



# The Japan Society *Review* 100

Current and former editors celebrate the 100th issue of the Japan Society *Review* sharing their memories and challenges editing the publication

## **In the Beginning. The Genesis of Japan Society Review**

by Sean Curtin

Former Japan Society chairs Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Sir John Whitehead provided the promethean fire from which *the Japan Society Review* was forged. Back in early 2005, Sir John, the then Japan Society chair, asked me if I could create a book review publication. In 1994, I'd launched the highly successful Hokkaido-based magazine *Polestar* (which incidentally is still going strong in 2022). I was tasked with creating a new Society forum for members' reviews.

Sir Hugh was an immensely enthusiastic reviewer who provided several reviews for the initial publication which was very well received. We produced two issues in 2005 and due to their popularity, decided to publish on a regular bi-monthly basis starting in January 2006. This is when *the Japan Society Review* was formally launched as a regular publication and our official first issue hit the stands.

The nascent publication also greatly benefited from the dynamism of the then Japan Society office team, especially Clare Barclay, assistant editor, and

Sharon Kelly, both of whom devoted a lot of time and effort to make our first year's run a success. During that 12-month period, we attracted a diverse group of quality reviewers with a wide-range of interests which gave *the Japan Society Review* lots of sparkle and energy. Prominent amongst these regular, early reviewers were Professor Ian Nish, Fumiko Halloran, Sir Hugh Cortazzi, Susan Meehan, Mike Barrett, Professor Ben-Ami Shillony and Takahiro Miyao.

Heidi Potter and John Toppon joined the Society team during our second year, giving us a new burst of creative thrust. They streamlined the publication and fine-tuned the layout, taking *the Japan Society Review* to new heights. While I continued as editor, John took on the new role of managing editor from issue 13 to 33 to focus on improving presentation and production values.

During this time, *the Japan Society Review* developed a loyal readership, many of whom began providing us with occasional reviews, which allowed us to become a truly membership-driven publication. However, as gatekeeper, Heidi always set a very

high standard for reviews, so the quality of articles was always superb and it was a joy to edit.

After John left the team, Jack Cooke took on the role of managing editor, accelerating *the Japan Society Review's* evolution, making us a more visually appealing and slick production while expanding the type of reviews and articles we featured. We reached issue 50 in April 2014 and by then *the Japan Society Review* was a dynamic, pulsating publication with its own gravitational field which drew in a constant stream of top-notch reviews. Having been at the helm for almost a decade, it seemed that issue 50 was the perfect time for me to bow out and let a new editor inject fresh ideas and vision into the enterprise.

Now *the Japan Society Review* has reached the amazing milestone of issue 100 and it remains an incredibly dynamic read with a wide-range of fascinating reviews and articles. It was a great honour to be its inaugural editor, but the project would not have got far without the incredible enthusiasm of our early reviewers, especially the boundless energy of Sir Hugh Cortazzi who provided at least one review for each of our first fifty issues, and the dedication of the Society office team.

*The Japan Society Review* is so much more than the sum of its parts and in many respects is the embodiment of the Society itself. Its trajectory is firmly set upwards to the stars and it is destined to power forward to issue 1000 and beyond! §

---

## An Extraordinary Breadth of Japanese Culture

by Jack Cooke

The best part of editing *the Japan Society Review* was the sheer variety of the job. Occasionally, a freshly imported, cellophane-wrapped DVD or book would land on my desk, but *the Japan Society Review* also made space for archival treasures, classic films or rare tomes from the Japan Society's own library.

There were, of course, sporadic challenges. One reviewer made a habit of describing a novel's entire plot in minute detail, so that on finishing their review there was little point in reading the actual book! Sometimes the arrival of a much-anticipated new novel or film

would prompt fierce competition between writers desperate to review the same thing.

For the most part though, *the Japan Society Review* was a showcase for an extraordinary breadth of Japanese cultural offerings. We were lucky to have a brilliant cast of contributors, unpaid but passionate, each with their own special area of interest, whether classical Japanese literature or modern Japanese cinema.

The last issue I edited was number 50, so it's wonderful to see the publication still going strong at issue number 100, and with a more engaging offering than ever. §

## Reflecting the Japan Society's Multifaceted Relationship with Japan

by William Upton

Working at the Japan Society brought me into contact with a far broader range of people than any job I've had before or since -- academics, students, entrepreneurs, bankers, diplomats, politicians, missionaries, artists, actors, translators, chefs and sommeliers. Each came with differing expertise, experiences and perspectives, and with the looming prospect of the next issue of *the Japan Society Review*, each was a potential contributor in my eyes. Fortunately for me, people generally proved to be enthusiastic at the prospect of receiving

review material. If I managed to find the right book, film or play to pique their interest I sometimes even received a review in return. The result was a collection of reviews that reflected the full breadth of the Japan Society's multifaceted relationship with Japan.

