

Paper Craft

Sir Hugh Cortazzi considers the Art of Japanese Paper

Kaleidoscope of Myth

Tales from a Mountain Cave reviewed by Jack Cooke

In issue 53, we again provide a wide range of reviews across many aspects of Japanese culture. We consider an overview of Japan from a broad range of perspectives, a mystical jigsaw compilation of fiction, artisanal crafts, another collection of short stories veering away from the romanticisation of Japan, a film that sets its sights on issues of fatherhood and finally an insight into an East Asian film festival.

Sir Hugh Cortazzi kicks off issue 53 with a review of *Japan and the Shackles from the Past* which, despite its flaws, provides an insightful perspective on modern Japan. We then turn our attention to the first of two sets of short stories. Jack Cooke reviews *Tales from a Mountain Cave* and focuses in particular on its dreamlike, mythical quality as it draws us through Japanese fairy-tales and folklore via the figure of the 'storyteller'. We continue on with another review from Sir Hugh, this time on *Washi: the Art of Japanese Paper*, an excellent and highly

visual introduction to the craft. Sir Hugh also highlights the relevance of *washi* to Anglo-Japanese relations, noting that Sir Harry Parkes sent home many samples of the craft. We then turn our attention to the second set of short stories. *Rivers* is perhaps a more grounded offering, and Chris Corker analyses this set of stories that attempt to de-romanticise and in a way, de-mythologise Japan by re-working metaphors and imagery of water that are usually associated with purity. We move onto Mike Sullivan's review of *Like Father Like Son*, a striking and poignant piece of cinema about the bittersweet love of fatherhood and the conflict between nature and nurture. Finally we have a round up of some of the featured films at the Terracotta Far East Film Festival including films from current Asian cinema and an all-night horror spectacular.

William Cottrell

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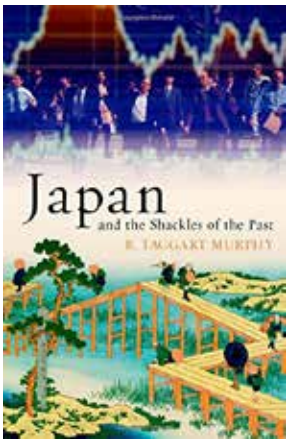
Chris Corker, Jack Cooke & Mike Sullivan

Special Reviewer

Sir Hugh Cortazzi

New reviews

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Japan and the Shackles of the Past

by R. Taggart Murphy

Oxford University Press, 2014

472 Pages, US\$29.95

ISBN 978-0-19-984598-9

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

The publisher summarises this book as 'a penetrating overview of Japan, from a historical, social, political, economic, and cultural perspective.' This is a book by an American author directed primarily at American readers. It makes many good points and Japan specialists will want to read and carefully consider some of his analysis of modern Japan. However, the author's knowledge and understanding of pre-war Japanese history is shaky and towards the end he allows his irritation with aspects of US policy especially over Okinawa to run away with his arguments. British readers looking for an introduction to modern Japan would do better by reading David Pilling's book *Bending Adversity*.

Taggart Murphy's reading of Japanese history seems to have been limited. There are many good American historians of Japan, but it is a pity that he does not seem to have read anything by Sir George Sansom or Professor W. G. Beasley. If he had absorbed Sansom's *Japan: A Short Cultural History* or Beasley's *Japanese Imperialism*, his first hundred pages might have provided a better and more rounded historical summary. Sex was an important element in Edo culture but it was not as central to Japanese life in the period as Murphy makes out. The British reader can safely skip through these pages.

Murphy is much better when dealing with modern Japan where he has lived for many years and is at home in the culture, which he has encountered in Tokyo. He is often perceptive about Japanese society, economy and politics. Thus, lives up to the summary of his book as expressed by his American publisher assuming the disguise of the OUP, which used to be regarded as the epitome of the British establishment.

