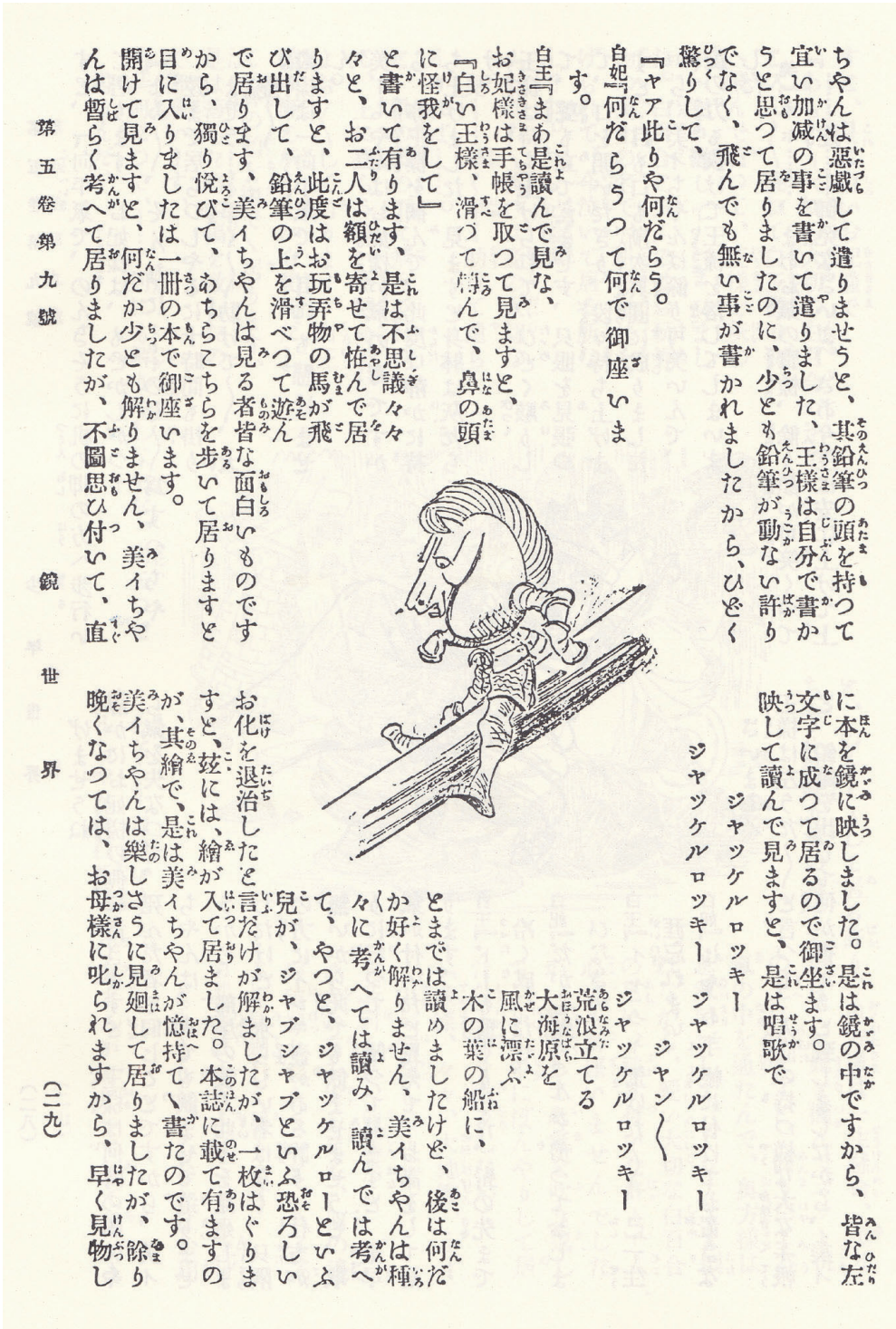
Japanese



ちやんは悪戯して遣りませうと、其鉛筆の頭を持つて宜い加減の事を書いて遣りました、王様は自分で書かうと思つて居りましたのに、少とも鉛筆が動ない許りでなく、飛んでも無い事が書かれましたから、ひどく驚りして、