Spontaneous and unsolicited contributions meant that we often ended up with two reviews of the same book or play. If I didn't know that it was the same, the differing accounts could leave me believing I had write-ups of different books, from different genres. As Isaiah Berlin quipped when recounting the story of how Irving Berlin was mistakenly invited in his place to dinner with Winston Churchill: 'There are many versions of this story – all true.'

---

## Learning and Enjoying

by Alejandra Armendariz-Hernandez

My role as editor of *the Japan Society Review* began in 2017 when I took over William Upton as Communication and Events officer at the Society. At the time, I didn't know much about the process of editing a publication nor for that matter about the amount of effort and dedication that lays behind each issue. However, being aware of the richness and diversity of Japan-related content available in the UK, I was certain that the Review was an excellent way to keep track of new books, films and events as well as to discover new perspectives about Japanese culture, history and society.

My aim as editor has always been to show that richness and diversity both in terms of subjects and points of view. With the help of publishers, reviewers,

and colleagues, I have tried to include different types of reviews in each issue presenting a varied selection of academic monographs, literary works, films, exhibitions and more recently even Netflix series! I have been always keen to mix authors and topics considered high culture with mainstream works in the conviction that Japan is far from a monolithic culture but rather more complex and vibrant than is sometimes assumed. I hope readers have been able to appreciate this variety and to learn and enjoy reading the bimonthly issues of the Review as much as I have learned and enjoyed editing them.

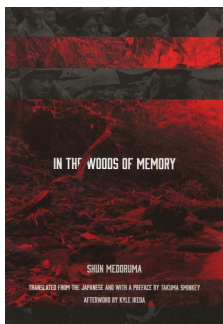
Now as the current editor of the publication at the time of its 100th issue, I can only say that it has been an honour to continue the amazing work done by previous editors and to work with a brilliant and dedicated group of reviewers over the years. I look forward to the next hundred issues to come! §

# The Japan Society **Review**100

Explore the Japan-related recommendations of books, films and events from our dedicated reviewers, editors and trustees

## Alejandra Armendariz-Hernandez

Editor



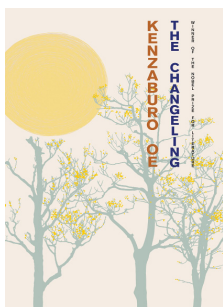
### *In the Woods of Memory* by Medoruma Shun

A powerful, thought-provoking novel that helps us understand the history and legacy war and

colonialism in Okinawa; a must-read on the 50th year anniversary since Okinawa was reverted to Japan in 1972.

### *Dendera* by Sato Yuya

A riveting and hilarious take on *ubasute*, the legendary practice of abandoning the elderly in the mountains to die, as well as a compelling depiction of ageing from a female perspective.

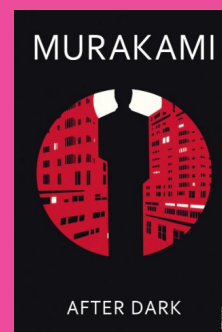


### *The Changeling* by Oe Kenzaburo

Inspired by the death of Oe's brother in law, filmmaker Itami Juzo, the novel offers an interesting reflection about death, art and friendship.

## Chris Arning

Reviewer



### *After Dark* by Murakami Haruki

**HaikaSoru series**  
Science fiction, fantasy and horror  
[www.viz.com/haikasoru](http://www.viz.com/haikasoru)

**Ikeda Ryoji**  
Digital Art  
[www.ryojiikeda.com](http://www.ryojiikeda.com)

**Souzou: Outsider Art from Japan**  
Exhibition, 28 March-30 June 2013,  
Wellcome Collection, London

**Souun Takeda**  
Calligraphy  
[www.souun.net](http://www.souun.net)



## Stephen Barber

Japan Society Trustee

During lockdown I watched (or rewatched) all Kurosawa Akira's best samurai films. Of these I nominate **Rashomon** (1950) and **Seven Samurai** (1954).

In the highly original **Rashomon** he conjures up a haunting, tortured ambience in Heian Japan, contrasting different accounts of the same murder. **Seven Samurai** is a much longer film, but unforgettable for the agonising build-up to the final attack on a besieged village, with some astonishing scenes of horsemanship. Hayasaka Fumio's scores, introducing traditional instruments into a Western orchestra, are chillingly evocative.

For sheer breathtaking panache, though, nothing beats the climax to **Throne of Blood** (1957), Kurosawa's masterful take on the Macbeth legend.



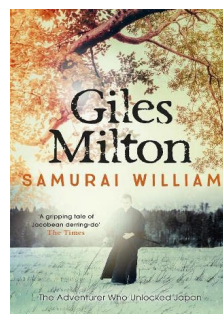
## Cameron Bassindale

Reviewer

### Ring

directed by Nakata Hideo

**Ring** marked the arrival of Japanese horror films into the global consciousness. Its importance to world cinema really cannot be understated. Until the release of **Ring**, horror as a genre was dominated largely by men with knives chasing drunk American teenagers around. **Ring** showed the world that horror movies can be subtle and terrifying, that pulling punches can lead to a climax which changed a genre forever.