As the best British investment managers have realised, the most successful Japanese companies are nowadays medium sized specialist firms, which deal in upstream components. Murphy fingers Keyence, Fanuc, Hirose Electric, Pacific Metals and Union Tool. But he also draws attention to those large firms, which seem to have lost their way and allowed Korean companies to capture parts of the market, which they had dominated.

He gives a helpful overview of Japanese employment practices and corporate governance issues, which have led to some of the social and economic problems

Japan faces today. He notes the way in which the so-called 'black companies' (*burakku kigyō*) have exploited young Japanese seeking permanent rather than temporary positions.

He rightly emphasises the success of Japanese investment in other countries, but notes their failure to bring non-Japanese into decision-making roles leading to failures and misunderstandings.

His description of the changes taking place within Japanese society in his Chapter 9 makes interesting reading. He introduces the reader to various types of modern Japanese women and explains the Japanese terms used to describe them under the generic '*gyaru*.' He defines Japanese neologisms such as *obatarian* and *sodaigumi*, which will be new to some readers who may be more familiar with terms such as *otaku* and *hikikomori* in the context of the problems of Japanese young people. He notes 'the re-emergence of class' (I never thought it had disappeared) and deplores 'the decline of Japan's leadership class' with its 'inability to confess error,' which was so apparent in the context of the Fukushima nuclear disaster and in the Japanese failure to come to terms with its militaristic past.

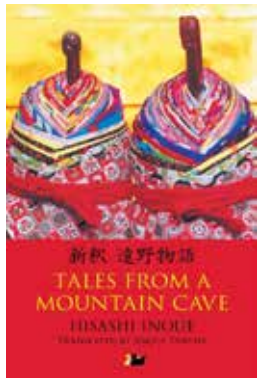
His account of modern politics is also worth reading. He is clearly fascinated by the roles played by such powerful puppeteers as Tanaka Kakuei, Kanemaru Shin and Ozawa Ichirō, although I suspect that he may have overestimated Ozawa's influence. His comments on rightist politicians are pointed. I was particularly struck by the following sentence (p. 273) about their attitude to the past: 'Acknowledging the scope of the Rape of Nanking, the terror bombing of Chongqing, or the atrocities committed by Unit 731 is literally [for the rightists] intolerable, for it threatens to besmirch the only ontologically grounded sense of the sacred to which they have access – "Japaneseness" and their status as members in good standing of a holy race living in a holy land.'

Of Abe's first term as prime minister he comments (p. 311) that 'all his rightist talk had the effect of making him come across as particularly tone deaf or k.y. (an acronym for *kūki yomenai*, literally, "cannot read the air" – the slang acronym actually uses the Roman letters).'

In the last and longest chapter, 'Japan and the World', Murphy is highly critical of the policy of the Obama government towards Japan and 'the New Japan hands' in the US Embassy in Tokyo and in the State Department who advised the President to snub Prime Minister Hatoyama in a way which hastened the latter's downfall. He also attacks the Pentagon and the US marines over US bases in Okinawa. He draws attention to 'Japan's agents of influence' in Washington. He concludes (p. 371) that 'the United States does not fundamentally care about Japan.' In his view (p. 373) 'The American Empire is doomed

to failure because it is structurally and institutionally ignorant of the wider world.' He thinks that ultimately (p. 374) 'the US-Japan "alliance" will crumble,' leaving Japan alone and friendless. He concludes (p. 387) that 'within a reasonable time-frame the last American base in Japan [should] be closed' but this requires a leader, a Japanese 'de Gaulle,' capable of establishing a regime which would re-establish Japan as a 'normal country' in East Asia, that could be relied on to play an influential but peaceful role. Murphy clearly does not think that Abe, of whose actions (e.g. over the secrecy law pushed through the diet without proper scrutiny) he is suspicious, is capable of filling such a role.

