



Editor: Sean Curtin

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In this issue we focus on pioneers and adventurers who opened Japan up to the wider world. Susan Meehan kicks off with a gripping new work by Roger Pulvers on Lafcadio Hearn, the great Japan chronicler of the 1890s who captured the essence of traditional Japan before it morphed into its modern form. Hearn was himself a true global citizen, having a Greek mother, Irish father and being schooled in England, Ireland and France. This background imbued his observations with a universal appeal which has stood the test of time. Michael Sullivan looks at Giles Milton's *Samurai William: The Adventurer Who Unlocked Japan* which charts the life of the first Englishman to learn about and live in Japan. Adams (1564-1620), known in Japan as Miura Anjin [三浦按針], helped forge the UK's first links with the land of the rising sun as well as establishing the first English factory in the country, something this work also examines. Adams will be one of the focal points in the 2013 Japan 400 celebrations to mark the 400th anniversary of initiating official Japan-UK ties. Next we move from reality to the realm of fictional adventurers with two reviews of *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure*. This beautifully illustrated work by the renowned Japanese artist Yukinobu Hoshino (星野之宣) manages to perfectly capture the unique atmosphere of the British Museum while conjuring forth a ripping yarn. Sir Graham Fry looks at the fictional Irish swashbuckler Milligan in Simon Alexander Collier's *Milligan and the Samurai Rebels* which is set in 1860s Japan. The likeable rogue takes on an array of indigenous and foreign foes, surviving some entertaining adventures and encountering a host of beautiful women. Atsuko Inoue (井上敦子) takes us back to reality with a Japanese book on the real life Australian trailblazer Henry James Black who became a traditional Japanese storyteller, a rakugoka [落語家], in 1891, taking the stage name Kairakutei Black [快樂亭ブラック]. The Australian writer and academic Dr Ian McArthur meticulously researches the life of this extraordinary individual. Susan Meehan explores director Yuya Ishii's bittersweet family drama *A Man With Style* (あぜ道のダンディ), which examines the relationship between two middle-aged men, both of whom are far removed from any association with 'style.' Michael Sullivan delves into Taichi Yamada enigmatic "In Search of a Distant Voice" which as the title suggests is a quest to understand a remote echo of the mind. The main character, Kasama Tsuneo, is on an emotional journey involving repressed feelings and a murky traumatic past. Susan Meehan rounds off this issue with a look Yukio Ninagawa's visually spectacular production of *Cymbeline* which chronicles the wanderings of Posthumus, the adventurer and main protagonist of Shakespeare's gripping and unusual tale.

Sean Curtin

## New reviews

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## Contents

- 1) The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn
- 2) Samurai William: The Adventurer Who Unlocked Japan
- 3) Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure
- 4) Milligan and the Samurai Rebels
- 5) 快樂亭ブラック[Kairakutei Burakku]
- 6) Professor Munakata's Museum Adventure
- 7) A Man With Style (あぜ道のダンディ)
- 8) In Search of a Distant Voice
- 9) Cymbeline

### We are grateful to our regular reviewers:

Sir Hugh Cortazzi	Fumiko Halloran
Ian Nish	Ian Nish
Susan Meehan	Ben-Ami Shillony
William Farr	

## The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn

by Roger Pulvers

Kurodahan Press Book No. FG-JP0031L37,  
220 pages, Trade paperback 5" x 8"  
(127mm x 203mm), ISBN-13: 978-4-902075-41-0

### Review by Susan Meehan

Talking about *The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn* at the Oriental Club in London on 24 October 2011, its author, Roger Pulvers, gave a measured account of Lafcadio Hearn, crediting him for his incredibly well-written yet fairly unknown journalistic work carried out mainly in the USA, his extraordinary insights into Japan and his role as a pioneer ethnographer and anti-elitist while pointing out that none of the stories he wrote in Japan were original. They were all well-crafted re-tellings of Japanese stories and myths.

Pulvers referred to Hearn as a "true cosmopolitan if an outsider." Hearn was born to a Greek mother and Irish father, schooled in England, Ireland and France and ventured out to the USA at the age of 19. Not quite Greek nor British nor Irish, diminutive and with a blind globular eye, Hearn felt alien amongst his own and more readily accepted by the Japanese who probably expected all foreigners to be a little strange anyway. Not the best of writers on Japan, the Japanese nevertheless have cherished Hearn for his lack of arrogance and superciliousness.

It is this aspect of being on the periphery that I imagined had attracted Pulvers to Hearn as Pulvers himself, born and bred in the USA, admitted to not being able to live in the country of his birth and to have felt instantly at home in Japan on setting foot there in 1967.

In *The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn*, Pulvers writes an intriguing and absorbing account of Hearn's life in Japan from the perspective



of this Japanese chronicler, describing Japan as it was in the 1890s before it underwent massive change. Pulvers pulls it off with aplomb, expertly mimicking Hearn's prose as it appears in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* or *Exotics and Retrospectives*, to name a couple of his books with which I'm familiar. Preceding the narrative is an extremely helpful and comprehensive biography of Lafcadio Hearn allowing readers to engage with Hearn's life story before reading 'his' account of his years in Japan.