### Samurai William: The Adventurer who Unlocked Japan

by Giles Milton

Milton's epic account of William Adams' journey from Gillingham, Kent to

Japan is a thoroughly well researched, emotive page turner. It is an important story; one which gives us a comprehensive account of the start of Japan's opening to England and the world at large. Readers will surely be amazed at the lengths these intrepid adventures went to, seeking fame and fortune. This is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Anglo-Japanese relations.

### Kitchen

by Yoshimoto Banana

Yoshimoto Banana is one of Japan's most prolific and well-known authors, churning out dozens of novels in a career which has spanned well over 30 years. In **Kitchen**, Yoshimoto deals with grief and familial love with a tenderness which is truly touching. So too is her description of what it's like to experience Japan in the late eighties as a transgender woman; readers with an interest in comparing British and Japanese attitudes will find much to sink their teeth into with this book.

## Roger Buckley

Reviewer

---

Three authors, three entertainments and all three granted global fame via inclusion in the international Everyman's Library listing. Let's ignore the purists, forget the critics of orientalism/occidentalism and simply rejoice.

My personal links are almost non-existent but here goes anyway:

### *Snow Country*

by Kawabata Yasunari

Strolling down Gion one summer afternoon I spied Kawabata chatting away with the owner of a prohibitively expensive antique shop. He was clearly enjoying splurging on the rewards from winning the Nobel. Crassly, I barged in and congratulated him as best I could on his remarkable success. And then weeks later I spotted him again - this time in everyone's favourite club in Akasaka where he was sitting quietly amidst blaring rock music surrounded by a bevy of pretty groupies. The face with its piercing eyes was exactly the same but the Tokyo noise could hardly have been more different from the Kyoto milieu. Yet the earlier writing on Izu dancer and the denizens of the snow country surely, I like to imagine, had parallels for the author with the determined clubbers of the contemporary "mugen" scene.



### *Fireworks*

by Angela Carter

I never met Angela Carter but had the undeserved good fortune to get to know her one morning in London. It began when a

white-gloved archivist wheeled in what looked like an overloaded hospital trolley into that holy of holies - the special manuscripts shrine of the British Library.

>>

Possessing zero literary qualifications I had somehow found myself with the rare opportunity to be the first to slice open the uncatalogued mounds of the recently purchased Carter papers. Much among the scribbled files and typed up papers of the aspiring novelist would be beyond me but portions that found their way into **Fireworks** were also there to be rediscovered. Her early months in Tokyo and down on the coast were there waiting to be charted.

### *Childhood Years: A Memoir*

by Tanizaki Jun'ichiro

On Tanizaki my only fifth-hand anecdote would be of memories of literary matrons in Tokyo muttering their disapproval of his widow's proud remarks on "my Junichiro". And why should not she be proud? Even the journalism of his youth is enticing.

## Jack Cooke

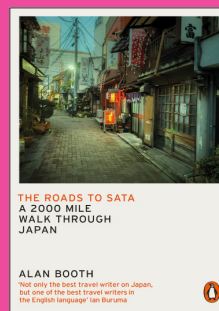
Editor

---

### *The Woman in the Dunes*

by Abe Kobo

Abe's masterpiece and a work of extraordinary imaginative power. A city entomologist on a weekend break becomes entrapped in a house buried in sand dunes. The brilliant film adaptation, directed by Teshigahara Hiroshi, is so uncomfortable it will make you itch all over.



### *The Roads to Sata*

by Alan Booth

A minor travel classic recounting a 2000-mile journey on foot, from Hokkaido to Kyushu, in the 1970s. Alan Booth is a

wonderful guide and his mastery of Japanese language and folklore makes for an enduring portrait of the countryside.

>>

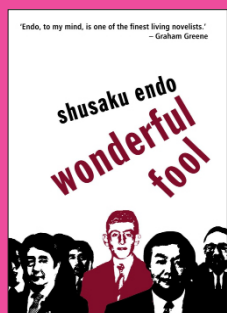
## Jack Cooke

Editor

### *The Youth of Things*

by Stephen Dodd

In this beautiful collection, Dodd rescues the short stories of Motojiro Kajii from oblivion, translating a definitive selection and paying tribute to the tragically short life of a Japanese writer who died at thirty-one.

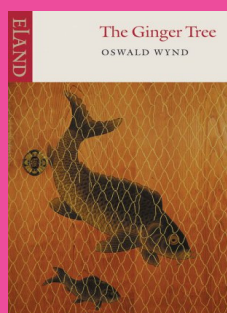


### *Wonderful Fool*

by Endo Shusaku

An endearing tale that follows the hapless but well-meaning Gaston Bonaparte; from his arrival in Japan, through a series of accidents,

to a dramatic and uplifting ending.



### *The Ginger Tree*

by Oswald Wynd

Oswald Wynd spent his childhood in Tokyo, then three years as a prisoner of war in the 1940s. His most famous novel spans the 20th

century and a troubled love affair with Japan that mirrors his own.