The polemical tone and dubious logic of this final chapter and the personal animus in it directed at US officials such as Richard Armitage and Joseph Nye detract from the impact of Murphy's often cogent and perceptive points about modern Japan. §



Tales from a Mountain Cave

by Inoue Hisashi,
translated by Angus Turvill

Thames River Press, 2013

142 Pages, £9.99

ISBN 978-0-85728-130-2

Review by Jack Cooke

A lone trumpet call reverberates across the mountain valley and our story begins . . .

If you have ever fallen asleep on an idle summer's afternoon and had one of those dreams that seems to encompass whole years instead of a few passing hours, awaking disorientated and curiously melancholy, then you already know what it feels like to turn the last page of *Tales from a Mountain Cave* and re-enter the world; in my case a cold, grey London in October.

The tales are set in the Kamaishi area of Iwate Prefecture. The region's twentieth century history, one of industrialisation and mining, offers a stark contrast with its folktale past, yet this thin veneer of modern life cannot repress the enduring legends that lurk beneath it. The period in which the stories are set seems just within our reach and simultaneously elusive, ever-present but masked by the dramatic transitions of the last one hundred years.

The structure of *Tales from a Mountain Cave* involves a tale within a tale, a jigsaw compilation of the mysterious story-teller's persona, an old man living in the mountain cave of the title, and that of his avid listener the narrator. The absorbing atmosphere this creates is akin to a daydream; where fact and fiction

freely intermingle. This mood is reinforced by the mixing of a plausible present, the 1950s 'real-time' in which the tales are related to our narrator, a student working in a Tohoku sanatorium, with the fantastical past of the old man's life. One curious way of looking at the plot is to view it as analogous to the composition of magnetite, the mineral that the region's mines are famed for. Parallel lattices of fact and fable intertwine, splicing elements of Inoue's own biography with the accumulated legends of Iwate's written and oral histories.

In what other story collection is the reader led through such a kaleidoscope of myth? Foxes fornicating with women, wayfarers running from cannibalisation, a giant eel disguised as an accountant; these and other such wonders represent a small cross-section of the varied legends that lie within. One particularly mischievous story relates the deeds of a beautiful seductress inhabiting a hillside grove. The scene conjured by the storyteller has the reader joining the protagonist peeping through a hole in the screen of this woman's house, watching as she entices a passing traveller. The voyeuristic appeal of the story makes us eager to enlarge the view through the hole but, at the climax of the tale, we find the vision that has held our mind's eye is not at all what it seems. Such shifting perspectives abound throughout the book.

Inoue Hisashi was renowned for his humour, both in his work as a playwright and as a novelist. At the outset of the book the author quotes from an earlier collection of folktales, *Tōno Monogatari* by Kunio Yanagita (translated as *Legends of Tōno* by Ronald A. Morse, 1975), from which *Tales from a Mountain Cave* draws some inspiration;

'I believe there may be hundreds of such stories in the Tōno area and their dissemination is greatly to be desired... legends that the people of the plains will shudder to hear.'

Inoue then contrasts this with his own rejoinder:

'I expect there are hundreds of stories like this around Tōno. I have no particular wish to hear them, but I am sure that such tales of mountain spirits and mountain people may serve to tickle the people of the plains.'

Married to the author's self-deprecation and mockery is his stated aim to 'tickle' the reader rather than induce a 'shudder'. However, I often found the two inseparable. Mountain men, kappa, fox spirits; the appearance of these in *Tales from a Mountain Cave* is every bit as frightening as the interpreted legends of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke or Lafcadio Hearn. In the book's darker moments we find tragic and grotesque spectacles; a pair of lovers' cliff-top suicide or the body of a disembowelled child. These instances of the macabre are contrasted with abundant comedy throughout, often centred on a sense of the absurd, such as this curious line:

'... I was material to be at least a doctor of some level, if not a fully fledged quack then perhaps at least some kind of quackling.'

