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Three Questions and my answers

1. How did you first discover L.M. Montgomery's world?

I found "*Kilmeny of the Orchard*" and "*Anne of Green Gables*" at the library in my junior high school, and read them in 1977.

* 2. What about Montgomery's world appeals to you?

I was enchanted by Montgomery's fantastic style, the beautiful descriptions of the four seasons of Prince Edward Island, the awkward and heartwarming love fostered between Anne and the Cuthbert siblings, and Anne's romantic and inspiring lifestyle.

3. How has Montgomery's world affected your life?

I became a translator to translate the first whole Japanese the Anne Books.

My L.M.Montgomery Story, by Yuko Matsumoto, January 2021

It was a misty autumn day in 1977 when I first read L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. I was fourteen years old, a junior high school student who lived in a small town facing the Sea of Japan. I was enchanted by Montgomery's fantastic style, the beautiful descriptions of the four seasons of Prince Edward Island, the awkward and heartwarming love fostered between Anne and the Cuthbert siblings, and Anne's romantic and inspiring lifestyle. In those days, I used to love reading Japanese literature, but the books were written by male authors and their protagonists were all adult men. When I read *AGG*, I encountered a novel whose heroine was adolescent -- like myself -- for the first time, and I felt as if Anne were my bosom friend. I read Anne Series translated by Hanako Muraoka (1893-1968) again and again until I remembered many passages and they became my favorite books. I also loved Muraoka's classic and warm style.

Fourteen years passed, I was a professional novelist with several best-selling published books.

One spring day, Shueisha -- one of the biggest publishers in Japan -- asked me to translate *Anne of Green Gables*. I told them, "I appreciate your kind offer. However I've passionately loved Hanako Muraoka's translations for years. It is not necessary for me to translate it. I would like to keep writing my own creative works with your company." After the meeting, I headed home.

But on the way home, I suddenly realized, "Oh, I haven't read it in English", and purchased an English paperback.

While I was reading *AGG* in English, I was so surprised, because I realized that many parts -- about 500 parts of the original book -- were not translated in Muraoka's book.

For example, an epigraph by Browning, a dedication to Montgomery's deceased parents, a scene of a vow of an eternal friendship between Anne and Diana, a description that Matthew's mother came from Scotland, and a moving scene in which Marilla told Anne, "I love you as my own flesh and blood", after Matthew's sudden death.

Secondly, Muraoka was a writer for children's books and omitted adjectives and adverbs from the original sentences. Montgomery's style is literary, flowery, profound, but not concise. I guess Muraoka cut many decorative words so that younger readers could enjoy the story.

Thirdly, some flowers, food, and clothes were also omitted, or changed to the similar Asian ones for Japanese readers who were not familiar with Western lifestyle.

For example, a mayflower was changed into a Chinese hawthorn, a raspberry cordial into a strawberry cordial, and a currant wine into a grape wine, etc.

However a mayflower should be translated as a mayflower, because this flower has the meaning, "I love only you", and was used when men proposed to women.

That's why Gilbert Blythe tried to give this flower to Anne in *AGG* and she flatly rejected it.

As for clothes -- a tam-o'-Shanter and a snood -- both of which show that Anne was a Scottish Canadian, were not included in Muraoka's translation.

I also understand the intentions of Muraoka. Her translation was published in 1952. In Japan, after the devastating defeat in World War Two, people were poor and did not have enough knowledge of Western culture.

About 70 years ago, the job of translators was to edit, summarize, and convert Western novels for Japanese. From this point of view, Muraoka was the best translator in the 1950s and I really appreciate Muraoka's achievement in the first translations of Anne's books. I love her reminiscent and sweet style even now.

In Japan, after the 1980s, the entire translation movement occurred and many world classics, such as *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust, and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, began to be translated in full, and were published and studied again. My translation of *AGG* was also born out of this literary publishing movement.

There were other translations of *AGG* by different translators. However all of them followed the style of Muraoka's book. Their books were also abridged versions.

After I recognized that Japanese translations of *AGG* were abbreviated versions, I decided to translate all sentences of *AGG*. It was the beginning of my long journey to study Montgomery's works.

Just after I began to read *AGG* in English, I found many old-fashioned and dramatic phrases and sentences in the text, as if they were lines from classic poetry or plays. I picked out seven hundred of them and I started to research their origins.

When I started to research in 1991, we didn't have the Internet, so I had to use

analog media. I purchased a quotation dictionary from the U.S. by sea mail.

That dictionary was useful and I was able to find some resources, such as Shakespearian plays. But dictionaries have their limits. If they don't contain the phrase we would like to study, we are up the creek without a paddle.

And next, I tried my hand at digital media. In 1991 I was an online computer service subscriber accessing the net over telephone lines. And I was able to access AOL, the American online service from Tokyo. I accessed the collected edition of Shakespeare on the U.S. network.

In those days, PCs had no hard disk and no Microsoft Windows. So I downloaded the plays onto 47 floppy disks and digitally searched each of the 47 disks for each of the seven hundred phrases.