Pulvers's characterisation of Hearn is marvellously done providing a well-rounded impression of this flawed, socially awkward, cantankerous, peculiar, shy, macabre misfit who managed to gain great respect and acceptance in Japan. His love of all manner of pipes, the affection which he garnered from his students in Matsue and Tokyo and the difficulty he had in connecting with people are palpable.

Unlike the many pontificating Western professionals who were invited to Japan after its opening to the West in 1853, Hearn arrived in Japan in the spring of 1890 aged 40 as, Pulvers so concisely puts it, "... to learn, to scavenge, to discover what his temperament had taught him was beautiful, potent and bizarre human spirit." Ironically, he wrote about aspects of old Japan which he was distressed to witness fading while the Japanese, in their embrace of everything Western, were loath to be reminded about. Initially on a contract with the magazine Harper's Monthly he soon severed links with Harper and Brothers feeling that they had mistreated him. He was found a teaching post at the Shimane Prefectural Common Middle School and Normal School in Matsue thanks to the efforts of Basil Hall Chamberlain, an eminent British Japanologist and Professor at Tokyo Imperial University.

Hearn spent the last 14 years of his life in Japan. Though there were aspects of Japan which he despised such as thoughtless copying of the West, imperial ambitions and Kumamoto, which he loathed, he admired the Japanese and felt that their art was superior, as Greek art was superior to early European art-groupings. "I only wish I could be reincarnated in some little Japanese baby so that I could see and feel the world as beautifully as a Japanese brain does," quotes Pulvers, remarking that Japan could not resist "such blatant adoration."

Though Hearn is shown to adore Japan throughout the book, he is also portrayed as having pet peeves and being irritated by certain aspects of the Japanese. He is critical of the Japanese giggle and false embarrassment as it "could turn to arrogance at the drop of a coin." On another occasion he talks about irritating obligatory mores and regulations and I wondered whether there was also an element of Pulvers projecting his own frustrations with Japan onto Hearn.

Pulvers serves up some interesting insights into Hearn's unconventionality; in the book he is seen to add salt to his coffee rather than sugar, avoid the telephone, leave restaurants before being served having completely forgotten that he'd not yet eaten and, most perversely of all I thought, to love the tall, hard wooden pillows used in

Japan while finding Japanese food bland.

Pulvers also introduces some startling episodes into the narrative – Hearn is portrayed on one occasion as a peeping tom watching his friend's sister having intercourse with a monk. On another, two of his students play an incredibly nasty trick on him during a trip to the hot spring resort of Hakone. Suspending disbelief and reading the book as Hearn's autobiography, as intended, I imagined these experiences of Hearn as providing material for his books on eerie and strange Japan.

While Pulvers gives us a real overview of Hearn down to his negative traits, I sensed a warmth for this man and felt that Pulvers recognised in him a kindred spirit.

Someone in the audience at the talk referred to the way Hearn seemed to treat his wife Setsu with little love. In the book Hearn refers to her being no beauty and admits that he wanted a wife to look after him and to give him peace and quiet. Pulvers defended Hearn by pointing out that he was a man of his time and that women were often treated with contempt in the 19th century. The role of the husband was to support his family and Hearn, with extremely well-paid teaching jobs and high status, ensured his family and his wife's family a comfortable and enviable lifestyle. In Setsu's account of life with Hearn, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, she is frank about her late husband and admits to having been embarrassed by him on occasions.

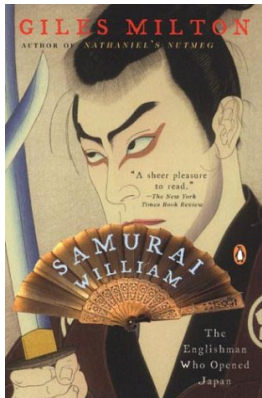
Like Hearn, Pulvers also feels that he will always be considered a foreigner in Japan no matter how good his Japanese and understanding of the country. As the monk Nakagawa, says to Hearn, "But of course, you foreigners will never truly understand Japan . . ." "... even if you become Buddhist yourself, even if you become Japanese yourself, even if you take a Japanese wife." For contrary Hearn, this makes his quest to understand Japan all the more pressing.

*The Dream of Lafcadio Hearn* touches on Hearn's life in Matsue, Kobe and Tokyo. I wondered why his stint in Kumamoto hadn't been included and Pulvers mentioned this at the talk. Hearn detested Kumamoto and felt miserable there so Pulvers left it out of the narrative – in character with Hearn's churlishness I thought.

Hearn's last years in Tokyo were not happy and, given the chance, he would have left Japan. Tokyo was in stark contrast to Setsu's small hometown of Matsue and was alien to Hearn's sensibilities. He came to detest the place finding it "hellish." In the meantime his eye and heart condition worsened.

In his talk Pulvers remarked that after his death Hearn became the most widely read interpreter of Japan outside Japan. This changed after the First World War, however, when he began to be seen as an apologist for nationalistic Japan. Hearn increasingly became discredited by the West as being outdated – a lover of fireflies and ancient stories. He would not have condoned Japanese wartime aggression, seeing it as yet another mistaken imitation of Western imperialism.