Bound up with Inoue's humour is a focus on the playful nature of animal spirits, central to many of the concepts expressed in Japanese belief systems. The combating of human and animal nature, in which the latter nearly always prevails, is a consistent theme in the tales. Human violence often gains the upper hand but it is animal guile that has the last laugh; the protagonists, the narrator and, by association, the reader, are all fooled time and again. The final example of this comes at the book's conclusion, a twist in the 'tail' well worth waiting for.

Inoue himself once worked in a sanatorium in Kamaishi. How wonderful it is to reflect on him sitting on the mountainside and concocting the tales that form this book; imagine the author, with his trademark grin, perched somewhere high-up above his daily labours and daydreaming this collection into existence.

The translator, Angus Turvill, has visited many of the settings found in *Tales from a Mountain Cave*. All royalties and translation fees from the book are going toward projects aimed at rebuilding the parts of Iwate that were so terribly damaged by the events of March 2011. There is a touching symmetry in the idea of a local book, first penned some thirty-eight years ago, now aiding the very place of its conception in a time of need. Turvill has distilled something very special in this reworking of Inoue's original and in his acknowledgements we find an exemplary panel of readers, editors and well-wishers. Those involved with the book, however obliquely, range across the full spectrum of Japanese translation. It is reassuring, both in literary and human terms, that so much of this community should come together to support a worthy project.

Turvill mentions in his introduction to the translation that, 'The building where the author lived with his mother in the 1950s was one of the many to be swept away (by the tsunami).' Inoue, who died in 2010, a year before the Great East Japan Earthquake, would be pleased to find that, though many things in this world are transient, his collection of stories has now reached beyond the 'people on the plains' and found a global audience. §



Washi: The Art of Japanese Paper by Nancy Broadbent Casserley

Kew Publishing, 2013

64 pages, £15

ISBN 978 184246 486 1

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

This book was been published to coincide with

an exhibition of Japanese handmade paper at the gallery of the Norwich University of the Arts from 12 March to 20 April 2013. Nancy Broadbent Casserley, who is a research fellow at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures in Norwich, is a curator and scholar of the history of design.

This book is based on the Parkes collection of 19th century *washi* [和紙] which is part of the collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and on 'The Soul of Japan' collection of contemporary *washi*. It contains colour reproductions of a wide variety of Japanese handmade papers and is an excellent introduction to *washi* (literally Japanese paper, but meaning here handmade Japanese paper).

Anyone who goes to Japan and receives a Japanese present will be immediately impressed by the importance attached to wrapping and will notice the decorated paper in which many presents are wrapped. The visitor may also be guided to Japanese shops in Tokyo, Kyoto or elsewhere which specialize in selling various types of Japanese paper. If the visitor also develops an interest in Japanese crafts and the Mingei movement [民芸, the Japanese folk art movement developed in the late 1920s and 1930s], they may be induced to visit some of the workshops around Japan where such papers are still made and where they can observe the labour intensive process of turning plant fibres into paper. Such paper becomes a medium for traditional and new designs which are aesthetically pleasing and often beautiful. I remember many years ago visiting the atelier of a venerable paper maker called Abe who lived in a remote part of Shimane prefecture and who had been declared a "living national treasure," so respected is the art of making paper in Japan.

In the introduction Nancy Casserley briefly outlines the history of *washi*, noting that paper-making had been introduced to Japan by a Korean priest in 610. She describes the raw materials used and the traditional Japanese process.

Sir Harry Parkes who was British Minister to Japan from 1866-84 was a controversial figure but no one could

deny his great energy and dedication to the promotion of British interests. In the summer of 1869 the Foreign Secretary, at the instigation of W. E. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, asked for a report on Japanese paper products and papermaking techniques. Gladstone was concerned by the increasing shortage of cotton and linen rags, from which paper was being made in Europe and North America, and wanted to learn about alternative fibres which the Japanese might be using. Parkes enlisted the services of the British Consuls in the Treaty Ports to collect samples of washi and to describe the techniques used. Parkes sent his report to London in March 1871 together with two boxes of samples of paper and objects made in paper.

