

9th JLPP International Translation Competition:
English Section Review of the Contemporary Literature Category

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Umberto Eco felt that translation was essentially a negotiation, a process of continuous decision making about whether to privilege the source or target text and context, or, more accurately, how to find a happy medium between them. The winners of the 9th JLPP Translation Competition have successfully negotiated the challenges set them by our sample texts and have created translations that respect the genius of the original Japanese while finding an English-language voice in which to express that quality.

Grand Prize: Rebecca Graham

Rebecca Graham, the Grand Prize Winner, demonstrates a keen sensitivity to the language and structure of Idogawa Iko's "Mai houmu," capturing the stream-of-conscious narration in a very literal English version that manages to be highly readable and poetic at the same time. The voice she creates for the young mother in search of a home builder is fully convincing, at times poignant. Rebecca Graham's translations of the three short essays by Kishimoto Sachiko are equally strong, deftly capturing the humor inherent in a foreigner's view of Kabuki or the wonder of a ripe peach. "I wonder if somewhere a religion exists devoted to the worship of peaches. The fact is, when I eat a peach, in my brain I'm one of a thousand humble followers gathered around a giant peach idol crying out 'Huzzah!!' as we throw ourselves to the ground in adoration." These translations demonstrate a high degree of sophistication and polish rare in a translator at the early stages of a career, and they fully deserve our Grand Prize designation.

Our Prize Winners, Laura Ikeda and Nicolas Keen have also negotiated the challenges posed by these texts, producing translations that rose to the top of a large and deep field of entries to the current Competition. Like Ms. Graham's translations, theirs demonstrate a high degree of faithfulness to the source texts while creating individual works that suggest their personal abilities and styles as translators.

Second Prize: Laura Ikeda

Laura Ikeda's version of "Mai houmu" almost exactly recreates the Japanese syntax and punctuation, a practice that in many hands would produce an unreadable translation, and yet she manages to find the graceful flow of the original and capture it in English: "Your name is Arakawa, my maiden name was Arakawa, she murmured, looking at his name tag, and the Arakawa in front of her replied 'I see' with a smile and immediately dropped his eyes to the form she had filled out, it's Shibakawa now, the 'kawa' part is the same, the kanji for 'river' is still there, so you're just a different kind of river, he said as though he was talking to himself, and then asked, you have two children, is that right? so she nodded." The rendering is similarly faithful yet delicate throughout. Ms. Ikeda's versions of Kishimoto's essays are also effective. They are accurate without being stiff, humorous but with a carefully modulated tone. The two imaginary foreign men attending the traditional theater in "Kabuki" come alive in her translation with all the gentle irony of the original. Ms. Ikeda richly deserves the Prize Winner designation.

Second Prize: Nicolas Keen

Nicolas Keen's translations also convinced us of both their quality and what was, perhaps, the boldest approach among our translators. He, too, hews close to the original stream-of-conscious narrative, but with some stylistic innovations that produce excellences that we found notable. The opening lines of his rendering of Idogawa's short story illustrate the strengths of these translations: "Spread over her outfit, the splash-like stains give the appearance of an eruption from the middle of her chest, the light beige dress making it all the more obvious. *Must be from the kids getting their breakfast or drool on me*, she thinks and leans in her body to open the glass door absorbing the midday light. Stepping inside, she tells herself, *That's what you get for wearing something plain that isn't dark*." Mr. Keen's translations, particularly for the Kishimoto essays, did suffer from a few clear mis-readings of the meaning in the original texts. While it is imperative for a translator to be as accurate possible, all translators make mistakes, and we felt that these lapses in interpretive skills were more than compensated by the high quality of the translations as whole, which were on a level achieved only by our other Prize Winner and our Grand Prize Winner in the current Competition.

All three of our winners are to be congratulated on the work they submitted for our review. It demonstrates considerable accomplishment and enormous potential, and we encourage them to continue their work in this field and the development of their skills.