## Chris Corker

Reviewer

### *Labyrinth of Cinema*

directed by Obayashi Nobuhiko

While Obayashi is best known for his zany cult-classic Hausu, his final work, *Labyrinth of Cinema*, is a sprawling and ambitious attempt



to come to terms with a nation's warring past, and also to highlight the power of cinema as a medium for healing. Delivered with a bouquet palette and surrealist asides, beneath the artistry is an entreaty to recognise historical failures, as well as an affirmation of youth and its ability to change the future for the better. As likely to induce tears as evoke joy, *Labyrinth of Cinema* never feels stretched despite its three-hour runtime.

### *The Sailor who fell from Grace with the Sea*

by Mishima Yukio

This short work by Japan's most controversial writer can be read in a few hours, but the conclusion will stay with the reader for weeks. A novella that builds in tension from the start and does not let up until the inevitable tragedy at the final page, this is a novel so blessed with imagery and a narrative tightness that the impulse to read always wins out against the natural inclination to avert one's eyes.

### *The Night is Short, Walk on Girl*

directed by Yuasa Masaaki

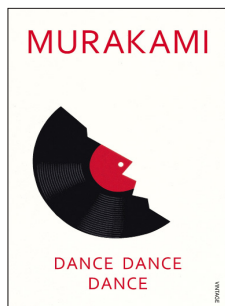


Outside of his somewhat nihilistic offerings on Netflix, much of Yuasa's oeuvre is overflowing with a palpable, youthful energy, often complemented with lyrical flow and fantastical narratives that themselves are so heart-poundingly alive that they leave an audience breathless. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his 2017 offering *The Night is Short, Walk on Girl*.





Based on a novel by Morimi Tomihiko, the writer of *The Tatami Galaxy* and *Penguin Highway*, the plot of one girl's bar crawl seems borderline mundane, but within his framework of surrealist simplicity, Yuasa brings an entire generation and its conflicts to life.



### ***Dance, Dance, Dance*** by Murakami Haruki

Murakami's real strength is his endurance, having been writing consistently since 1979 and showing no sign of slowing down.

Now internationally-renowned, it's hard to imagine a time when he had but a small if dedicated readership. *Dance Dance Dance*, however, was written during such a period. Penned with a bemused cynicism, the novel deals with the pitfalls of fame and parenthood, all the while having its characters wrestle with an existential dread that ultimately culminates in murder. Delving just as readily into farce as it does into tragedy, its portrayal of the darker side of idol culture is particularly penetrating.

### ***Onibaba***

directed by Shindo Kaneto

*Onibaba* is a claustrophobic fever dream. While western directors like David Lynch have had success with their own dreamscapes, Shindo's film is unique in being so charged with sexual tension, and at times virulent hatred, that one can't help but imagine the dreamer thrashing about in their bed. Set in 14th century during a period of civil war, the film acts as a cautionary tale on both the violence of desire and the pitfalls of overbearing parenting. Making incredible use of the contrast of black and white, the viewer is left only with the impression of an angry, passionate red.



## **Katie Croft**

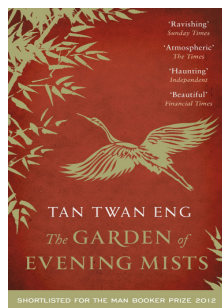
Reviewer

---

### ***Inside Japanese Gardens: From Basics to Planning, Management and Improvement***

by Masuno Shunmyo

This handbook by the well-known garden designer, academic, author and Buddhist monk Masuno Shunmyo is my favourite and most often used reference guide to Japanese gardens. Unlike most books written for amateur garden-lovers in the West, this manual contains explanations and diagrams giving details on everything from tools, tree and rock placement and pruning techniques. Those that are interested in language will also appreciate that it includes the Japanese names for plants, techniques and so on. Unfortunately, it is quite hard to get hold of in English but any other book by Masuno will also be worth your time.



### ***The Garden of Evening Mists***

by Tan Twan Eng

This is the book that got me interested in Japanese gardens and inspired me to go on my first work trip to Japan.

Although written by a Malaysian author, the description of the Japanese-style garden at the centre of the story is exquisite and cannot fail to capture your heart.

### ***Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: Informal Talks on Zen Meditation and Practice***

by Suzuki Shunryo

This influential book on Zen buddhism practice was published long before I was born and has been read by millions of people. But there's a good reason for it's popularity: Suzuki's lighthearted and enjoyable prose makes difficult to understand concepts enjoyable and beguiling

>>

## Katie Croft

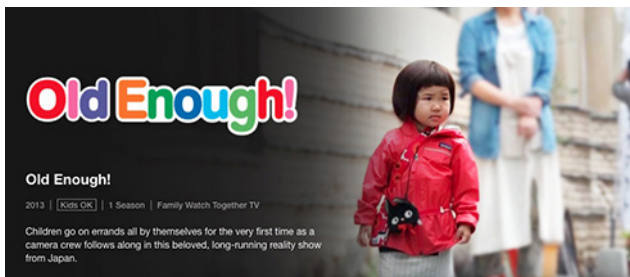
Reviewer

without the frustration of denser works. Although it's a slim volume, there is so much in there that I find myself returning to it regularly both as part of a meditation practice and to try to gain a better cultural understanding of Japan.