Many of the samples sent home by Parkes were decorated *washi karakami* [唐紙] used on sliding partitions such as the following. The design on the left depicts a phoenix among arabesques and flowers: that on the right silver floral medallions in squares of blue pine branches.



Parkes also sent boxes made from paper as well as items made to look like leather such as pouches. There was even a helmet for a government official which was made of paper.

'The Soul of Japan' collection of contemporary *washi* arose out of a plan to hold a *washi* exhibition in Britain in the 1990s, but because of funding problems it never took place. The Japanese committee decided to call themselves 'The Washi: The Soul of Japan Committee' and to produce a multi-volume *washi* compendium containing samples of *washi* collected around Japan. Here are a few striking examples from this section. The washi depicted on the left is from Kyoto and shows chrysanthemums, leaves and arabesques on an indigo base.



The picture on the right is described as a *katazome gami sansui* showing village scenes looked at from one side or from the opposite side depicting ships, houses and trees.



This is a pattern of birds, flowers and waves from the Okinawan tradition:



This striking design is on the back fold. §



Rivers

by Miyamoto Teru,
translated by Ralph
McCarthy and Roger
Thomas

Kurodahan Press, 2014

266 pages, £16.50 (paperback)

ISBN-10: 4902075598

Review by Chris Corker

Miyamoto Teru has enjoyed huge popularity in Japan, while to readers in the West he remains a relative unknown. Perhaps that is because his fiction, essentially autobiographical, portrays a Japan that does not sit well with the modern, romanticised version of a country recovering immediately after the war, quickly becoming a world powerhouse decorated with neon. The Japan here is much less glamorous. These three stories – spanning decades but always set in Osaka, each by the side of a river – show the daily struggles of a proletariat population, suffering not only from the squalor of poverty but also suffering psychologically with the legacy of defeat. Running through each story is a desperate desire from the older generation to pass on something more to their younger counterparts, to try and offer promise in an environment that drains it away.

'A newborn had been found floating in the river, trailing a long umbilical cord...'

Rivers and water are often used by an author as metaphors for purity and cleansing. One thing apparent from very early on in 'Muddy River' – set in 1955, a decade after the war – is that while the river may be the lifeblood of the town, it is a stagnant and fetid flow, associated often with death and dissolution. This twisted symbolism is apt for *Rivers* as a whole, at once nostalgically reminiscent and traumatic. 'Muddy

River' sets the tone with a particularly striking image, as an already disfigured veteran is crushed under the wheels of his cart as he struggles to push it up a hill. The returning soldiers had escaped the war, but their struggles are far from over. Another is mentioned: 'He was a farmer from Wakayama, had two kids. Bullets were flying around us like swarms of bees, and he walks away without so much as a scratch. Then, three months after he was sent home, he fell into a ditch and died.'

Shortly after he sees the death of the veteran, a young boy named Nobuo notices a new riverboat in the town. He has no idea as he makes friends with the boy from the boat – Kitchan – that Kitchan's mother is a prostitute, and that they move from place to place on the river, staying as long as they can before they are forcefully moved on by the authorities. Nobuo, Kitchan, and Kitchan's sister, Ginko, develop a friendship that at all times feels fleeting, made more pitiful as Nobuo begins to have deeper feelings for Ginko. Later, after a moral disagreement between Nobuo and Kitchan, he stops talking to them. Just like the soldiers back from the war, Nobuo – the younger generation – cannot fully accept the tainted family, forced to extremes just to get by. By the time he finds forgiveness, it is too late.