The Japanese continue to consider Hearn a foreigner who profoundly understood Japan and an irresistibly fascinating character. Despite his erratic behaviour he continues to be affectionately held in high esteem. That such a slim book can conjure up such a multi-faceted impression of the man is tribute indeed to Roger Pulvers.



## Samurai William: The Adventurer Who Unlocked Japan

by Giles Milton

Hodder and Stoughton, 2003, 399 pages, £7.99, ISBN 0340794682

Review by Michael Sullivan

Using extensive research of letters and other documents of the seventeenth century, this book tells the fascinating story of the first Englishman and the first English factory in Japan. In 1620 William Adams, otherwise known as Miura Anjin [三浦按針], passed away and by 1623 the English factory was given up, bankrupt, and within a few years Japan would enter an era of Sakoku [鎖国], or closed country. Although the main focus is on the life and actions of Adams, the book goes into great detail about the English factory and its other European competitors. It details the bafflement that Europeans had to overcome in order to pursue business interests in Japan while showing the contrasting confusion that the Japanese felt when trying to understand the politics and religions of Europe. Initially marooned in Japan after an ill-fated voyage, Adams eventually took up the customs and language of Japan as his own and was pivotal in opening the country up for trade on behalf of his own countrymen as well as a fellow Protestant country, Holland.

William Adams was born on 24th of September 1564 in the fishing town of Gillingham in Kent, in his youth he was trained as a shipwright and pilot. At a relatively young age he was given command of a supply ship in 1588 during the attempted invasion by the Spanish Armada. In the same year he married Mary Hyn in the parish church of St Dunstan in Stepney. After years of work on trading ships travelling between England and North Africa, Adams heard about Dutch plans to send a large fleet to the East Indies. Lured by the thought of adventure and riches, in 1598 Adams left his wife, daughter and London, to join the fleet in Rotterdam. Unbeknownst to him, he would never return. In Rotterdam he found the fleet at anchor, five ships: *Hope*, *Faith*, *Love*, *Fidelity* and the *Merry Messenger*, he also found widespread rumours that the real purpose of the fleet was to sack Catholic Spain's settlements in South America.

Over the course of the next two years the fleet would repeatedly suffer ill luck, the description of the voyage provides

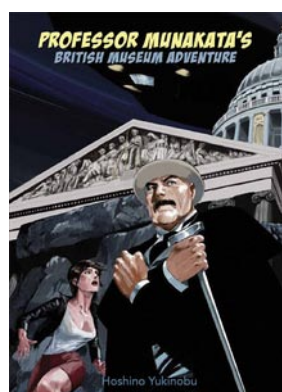
an interesting contrast to the modern day. A journey to Japan now can be completed in less than two days and return just as quickly. In comparison, in 1598, the Dutch fleet had to fight with Portuguese soldiers in the Cape Verde Islands and suffer fatalities from the poisoned arrows of the tribes of Cape Lopez. In 1599 the fleet became becalmed in the southern Atlantic, and then while braving the Straits of Magellan the starving men found an island of penguins. Within minutes over a thousand birds were dead. Sailing up the western side of South America, again the hapless sailors had to contend with bands of tribesmen who were fearful fighters and described as gigantic men up to eleven feet tall. Upon reaching the Pacific Ocean the fleet was scattered by a storm, the *Faith* was the only ship to eventually return to its homeport with only thirty six crewmembers still left alive out of an original one hundred and nine. The other ships, apart from Adams' ship the *Love*, would be captured by the Spanish, Portuguese or sunk.

Worried about encountering the Spanish or Portuguese in the Spice Islands and in the Philippines, they decided to head for the fabled land of Japan. The Portuguese had reached Japan in 1544 and by 1580 had gained control over the port of Nagasaki, by this time they had established a lucrative trade importing silk while Catholic priests took up the task of conversion. Rumours of wealth, particularly silver, had gradually spread around the European continent since that time. Unfortunately, the journey was long and the crew of the *Love* did not know exactly where Japan was. On 12th of April 1600, starving and sick, the ship arrived in Bungo, Japan. Only twenty four of the original crew were still alive, most near death, and Adams was one of the few who could still stand when he looked upon the Japanese for the first time. By this time the Portuguese had made nearly 150,000 converts in Japan and through their connections they quickly heard about the arrival of a strange ship in Bungo, believing it to be Spanish they interceded with the local lord to help the battered ship's occupants. When they discovered English and Dutch Protestants, they just as rapidly decided that Adams and his crew had to be gotten rid of. Since arriving in Japan the Portuguese had presented their religion as being united under the leadership of the Pope in Europe, furthermore they had claimed that their king had an army of millions.

The governor-general of the area, Lord Terasawa, did not know what to do, so he sent a message to his superior in Osaka, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ieyasu brought Adams to the magnificent castle of Osaka for a personal interview and at first hand heard about the wars of Europe, how Christianity was divided and about the ships and weapons of the English and Dutch. He soon made a decision; the newly arrived foreigners would be kept safe, but must not leave Japan again. Ieyasu wanted the knowledge of how to build ships, and wanted to use the cannons of the *Love* for an upcoming war.

