

Japanese Literature Prize

Prize for Translation of Japanese Literature Goes to Couple from Northern California

Shogo Oketani and Leza Lowitz from Petaluma, California, are among the winners for best translations of this year's Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Awards for the Translation of Japanese Literature, the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture announced last month. Mr. Oketani and Ms. Lowitz are going to receive the award for their translation of *America and Other Poems* by Ayakawa Nobuo.

The Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture also awards Professor Charles S. Inouye for the translation of *Japanese Gothic Tales* by Izumi Kyouka. Mr. Inouye is currently Associate Professor of Japanese, Co-Director of the International Letters and Visual Studies Program, and Dean of the Colleges for Undergraduate Education at Tufts University.

Shogo Oketani and Leza Lowitz are freelance translators, editors and writers, residing in Petaluma, California. Mr. Oketani, a graduate of Keio University (B.S. Philosophy/Literature) has served as Adjunct Professor of Translation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies and as news correspondent and translator for *The Sangyo Times* in Tokyo, Japan. In addition to translating Ayukawa Nobuo and Sakaguchi Ango, he is the author of *Cold River*, a work of original poetry published by Marodosha in 1992. Mr. Oketani is the co-author, with Ms. Lowitz, of *Designing with Kanji: Japanese Character Motifs for Surface, Skin & Spirit* (forthcoming, Stone Bridge Press).

In 1997, Mr. Oketani and Ms. Lowitz received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts to begin translation of Ayukawa Nobuo's poetry, which has been a strong inspiration to Mr. Oketani personally and to many important writers and poets of the postwar and subsequent generation. He is honored to bring this profound, lyrical and politically astute work to an English-speaking audience.

Ms. Lowitz earned her B.A. in English from the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University, where she taught before moving to Japan in 1989. While in Japan, she was a Lecturer at Tokyo University and a contributor to the *Japan Times*, *Art in America*, the *Asahi Evening News*, *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *NHK Radio's Japan Diary*. Her honors include the PEN Syndicated Fiction Award and the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award for Poetry. She has also received fellowships in translation from the National Endowment for the Arts and The National Endowment for the Humanities. Ms. Lowitz co-translated the award-winning anthologies of contemporary Japanese women's poetry, *A Long Rainy Season and Other Side River* (Stone Bridge Press) and is currently co-translating the prison-camp haiku of WWII internee Itaru Ina. She is also editing Donald Richie's *Japan Journals 1947-2002*.

The prizes will be presented to Mr. Oketani, Ms. Lowitz, and Professor Inouye during an award ceremony at Columbia University in the spring of 2004.

Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature

The Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture at Columbia University annually awards \$5,000 in Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prizes for the Translation of Japanese Literature. A prize is given for the best translation of a modern work of literature or for the best classical literary translation, or the prize is divided between several works. Translators of any nationality are wel-



come to apply. To qualify, works must be book-length translations of Japanese literary works: novels, collections of short stories, literary essays, memoirs, drama, or poetry. Submissions are judged on the literary merit of the translation and the accuracy with which it reflects the spirit of the Japanese original. Eligible works include unpublished manuscripts, works in press, or books published during the two years prior to the prize year. Applications are accepted from translators or their publishers. Previous winners are ineligible.

For detailed eligibility requirements and entry procedures, please contact the Donald Keene Center at 212-854-5036 or visit the website at:

www.columbia.edu/cu/ealac/dkc/translation.htm