'River of Fireflies', the strongest and most poetic of the three stories and winner of the Dazai Osamu Prize, is a bittersweet coming-of-age tale set amongst tragedy. Taking place during a particularly harsh winter in 1962, 'Fireflies' opens with an unhappy family scene, ending with Tatsuo's father having a stroke. When his father and his best friend die, it is the prospect of a trip to see the fireflies – promised to him by his father's old friend Ginzō, who has lost his own son – which keeps him going. Again we have the older generation desperate to offer something to the younger, here a little childish innocence. When his sweetheart, Eiko, agrees to go along, Tatsuo becomes obsessed with the trip. When he reaches the fireflies, however, Tatsuo realises this is the end of his innocence and the beginning of maturity. Soon he will be leaving for high-school, most likely going to a different one to Eiko. The fireflies, that the characters had expected to be a beautiful spectacle, become a sombre sight for each, separately dealing with their own loss.

'River of Lights' is by far the longest of the three and because of this offers more depth than the others. However, it also suffers from a stuttering narrative and contemplative nature, some of the characters and situations seeming superfluous to the narrative. Set in 1969, the story focusses on two characters: Takeuchi, a retired ageing pool-shark who doesn't want his son, Masao, to make the same mistakes; and Kunihiro, a young man deciding whether he would like to go to university or stay working at Takeuchi's bar. Takeuchi's feelings for Masao are complicated, the taint of his mother's infidelity passing on to him

being something that Takeuchi finds hard to forgive. For Kunihiro, stuck between the quarrelling Takeuchi and Masao, stuck between the past and the future and stuck between staying and leaving, none of his options seem appealing. One transient character puts it all very succinctly:

"It gets so that you don't know whether you're working just to stay alive, or staying alive just to work."

This sentiment, born of the recession but still very relevant in modern Japan, sums up the struggle of Miyamoto's characters perfectly.

The weakness of *Rivers* lies in its use of an overly explanatory tone. Miyamoto seems fond of extensive descriptions to set the scene, but this sometimes overflows into his narrative and goes against the old adage that an author should show and not tell the reader how to think. A glaring example of this is found towards the end of the collection, during a telephone conversation.

"I'm at our usual coffee shop right now. It looks as if I won't be able to see you again for some time, so I'd like to say goodbye..." Hiromi sounded as if she wanted to meet and have a talk.'

Although this is a particularly obvious instance, there are several that stick out throughout the stories, especially in 'River of Lights', which also has quite a number of spelling and grammar mistakes that should have been picked up in editing.

Despite these drawbacks, *Rivers* is an informative collection that creates an interesting hybrid of the cruel and the nostalgic times of youth. While the heavy description can be a little invasive and a hindrance to the narrative, the plight and growth of the characters is compelling enough for the reader to persevere. At times, even amongst the squalor, the cruelty and the suffering, there are moments of beauty that allow the reader and the characters alike to push forwards. §



Like Father Like Son

Directed by Koreeda Hirokazu

121 minutes, 2013 (DVD)

Review by Mike Sullivan

Koreeda Hirokazu is a director who has made the move from directing documentaries in the 1990s to now writing and directing films which document human life. In the 1998 movie, *After Life*, he told the story of souls, people who have just died who need to choose their happiest memory to serve

as their heaven. They would then experience this memory forever. In 2004, Koreeda began to gain international fame with his movie *Nobody Knows* which was based on the true story of four children who had been abandoned and who survived for nine months by themselves. This movie won several awards at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. In 2008, Koreeda's film *Still Walking* focussed on a family over 24 hours as they commemorate the death of the oldest son 15 years before.



Both families then have to figure out what to do going forward but for anyone, it is hard to give away the child you have raised and accept another in his place. Both families spend time together and it becomes evident that while Ryota believes himself to be a good father, he pales a little bit in comparison with Yudai whose shop is attached to his family home and who spends a lot of time with his children. Slowly the story reaches the point where they try to live with their real sons in their own homes, much to the confusion of these young boys.

Koreeda presents a story which is painful to watch at times. It is hard to imagine how people in real life have dealt with this kind of situation and this comes across in the movie. Fukuyama gives an amazing performance by which he presents himself as a father who begins to question his own parenting skills, while never putting us in doubt about how much he loves his son. In the end Koreeda leaves us with questions, but that is within his style. §



Like Father Like Son is again in a similar vein of looking at human lives as we see how two families cope when they discover that their sons were mixed up at birth. It was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival, and it won the Jury Prize. It was also shown at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival, and the 2013 Vancouver International Film Festival.