Adams spent the rest of his life in Japan, his letters to England eventually arrived, provoking interest in an English trading mission and he was instrumental in setting up the English factory in Hirado in 1613. However, by the time the English had arrived in Japan Adams had spent over a decade living there and to their

surprise he seemed to have gone completely native. This book details the incredible challenges that seventeenth century adventurers had to brave in the name of profit, religion and patriotism, as well as the Japanese responses to the differing stories told by their visitors. The Europeans would witness battles involving hundreds of thousands of Samurai and between themselves, while eventually all Catholics would be banned from the country. The recurring theme throughout the book is the behaviour of the Europeans coming into conflict with Japanese culture, a problem which finally couldn't be resolved and led the Japanese to the decision that the best choice would be a Japan with no Europeans.



## Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure

by Yukinobu Hoshino,  
translated by Nicole  
Coolidge Rousmaniere,  
Hiromi Uchida and Timothy  
Clark

British Museum Press, 2011, 264  
pages, ISBN-13: 978-0714124650,  
£14.99

### Review by Sean Curtin

This beautifully illustrated work by the renowned Japanese artist Yukinobu Hoshino (星野之宣) manages to perfectly capture the unique atmosphere of the British Museum. Hoshino's meticulous artwork successfully transports the world famous institute, plus several of its curators, into the alternate reality of the manga world. Hoshino places Professor Munakata (宗像教授), his best known character, into an extraordinary web of intrigue centred round the museum and its eclectic collection of amazing artefacts. The internal and external depictions of the iconic museum, from a host of angles and perspectives, are masterfully drawn in superb detail. Anyone who appreciates the building's elegant architecture will enjoy Hoshino's exquisite artwork, even if they are not particularly interested in the manga genre.

The enthralling narrative begins with the distinguished Professor invited to the British Museum to give a lecture on mythology and folklore. However, at about the same time the majestic Stonehenge megaliths on Salisbury Plain are somehow stolen. The Professor's investigations lead him into a sinister and tangled plot that threatens the museum itself along with some of its most important collections and prize exhibits. Much of the action takes place in various galleries and locations within the museum with each presented in fantastic detail. My only real complaint is that at one point in the action the roof of the magnificent Great Court is severely damaged and even though this is only in the fictional manga world, the sight of such destruction is quite disturbing.

The extraordinary tale was originally published over five months during 2010 in ten instalments in the popular Japanese magazine *Big Comic* [ビッグコミック]. The British Museum Press has compiled and translated these ten episodes into one slick English language volume. To give the work an authentic manga feel reading is from right to left with the trademark manga sound captions retained in the original Japanese. The book also contains several supplementary features including an interview with Hoshino, an essay on the history of manga entitled 'From Ukiyo-e to Manga' by Timothy Clark, plus useful reference material. Some of the black and white strip is in gorgeous colour further enhancing the work and making this a highly attractive publication.

The book was launched at Daiwa House in London on 8 November 2011 by Dr Rayna Denison and Dr Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, whose manga alter ego appears in the story. Dr Denison presented a fascinating and energetic overview on the history of manga while Dr Rousmaniere gave some insights and background into the story itself. She traced the genesis of the project back to 2009 when Hoshino attended a small exhibition of his work at the British Museum. The artist was deeply impressed by the marvellous interiors of the museum and its incredible collections while the curators were eager for him to take the museum into the manga realm.

Dr Rousmaniere, who currently also serves as a project curator in the museum's Department of Asia, worked closely with Hoshino during the creation of Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure. She is the inspiration for the key character of Chris Caryatid who accompanies the Professor in the tale. Dr Rousmaniere also detailed how Hoshino integrated experiences from his time in the museum and well known London locations into the narrative.

The character of Professor Tadakusu Munakata (宗像伝奇) was first conceived by Hoshino in 1990 and has subsequently become one of Japan's most famous manga characters. Millions of readers eagerly await his adventures which appear fortnightly in the magazine *Big Comic*. Because the strip appears every two weeks, Hoshino has to work to a gruelling schedule to meet the deadlines. This meant the time he could spend in London was limited. In many respects the British Museum is a perfect backdrop for the Professor who is a historical ethnographer dedicated to unravelling mysteries. In previous adventures the intrepid academic has discovered ancient burial grounds and participated in deadly Agatha Christie style archaeological excavations.

The museum is currently exhibiting an exclusive display of some of Hoshino's original artwork from the book accompanied by explanations of how he created illustrations in the story. This is scheduled to run until 8 April 2012 and is worth seeing, especially if you or your children have purchased the book.

