

PRESS RELEASE: 2021.09.30

Japanese translator Nami Kaneko wins the Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Prize

- The Japanese translation of Bernardo Atxaga's 'The Accordionist's Son', published by Shinchosa, has won this year's award.
- Translator and publisher will share the 4,000-euro prize and receive a grant of up to 2,000 euros for promotional work.

Bernardo Atxaga's novel 'The Accordionist's Son', first published in Basque in 2003 by Pamiela, has been given a new life. Translated directly from Basque into Japanese, the jury commended the quality of Kaneko's work, naming her the winner of the competition's seventh edition. The book is published by the Shinchosha publishing house, and Shigeki Tabata was responsible for editing.

Neither of the two was able to attend the award ceremony in person but did join online. The event was attended by Bingen Zupiria, Basque Government Minister for Culture and Linguistic Policy; Irene Larraza, director of the Etxepare Basque Institute; and Inaxio Garro, head of the Basque language department at LABORAL Kutxa.

This competition, created to reward the translation of a literary work originally written and published in Basque, values both the translation itself and the effort invested in promoting the work. In this sense, the jury wanted to highlight the promotional work by Kaneko and Shinchosha: "The translation has been highly acclaimed in Japan and has received good reviews. It was a finalist for the Best Japanese Translation Award and has been included in several publications on the best books."

The jury described the quality of the translation as "very good" and praised "the decisions made by the author in the process of translation into Japanese". It also wished to recognise Kaneko's career, "who not only translates from Basque, but also undertakes research in this field".

The jury underscored Shinchosha's "importance and specialisation in literature", and that the publishing house printed a large print run of 4,000 copies, double the usual number in the market for literature translated into Japanese. In addition, a recommendation of the well-known writer Akira Higashiyama appears on the back of the book, together with commentary by Basque critic Ibon Egaña. The publishing house played an important role in the promotion of the work, which the jury wished to recognise.

The jury for the seventh edition of the award was made up of Inaxio Garro, head of the Basque language department at LABORAL Kutxa; Imanol Otaegi, Director for the Promotion of the Basque Culuture at the Etxepare Basque Institute; Elizabete Manterola, lecturer at the the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) and a member of EIZIE; Naroa Zubillaga, professor at the UPV/EHU and member of EIZIE; and Beñat Doxandabaratz, from the Communications department at the Etxepare Basque Institute.

Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Prize

The Etxepare – LABORAL Kutxa Translation Prize was created in 2015 to recognise the translation of literary works originally written and published in Basque. Translation is the bridge that enables Basque writers and their work to reach an international audience. These awards shine a light on the work of the translator in the shadows.

The contest is open to translators and publishers from around the world, provided they meet the following requirements: the translation must have been published in 2020 (in the case of this edition), and it must be the translation of a literary work originally written and published in Basque.

The prize, valued at 4,000 euros, is awarded for the quality of the translation and the promotional work of the publishing house. The prize is therefore shared between the publisher and the translator. The winners may also be granted up to 2,000 euros to attend the award ceremony or to continue the promotional work (presentations, advertising campaigns, etc.) in the country where the prize-winning work was published.

This award is yet another one of the Etxepare Euskal Institute's activities aimed at raising the profile of Basque culture. In the area of literature, besides providing grants for translation and travel expenses, the Institute encourages the participation of Basque writers at book fairs and international literature festivals. Moreover, through this award, LABORAL Kutxa continues its commitment to furthering the Basque language and culture.

Nami Kaneko

Nami Kaneko (Akita, 1984) is a translator, PhD in literature and a Spanish teacher. She researches the literature of Bernardo Atxaga and the translations of his own work. She completed her PhD studies at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Language and Culture Studies) and at the University of the Basque Country (Literature and Comparative Literary Studies).

The Japanese translation of Bernardo Atxaga's novel 'The Accordionist's Son', which was a recipient of a grant from the Etxepare Basque Institute, was one of the five finalists for this year's Best Japanese Translation Award. In 2016, Kaneko won this coveted award for her translation of Kirmen Uribe's novel 'Mussche'. The book, published by Hakusuisha, also won the Etxepare - Laboral Kutxa prize that same year.

Shinchosha Publishers

Shinchosha was founded 125 years ago, in 1896, in Tokyo, and is now one of the largest publishing houses in Japan. Specialising in literature, Shinchosha has published numerous well-known Japanese authors, including Yasunari Kawabata, Yukio

Mishima, Kenzaburo Oe, Haruki Murakami, Banana Yoshimoto and Yoko Ogawa. In the field of translated literature, some 170 works have been published in the 'Crest Books' collection since its creation in 1998. Translated authors include Jhumpa Lahiri, Alice Munro, Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, John Banville, William Trevor, Colm Tobin, Jose Luis Peixoto, Bernard Schlink, Lyudmila Ulytsukaya, Anthony Doerr, Miranda July, Yiyun Li, Etgar Keret, and César Aira.

Shinchosha released the Japanese edition of "The Accordionist's Son" in May 2020.

Previous winners:

2020

Eider Rodriguez & Lander Garro, and Literatura Random House

Bihotz Handiegia (Eider Rodriguez)

Book of short stories

Spanish

2019

Ainara Munt and Pol-len edicions

Hilda dago poesia? (Joseba Sarrionandia)

Poetry

Catalán

2018

Amaia Gabantxo and Center for Basque Studies

Harri eta Herri and *Maldan Behera* (Gabriel Aresti)

Poetry

English



ETXEPARE
EUSKAL
INSTITUTUA



2017

Yaroslav Gubarev and Anetta Antonenko

Behi euskaldun baten memoriak (Bernado Atxaga)

Novel

Ukrainian

2016

Nami Kaneko and Hakusuisha publishers

Mussche (Kirmen Uribe)

Novel

Japanese

2015

Isaac Xubín and Kalandraka publishers

Tempo de exilio (Joseba Sarrionandia)

Anthology of Poetry

Galician

Info+

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