『ヤア此りや何だらう。

白妃』何だらうつて何で御座いまず。

白王』まあ是讀んで見な、お妃様は手帳を取つて見ますと、

『白い王様、滑つて轉んで、鼻の頭に怪我をして』

と書いて有ります、是は不思議々々々と、お二人は額を寄せて怪んで居りますと、此度はお玩弄物の馬が飛び出して、鉛筆の上を滑べつて遊んで居ります、美イちやんは見る者皆な面白いものですから、獨り悦びて、あちらこちらを歩いて居りますと目に入りましたは一冊の本で御座います。開けて見ますと、何だか少とも解りません、美イちやんは暫らく考へて居りましたが、不圖思ひ付いて、直に本を鏡に映しました。是は鏡の中ですから、皆な左文字に成つて居るので御坐ます。映して讀んで見ますと、是は唱歌で

ジヤツケルロツキー　ジヤツケルロツキー

ジヤン〳〵　ジヤツケルロツキー

荒浪立てる大海原を

風に漂ふ木の葉の船に、

とまでは讀めましたけど、後は何だか好く解りません、美イちやんは種々に考へては讀み、讀んでは考へて、やつと、ジヤツケルローといふ兒が、ジヤブシヤブといふ恐ろしいお化を退治したと言だけが解りましたが、一枚はぐりますと、茲には、繪が入て居ました。本誌に載て有ますのが、其繪で、是は美イちやんが憶持てゝ書たのです。美イちやんは樂しさうに見廻して居りましたが、餘り晩くなつては、お母様に叱られますから、早く見物し

Hasegawa Tenkei

The First Japanese Translation of "Jabberwocky" by Hasegawa Tenkei

Ashitagawa Yuko

The *Alice* books have long been popular in Japan and have been translated more or less continuously. Japan's National Diet Library Database lists thirty-seven complete Japanese translations of *Through the Looking-Glass* published in book form from 1948 to 2022 by twenty-three translators (including Kusuyama Masao, who published the first complete translation of both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1920). Added to those are adaptations and references in various forms, and there are at least forty-six Japanese versions of the first stanza of "Jabberwocky" (Kinoshita). Most Japanese translations of "Jabberwocky" retain the same number of lines and stanzas as the original poem; in addition, they manage to reproduce the sound of proper nouns and nonsensical portmanteau words in ways that do not contradict Humpty Dumpty's explanation. Apart from these post-war translations, there are older versions of the *Alice* books in Japanese that are more like adaptations than translations, and it is the treatment of "Jabberwocky" in one of these that I will discuss here.

My choice is the first known Japanese version of "Jabberwocky", which was published in 1899. The translator was a literary critic, Hasegawa Tenkei (1876-1940), who serialised his adaptive translation of *Through the Looking-Glass* in *Shonen-Sekai* [*Children's/Boys' World*], a children's magazine. The eight-part story is titled "Kagami- Sekai: Seiyō Otogi-Banashi" ["Looking-Glass World: A Western Fairy-Tale"] and actually appeared nine years earlier than the first known Japanese translation of *Alice in Wonderland* in 1908. As in the case of many adaptive translations at that period, Hasegawa's heroine has a Japanese name (Miyo, or the

pet name Mī-chan) and the translator retells or recreates the narrative by adding or omitting ideas rather freely. Kusumoto observes that Hasegawa's translation is characterised by his own version of the poems and by the content of his narrative which catered to Japanese children's interests and understanding (22).

Hasegawa's "Jabberwocky" poem appears in Part One and shows an interesting notion of what the poem may be about and what can provide delight for children. There is only one verse, of which the content is radically different from the original; the rest of the poem is summarised in the subsequent narration as Mī-chan's interpretation. The passage concerned (Hasegawa 214), with the introducing phrase, can be translated (back) into English as follows:

> She read the reflected letters to find that they constituted a song:
>
> Jakkerurocky
> Jakkerurocky Jakkerurocky
> Jan-jan
> Jakkerurocky
> Among the wild waves
> In the great ocean
> Drifting with the wind
> On board a leaf boat,
>
> She managed to read this far but could not quite understand the rest. Mī-chan contemplated and read and read and contemplated, until finally she figured out only that a child named Jakkerurō destroyed a hideous monster named Jubjub; then she turned a page to see a picture. Here in this magazine is the picture, which Mī-chan drew from memory.