### **Old Enough! はじめておつかい!**

TV show available in Netflix UK

If you're having a bad day, nothing will cheer you up as much as watching a Japanese toddler as they go on their first solo errand in this adorable and innocent reality programme. Each episode is between 5-10 minutes long and follows a child (sometimes younger than 3) as they go out on their own to do a small errand for their parents. Immensely popular, はじめておつかい! has been running for over 30 years in Japan and is now available to watch on Netflix in the UK.



### **The Japanese Garden Society's Annual Conference and Events**

The Japanese Garden Society in the UK runs Japanese garden related events and activities all over the UK throughout the year, including an annual conference. I met gardeners from Japan and around the world whilst learning a great deal through attending the Japanese Garden Society's lectures, day trips and practical workshops. Volunteering in their garden maintenance activities at public and private Japanese-style gardens around the UK is also great fun and a good learning opportunity. Up-to-date information is available on their website [www.jgs.org.uk](http://www.jgs.org.uk).

## Bill Emmott

Japan Society Chairman & Reviewer

I am drawn to books and films that give me insights into the way Japanese people think, the way society works and what one might call the "back stories" of those many things in Japanese culture and society that at first we notice and then start to take for granted.

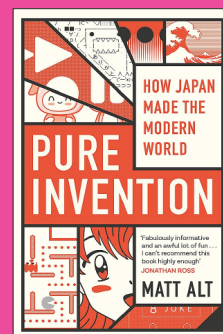
When a friend suggested I recommend Abe Kobo's masterpiece *The Woman in the Dunes* (1962) for a book club I am a member of, we were all blown away by his dystopian vision but also his perception of human nature.

I loved all Itami Juzo's satires on Japanese society, especially those like *The Funeral* (1984) and *A Taxing Woman* (1987) that came out in the 1980s at the time of the bubble economy and represented both a wonderful popping of pomposity and a gentle but sharp rebuff to hypocrisy and corruption, which seemed to me hugely healthy.

To understand Japan's culture, history and foreign policies through the ages and today,



it is vital to know of the country's love-hate-fear relationship with China, which is why Ezra Vogel's last major book before he died, *China and Japan: Facing History* (2019), was in my view his greatest achievement. But then to understand Japan's contemporary culture, society and even global influence, Matt Alt's survey of pop culture, *Pure Invention: How Japan's Pop Culture Conquered the World* (2020) also seems to me absolutely essential reading.



## Laurence Green

Reviewer



### **Convenience Store Woman**

by Murata Sayaka

The field of Japanese literature in English translation is constantly morphing, beholden to

constant shifts and emphasis in terms of passing trends and vague ideas of what the image of Japan we get through its literature 'should' look and feel like. But if there's any book that has done more than most to promote the cause in recent years, it has to be **Convenience Store Woman**. Riding high on a concerted marketing push and some exceptionally brilliant cover art design, Murata Sayaka's quirky story not only shines as a finger-on-the-pulse beacon of contemporary Japanese pop culture, but has also helped open the floodgates for translations of other big names in the world of Japanese female writers, like Kawakami Mieko. At the time of writing, **Convenience Store Woman** has nearly 5000 starred ratings on Amazon, with Murakami Haruki's classic **Norwegian Wood** the only volume of Japanese literature to boast more.

### **Lady Joker**

by Takemura Kaoru

This classic of Japanese crime fiction from the 1990s was sadly greeted by a rather muted commercial response on its English language release, due to an initially US-only publication as well as being split into two separate volumes. A UK release did eventually follow, and the critical response - at any rate - was more favourable, with many hailing this sprawling tale as similar to sleek televisual procedural dramas like *The Wire*. Based on a real-life case of CEO kidnapping in the murky depths of Japan's post-boom corporate realm, the stark realism and gritty characterisations make **Lady Joker** an utterly engrossing read, despite its length.



## 0.5mm

directed by Ando Momoko

I fondly remember the screening of this film at the British Library in 2017, which was accompanied by a talk from its director; Ando Momoko. Starring the director's sister, Ando Sakura, (who will be familiar to many from her starring role in Koreeda Hirokazu's **Shoplifters**), this 3 hour 18 minute-long epic sadly seems unlikely to see a conventional release in the UK any time soon. Fans of its unflinching gaze at the overlooked margins and taboos of Japanese society are advised to check out Ando's earlier directorial work **Kakera: A Piece of Our Life** (2010), which is available from Third Window Films.



