

Yomiuri Prize for Literature and Professor Jeffrey Angles

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Like many of you in this room, I was thrilled when I learned about the news. It was during the Allied Occupation when the Yomiuri Prize for Literature was established (1949). The Yomiuri Newspaper Company was urged to revive arts and literature in Japan when the nation was suffering from the defeat and despair. And the company founded the prize to encourage writers, critics, poets, and literary scholars. In its near-70-year history, renowned writers such as Yukio Mishima, Kōbō Abe, Kenzaburō Ōe, Shūsaku Endō, and Donald Keene have received this award. These acclaimed writers are internationally known. You might not realize this, but I bet you know some of these writers, too. For example, Kenzaburō Ōe won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1994. *Silence* written by Shūsaku Endō, a story of the persecution of the Christians in 17th century Japan, was now available in film in the United States. Famous directors such as George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola sponsored a film about Yukio Mishima, released as the film titled *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* in 1985. Kōbō Abe's *Women in Dunes* also became a film, one of the Criterion corrections, that are available through Amazon. What I am excited about Prof Angles' winning of this prize is that Professor Angles has now joined this very, very exclusive club of distinguished writers and literary scholars.

For those who know Professor Angles' accomplishments well, it is no mystery that he received this prestigious award. He has published 3 books, 9 book-length translations, 2 edited volumes, and 28 articles and book chapters in English and Japanese. Universities in the US, Japan, Germany, Sweden, and many other places around the globe have invited him to discuss his work. He accomplished all of these since he joined WMU in 2004.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the Yomiuri Prize for Literature is probably one of many awards that Professor Angles will receive throughout his academic career. The prestigious grants that Professor Angles has already received include: the PEN Translation Grant (2008), the National Endowment for the Arts Grant (2009), and the Japan-US Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature (2009) which is administered by Donald Keene Center for Japanese Studies at Columbia University.

It is wonderful to have a ceremony like this to acknowledge Professor Angles' accomplishments. I am certain that this kind of acknowledgement will keep him going. This evening we have a surprise guest from the State of Michigan Government, and I would like to introduce Ms. Kelly Doyle to you. She would like to say a few words about his winning of the prize. [Ms. Doyle delivered a framed acknowledgment from the State of Michigan to Professor Angles.]