215 鏡世界　長谷川天渓訳　　少年世界　明治33年4月15日

The vertical text, arranged irregularly, is accompanied by a slightly simplified drawing of Tenniel's White Knight. The illustration of the monster is on the next page so that the readers of the original magazine actually needed to turn overleaf to discover it. The unfinished "song" appears to consist of the title, three jingly lines, and four lines about a voyage. The song does not seem to contain any portmanteau words, possibly because in Hasegawa's text the equivalent of Humpty Dumpty (renamed Gombē, who has strange creatures in his garden) does not interpret the poem when he appears later (248-51). The word "Jakkerurocky"

(which can also be transcribed as "Jakkerurokkī"), containing more vowels, may be easier to pronounce as a Japanese word than "Jabberwocky". At the same time it is interesting to note that the two words written alphabetically look remarkably similar: "k" and "b", or "ur" and "w", may almost be interchangeable, although these similarities in appearance cannot be rendered with Japanese kana characters. In any case, the jingly lines offer an intriguing sound, harking back to the original poem's questioning exploration of the relationship between sound and meaning.

The latter part of the song begins to tell a story. In the Japanese text, each of the latter four lines comprises seven syllables, which is a traditional Japanese poetic metre. The four lines evoke hardships and adventure at sea, perhaps because "wabe" in the original is reminiscent of "wave" and perhaps because the word "jubjub" (which can also be transcribed as "jabu-jabu") in Japanese represents a sound of vigorous splashing about. The wild description hints at humans' helplessness in nature, which can make the young Jakkeruro's victory look all the more impressive. In fact, the preceding jingly part may be viewed as celebrating the child's heroism, just as the poem's title "Jakkerurocky" refers to the hero's name rather than the monster's name as in the original. Unlike Alice's vague comment about "Jabberwocky" that "*somebody* killed *something*: that's clear, at any rate—" (Carroll 156), Hasegawa's narration mentions the name of the juvenile killer as well as the monstrous victim, justifying the deed. As a result, the mock-epic or parodic nature is less evident here than in Carroll's text. On the other hand, Hasegawa's narration emphasises the unintelligible quality of the poem, much in the spirit of the original text. While Hasegawa's version fails to reproduce most of the nonsensical words, it recognises, at the very least, the existence of a poem that is "*rather* hard to understand", as Alice says (Carroll 156).

Another noteworthy point in Hasegawa's narration is that it draws attention to the illustration, stating that it has been copied by the heroine from the book she read in a mirror. It is not uncommon to assume that children like pictures, and Mī-chan here is made to seem better with pictures than words. The picture, unsigned, is a fairly faithful reproduction of Tenniel's drawing; however, fewer lines lighten the shadowy parts, the Jabberwock's eyes seem slightly less terrifying, and its upper limbs look more feathery. Apparently, the monster's picture was not deemed too scary for children, but overall the copy presents a visual interpretation that is brighter than Tenniel's. The illustration, being based on the original but not entirely faithful, can be viewed as an embodiment of Hasegawa's approach, although his narrative tends to depart more freely from the original. Hasegawa's "Jabberwocky" is a fascinating example of how Japanese (children's) literature tried to modernise itself by absorbing and customising the creativity of another culture.

Translation into Japanese

Hasegawa, Tenkei. "Kagami-Sekai [Looking-Glass World]". 1899. *Sakkarē/Kyaroru-shu [Thackeray/Carroll Collection (Meiji-Period Translated Literature Series: Newspapers and Magazines 11)]*, edited by Kawato Michiaki and Sakakibara Takashi. Ōzorasha, 1999, pp. 207-58.

Secondary Sources

Carroll, Lewis. *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*. Penguin, 2001.

Kinoshita, Shinichi. "Kagami-no Kuni-no Arisu Kotoba-Asobi-no Hon'yaku [Japanese Translations of Wordplay in *Through the Looking-Glass*]". *The Page of Lewis Carroll*, http://www.hp-alice.com/lcj/l_translation.html. Accessed 28 August 2024

Kusumoto, Kimie. *Hon'yaku-no Kuni-no "Arisu" ["Alice" in Translationland]*. Michitani, 2001.

NDL Online. National Diet Library, Japan. https://ndlonline.ndl.go.jp.