## Your Name

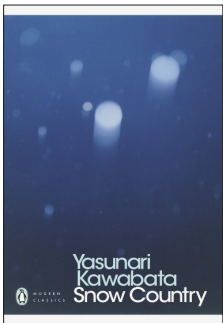
directed by Shinkai Makoto

Director Shinkai Makoto had long been hailed as a rising star in the anime industry, but it was *Your Name* that really sealed his status as one of the medium's biggest and brightest talents. Taking both his signature visual style and thematic motifs, **Your Name** is a cinematic tour de force of euphoric scope and scale; perhaps the single work that best represents everything anime has to offer to viewers. Its soundtrack - by the popular Japanese pop-rock band Radwimps - is also an absolute marvel.



## Martin Hatfull

Japan Society Deputy Chairman



### **Snow Country** by Kawabata Yasunari

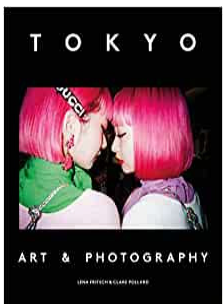
A quintessentially Japanese novel exploring relationships, social constraints and the power of the unsaid.

### **Killing Commendatore** by Murakami Haruki

Fantasy, the artist's experience, the influence of history on the present. Give in to it and don't try too hard to understand it.

### **Convenience Store Woman** by Murata Sayaka

Vital female perspective on the challenges of contemporary urban life.



### **Tokyo: Art and Photography**

Stunning catalogue of an outstanding recent exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

### **My Neighbour Totoro** directed by Miyazaki Hayao

Enchanting animation which also conveys a real sense of Japan's relationship with the natural world.



## Jenni Schofield

Reviewer

### **Alice in Borderland** TV series available in Netflix UK

**Alice in Borderland** is an eight-part series focusing on Arisu and his friends Karube and Chota, who find themselves in an alternative version of Shibuya where everyone has disappeared, where they are forced to take part in a series of games in order to stay alive. This horror-thriller series provides an insight into the malaise felt by many young people who are struggling to find their place among a rapidly changing society, with pressures to follow the same path to employment their parents did, despite those same roles no longer exist. A must watch for fans of **Squid Game**.



### **Queer East Film Festival** Annual film festival in London

**Queer East** is a film festival dedicated to showcasing LGBTQ+ films from East Asia, hosted in multiple cinemas across London every spring. With works showcased from large distributors and smaller independent artists alike, there is always something for everyone across the programme. Cinematic programmes such as the Artists Moving Images series, where a series of small arthouse films are shown back-to-back surrounding a theme, are especially enjoyable. This year's festival also included a VR experience, which transported the viewer to a fantasised gay sauna.



## **Battle Royale**

directed by Fukasaku Kinji

**Battle Royale**, both the 1999 novel by Takami Koushun and the film directed by Fukasaku Kinji in 2000, are responsible for birthing an entire genre of media named after it, with battle royale video games especially dominating the market.

**Battle Royale** follows a high school class who are transported to an island and told to kill one another, and that the last person standing can go home. Dealing with the disenfranchisement of younger generations and the damage intergenerational dispute can cause, **Battle Royale** is a classic, and a must-watch staple of modern Japanese cinema.



## **Ben-Ami Shillony**

Reviewer

Britain has encouraged the learning and research of Japan throughout the world by inviting scholars of Japan to its first-class universities and libraries to engage in research. Oxford and Cambridge have become the places where anyone interested in Japan, including Japanese scholars, meet and discuss in an intellectually rewarding atmosphere. Some of these British-based lectures and seminars have become first-class books.

### **Turning Points in Japanese History**

edited by Bert Edstroem

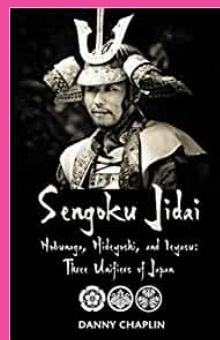
### **Carmen Blacker: Scholar of Japanese Religion, Myth and Folklore**

edited by Hugh Cortazzi

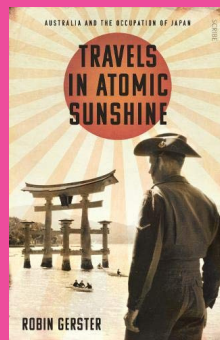
## **Trevor Skingle**

Reviewer

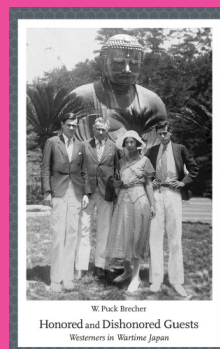
During its history Japan has, to a greater or lesser extent, been wrapped up in wars, either internecine or with other nations. These three very different books take three very different perspectives on this issue. Japan's own formative internecine strife (Nobunaga prepared the ingredients, Hideyoshi baked it and Ieyasu ate it), the events of the post WWII occupation by the British Commonwealth Occupation Force and, during WWII, the treatment of Westerners in Japan. Fascinating, occasionally horrific, and thorough in the treatment of their subject matter they reveal the turmoil which has given birth to a modern nation which has taken its rightful place on the world stage.