While this publication is primarily aimed at manga aficionados and young adults, its appeal is much wider

and it makes a highly attractive museum souvenir. Children familiar with the British Museum will also greatly enjoy it. My nine-year-old son thought it was brilliant as did several of his friends. They especially liked the fact that places they know in the museum along with famous objects like the Rosetta Stone are featured. This is something that will no doubt also appeal to British Museum Young Friends. The only gripe I heard from the children was the price, £14.99, which was beyond the normal pocket money allowance. The museum produced this volume so it would include the entire original ten episodes, but I hope there may be a possibility in the future for individual episodes to be published. If this were the case, smaller booklet formats should be within the pocket money range of young children. One thing seems certain, Hoshino's magnificent manga incarnation of the British Museum is destined for a long life and represents an excellent export of this Japanese art form.



## Milligan and the Samurai Rebels

by Simon Alexander Collier

Amazon, 2012, 339 pages, ISBN: 1477544593

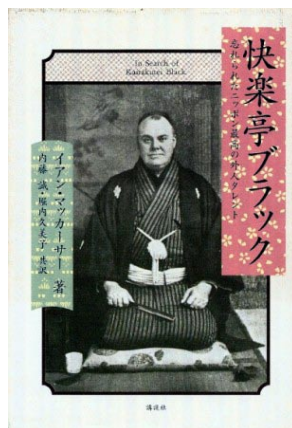
Review by Sir Graham Fry

What would have happened if in 1862 the serious British diplomat, Ernest Satow, had gone to Japan with a rather less studious colleague called Milligan, whose main interests were women and wine but whose escapades have mysteriously vanished from the history books? The answer is in this book by Simon Alexander Collier, himself a former British diplomat, and it provides a thoroughly entertaining story. Milligan lands himself in one scrape after another, and the reader is carried along with him at a breathless pace.

Milligan is a likeable Irishman who cannot resist temptation but is blessed with more than his fair share of good luck and a strong instinct for self-preservation. This is just as well since his encounters with an enraged British naval officer, murderous samurai, a wicked French spy, and a rich assortment of other threatening characters would surely have proved the undoing of a lesser man. Along the way, Milligan is comforted by an equally rich assortment of beautiful women. With their help he manages not only to survive, but to play an important (but unseen) role in the success of British diplomacy, as Japan's western clans scheme to expel the barbarians and overthrow the Shogun's government.

The book owes part of its inspiration to the Flashman stories by George MacDonald Fraser. Like them, the historical background has been carefully researched, but the reader needs no prior knowledge of history to enjoy the tale. He or she needs only to keep turning the pages as the plot twists and turns.

Those who wish to study the history of Japan's opening to the West are well-advised to stick to Satow's diaries, but for those who want only to cheer themselves up on the long flight to Tokyo, the Milligan version is just the job. This is Collier's first book, and it is available from Amazon. Let us hope that he finds time soon to write the sequel.



## 快樂亭ブラック[Kairakutei Burakku]

イアン・マッカーサー著

内藤誠、堀内久美子 共訳、講談社 [Kodansha International], 1992, 317 pages, 2000円, ISBN: 4-06-205738-7

Editor's note:

Henry James Black was born in Adelaide, Australia on 22 December 1858. Due to his father's work he lived in Japan from the age of three. He worked as an English teacher for about a decade before becoming a rakugoka [落語家], or Japanese style public storyteller. He performed under the name Kairakutei Black [快樂亭ブラック], which he adopted in March 1891. He also had a stint as a kabuki actor. Black eventually took Japanese nationality, taking on the Japanese name Black Ishii [石井 貌刺屈]. He received his Japanese name by being adopted by Mine Ishii, a sweet shop owner whose daughter, Aka, Black married. He died of a stroke on 19 September 1923 at the age of 64 and is buried in Yokohama Foreign Cemetery.

井上敦子

モーツァルトがまったく無名だった当時の有名な音楽家は宮廷楽長のサリエリだった。けれども今、サリエリの名前はモーツァルトと比べるとほとんど人の口にのぼることはない。

ご存じですか、快樂亭ブラックのことを……。ではじまるカヴァの見返し部分の紹介文を読んで先ず思い浮かんだのがこれだった。

青い目の落語家、ヘンリーブラックのよきライバルとされていたのが三遊亭円朝だった。お互いに切磋琢磨して天下の人気を二分したとあるが、三遊亭円朝はいまだに三遊亭の一派が脈々と続いている中で確固とした地位を占めている。かたや快樂亭と言う名を私は聞いたことが一度もない。

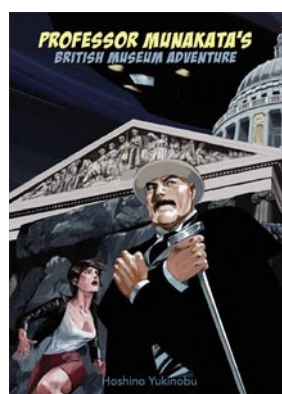
今では相当な数にのぼる外人タレントのはしりだろうか。アジア系以外の外国人が日本語を流暢に話してくれるときの驚きと面はゆいような嬉しさを感じさせる何か私たちのDNAにはいまだに確実にある。当時の日本人の反応はいかばかりだったろうかと想像するだけでもこの「青い目の落語家」という肩書は興味を引いた。