And then I purchased many imported CDs from the UK and the U.S. Those CDs contained digital text data of English and American literature, and several English Bibles -- such as the King James Version.

Finally, I found 80 quotations from many works. My translation of *AGG* with 117 annotations was published as a hardcover by Shueisha in 1993 .



As for my annotations, I elaborated on not only the quotations and their meanings, but also on the wide range of Canadian issues, such as political, historical, ethnic, religious, domestic, agricultural, and botanical issues. *AGG* precisely describes Canadian life in the late 19th century.

I suppose that it might have been the world's first annotated *AGG*. Four years after my book's publication, in 1997, another *Annotated AGG* was published by Oxford University Press in the U.S.

My translation fortunately received good reviews, and the book went through

18 printings.

After my hardcover book was published, I kept on researching to find out the origins of the quotations of my *AGG* book, which would be published as a paperback later.

Then, I extracted the titles of the books and the poems which Montgomery mentioned in her daily journals published by Oxford University Press, and I made a list.

And then I brought the list to the Harvard University Library twice in 1994, and The British Library in London in 1995. I took photocopies of the books at two libraries. They filled two suitcases. I brought them back home and read them.

Next, I scanned all the papers and converted them into image data. After that I changed it into digital text data from the image data using OCR -- Optical Character Reader software. Finally, I made a digital text data bank of English, Scottish and American literature. I also did additional digital researches and found other resources of the quotations, and elaborated on the meanings and the author's intentions. (I posted all the data to my web page, and sometimes I receive emails from students and researchers overseas, who study Montgomery's works. I am happy to read them, and to know that my data helps their studies.)

With the new annotations added, my translation of *AGG* was published as a paperback in 2000 in Japan.



After my translation was published, I visited many countries. This was in order to witness the settings of the English and American literary works in *AGG*, and to deepen my understanding and appreciation of them.

For example, I traveled around the UK several times by car to go to Iona Island of *Macbeth* (*AGG*,chapter17), Loch Katrine of *The Lady of the Lake* (ch5, ch30), Stirling of *Rob Roy* country (ch34), the Palace of Holy Rood of *Queen, Mary of Scots* (ch24), Flodden of *Edinburgh after Flodden* (ch5), Nohram Castle

of *Marmion* (ch27, ch29), Lake District of Wordsworth's poems (ch36), and Stratford-upon-Avon of Shakespeare, Oxford of *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (ch8), Winchester of *the Arthurian Legend*, Guilford of *Lancelot and Elaine* (ch28). I also followed the footsteps of Montgomery's honeymoon tour from Scotland to England, bringing her daily journals with me.



(Matsumoto in a school where William Wordsworth studied, Lake District, England)

I visited the U.S. to go to Cambridge, Massachusetts of Longfellow's house (his poems in ch30, ch37), a building used by L.C. Page Company in Boston, L. M. Alcott's Orchard House in Concord -- both of which Montgomery visited in 1910 -- Hartford, Connecticut of Lydia Sigourney (ch11), and Mark Twain's house and library. Twain wrote a comment for an advertisement of the Anne Books.

I visited to Denmark of *Hamlet* (ch20, ch26), and Italy to go to Rome of *Julius Caesar* (ch19), Basilica di Santa Croce in Florence of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (ch17), Verona of *Romeo and Juliet* (ch5), Venice of a renaissance painter, Titian, Asolo of *Pippa Passes* (the end of ch38), Genoa of *Night Scene of Genoa* (ch18, ch30), Spain of *the Siege of Valencia* (ch18), Belgium of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (ch17), and Germany of *Bingen on the Rhine* (ch19), Gilbert recited it to express his love for Anne.

I kept these trips for more than 15 years, and I was able to obtain deep appreciation of each work, just like how people who visit PEI can understand the background of the story.

Sometimes I am asked whether I have applied for subsidies from universities.

However, I am a freelance writer, so I study at my own expense from royalties on my novel books.

Based on those research trips, I wrote about 10 commentary books on *AGG*, such as "Shakespearian Plays, English, Scottish and American Poetry Quoted in Anne of Green Gables; To Resolve the Meanings of Each Quotation" by Shueisha in 2001,



"Something Unknown about Anne and Montgomery; The Background of the Stories and the Author" by Shueisha in 2000.



The readers of my books wanted to travel with me to the countries that I visited. To meet demand, I formed itineraries and led an Anne of Green Gables Tour to Canada every year, and also tours to Italy, the UK, Spain, and the U.S. These tours have been held every year since 2007. More than 800 readers have participated in them so far.

In 1997, I received the document -- 'L. M. Montgomery's use of quotations and allusions in the "ANNE" books' by Rea Wilmschurst, in *Canadian Children's Literature*, 56, 1989. I was encouraged to know that there were scholars in Canada who *were* doing the same research as I. But I regret that I didn't have a chance to meet Wilmschurst before she passed away.

That year, I also started using the Internet to look for the sources of quotations in the Anne Books.

In the 2000s, I translated *Anne of Avonlea* and *Anne of the Island* with annotations, and they were published by Shueisha.

Since my translations and commentary books were published, the perception of Montgomery's works has gradually transformed from silly and sentimental girl's stories into 20th century Canadian literary novels. Some professors and college students have written theses based on my books.

