MATERIAL: English synopsis and sample translation

PUBL DATE: August 2008 (Japan)

BLURB: Shoko is a gynaecologist, specializing in gender-based medicine. Her former colleague is accused of medical malpractice. Kishikawa, director of Sun Beach Hospital, is witness for the defence. Shoko is impressed with his speech. A few months later, Shoko is offered a job at Sun Beach Hospital where gender identity disorder is treated and sex reassignment surgery is carried out. Shoko devotes all her energy to treat patients who suffered from these sensitive problems. She discovers that many of Kishikawa's friends and acquaintances have died strange and unnatural deaths. Is she the only one who can uncover the truth?

SLEEPLESS TOWN by Seishu Hase (crime/suspense)

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori
PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Kadokawa Publishing
MATERIAL: English ms available
PUBL DATE: August 1996 (Japan)

BLURB: We enter the dark world of the Chinese mafia, the underworld of Kabukicho, Shinjuku, Tokyo. Kenichi is Taiwanese-Japanese. In order to survive in 'Kabukicho', sleepless town, he believes only in himself. He does not mind telling a lie, betraying and selling his friends and his girl friend, and hurting other people.

The author vividly describes people in Kabukicho; one man finds sexual satisfaction in slitting people with a knife, a person with a 'Lolita Complex', an adult entertainment writer who destroys himself by gambling. The film based on this novel was a big hit all over Asia.

HORROR

BLACK HOUSE by Yusuke Kishi (horror/thriller)

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori
PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Kadokawa
MATERIAL: English synopsis and first chapter available
PUBL DATE: June 1997 (Japan)

BLURB: This bestselling horror/suspense novel won the best Japan Horror Novel prize in 1997 and was made into a film in Japan (1999) and in Korea (2007), a bit hit in both countries.

Shinji Wakatsuki works for a life insurance company in Kyoto and is kept busy assessing insurance payouts. One day, he is asked to visit one of his customers and discovers a child trying to hang himself. Shortly after that, the customer, Shigenori applies for death benefit but Shinji senses something suspicious about the customer's attitude and starts his own investigation. He finds out that Shigenori had cut his own fingers off to claim disability benefit. He believes that Shigenori killed the child. Then he and his girl friend start to experience strange things; he receives silent phone calls, her cats are killed brutally and her colleague is murdered, his legs and arms cut off. Shinji doesn't know nightmares lie ahead...

A DARK FAIRY TALE by Otsuichi (horror)

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori
PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha
MATERIAL: English synopsis and sample translation
PUBL DATE: September 1996 (Japan)

BLURB: A high school girl loses her memory and the eyesight in her left eye after a car accident. Thanks to an eye transplant she can see again but her character seems altered. The left eye begins to throw up strange images in her brain. They are the left eye's memories. She decides to confront the issue head on and travels to where her donor used to live, only to walk into a nightmare...

Otsuichi made his debut as a writer while still in high school. His first novel, **SUMMER, FIREWORKS AND MY DEAD BODY**, is also available. This is about young siblings trying to hide a dead body. It is narrated by the dead girl. His major works include a novel **GOTH**, which was made into a manga, and a short story collection **ZOO**, which was made into a film.

Literary Fiction

OUTLET by Randy Taguchi

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Trannet
PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Gentosha
RIGHTS SOLD: Italian – Lain Fazi S.R.L, Rumanian – Quality Books, Russian – Eksmo, US – Vertical
PUBL DATE: 2000 (Japan), 2003 (US)

BLURB: After a steamy one-night stand with her old friend Kimura, Yuki Asakura learns that her brother Taka's badly decomposed body has been found in his apartment; it seems he has starved himself to death. Yuki helps her alcoholic father and distraught mother make it through the funeral, then she turns to her college psychology professor and former lover, Atsuo Kunisada, whom she hopes will help her cope with

her loss. Yuki has also begun smelling the stench of death on people who appear healthy, including Kimura, and has been troubled by surreal dreams about her brother. When she runs into an old classmate, Ritsuko Honda, who's now studying shamanism, Ritsuko steers Yuki to a shaman named Yamagishi, who helps her to interpret the dreams as Yuki closes in on the heart of the mystery. She struggles to maintain her sanity as she's torn between dreams and reality; 'I'm way past neurotic and into schizophrenic'. But the truth is more complicated: it becomes clear that what she smelt on Kimura was cancer, for which he is successfully treated, and that her sexual encounters may have a healing power. Taguchi's absorbing prose links the mystical to the psychological; the novel's dark twists and turns keep you hooked until she trips you up at the last moment. This bizarre, provocative and sometimes grisly debut novel was a huge bestseller in Japan

THE PRAYER OF AUDUBON by Kotaro Isaka

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Trannet

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Sinchosha

PUBL DATE: December 2000 (Japan)

BLURB: Ito fails to rob a convenient store and loses consciousness while on the run. He wakes up on an island called Ogishima. Ogishima has had no contact with the outside world since the Edo era and all the residents are peculiar: a painter who lies all the time, Sakura who commits sanctioned murder in order to keep the island in order, a scarecrow who can foresee the future. On Ito's second day on the island, the scarecrow is dismembered and killed, and his head goes missing. With his talent for seeing into the future, why didn't the scarecrow prevent his own death?

