

Professor Emeritus Hideo Hirooka – A Legendary Kandai Philologist
Masahiro ISHIHARADA (Professor at Shitennoji University)

Hideo Hirooka, Professor Emeritus at Kansai University (henceforth Kandai), was a prominent English philologist, best known for his books on the English language and dialects. As a scholar of English studies, and also as a joint editor of *Anglica*, he made substantial contributions to academic societies. He completed ‘Studies in the South-Western Dialect Used in the Works of Thomas Hardy’, compiled it into *Thomas Hardy’s Use of Dialect* (1983), and earned a doctorate from Kandai, which granted him the title of Professor Emeritus at retirement in 1989. After retirement, he was awarded the Third Order of the Sacred Treasure (*Kun Santo Zuihosho*) on 3 November 1992, and on the autumnal equinox day in 2012 he peacefully left us at the age of 94.

1. Experience

On 24 April 1918, Hideo Hirooka was born at Hoshida, Kita-Kawachi County (now Katano City, Osaka) where he lived his whole life. After education at local schools, he learned English at Kandai preparatory course from Professor Jiichi Hattori (1903-52), who had learned from Dr Itsuki Hosoe (1884-1947), professor at Osaka University of Commerce (now Osaka City University). Hirooka went on to the Kandai English specialist course, where he graduated in September 1943. And in March 1944, two months after his teaching career launched at Riseisha Middle School (now Riseisha High School), he was drafted and assigned to serve in China.

After the war, in March 1946, Hirooka returned home to resume office at Riseisha. In 1947 he became professor at Osaka Daiichi Normal School (now Osaka Kyoiku University). In 1950 he came back to Kandai to work, retiring in March 1989. In his long career he taught thousands of students, but he also had the two teachers he respected most: Dr Hosoe and Dr Tadao Yamamoto (1904-91), professor at Hiroshima Imperial University Teachers College (now Hiroshima University).

2. *Anglica* and Others

When I was a graduate student in 1970s, Professor Hirooka was one of the pillars of Kandai English department. Prof. Sutezo Hirose (1911-2002),

eminent scholar of Chaucer, well-known for the collection of the Manyoshu MSS, was President, and since he was busy in the president's office, Hirooka was really head of Kandai Philology. One of his activities deserving special mention was to edit the scholarly magazine *Anglica*, published by Kandai English Philological Society (later Kandai Anglica Society). It was the first international journal of English studies in Japan and it made its first appearance in November 1950, seven months after Hirooka was appointed at Kandai. From the outset he became involved in the management of the journal, which was to have far-reaching consequences in his career.

The journal title was chosen by Dr Tadao Yamamoto. The black lettering on the yellow cover was written by Dr Sanki Ichikawa (1886-1970). As the title suggests, *Anglica* (meaning 'the English language in Latin) was the journal of English philologists, as opposed to to new linguists emerging at the time, in particular American structural linguists. The philologists loved *OED* and *MED*, and they did not ask 'What is language?' but how English had developed.

Anglica Vol. I, No. 1 begins with Dr Ichikawa's essay 'Be learning still,' where he tells how hard Dr Tomitaro Makino worked even in later life and how kind and generous Dr Hosoe was, and then referring to Professor Yamamoto's 'Dickens Lexicon', he expresses his great expectations for its success. Soon after No. 4, Professor Hattori, founder and editor in chief of *Anglica*, suddenly passed away. Prof. Kinjiro Enomoto and Hirooka collaborated with their colleagues to carry on the publication, and *Anglica* achieved international recognition. Editing papers and preparing for the press may have been laborious, but those days must also have been their happiest and proudest days; they worked at a time when journal publications were not so numerous as these days. Professor Hirooka recalled, 'Through *Anglica* I was lucky enough to get acquainted with the leading philologists.'

