

The Secret: Japanese Version Translation

By Kenta & Phil

Note from Phil: I've added any comments my friend/translator, Kenta, and I made that aren't actually written in the Japanese book. These will be in red brackets. [like this]

Postscripts and Hints:

Ready to accept the challenge of this treasure hunt?

This treasure hunt book is mainly divided into two sections. The first half contains the main story of the treasures that the fairies brought. The second half introduces the descendants of the Fairies that came to the new world. Together they create a humorous allegory of today's society.

Now, let's take a look into each section.

In order to find the locations of the treasures the Fairies hid, we must first read the poems. Of course, the twelve poems conceal critical hints for the treasures, so instead of reading it as a poem, you should study it like a coded message.

However, there is a problem. Each of the twelve poems can be read in different ways. For example, some prepositions are placed so that it is ambiguous whether it is describing the previous line or the next line. Even when I asked my American colleague, (s)he couldn't be sure either. In addition, even for a single word, it is hard work to choose from all the Japanese words it could translate into. Therefore, this book keeps the original English text, and the Japanese translation as footnotes.

(For Japanese readers,) even with the translations, these poems are overwhelming. So I had an international phone call with Mr. Preiss where he gave hints specifically for the Japanese readers. Of course these are not hints that can easily lead to answers. Sometimes these provided hints might taint your imagination and make the endeavor even harder. However, hints are still hints. Using them as starting points, you will get closer to the Fairies' hidden treasures.

Now let's use our brains!

Hints to unlock the 12 poems.

These hints are about the original English wording. Not the translation.

Poem #1

(Hidden meanings/hints)

Line 9: The water veers. Water shooting to the sky. Is it a spring, or a fountain?

Line 10: Small of scale. "Small" means small of size, but how about scale? Even in Japan we say "scale model" [they use the English phrase]

Line 16-17: What we take to be our strongest tower of delight. This is a quote from a famous book. What is that book?

Line 21: There's the spout. This relates to line 9 "the water veers," so obviously it would mean...

Poem #2

Line 7: Fills the afternoon hours literally translates to (japanese: "fill the afternoon hours" ["find things to do in the afternoon?"]), but if you fix this to a more easy, direct expression...?

Line 8-9: Here is a sovereign people who build palaces to shelter their heads for a night! This is a quote from a famous book. Now, go through a dictionary of quotations!

Poem #3

For the third poem, a hint could lead immediately to an answer, so he didn't give me one. Too bad.

Poem #4

Line 11: Free Speech would translates to "(Japanese) Freedom of Expression"... So that means...?

Line 11: Couplet, or two lines that rhyme. Think about Shakespeare.

Line 13: Columns. "(Japanese) columns/pillar". Specifically stone columns. What columns made of stone are famous around the world?

Poem #5

Line 1: Lane. If translated to a noun, it would be "small street" or "narrow path", but I was told this "Lane" is a proper noun. A proper noun means it is a name, so what could it be? A mountain, river, city, or...?

Line 4: Weight and roots. For this section, I was told you should think about architecture/buildings/structures.

Line 9: Wingless bird. If literally translated it would be "a bird without a wing", but as an "iron horse" implies a motorcycle, keep your mind flexible. This wingless bird can be easily spotted in Japan.

Poem #6

Line 2-3:

Men of tales and tunes

Cruel and bold

What kind of men could they be? Start analogizing from the word "romance". Not "Romance" in Japanese (Japanglish) for romance novels [love affairs, etc.], but medieval Europe's...

Line 9: The birth of the century. This would mean a "birth of a particular century", what century could it be?

Line 10: May 1913. Now let's immediately go to books of chronological history.

Line 14-15:

Between two arms extended

Below the bar that binds

This hint is difficult to present. Arm can only be seen as (literal human arms). However, a bar usually means a "horizontal bar", and then followed by binds (tie/connect), so...

[it seems to be translated specifically to parallel bar or the like.]

Line 19: White House. Is this "The White House" or a "white house"? If there is a "The", it would be the presidential residence, and with an "a", it would be a simple white house. This doesn't have a preposition, so which one is it?