The film stars Masaharu Fukuyama, a musician, singer and actor, and Lily Franky, a popular comedian and actor, as the two fathers of this story and Machiko Ono, film and TV actress, and Yōko Maki, also a film and TV actress, as the two mothers. They are all well-known faces on Japanese TV and bring real experience and depth to their characters and to this film.

Ryota (Fukuyama) is a hardworking man who is married with one child; the family are well off and keep their child busy with lessons and recitals. One day they are asked to come to the hospital where their son, Keita, was born. Here, they are faced with the unbelievable news that their son isn't their son and was switched at birth with another child. They agree to a meeting with the 'parents' of their real son and the contrast between both sets of parents is clear. Compared to the more polished and dignified appearance of Ryota and his wife, Yudai (Franky) and his wife are rather different. As both sets of parents attend the hospital's investigation they discover that the nurse who attended the births did not switch the babies by accident. She envied Ryota and his wife for their apparent happiness and evidence of wealth, and so she swapped their child with another.



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Terracotta Far East Asian Film Festival Press Event

The film festival ran from Friday 23 May – Sunday 1 June 2014.

Review by Mike Sullivan

This was the fifth year of the Terracotta Far East Film Festival and it gets bigger and better each time. This year's press event allowed us to preview the featured film line up accompanied by some of the trailers. It was also a great opportunity to discuss the films with fellow Asian movie lovers and the organisers of the event. The festival took place at the Prince Charles Cinema and The Institute of Contemporary Art and this year there were three distinct strands; SPOTLIGHT ON: Philippines, Current Asian Cinema and Terra Cotta Horror All-Nighter.

As part of the focus on the Philippines, there were six movies shown from that country. For Japanese movie enthusiasts there was a choice of four Japanese movies, plus a movie which, although made in Taiwan, was directed by Aozaru Shiao and Toyoharu Kitamura.

Be My Baby made it to the official selection of both the Hong Kong International Film Festival 2014 and the Udine Far East Film Festival 2014. It was directed by Hitoshi One and the screenplay was written by award-winning dramatist Daisuke Miura. Amazingly it was made in just four days with a budget of under \$10,000. The plot follows a group of young people and the events following a party with dimly lit rooms, where there are lies, lust, betrayal and manipulation.



The Snow White Murder Case is the latest movie by a personal favourite of mine, director Yoshihiro Nakamura. His impressive filmography includes *Fish Story* and *See you tomorrow, everyone*, and it is fair to say that his latest movie isn't one to be missed. In a similar style of storytelling to *Fish Story* this movie features a multi-perspective plot following a murder and an unofficial investigation by a director and twitter addict Akahoshi (Go Ayano). This had its UK premiere on 31 May at the Prince Charles Cinema.

Judge! is a 2014 movie directed by Akira Nagai and featuring Satoshi Tsumabuki and Keiko Kitagawa. Ad agency employee Kiichiro Ota (Tsumabuki) is sent by his boss to be on the judging panel at the Santa Monica Advertising Festival and he brings his colleague (Kitagawa) to help him. What follows is a race to win the Grand Prix with comedic action, absurd moments and a little bit of sentimentality.

The fourth movie was for the Japanese horror fans and was part of the Terracotta Horror All-Nighter at the Prince Charles Cinema on 31 May. *Lesson of Evil* is by the infamous director of *Audition*, Takashi Miike and follows a popular English teacher, Seiji Hasumi, played by Hideaki Itō. Although he is trusted and appears to be a nice guy, students start to disappear with horrific results. This all-nighter film session also included movies from Malaysia, the Philippines, and a joint Japanese-Indonesian movie, *Killers*. §