Meanwhile, the journal was quite different from ordinary magazines in that the staff never received any financial assistance. Professor Hattori managed to pay all the publishing costs from the royalties of the textbooks he had edited. The members of the Anglica Society, in tune with him, followed his example and continued to publish the journal for nearly 20 years. But, alas the day to stop publishing came at last. The final number, Vol. VI, No. 4 (the 29th volume of the set), was issued in March 1968.

Kandai English Philological Society also published Dr Tadao Yamamoto's best known work, *Growth and System of Language of Dickens* (1950), and in May 1953 Dr Yamamoto received the Japan Academy Prize. Invited to the celebration held in Hiroshima, Hirooka delivered a congratulatory address to express his pleasure.

3. Research Interests

Dr Hosoe had studied English dialects before anyone else in Japan. He was to take up office at Kandai, but unfortunately, he died in March 1947 before the new term started. Hirooka inherited his work and the bereaved family allowed him to freely use the materials the deceased scholar had collected. Kandai Library has housed part of the Hosoe Collection of books.

Professor Hirooka developed the study of dialects and left us many achievements. His famous book *Dialects in English Literature* (1965) was a landmark contribution and stimulated popular interest in English dialects that had been given little attention. After the introduction to Old and Middle English dialects, Hirooka exemplified all the main dialects in England, which reflected his scholarship: a love of linguistic facts, good historical judgement, a good sense of humour, and, above all, a deep understanding of human nature. His principle in research, he said time and again, is summed up as follows:

Context (or situation) is important. Each word can be a linguistic material, and each word has a human meaning. We must consider when and where and why it is used.

He noticed, for example, that when *you* and *ye* are used in a dialect, the former is a stressed form while the latter is not, and that the dialectal *ye* is not the historical remnant of ME *ye*, but it is just a modern corruption of *you*. Cf. 'Ye in the Wessex Dialect,' *Anglica*, No. 4 (1952), 60-72.

In the same way, in his 'Is the Present Dialectal 'en, 'un, 'n the lineal Descendant of OE. *hine*? (With Special Reference to *Ancrene Riwle*),' *Anglica*, No. 5 (1953), 16-89, he rejected the common belief that the [ən] written 'en, 'un, 'n in dialects comes from OE *hine*, and claimed instead that *him* and *en* cannot be interchanged because *him* is a stressed form while *en* is unstressed. That was already evident in *Ancrene Riwle* along with

Ayenbite of Inwyt, where *him* gradually took the place of *hine*, which in turn ceased to be used in the ME period. A comeback? No. Hirooka thinks that by corruption in Modern English *him* became *im*, *um*, *m* in Northern and Midland dialects while in Southern it became *un*, *en*, *n*.

Furthermore, concerning the origin of 'em, generally regarded as the remnant of ME *hem*, Professor Hirooka describes it as a modern development from *them* with the loss of the initial fricative, giving many other examples from dialects. He considers it questionable that, though 'em is a common form in Scotland, Ireland, England, America, etc., a modern phonological theory naively decides that it comes from ME *hem* with the loss of the aspirate. Hirooka asks why *hem*, a possible emphatic form, didn't survive and never occurs, and why 'em always occurs along with *them*. Cf. 'On 'em,' *Essays and Studies by Members of the Literary Faculty*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, Kandai, Osaka (1965), 275-289.

Archaic or obsolete words are often found alive in dialects, but dialect does not always mean antiquity. Professor Hirooka argues, in 'I Says and Similar Forms in English Dialects,' *Anglica*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1958), 51-63:

The language is living and is destined to change everyday, and the reality of English would consist in living speech. It is really important to observe the language from its function in the context as well as from the historical point of view. We ought to watch what situations and what contexts the words are used in. (53)

Thus emphasizing the functional and situational importance, he continues:

Historical explanation, of course, should not be neglected in this connexion, but it is by no means all-powerful in every case. It would be dangerous to seek the origin of dialectal forms always in their older stage without making observation of their real use and function in the given situation. (63)