Poem #7

Line 2: Sweet. Usually it would mean a sweet taste, but I was told you shouldn't obsess over taste. The air smells sweet, so just like in conventional Japanese, you can think of it like "atmosphere/mood."

Line 4: High post. I was told this post is made of wood.

Line 5: Education and Justice. With only this it's hard to understand, I was told you should think of the phrase together with "...can be seen not far...". "(Education and Justice can be seen from not too far)" means....?

Line 7: Sounds from the sky. What could "sounds from the sky" be? There are many sounds heard from the sky. Sounds of birds? Sounds of planes? Sounds of the wind? But, there are sounds that cannot be heard by us humans. There are sounds that can only be heard using specialized equipment/machinery...

Line 12: Twain. Twain, the famous....

Poem #8

Line 1: The three stories of Mitchell. "(Japanese) Mitchell's 3 stories", but the "stories" is tricky. Is it "three stories by the novelist Mitchell"? or "Michell's three story building."? At first I interpreted it as the first, but Mr. Preiss (even though not clearly stating) strongly directed me towards the "three story building", so I chose that expression for the Japanese translation.

Line 2: The beating of the world. This is a difficult section (...even though every part is difficult). From beating, think "beat", and from "beat", think "drum". (Japanese "drum") is spelled "d.r.u.m." From this you must think of a person's name. Open up a relatively large English dictionary and find "drum", and search the vicinity to arrive at a person's name. Without tedious effort there will be no treasures acquired.

Line 8-9:

Step on nature

Cast in copper

For this section, I was told to imagine "a leaf"... What does "a leaf" mean?

Line 21: On a proud, tall fifth. What could this "fifth" be the fifth thing of? Mr. Preiss would not tell me at all. I barraged him with many names of things, and I soon started to think that the object is a "tree". I cannot definitely say it's a tree, and I won't take responsibility, but personally I still think it's a "tree"

Poem #9

Line 4: Wind rose. Mr. Preiss told me, that you should think about this wind rose being related to navigation, as in, navigation on the sea.

Poem #10

Line 6: Whirring sound

I was told it sounds like [japanese onomatopoeia:] "bún bún" [pronounced more like bune-bune/boon boon, generally used in conversation to describe a fluttering sound from bees buzzing or engines humming] What type of things make these sounds? First you might think of insects flying or an airplane propeller turning. It could be many things, but when thinking with the word "cars" from line 7, it seems like he's inferring something that moves on land. Preese hints that it's a device that needs human power to move.

Line 12: Of him of Hard words in 3 Vols.

From this line we can tell the subject is an author. Who could it be? Preese replied to me in a riddle. He said that to arrive at this person, you should do a word play, and start with Chicken. [in Japanese, the word they used translates directly to: "word play," but generally indicates a word ladder of sorts. There are many wordplay games in Japanese, for example, connecting words that rhyme, connecting words using the last letter as the next words first letter, etc.]

Line 19: Rhapsodic man's soil

I tried to translate directly [emotional, romantic, poetic], but it won't take us anywhere. Instead, think of a famous song from the word Rhapsodic. When you do that, you can tell the Rhapsodic man is the man who wrote that song.

Poem #11

Line 1: octave. Octave usually relates to the number 8, and it's used in music. However Mr. Preiss hints that in this case it is a proper noun. He did not give me further hints.

Line 18-20: To achieve by dauntless and unconquerable determination.

This part is a quote from a book, so let's look at the dictionary of quotations again.

Poem #12

Line 1: M and B. I was told these letters are the initials of two individuals. From that alone, I have no idea about the names, so I asked Mr. Preiss what these people do, and he said they are both famous composers [or song writers]. Now which composer is M and which is B?

Line 2: Congress. If translated literally this is (Japanese for: US congress). However, according to Mr. Preiss this is a proper noun as well. In order to find out what proper noun it is, we would need to do our own research.

Line 2-3: R and L. These are individual people as well. According to Mr. Preiss they are both critical politicians. [book then goes on to define critical in all ways:] (criticizing, important, dangerous) Can you think of someone? [After this translation I pressed Kenta to see what that would mean to him as a Japanese reader. He said this "critical politician" phrase could mean someone like the President.]

