

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
 The University of Michigan
 College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Ken K. Ito, associate professor of Japanese language and literature, with tenure, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Japanese language and literature, with tenure, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1985	Yale University
M.A.	1979	Yale University
B.A.	1974	Yale College

Professional Record:

1990 – present	Associate Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan
1985 – 1990	Assistant Professor, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Michigan

Summary Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Ken Ito is an excellent teacher of both graduate and undergraduate students. His courses have contributed significantly to the Department’s curriculum. He has taught fifteen different courses ranging from introductory undergraduate lecture courses on Japanese civilization to highly specialized graduate seminars in Japanese literary studies. He has been responsive to adapting his teaching to meet the needs of curricular reforms enacted in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures over the last six years. Professor Ito has especially distinguished himself as an excellent graduate mentor, having served on fifteen dissertation committees over the last nine years; he chaired eight of these committees.

Research – Professor Ito is widely recognized as one of the leading scholars in modern Japanese literature. His work is praised by his peers for its substance and its rigor. His current research explores the interactions of text and context in late Meiji Japan (1868–1912) to disclose the mutually productive effects of fictional and social discourses at a time when Japan was rapidly making the transformation into a modern nation state. His forthcoming book, *An Age of Melodrama*, reveals how popular narratives engaged and challenged state discourses at the time of Japan’s convulsive rupture of modernity. He is currently at work on a third monograph that will explore status and class in the fiction of Meiji Japan.

Recent and Significant Publications:

An Age of Melodrama: Family, Gender, and Social Hierarchy in the Turn-of-the-Century Japanese Novel, Stanford University Press, forthcoming.

“Class and gender in a Meiji family romance: Kikuchi Yuho’s *Chikyodai*,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 28(2), 2002, pp. 339–378.

“The family and the nation in Tokutomi Roka’s *Hototogisu*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 60(2), 2000, pp. 489–536.

“Prefacing ‘Sorrows of a Heretic,’” in *A Tanizaki Feast*, A. Chambers (ed.), Michigan Center for Japanese Studies Publications, 1998.

Service – Professor Ito’s service record is exemplary. He is currently director of undergraduate studies, chair of the Curriculum Committee, and on the Department’s Executive Committee. He was associate chair of Asian Languages and Cultures (2004–2006) and also served as director of graduate studies at the Center for Japanese Studies. He is serving on the Executive Committee of the College’s Office of International Programs (2005–present), and he served on the College’s Academic Judiciary Committee (2004–2005) and on the University’s Commission on Undergraduate Education (2002–2004). Internationally, he has served on the governing board of the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies for over twenty years and currently chairs that Center’s Executive Committee.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“He has written the defining critical study of a great, many would say, the greatest modern Japanese novelist, Tanizaki Jun’ichiro. ... To this first major book, he has now added another [*An Age of Melodrama*], his long-awaited and sure to be prized study of melodrama and projections of ‘family’ in fiction around the turn of the twentieth century. ... There should be no question about the range and importance of Ken’s published work to date.”

Reviewer (B)

“Ito is without a doubt one of the most important scholars working today on late Meiji fiction. ... Ito stands apart by the substance of his scholarship. He is a scholar’s scholar. ... he offers solid, careful, reliable, thorough scholarship that not only lays a strong foundation for new and exciting ways of viewing texts, but charts new ground for the study of Japanese literature. ... [*An Age of Melodrama*] is a tour-de-force. ... It will without a doubt set the standards for future studies of the Meiji—or of any era of modern Japanese literary history, in my opinion.”

Reviewer (C)

“*An Age of Melodrama* ushers in a major new departure for the field.”

Reviewer (D)

“...his work bears the mark of someone deeply concerned with fiction’s ability to represent the dynamics of historical change, and, indeed, to interact with them. This concern has, I believe, generated his most significant contributions to the field and will stand him in good stead in his future research.”

Reviewer (E)

“...everything he has produced has been a model of deep scholarship, careful and insightful exegesis, and lucid expression of ideas. ... Ito continues to be one of the most important scholars in the field. ...his analyses are always tightly wrought and are the very model of careful, insightful scholarship.”

Reviewer (F)

“Professor Ken Ito has established himself as a major scholar on Meiji literature. His reputation includes his highly theoretical approaches to literature, which he places in the socio-cultural contexts. ... He has steadily published important articles in major venues. Some are in excellent peer reviewed journals and others in edited volumes...Ito is well connected in his field of specialization.”

Reviewer (G)

“The work is solid, even monumental... I expect his forthcoming book to attract serious attention and secure his reputation as one of the most senior academics in modern Japanese literature in North America. ... Especially noteworthy about Ito are the students he has produced while in Ann Arbor.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Ito is widely recognized as one of the leading scholars in his field. He is an excellent teacher and his service contributions have been exemplary. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Ken K. Ito be promoted to the rank of professor of Japanese language and literature, with tenure, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History, and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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