物語はヘンリーの父が日本に来るようになったいきさつからヘンリーと日本語の関わり、落語家になるようになった経

緯、人生の上り下りを当時の時代まで含めて描いている。

彼の活躍は創作落語を含む高座だけにとどまらず楽隊を率いてのエンターティナー、翻訳、通訳、催眠術、歌舞伎役者、英語教師、記者、日本で初のレコード制作にも関わってすっかりと自分の落語をたっぷりとレコードに吹き込んでいる。このレコードは100年前の日本語の話し言葉のイントネーションを研究する上での貴重な資料となる。

しかし落語家として名を成すようになればなるほど家族とは疎遠になった。「河原乞食」などと言う言葉はもう死語で、外人タレントは現代ではひっぱりだこだが、100年前なら日本人も今とは違っていただろう。ヘンリーの兄弟がそのことを感じなかったわけではないと思う。歩いて10分、15分くらいの距離に住んでいながら会おうともせず母親の死も知らせなかった妹、神戸で実業家になってはいたが、ヘンリーの高座を大声で罵倒妨害した弟。本当の家族を持ってなかったヘンリーにとっては哀切極まりない事実だ。こういった様々な暗い逸話の一方でヘンリーは日本を深く理解し幅広い交友関係でいどりある人生を歩むことができたのではないかと。ぜひそうであってほしいと思う。



## Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure

by Yukinobu Hoshino,  
translated by Nicole  
Coolidge Rousmaniere,  
Hiromi Uchida and Timothy  
Clark

British Museum Press, 2011, 264  
pages ISBN-13: 978-0714124650,  
£14.99

### Review by Hugh Cortazzi

This is the English version of an original Japanese Manga book. It was translated into English by Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere with Uchida Hiromi and Timothy Clark. It has to be read from the back as if it were a Japanese book.

As Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum explains in his foreword the museum became acquainted with Mr Hoshino Yukinobu when he was making drawings of Japanese clay figures for the recent dogu exhibition at the museum (Also see our review of the *Unearthed* Exhibition in issue 30). The artist visited the museum and was inspired to produce ten episodes in which his manga character Professor Munakata is involved with objects in the museum's collection.

Dr Rousmaniere in her introduction explains for readers unfamiliar with the genre that manga "which we might translate playfully as 'pictures run riot' is a visually compelling medium that engages the reader in a uniquely effective manner through a combination of pictures and text. They are printed in predominantly black and white and are initially serialized in low cost magazines." If they become popular they may appear in book form or even inspire anime films.

Hoshino Yukinobu "is one of the most acclaimed manga artists currently working in Japan." Born in Kushiro, Hokkaido his studio

is in Sapporo. Nicole Rousmaniere comments that "Hoshino's work is characterized by its detailed and yet dramatic drawing style, swift and suspenseful storylines, and the incorporation of actual historical or mythological events in his narratives." In recent years Hoshino's stories have concentrated on the character of Munakata Tadakusa, a professor of Ethnology and Folklore at the fictitious Toa Bunka University in Tokyo, "who challenges previous misinterpretations of myths, legends and historic incidents from the ancient past to the present."

As Hoshino explained to Dr Rousmaniere, in thinking about a manga which would involve the British museum, he first decided that he would like to introduce an airship and then Stonehenge. He explained that he does not see manga as high or fine art, but Ukiyo-e too "was created for the mass public." He added that he had some fun creating "the story of Professor Munakata and the museum" which was one of his two longest stories.

Tim Clark in a separate essay 'From Ukiyo-e to Manga: Japan's Mischief-making Print Culture' notes that "a manga-like genre which began in 1775, can be found in the popular kibyōshi or yellow cover books." He points out that "There is a chronological lineage of pre-modern artists of popular illustrated fiction and ukiyo-e prints which leads fairly seamlessly into the world of modern manga. The artists are linked above all by a common predisposition for mischief-making that may well end up being the defining characteristic of the lineage." The Japan Punch produced by the British artist Charles Wirgman in the Treaty port of Yokohama in the early Meiji period influenced the way in which manga eventually developed in Japan. But he rejects the view that "manga are the modern equivalent of ukiyo-e or that ukiyo-e are the traditional precursors of manga."

Japanese (and English) readers will find in the drawings an introduction to the contents and work of the museum and to famous places in London as well as to important historical personages. Professor Munakata wanted to see the room where one famous Japanese figure connected with the museum had worked. He was Minakata Kumagusu (1867-1941) who spent so much time in the Reading Room, but the Professor does not seem to have been told that Minakata was twice suspended from entry to the Reading room for causing disturbances (see Carmen Blacker's portrait of Minakata Kumagusu in *Britain and Japan Biographical Portraits volume 1* edited by Ian Nish, Japan Library 1994).

I will not spoil the reader's enjoyment of the fantastical and fictional elements of the story line by attempting a summary.

## A Man With Style (あぜ道のダンディ)

directed by Yuya Ishii

(石井裕也), 2011, 110 minutes.

Review by Susan Meehan

Director Yuya Ishii is only 27 and has already released a number of films



including last year's hit, the hilarious and poignant *Sawako Decides* (川の底からこんにちは).