第9回 JLPP 翻訳コンクール 現代文学部門英語講評

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スティーブン・スナイダー

ウンベルト・エーコは、翻訳とは要するに取り引きで、原文と文脈のどちらを優先するのかを絶え間なく決断するプロセスであり、より正確に言えば、両者の間に妥協点を見つけることだと考えていた。第9回 JLPP 翻訳コンクールの受賞者たちは課題作が突きつける難問とみごとに取り引きし、独創的な日本語原作を表す英語のヴォイスを見出ししながら翻訳を創り上げている。

最優秀賞 レベッカ・グレアム

最優秀賞のレベッカ・グレアムさんには井戸川射子著「マイホーム」の言語表現と構造に対する鋭い感性がある。意識の流れに沿った語りを忠実に英語に置き換えつつ、同時に非常に読みやすく、かつ詩的な表現を成し遂げている。ハウスメーカーを探す若い母親のヴォイスは翻訳において十分な説得力を持ち、時に痛切である。

また、岸本佐知子による短いエッセイ3篇の翻訳も同様にすばらしく、歌舞伎を見る外国人の脳内や熟した桃への驚嘆を描いた原作のユーモラスな筆致が巧みにとらえられている。例えば、

“I wonder if somewhere a religion exists devoted to the worship of peaches. The fact is, when I eat a peach, in my brain I’m one of a thousand humble followers gathered around a giant peach idol crying out ‘Huzzah!!’ as we throw ourselves to the ground in adoration.”

(桃をご神体にした桃教、というのはないのだろうか。じっさい桃を食べている時、私の脳内では千人の土民の私が巨大な桃を取り囲み、「ウラー」と言いながらひれ伏している。)

グレアムさんの訳文は、経験の浅い翻訳者とは思えない非常に洗練されたものであり、最優秀賞にふさわしい優れた作品である。

優秀賞受賞の池田ローラさんとニコラス・キーンさんも原作の持つ難問にうまく対処し、今回の多数の応募者のなかでトップレベルに立つものであった。グレアムさんの翻訳と同様、原作に忠実でありながら、翻訳者としてそれぞれの個性や能力を見せている。

優秀賞 池田ローラ

池田ローラさんの「マイホーム」の翻訳は原作の日本語構文や句読法をほとんどその

まま再現している。そのような訳文は多くの場合、読みにくくなりがちなのだが、原作のしなやかな流れが英語でみごとに表現されている。例えば、

“Your name is Arakawa, my maiden name was Arakawa, she murmured, looking at his name tag, and the Arakawa in front of her replied ‘I see’ with a smile and immediately dropped his eyes to the form she had filled out, it’s Shibakawa now, the ‘kawa’ part is the same, the kanji for ‘river’ is still there, so your just a different kind of river, he said as though he was talking to himself, and then asked, you have two children, is that right? so she nodded.”

（荒川さんですか、私の旧姓と一緒に、と名札を見て彼女が呟くと、目の前の荒川は、なるほどですね、と笑顔で返事した、そのまま彼女の書いた記入用紙に目を落とし、今は芝川さまなんですね、違う川になったんだ、と独り言みたいに言う、お子さんがお二人なんですね、と聞くので、彼女は頷く。）

作品全編にわたり、忠実であると同時に繊細な翻訳である。

岸本佐知子のエッセイ翻訳も優れていた。正確だが堅苦しくはなく、ユーモラスだがトーンはていねいに整えられている。「カブキ」では伝統芸能を鑑賞する想像上の外国人二人が、原作の軽い皮肉な口調を持つ訳文のなかで生き生きと立ち現れている。池田さんの力は優秀賞受賞にふさわしい。

優秀賞 ニコラス・キーン

ニコラス・キーンさんについても、その翻訳の質の高さ、そして恐らく応募者のなかで最も大胆に取り組んでいたことを我々審査委員は評価した。

キーンさんも「マイホーム」の内的独白に忠実だが、文体に工夫が凝らされていて注目される。それが効果を上げているのが「マイホーム」第1文である。

“Spread over her outfit, the splash-like stains give the appearance of an eruption from the middle of her chest, the light beige dress making it all the more obvious. *Must be from the kids getting their breakfast or drool on me*, she thinks and leans in her body to open the glass door absorbing the midday light. Stepping inside, she tells herself, *That’s what you get for wearing something plain that isn’t dark.*”

（見れば胸の中央から吹き出るように、服に水滴のシミが散って模様になっている、薄いベージュのワンピースだから目立つ、子どもたちの食べこぼしかよだれだろう、無地の服ならやっぱり、黒以外は着ちゃいけないんだと思いながら彼女は、昼の光を吸い込むガラスのドアを、体の重さで押し開け中に入った。）

キーンさんは、特に岸本佐知子のエッセイ翻訳において、幾つか誤訳があった。翻訳はできるだけ正確でなければならないが、翻訳者は誰でも間違えるものであり、それらの

ちょっとした解釈の誤りは今回の受賞者たちのみが達成した翻訳の質の高さにより、十分に補われていたと考える。

三人の受賞者に祝意をささげる。提出された翻訳作品は卓越した完成度と大きな可能性を示しており、それぞれがこれからも文学翻訳に取り組み、実力を高めていくことを願っている。