Line 13: Rumble.

Sounds like: [Onomatopoeia:] "goro-goro, gara-gara", so in essence... [In Japan, we do onomatopoeia a lot. This is generally used in conversation for sounds of large/heavy things dragged, shaking, rolling, or tumbling down. (I asked him if this onomatopoeia could be used for trains in Japan. He said definitely.)]

Line 14: Brush. This word has many many meanings as well. Mr. Preiss made statements that compared this word with the next word "music", which made me infer that he is talking about paintings.

Line 15: Hush. This means silence or quiet. Mr Preiss just said one thing: "place after quiet."

Last page after hints:

This is the end of the hints that I was able to get through my international call with Mr. Preese. What do you think? Will they be useful?

One more thing. We got some special advice from Mr. Preese for our Japanese readers. That is to start by solving the pictures/paintings. To do so, you must decode the poem by solving the combinations of numbers that are in the poems.

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[P: What? That doesn't make sense. Is there any more clarification on how to decode the combination of numbers?

K: He seems to just want you to figure out what the combination of the numbers mean.

P: And then are you supposed to do anything with those and the images?

K: Let me try to get the nuance right... ya it seems like in order to work on the picture, you need to decode the combination of numbers from the poems.]

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This book was published in America in November of 1982. At this point in March of 1983 there have already been over 500 answers submitted and none have been correct. Preese said to his Japanese readers "good luck" and to use his hints to the fullest to find the treasures.

It's a difficult task to solve the [riddles/problems/mystery] in this book, but I heard it was also hard for the people involved in this project. For example, at one location where they were burying the jewels, they had a run-in with a police officer. Another time they were stopped at customs in Canada for bringing shovels and other suspicious tools, and almost couldn't go bury their treasure.

Final Pages:

About the Descendents of Elves/Fairies

The multitude of Elves that are introduced in this book are descendents of Elves from Europe that migrated to avoid humans. However, of course, these Elves have no relation with any of the [traditional/orthodox] elves that we know from classic European folklore and tales. These characters are made up by the author and editors for fun. I said for fun because as you can read in the body of the text, each one is written with [satire/humor/playfulness] as an allegory of society. [K: Each one makes fun of culture.] Since the humor is so good, I read the introduction of the author, and then I understood. Two of the writers, Sean Kelly and Ed Mann are editors for the monthly parody magazine, National Lampoon. In order to better understand their inspirations, let me introduce a little bit about the National Lampoon magazine.

National Lampoon's first issue was 1970. Yes, this was the time when America's students had the most progressive and radical thoughts. The magazine originally started as Harvard Lampoon which was a parody/comedy magazine that was edited by Harvard students. By the

way, the word Lampoon means Parody/Satire/Allegory/humor against individuals, culture and society. Because this was a publication that was created in this era, the spirit of criticism is very active and instead of using visual expression like comic books and cartoons, this is humor using the written word. In this section about elves, the spirit nurtured in the National Lampoon was utilized to the fullest. This is where it becomes a problem. The Lampoon spirit being fully used is a great thing, but because this is completely aimed at an American audience, you need to know American culture and recent events. Otherwise, not only would you not find it funny, but it would be hard to understand more than half of the book. To this point Preiss himself said that even inside America, some things are not understood or laughed at.

I, who translated this book, and the editors at the Japanese publishing company sometimes even had to hold our heads in confusion. We tried to insert explanations and disclaimer footnotes behind the humor and satire, but if we did that, the explanations would have been longer than the sentences themselves. Therefore, the editors decided to rewrite much of the content. However, that doesn't mean we are rewriting with no intention whatsoever. We thought and contemplated and ended up using the names of the elves and descriptions just as a base to make the story a bit more accessible. We did this so that the Japanese readers that don't understand American culture well can still enjoy it. Accordingly our introductions of the elves can not be described as literal translations.

At the very end we'd like to thank... [tons of Japanese names, no Palencar or anything]

[Last page is adverts for other books.]

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