NHK, Japan's public broadcasting network, asked me to produce TV programs on *AGG* and Montgomery and to appear in them. So I wrote the scripts of its 13 episodes. I decided the filming locations in Canada, and took a famous Japanese actress, Ms. Keiko Matsuzaka and a digital high vision camera crew to PEI and Ontario with me.

The programs were aired every week for 3 months in 2008. They gained tremendous popularity. The book based on the programs I wrote was sold more than 400 thousand copies in one month. The DVD of the programs was also released by NHK.



However, Shueisha stopped to publish translation books.

So I resumed writing my own works; a critical biography novel, "*Fireflies in Love or Tomie Yamazaki and Osamu Dazai*" in 2009,



a historical novel of the 19th century's Civil War in Japan, "*Burning Island, or Oki Incident*" in 2013-- about Oki Incident, Egerton Herbert Norman, a Canadian diplomat and historian also wrote in his book, "*Soldier and Peasant in Japan*" in 1943, and I quoted one line from his book and used it for an epigraph of my novel,

and a novel of a poet, Misuzu Kaneko and her brother, a playwright, Gasuke, "*Misuzu and Gasuke*" in 2017, etc.



Fortunately, in 2018, Bungeishunju Ltd., established in 1923, decided to publish my translations as paperbacks.

I began thoroughly revising my old translations of *AGG*. For the new *AGG*, I increased the annotations from 117 to 357. After my paperback *AGG* was published in 2000, I visited Canada 20 times and researched in Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Newbrunswick, Nova Scotia, and Québec. As a result, I understood many more things in *AGG*. For example, The Creek on PEI, etc.

The new *AGG* with annotations, the new *Anne of Avonlea* with 256 annotations, and the new *Anne of Island* with 328 were published in 2019.

Anne of Windy Willows with 380 annotations and *Anne's House of Dreams* with 397 were published in 2020.



My new *AGG* to *Anne's House of Dreams*

Some newspapers have had feature articles on my translations and annotations as the first accurate translations, and generated some sensation. My new Anne Books are being reprinted on.

Still now, many Japanese male authors and critics who haven't read Montgomery works tell me, "You have spoiled your career as a novelist. You shouldn't have translated such a childish story like Anne. You should write your own works."

I smile back at them, and continue translating *Anne of Ingleside* and writing its annotations every day.

At the same time, I am also doing research of Celtic Christianity, St. Cuthbert, and the Arthurian Legend in the Anne Books.

In 1911, Montgomery went to Lindisfarne Island in the North Sea where St. Cuthbert lived in the 7th century. I also went to the nearest shore of England side, where I could see the island before me. But I wasn't able to go to the island, because of a lack of a convenient ferry service.

Instead, I went to Ireland in 2019 in order to see The Book of Kells at The University of Dublin. These hand-written Bibles from the 8th to the 9th centuries have the ancient Celtic traditional patterns. We can see the same pattern on a cover of the Bible found in a coffin of St. Cuthbert in Northumberland. I am

going to write an essay on Celtic Christianity, St. Cuthbert, Celtic Crosses (It is one of my hobbies to take pictures of Celtic Crosses in northern England, Scotland, Ireland, and Nova Scotia), and the Arthurian Legend in the Anne Books for a monthly literary Japanese magazine in 2021.

Since when I first read *AGG* and was dreamily fascinated by Hanako Muraoka's translation, forty four years have gone by. And since I began to translate the Anne Books, thirty years have passed.

Translating the Anne Books gives me a wonderful opportunity to study Shakespearian plays, English poems, and to read books on the Arthurian Legend, Celtic History, Presbyterian Church, and Canadian history. Montgomery's books have broadened my horizons.

Moreover, when I have faced some difficulties in life, I have always been comforted and inspired by Anne's positive attitude, Matthew's affection for his family, Marilla's diligence in housework, and efforts and passion Montgomery displayed in her writing so many novels.

The Anne Books are like my bible helping me to live well and happily. And it is the greatest pleasure to visit Prince Edward Island every year (except 2020), and meet the people in Canada who love Anne and Montgomery.

Now my aspiration is to translate all the Anne Books in full with the detailed annotations, and let Japanese people know the real literary value of the great Canadian author, L. M. Montgomery's works.

At the end of this essay, I would like to express my gratitude to my English teachers. Without the professional guidance of my teachers from Canada, the U.S., England, and New Zealand, I couldn't have finished my translations and this essay. I heartily appreciate their kindness and sincere cooperation.

Profile; Yuko Matsumoto, a Japanese author and a translator, and a board director of Japan P.E.N., the Japan branch of International P.E.N.

"For An Over-Eating Girl, The Dawn Never Comes", The Subaru Literary Award" in 1987. *"Fireflies in Love; Tomie Yamazaki and Osamu Dazai"*, The Nitta Jiro Literary Award in 2010. Some of her works have been translated and published in China, Korea, and Italy. Matsumoto's recent works -- the first complete, unabridged Japanese translations of the Anne Books with annotations -- are currently being published.