His research was based on sharp observations of the materials taken from literary works. It was, however, insufficiently recognized by some linguists who objected, 'Materials taken from literature are not real evidence by themselves.' Hirooka had realized this rather well; he made it clear in advance that he was concerned with the dialect Hardy used, but not with

Dorset dialect itself. Hence the title 'Wessex Dialect (I),' "Thomas Hardy's Use of Dialect", *Kansai University Studies in English Language and Literature*, No. 6 (1969), 26-43, in which he explains his belief as follows [in my translation]:

The use of dialect is essential to Hardy's Wessex Novels; the scenes are set in Dorsetshire, where local people, whether laborers or farmers, speak in their vernaculars. We should keep it in mind that literary products are not the record of dialectal speech nor linguistic materials. A good literary work must be easy to read, for which reason the author tries hard to choose the right word in the right place. We call this 'artistic creation'. (26-28)

4. Publications

One of his prime concerns was with the way Hardy used the dialect. He made a close inquiry whether Hardy's use of dialect had changed in accordance with the context or the year of production, resulting in *Thomas Hardy's Use of Dialect*. That was 'dedicated by his pupil to the memory of Itsuki Hosoe, a pioneer of English Dialect study in this country.'

His other publications are too many to mention here. They include *A Historical Survey of the Language of the English People* (1956), its revised and enlarged edition I (1969) & II (1970), and *A Historical Survey of English Pronunciation and Grammar* (1975). He revised Dr Hosoe's *An Outline of English Syntax* (1971), and, as a collaborator of Isamu Ono, he translated *The Sexton's Hero* by E. C. Gaskell (1955), edited with notes *The Tragedy of Nan* by John Masefield (1977), and, in collaboration with Hakuho Fujiki, published a textbook of Charles Lamb's *A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig* and Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* (1988).

5. Membership

Professor Hirooka was instrumental in the foundation of the Medieval English Literary Society 中世英文学研究会. When a biannual meeting was held at Kandai, he was the regular discussion leader for research presentations. When the Round Table Conference on English Historical Linguistics planned and organized by Prof. Akio Oizumi along with Prof. Yoshio Terasawa and Prof. Tadao Kubouchi was held in 1983, Professor Hirooka, one of the seven presenters, announced his recent research on

English dialects, on which Prof. Yoko Haneda gave a respectful comment which was right on the mark. All the presentations at the conference are included in *The Methods of English Historical Linguistics* (1985).

6. A Legendary Figure

Professor Hirooka was a readily recognizable figure on campus. When I first met him, he was in a black suit, with long hair and a mustache. He used to carry books and all in a scarlet kerchief (*furoshiki*), and on a rainy day held an old-fashioned umbrella in his hand, wearing a pair of black wellies, already uncommon at the time.

His classes were full of humour. I was astonished how interesting English could be and became immediately interested in his class. So many students were likewise deeply moved by his unique teaching. After graduation, we visited him with our essays, on which he gave inspiring comments, always ending with 'What's the following theme? Show me the paper when you come next.' Indeed, he was a mentor who skilfully enhanced our studies.

In celebration of his 77th birthday, Professor Emeritus Koji Itoh at Nara Prefectural University presented him with *The Songs in Praise of English Language and Literature* (1994), for which a number of the leading scholars and his former students contributed their papers (77 in all). At the celebration, Professor Emeritus Hirose as guest of honour offered an impressive message of congratulations.

7. Finally

As a nonagenarian, he was still hale in his old age. For hours without reserve I enjoyed talking with him about a variety of topics. That was just a few years ago. Towards the very end of his life, nevertheless, he became seriously ill. His wife had predeceased him. Mr Yoshitomo Hirooka, a world-renowned painter, and his wife devoted themselves to caring for him. But all their efforts were in vain. A funeral took place at Katano Memorial Hall on 24 September 2012. Our legendary professor and his beloved wife, Ayako, will be ever with us. May their spirits rest in peace.