

Re: "Tombo no Sato" English Version

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang.japan/2005-05/msg00234.html>

- *From:* jjchew@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (John J. Chew III)
 - *Date:* Sun, 8 May 2005 02:24:12 +0000 (UTC)
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In article <d558ps\$ice\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>,

B. Ito <jg2cme@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

- > "Go-Touchi Song(u)." Have you ever heard of this Japanese phrase ?
- > Hi-level Japanese learners may understand better what it is by seeing
- > the kanji/kana spellings,

Even low-level learners may find the kanji helpful in disambiguating from "torch song".

- > In a word, it is a PR song for the local town.

That's quite native use of the phrase "in a word", well done.

- > Iwata no oka ni furusato jiman
- > Shizen no houko Nihon-ichi
- > Tombo no Sato no Okegaya-numa wa
- > Yamma, Bekkou, yago ga uka shite
- > Ureshi tabidachi aoi sora
- >
- > I_wata is our town we live in, / where we feel so prou_d a_bou_t /
- > The ecological resources, / No. 1 (Numbe_r one_) in Japan
- > A_ll so_rts o_f dragon flie_s fly about / Okegaya Ma__rsh,
- > Ya_m_ma__, Be__kkou, / their la_rvae emerge here.
- > We hope they enjoy themselves / un_der the blue skies.

"Our town we live in" is one too many pronouns, even for English.

"The town we live in" is less clumsy/tautological without losing any of the boosterist "we"-ness.

On the other hand, "under our blue skies" makes the verse end more strongly, without sounding too awkward, despite adding four pronouns to a Japanese line that had none. What a language.

It still bugs my NSOJ mom, who emigrated more than 40 years ago, that we don't seem to care in English whether or not the sky is singular or plural. I used to think this was funny, but only found out this year that the Spanish don't care whether "lente" is masculine or feminine!

- > Ike numa meguri hodou ni asobu

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- > Namae mo shiranu tori ga naku
- > Tombo no Sato no Okegaya-uma wa
- > Akane, Beni-Ito iro azayaka ni
- > Saku ni tomatte dare wo matsu
- >
- > The observation wooden roads / take you around the marsh and other ponds.
- > You'll encounter so many birds / chirping merrily.
- > All sorts of dragonflies fly about / Okegaya Marsh,
- > Akane, Beni-Ito / with their colorful bodies,
- > Silently sit on the fences. / Who would they wait for ?

"Boardwalk" for "wooden road", and I'm not sure that "observation" is necessary.

I have two problems with "dragonflies fly". One is that the "flf" sounds easy to stumble over, but more seriously from a copyeditorial standpoint is that you appear to have dragonflies simultaneously flying and sitting silently. That may be the case, especially in a region so full of dragonflies, but it adds confusion that wasn't present in the original.

- > Negura ni kaeru karasu no koe ni
- > Kaa-san koishi(i) higure-doki
- > Tombo no Sato no Okegayanuma wa
- > Sanae, Yotsuboshi sotto sayonara
- > Sora wa yuuyake akane gumo
- >
- > Hearing the crows crying / on the way to their roosts,
- > Children feel like seeing their mothers / in the evening.
- > All sorts of dragonflies fly about / Okegaya Marsh,
- > Sanae, Yotsuboshi, / we'll say Good Night to them
- > The skies are all dark red. / So are most of the clouds.

The last line is wrong in three interesting ways. Most importantly, in English, the clouds are part of the sky and not seen to be floating below them. So if the sky is described as being all one colour, then the clouds must be that colour too. Secondly, you can't use "all" with "skies", because that would (sigh) suggest that there was more than one sky, which there isn't, even if we talk about it sometime in the plural. "The skies are dark red" would be okay. Thirdly (due to my copyeditor wife), at sunset the sky is not a uniform colour, so it is incorrect to say that it is "all dark red". And no, there's no English word for "yuuyake".

John

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 - ◇ From: B. Ito

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