In 2000, THE PRAYER OF AUDUBON won the Shincho Grand Prize of Mystery, making Kotaro Isaka's debut as a professional writer. He has also won the Eiji Yoshihara Prize for the best new author and the Japanese Authors Association of Mystery Award in the short story category in 2004.

He is seen as a second Murakami.

FALLING DOWN TO THE STAR by Hitomi Kanehara

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha

PUBL DATE: December 2007 (Japan)

BLURB: Three star crossed lovers: A young woman splits up with her boyfriend and moves in with her new lover. A young man tries to commit suicide when he finds out that his boyfriend has been having an affair with a woman. A second man mourns the loss of his girlfriend. The deeper they love, the lonelier they become in equal measure.

SALES OF PREVIOUS TITLES: UK - Random House, US - Dutton, Brazil - Terra, Catalan - Column, Czech Republic - Argo, Denmark - Bjartur, Finland - Kustannusosakeyhtiö Sammakko, France - Grasset, Greece - Oceanida, Germany - List, Holland - Prometheus, Hungary - Magveto, Iceland - Bjartur, Italy - Fazi, Japan - Shueisha, Norway - Bjartur, Poland - Albatros, Portugal - ASA, Russia - AST, Spain - Emece, Taiwan - Sharp Point – Press, Swedish – under offer

HYDRA by Hitomi Kanehara

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shinchosha

PUBL DATE: January 2007 (Japan)

BLURB: Saki is an anorexic model, her boyfriend is a photographer. They live together, but Saki knows he does not love her. She knows that he likes her slim and she's scared that he's going to dump her which only exacerbates her eating disorder. One day, she meets Matsui the singer of a popular indie band. Matsui loves her and Saki knows he will make her happier. But Saki is scared to leave the photographer, meanwhile, she's wasting away.....

SALES OF PREVIOUS TITLES: as above

GO by Kazuki Kaneshiro

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Kadokawa

MATERIAL: English ms available

PUBL DATE: March 2003 (Japan)

BLURB: A very funny Romeo and Juliet love story about growing up, working out who you are and fitting in....or not

Sugihara is Korean but lives in Japan. He makes the decision to cross boundaries and go to a Japanese high school. He fights against discrimination and prejudice-sometimes literally, with the boxing skills he has learned from his father, a former professional boxer. He falls in love with a girl named Sakurai-though keeping from her the fact that he is Korean-a misunderstanding which leads to the fatal stabbing of best friend. No longer able to maintain his pretence, he reveals his true identity to her. Warned by her father not to go near Chinese or Korean boys, Sakurai breaks off their relationship. After a full-blown fight with his own father, Sugihara declares that he is going to "erase national boundaries." Can he persuade Sakurai that a true life is one lived without racial discrimination?

RULE by Seiji Kodokoro

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha

MATERIAL: English synopsis and sample translation

PUBL DATE: April 2002 (Japan)

BLURB: A novel set at the end of WW2. Japan could surrender at any time. On Luzon island, Narugami is ordered to do a cargo shipment as the captain of his platoon. Life on the island is very hard, the soldiers are sick with malaria and starving to the point of death. One day a soldier shoots down a US plane, and captures the US pilot alive.

DON'T LAUGH AT OTHER PEOPLE'S SEX LIVES by Naokora Yamazaki

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Kawade

PUBL DATE: November 2004 (Japan)

BLURB: This is a fresh and sentimental *The Graduate* style love story about a young man who falls in love with a much older woman who lectures at the local art school.

Naokora Yamazaki won Bungei Prize and was nominated for Akutagawa Prize in 2004. His latest title has been nominated for Akutagawa Prize in 2008.

CRIMSON ROOM by Toshimitsu Takagi (fiction)

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Sunmark

PUBL DATE: April 2008 (Japan)

BLURB: 'Escape the room' games are a huge hit all round the world. Mitsuaki Takagi used to be in the limelight as a great new game writing talent. These days he is management, no longer close to the creativity of production. He spends his time getting drunk and wandering around down town. One day, a young talented creator, K, appears and says that he is a big fan of Mitsuaki. Mitsuaki uses K's talent to make a dramatic comeback.

ROLLING WITH THE WIND by Mangetsu Hanamura

AGENT: The Marsh Agency, Tuttle Mori

PUBLISHER(S): Japan – Shueisha

PUBL DATE: June 2000 (Japan)

BLURB: Hikaru is depressed after failing to pass his university entrance exams. He is under huge pressure from his repressive father, a famous author. Life is good when he rides his new yellow bike or when he hangs out with his girlfriend, Moeko. Then Moeko gets pregnant at the same time as his father is exposed for plagiarism. Hikaru can't handle the pressure. He kills his father and runs away on his yellow bike with Tetsuo a yakuza. The two boys go to Hokkaido and hide in the deep forest, planning to travel to the far south of Japan. Is there any hope for their future?