**Sengoku Jidai: Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu: Three Unifiers of Japan**  
by Danny Chaplin



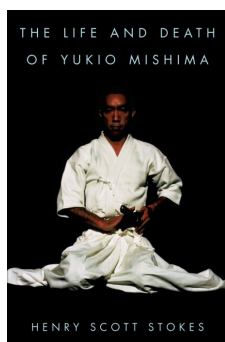
**Travels in Atomic Sunshine: Australia and the Occupation of Japan**  
by Robin Gerster



**Honoured and Dishonoured Guests: Westerners in Wartime Japan**  
by W Puck Brecher

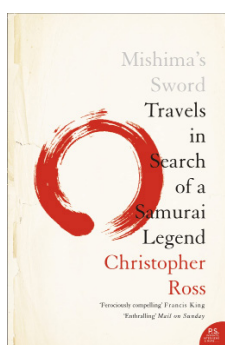
## Taniguchi Tomohiko

Reviewer



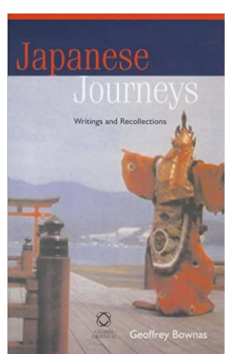
### ***The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima***

by Henry Scott-Stokes



### ***Mishima's Sword: Travels in Search of a Samurai Legend***

by Christopher Ross



### ***Japanese Journeys: Writings and Reflections: Writings and Recollections***

by Geoffrey Bownas

## William Upton

Editor

### ***Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons***

by Shirane Haruo

Japan's tradition of elegant representations of nature in its poetry, art and ceremonies gave birth to the idea that the country and its people enjoy a privileged relationship with nature.

>>

This beautiful book unpacks this myth, tracing how the idea of harmony with the natural world flourished in Japanese art as rural life receded.

### ***Cowboy Bebop***

directed by Watanabe Shinichiro

Before joining the Japan Society I worked as a musician, and my introduction to Japanese culture came when I played the infamous lead saxophone part for Kanno Yoko's *Tank!* the opening theme to the cult animé ***Cowboy Bebop***. I subsequently binge-watched all 26 episodes, and its inscrutable jazz noir aesthetic and stunning soundtrack made a big impression on me.



### ***Where the Heart Beats: John Cage, Zen Buddhism, and the Inner Life of Artists***

by Kay Larson

This book centres on how John Cage's encounters with Daisetz T. Suzuki changed the course of Western music. Kay Larson is a respected art critic and practicing Buddhist, and this biography is equal parts hagiography and parable. Nevertheless, taken with a pinch of salt it gives a fascinating insight into Cold War Japan, America and the lives of one of the 20th century's great musicians and thinkers.

### ***Professor Risley and the Imperial Japanese Troupe: How an American Acrobat Introduced Circus to Japan -- and Japan to the West***

by Frederik L. Schodt

An alternative account of Japan's rapidly developing relationship with the West at the turn of the 20th century, centred on the intrepid Japanese acrobats who toured the world on a shoestring.

>>

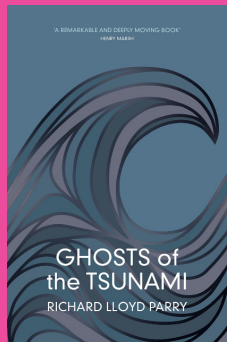


## **Garden Rain** by Takemitsu Toru

The music of Takemitsu Toru has enjoyed something of a revival over the past decade, and any burgeoning Japanese composer must endure comparison with this colossus of mid-20th century classical music. **Garden Rain** is a collection of his chamber music of the 1960s and 70s, capturing a period in which his conflicting tendencies as colourful impressionist and ascetic modernist coalesced into an instantly recognisable style.

## **David Warren**

Former JS Chairman & Reviewer



## **Ghosts of the Tsunami** by Richard Lloyd Parry

An unforgettably moving account of the devastating impact of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami on one Tohoku community, which ranks alongside John Hersey's *Hiroshima* as a record of unimaginable calamity.

## **Spring Snow** by Mishima Yukio

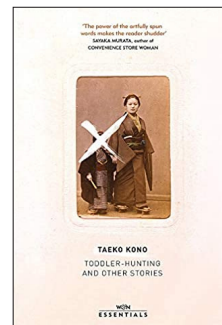
In Michael Gallagher's superb translation, the best and most accessible volume in his tetralogy, **The Sea of Fertility**, a wonderful evocation of the lives of spoilt rich kids in the early Taisho era.

## **Tokyo Story** directed by Ozu Yasujiro

A timeless study of aging parents, whose children are drifting away from them, facing the end of their lives alone.

## **Beau Waycott**

Reviewer



## **Toddler-hunting & Other Stories**

by Kono Taeko

At once both a prominent member of the post-war *joryu bungaku* genre and a key figure in genre's

dismantlement and participation into simply *bungaku*, this collection of Kono's fiction focuses mainly on short stories of the 1960s, with translator Lucy North's afterword to the new edition adding some fascinating modern discourse to some of the startling themes. Fans of Tanizaki will also no doubt appreciate the numerous parallels Kono took from her idol.