*A Man With Style* is a bittersweet family drama which has at its centre two fifty-something school friends – widower Junichi Miyata (Ken Mitsuishi – 光石研), a blue-collar worker and Sanada (Tomorowo Taguchi – 田口トモロヲ). Both are rather ordinary middle-aged men, far removed from any association with 'style.'

They reminded me somewhat of *The Odd Couple*, a 1970s film and TV series about Felix and Oscar, two divorced men sharing a Manhattan flat. One is a neat obsessive and the other far more casual resulting in comedy situations. Another film which sprung to mind was *Sideways*, a 2004 feature directed by Alexander Payne centring on two college friends now 40-something men, on their week-long road trip.

Junichi Miyata is the more cantankerous and frustrated of the two in Ishii's oeuvre. His wife died of cancer ten years ago, leaving him with an overriding memory of a silly but hilariously acted children's song of bunnies she used to sing and two children who now, aged 18 and 19, hardly engage with him and are keen to move to university in Tokyo. He is short-tempered with them and nags them endlessly to no avail.

Miyata, suffering from stomach problems, is convinced he has cancer and no more than three months to live. He doesn't want to worry his children, allegedly, but confesses his fears to Sanada during one of their regular drinking sessions. He melodramatically resorts to taking a funeral photo of himself with his cat and in another funny scene, slides copies under his children's bedroom doors much to their amusement – they have never seen a funeral photograph including a pet.

Having made an appointment to see the doctor, Miyata histrionically asks Sanada to look after his kids.

Sanada, the more carefree of the pair has taken to sporting a hat and comes across as the long-suffering friend. He has spent the last seven years devotedly looking after his dying father only to have his wife desert him. He never complains, has no children to worry about and is constantly reassuring and uplifting Miyata.

The polyp, it turns out, is benign and Miyata is told to go easy on the drink. The ensuing scene is hilarious, as he immediately gets drunk and unruly as he celebrates with Sanada. In an admission of his failure in life, he says, "I can't even get cancer!"

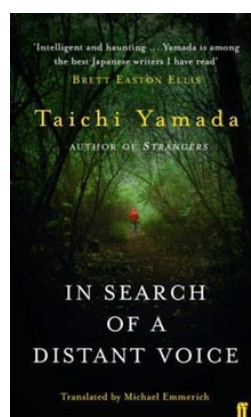
With no money or status and with kids who ignore him, Miyata confesses to wanting to have style at the very least. Sanada assures him that he has bags of style and has done all he could for his kids, Toshiya and Momoko, brilliantly played by Ryu Morioka [森岡龍] and Jun Yoshinaga [吉永淳]. In the little time they have before the kids move to Tokyo to take up their places at private universities, Sanada does his best to ensure that all three connect.

As Sanada drops Toshiya and Momoko off in Tokyo, the sense of gratitude the children have for him is palpable and Toshiya tells his father not to worry about money as he will diligently continue working part-time in order to pay his costs in Tokyo.

The show of emotion and love in this film are sensationally subtle and almost Ozu-esque. There is no trace of sentimentality and there is no hugging, touching or kissing each other. The affection they feel for each other is shown through acts of selflessness.

All in all a very beautifully portrayed, well-scripted, good-natured, gentle film full of side-splitting scenes and tremendous acting; Mitsuishi playing Miyata, however, steals the show; you can't get much more curmudgeonly!

This film was shown at the Premiere Japan 2011 event at the Barbican.



## In Search of a Distant Voice (遠くの声を探して)

by Taichi Yamada [山田 太一]

(translated by Michael Emmerich, Faber and Faber Limited, 2006 (originally published in 1989, Tokyo), 183 pages, £8.99, ISBN 0571229719.

### Review by Michael Sullivan

Taichi Yamada [山田 太一] was born in 1934 in Tokyo, he has worked as a screenwriter for television and film. In 1987 his novel *Strangers* [異人たちとの夏] was published and it won the Yamamoto Shugoro Prize, in 1989 he followed this up with the publication of *In Search of a Distant Voice* [遠くの声を探して]. In 2004 *Strangers* was translated and published in English and since has been released in many other languages, subsequently in 2006 *In Search of a Distant Voice* was also translated and published.

As the title suggests, the theme is the search for a distant voice, one that only Kasama Tsuneo can hear. Following a traumatic event in his past he focuses on having a normal life, which to him means dedication to work and a lid on any emotions. He wants to be clean, so he doesn't allow himself to become intimate with girls, and his only friends seem to be fellow co-workers. As the story develops, and Tsuneo's emotions are given full release, it becomes apparent that the repression of his personal feelings and of his past, are interlinked.

Eight years after leaving America Kasama Tsuneo works for the immigration office, tracking down illegal immigrants and constantly fighting a battle within himself, a 'ritual' that he performs every day to be emotionless. On one raid an illegal immigrant tries to escape, but just as Tsuneo has the immigrant cornered he is paralysed by a huge feeling of arousal, thus allowing the man to run away. Later that night, the same thing happens again except this time he is paralysed by the emotion of sorrow after which he 'hears' a

female voice asking “who are you?”

