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## From the Editor-in-Chief

*ACCU is now receiving participants from countries in Asia as well as from other regions for a training course in publishing in Tokyo. Although the training itself focuses on the production side of educational materials, it was found that the primary concern of the participants was how to ensure a reading environment among children in their countries. This is not limited to countries with inadequate infrastructure and poor economic situation, but also countries with a well-established publishing industry. The reason may be attributed to TV, videos and recent development of ICT that provides digital entertainment and information.*

*However, it is interesting to note that in recent years comics, especially Japanese "manga", are fascinating many children as well as grown-ups in some countries in Asia as well as in Europe and the USA. In the age of colourful picture books and fast-moving TV games, why are they attracted to monochrome linear illustrations printed on poor quality paper?*

*This issue of ABD gives you an introduction to such comics, for those*

*who love them and those who know little about them. According to Mr. Natsume, after half a century of development, expression techniques in manga today have become highly refined and its contents cover all spheres of life, just as in literature or movies. If the power of story-telling lives in comics and that is why it has universal appeal, why not make use of it as a tool in reading promotion? We do not mean to promote manga itself. Making this a starting point, let us seek further possibilities in expression through illustrations, based on each individual culture.*

*Lastly, I should like to thank all who cooperated in the Asia Pacific Forum for UNESCO in July this year organized by ACCU and UNESCO. It was our great joy to have received so many precious suggestions for our future programmes. Please have a look at the detailed report of the forum carried in this issue.*



Sato Kunio

### Editorial Committee Members

Akutsu Masaru  
Kodansha Ltd.

Amadio A. Arboleda  
Josai International University

Kanehira Shonosuke  
Publishers Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE)

Machida Kazuhiko  
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Maeda Kanji  
Sanshusha Publishing Co., Ltd.

Michiyoshi Gow  
Michiyoshi Design Laboratory Inc.

Shima Tayo  
Consultant for Children's Literature

Shindoh Masaaki  
Shogakukan Inc.

Sato Kunio  
ACCU

### Editor-in-Chief

Sato Kunio  
Director-General, ACCU  
Editorial Office  
Culture Division, ACCU

### Design

Michiyoshi Gow  
Nakamura Kazuyo

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All correspondence should be addressed to:  
The Editor-in-Chief, ABD  
Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)  
6, Fukuromachi, Shinjuku-ku,  
Tokyo 162-8484, Japan  
phone: (81) 3 3269 4436, 4435  
fax: (81) 3 3269 4510  
e-mail: [abd@accu.or.jp](mailto:abd@accu.or.jp), [culture@accu.or.jp](mailto:culture@accu.or.jp)  
<http://www.accu.or.jp>,  
<http://www.accu.or.jp/appreb>

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### List of Correspondents (25 countries)

Australia—**Stephen Matthews**  
Publisher, Ginninderra Press, PO Box 53, Charnwood, Act. 2615

Bangladesh—**Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman**  
Member Directing Staff (MDS) and Joint Secretary to Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), Savar, Dhaka

Bhutan—**Rinzin Wangmo**  
Youth Information Officer, Department of Youth, Sports and Culture, Ministry of Education, Thimphu

Cambodia—**Tes Dary**  
Administration Office, Section of Planning and International Relation, No. 169, Preah Norodom Blvd., Boeung Keng Kang 1, Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh

China—**Wu Xusheng**  
Executive Editor-in-Chief, Information on Publication, No. 38, Tai Ping Qiao Xi Li, Fengtai, Beijing 100073

Fiji and the Pacific Islands—**Linda S. Crowl**  
Publications Fellow, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, PO Box 1168, Suva

India—**Sukumar Das**  
President, The Federation of Publishers' & Booksellers' Associations in India, 268, Sector 'A' Pocket 'C' Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070

Indonesia—**Alfons Taryadi**  
Member, Council Board, Indonesian Book Publishers Association (IKAPI), Jl. Kalipasar 32, Jakarta 10330

Iran—**Lili Hayeri Yazdi**  
Cultural Advisor, International Affairs Department, Institute for Intellectual Development of Children & Young Adults, Fatemi Ave., Hejab St., PO Box 14145/136, Tehran

Japan—**Kiyota Yoshiaki**  
President, Shuppan News Co., Ltd., 2-40-7 Jimbocho, Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0051

Kyrgyzstan—**Asel Aitmatova**  
Press-secretary for National Commission of Kyrgyz Republic for UNESCO, 54 Erkindik str., 720040, Bishkek

Lao P.D.R.—**Soubanh Luangrath**  
Director of Children's Cultural Centre, PO Box 6244, Vientiane

Malaysia—**Siatan Ahmad**  
Chief Executive Officer, Malaysian Book Promotions Sdn Bhd., B 510 Blok B Kelana Square, Jalan SS7/26, Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Mongolia—**Jambyn Dashdondog**  
Director General, Mongolian Children's Cultural Foundation, PO Box 2106 46/46, Ulaanbaatar

Myanmar—**Myo Thant**  
Central Executive Committee Member, Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, 529, Merchant St., Serpay Beilman, Yangon

New Zealand—**Brian Phillips**  
Publishing Consultant, PO Box 19-862, Woolston, Christchurch

Pakistan—**Ahmad Faraz**  
Managing Director, National Book Foundation, G-8/4, Taleemi Chowk, Islamabad

Papua New Guinea—**Otto Anduari**  
Principal Editor, Standards Division, Curriculum Development Division, PO Box 446, Waigani, NCD

Philippines—**Dominador Buhain**  
President, Philippine Educational Publishers Association, 84 P. Florentino St., Quezon City

Rep. of Korea—**Jong-Jin Jung**  
Secretary General, Korean Publishers Association, 105-2, Sagan-Dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-190

Singapore—**Selven Sadanandom**  
Manager, National Book Development Council of Singapore, Geylang East Community Library, 50 Geylang East Avenue 1, Singapore 389777

Sri Lanka—**Ranjith Amarakeerthi Palihapitiya**  
Chairman, Sri Lanka National Book Development Board, Ministry of Resource Development, Education & Cultural Affairs, Isurupaya, Battaramulla

Thailand—**Usanee Watanapan**  
Director, Book Translation Institute, Academic and Educational Standards Bureau, The Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Dusit, Bangkok 10300

Uzbekistan—**Sagdullaeva Gulchekhra**  
Editor in Chief, The World of Book, State Uzbekistan Agency of Press and Information, 30 Navoi Street, Tashkent, 700129

Viet Nam—**Phan Thanh Hao**  
Assistant Editor-in-Chief, The Education and The Times, 1B Le Ngoc Han St., Hanoi

\* In ABD, the name of a Japanese person is written family name first, then given name, to be consistent with Japanese custom.