## **The Karma of Words : Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan** by William R. LaFleur

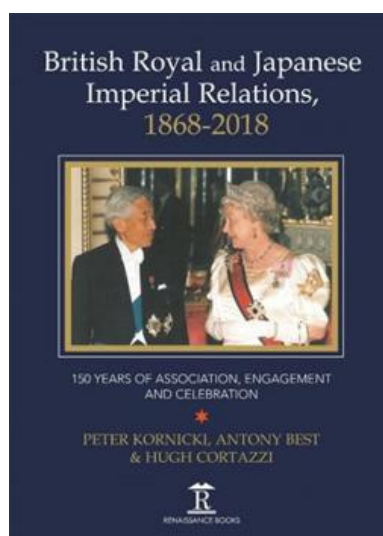
Valuable to anyone with an interest in medieval Japan, LaFleur's study of Japanese thought and literature from the 11th century onwards provides analysis of the Buddhist beliefs of both high society and the proletariat. The seventh chapter on *kyogen's* relationship with Buddhism is especially fascinating, not least when followed by a comparison with *noh*.

## **A History of Japanese Political Thought 1600-1901**

by Watanabe Hiroshi

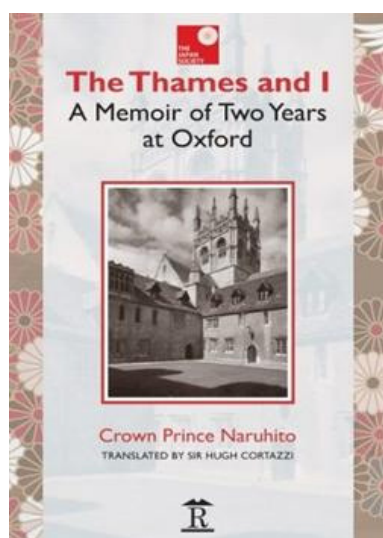
David Noble's smooth translation of Watanabe Hiroshi's charting of particularly Confucian beliefs from the 16th to 20th centuries provides both a deep characterisation of Confucianism in China before discussing it in the Japanese context from the Tokugawa period. A student of Maruyama Masao, Watanabe probes some deep reconsiderations of imperial imposition and legitimisation, especially during the shift into Meiji.

Visit the Japan Society online bookshop to discover a wide variety of publications on Japanese history, literature, arts and much more!



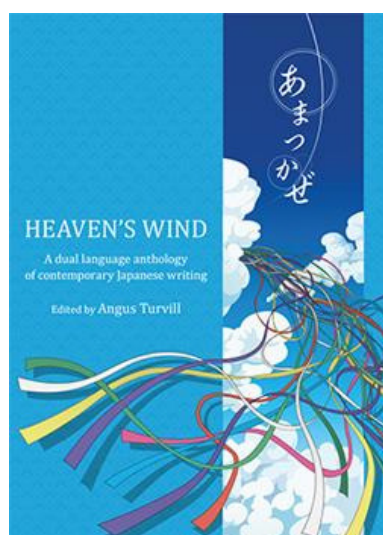
***British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations, 1868-2018***  
edited by Peter Kornicki, Antony Best and Sir Hugh Cortazzi  
The Japan Society and Renaissance Books (2019)

This new study examines the history of the relations between the British and Japanese monarchies over the past 150 years. Complemented by a significant plate section, with many rarely seen historical photographs and illustrations, together with supporting chronologies, *British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations, 1868-2018* will become a benchmark reference on the subject. It is also a memorial volume to the late Sir Hugh Cortazzi who died in August 2018, shortly after completing his own contribution to the volume.



***The Thames And I: A Memoir of Two Years at Oxford***  
by Prince Naruhito, Crown Prince of Japan  
The Japan Society and Renaissance Books (2019)

Translated by the late Sir Hugh Cortazzi and first published in hardback in 2006, this reprint in softback is published to mark the ascendancy to the imperial throne of Japan of Crown Prince Naruhito in 2019. Prior to becoming Crown Prince of Japan in 1989, following the death of his grandfather Emperor Showa, Prince Naruhito studied at Merton College, Oxford, from June 1983 to October 1985. This marked the first time that anyone in direct succession to the throne had ever studied outside Japan.



***Heaven's Wind***  
edited and translated by Angus Turvill  
The Japan Society (2018)

*Heaven's Wind* is a collection of short stories by five of Japan's leading contemporary authors: Kuniko Mukoda – *The Otter*; Natsuko Kuroda – *Ball*; Kaori Ekuni – *Summer Blanket*; Mitsuyo Kakuta – *The Child over There*; and Aoko Matsuda – *Planting*. Taking its name from one of Japan's best known classical poems, *Heaven's Wind* (Amatsukaze) is the world's first dual language anthology of Japanese women's writing, including four Naoki and Akutagawa Prize winners.