Gradually, over the course of days, Tsuneo begins to talk to the female voice. She seems to hear everything he thinks, but he can only hear what she says to him. Unbeknownst to him, in their conversations he is also talking out loud causing concern to his neighbour and his preoccupation with the voice means that his behaviour becomes increasingly bizarre to those around him. An arranged marriage is ended when during the engagement ceremony he is first paralysed by laughter and then by grief, he becomes angry with the ‘voice’ accusing it of being someone from his past. He refuses to explain what is happening to his co-workers or a doctor that he is sent to, ultimately his obsession with the voice leads him to think she must be the answer to everything. He makes her agree to meet him, and in return he will tell her the truth of what happened to him in America.

## Cymbeline

by William Shakespeare (Yukio Ninagawa's production at the Barbican, London, 29 May 2012 to 2 June 2012)

Review by Susan Meehan

I was expecting this version of *Cymbeline* to display Yukio Ninagawa's trademarks—unparalleled stage scenery, plush costumes and a magical ending. I was not disappointed. However, having recently enjoyed 11 Shakespeare plays during the Globe to Globe season in which the 37 plays were performed in different languages by 37 international theatre groups, I had come to appreciate the understatement and simplicity of the Globe's stage and the actors' costumes. Unexpectedly, I found Ninagawa's sets and exquisite costumes to be somewhat excessive and unnecessary and was more critical than I had intended or wished.

The play, part of the World Shakespeare Festival, breathtakingly opened with the actors sitting down before dressing table mirrors, getting ready to perform, moving across the stage and chatting to one another. This magical set disappeared all too soon as the actors lined up to bow to the audience and had no tie-in to the rest of the play.

*Cymbeline* is set in Britain and Rome in the early first century, during the reign of Augustus Caesar, Emperor of Rome, and Cymbeline, King of Britain. Majestic statues of two wolves associated with the rearing of Romulus and Remus adorned the stage when the action was in Rome along with beautifully elaborate Japanese folding screens depicting scenes from the *Tale of Genji*.

Cymbeline's first wife died when his three children, a girl (Innogen) and two boys, were very young. He remarries. Cymbeline's second wife hopes that her son, Cloten, will marry Innogen who is the king's heir while his two sons, kidnapped when they were very young, are not found. The scheming queen is a wicked stepmother and on a par with evil Lady Macbeth.

Innogen secretly marries her childhood friend Posthumus. Orphaned as a baby, he was brought up by Cymbeline. The king, furious that Innogen has married below her status and supporting the queen in her wish for Cloten to marry his daughter, has Posthumus exiled.

Posthumus was wonderfully played by the handsome and charismatic Hiroshi Abe while Innogen was played by fifty-four year old Shinobu Otake. This was a brave decision given that this role is normally saved for actors in their youthful prime. Innogen had a lot to say; sadly she did so very quickly in rapid machine-gun style, failing to declaim her words with much feeling or poetry.

Cloten tries to woo the heartbroken Innogen with, unsurprisingly, no success. He is an incompetent fool. Masanobu Katsumura played him expertly as a goofy Mr Bean-style clown with an unflattering mop of hair, clumsy and unable even to unsheathe his sword. The best scene has him sliding round the stage like a penguin on ice – a veritable jester, which I'm not sure is what Shakespeare had in mind.

In the lush Roman setting to which Posthumus has fled, he falls in with the friends of his host Philario who begin talking about women. Iachimo, one of these friends, is offended that Posthumus in extolling Innogen praises her above Roman women. A wager is made – Iachimo will travel to Britain and make Innogen fall in love with him. Posthumus, so confident of Innogen's fidelity, promises to give Iachimo his diamond ring if Iachimo succeeds in wooing Innogen.

Iachimo was portrayed as a cackling somewhat exaggerated villain by Yosuke Kubozuka. He inveigles his way into spending a night hidden in a trunk in Innogen's bedroom and is able to commit the room to memory, to slip off Innogen's bracelet while she is asleep (which he'll say she gave him as a token of her love) and to notice a distinguishing mole on her breast.

The second half of the production was an improvement on the first. It became tenser and compelling when Pisanio, Posthumus's servant at court in Britain, having led Innogen to Milford Haven tells her that Posthumus wants her killed for her infidelity. Dressing Innogen in men's clothes, Pisanio, played with genuine style and affection for the part by Keita Onishi, says that she'll be safer as a man. He encourages her to serve Caius Lucius, a general of the invading Roman army. A distraught and confused Innogen is grateful for this idea as she can then follow Lucius to Rome where she can keep an eye on Posthumus.

As Innogen wanders into the distance disguised as the lad Fidele, a lonely figure in the huge wooded landscape, the simple setting works extremely effectively. Otake is a much better Fidele than Innogen.

The play concludes on a positive note as all is resolved and the evil get their come-uppance. A hugely enjoyable evening but perhaps Ninagawa's *Cymbeline* fell short of his *Twelfth Night*, *Pericles*, *Titus and Andronicus* and *Hamlet*.

