

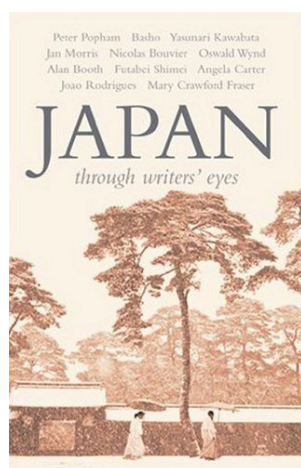


Editor: Sean Curtin

Managing Editor: John Toppon

As we zoom towards the July heat, this issue is packed full of interesting books and films to catch up with during the summer holiday period. Susan Meehan looks at the highly readable "Japan through writers' eyes," which reminds us what fantastic prose Japan has inspired from the pens of both foreign and indigenous authors. For those who love to discuss such writers we launched "Japan Society Book Club" in June which meets regularly (for more information see the Society website or e-mail: events@japansociety.org.uk). Sir Hugh Cortazzi dissects the thesis of Hans Brinckmann's new book "Showa Japan: The Post-War Golden Age and Its Troubled Legacy." It paints rather gloomy future scenarios for the land of the rising sun. Fumiko Halloran analyzes an insightful new Japanese language book on the surprising economic woes of many of Japan's best educated people in "Highly Educated Working Poor" (Ko Gakureki Wakingu Puua). Amazingly only about fifty percent of recent Japanese doctoral graduates in humanities and social sciences find fulltime employment and these figures were before the recent economic downturn. Our movie/DVD offering looks at an acclaimed German film, "Kirschblueten-Hanami" (Cherry Blossoms: Hanami), which is set in Japan and Bavaria. We also explore a fascinating new book on one of Japan's most Bohemian and contradictory modern artists, Leonard Foujita (Fujita Tsuguharu). With summer in the air we assess the feasibility of adding "A Japanese Touch for your Garden" before Helen McCarthy looks ahead to the fall with the visually stunning "Autumn Colours of Kyoto" book. We also ponder the historically complex relationship between swordsmanship, Zen and calligraphy in "Ken Zen Sho, The Zen Calligraphy and painting of Yamaoka Tesshū." On a more light-hearted note (and by popular demand) Jayne Kerry reviews another paper-folding publication, this time "A Kaleidoscope of 28 Decorative Origami Creations."

Sean Curtin



Japan through writers' eyes edited by Elizabeth Ingrams

Eland Publishing Ltd., 2009, 336 pages
Paperback £12.99

ISBN: 978-190601108-6

Review by Susan Meehan

'Japan through writers' eyes' is a literary companion or guide to Japan, in which freelance writer

Contents

- (1) Japan through writers' eyes
- (2) Showa Japan: The Post-War Golden Age and Its Troubled Legacy
- (3) Ko Gakureki Wakingu Puua (Highly Educated Working Poor)
- (4) Kirschblueten-Hanami (Cherry Blossoms: Hanami)
- (5) Glory in a Line, a Life of Foujita – The Artist Caught Between East and West
- (6) Autumn Colours of Kyoto
- (7) A Japanese Touch for your Garden
- (8) Origami Rings and Wreaths – A Kaleidoscope of 28 Decorative Origami Creations
- (9) 劍禪書 – Ken Zen Sho

New reviews

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We are grateful to our regular reviewers:

Sir Hugh Cortazzi	Anna Davis
Fumiko Halloran	Susan Meehan
Takahiro Miyao	William Farr
Ben-Ami Shillony	Tomohiko Taniguchi
Mikihiro Maeda	Simon Cotterill
Ian Nish	

and former Japan-resident, Elizabeth Ingrams, includes poetry, fiction and non-fiction excerpts from an impressive breadth of writers such as Matsuo Basho, Jonathan Swift, Rudyard Kipling, Lafcadio Hearn, Yasunari Kawabata, Jan Morris, Alan Booth and Angela Carter. The scope of the book is testament to Ingrams' enthusiasm. Japan is, according to her, "the best country thus discovered." The book, a lyrical and informative journey throughout Japan, can be challenging at times – and I was grateful for the reminder of places and protagonists in the tale of the Taira and Genji clans which were thoughtfully included in the introduction to the Hiroshima and Chūgoku section.

'Japan through writers' eyes' was launched at Asia House on 19 March 2009 with brief speeches by Elizabeth

Ingrams, Timon Screech (Professor of History of Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), the author Lesley Downer and travel writer Joanna Hunter.

Timon Screech referred to Ingrams' edited book as "wonderful" thanks to the richness of writers' responses to Japan. Japan was considered "worthy" of Europe, thus attracting many visitors, remarked Screech, though visitors often found Japan quirky. In Jonathan Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels', for instance, the hero visits a host of imaginary countries and Japan, in a way conveying a sense of its unintelligibility according to Screech.

Ingrams begins her guide with Tokyo, deftly whetting the travellers' appetite by introducing the reader to the 'gokaidō', the five major connecting highways which started in Edo (Tokyo) and were built in the Edo period (1603-1867) and by introducing the authors whose extracts have been used.

Tokyo is the most comprehensive section of the book with sub-sections including the Edo (1603-1867), Meiji (1868-1912), Taishō & early Shōwa (1912-1926), and Postwar periods. Ingrams includes excellent, sweeping and well-researched backdrops to each of the Tokyo sub-sections, helping put all the selected pieces in historical and cultural context as well as telling us about each author. The introductions to all the other following chapters and areas of Japan are also hugely helpful.

The book certainly captivates and transports the reader to Japan. I was reminded of Japanese writers I wish to revisit such as Kawabata and Sōseki and prompted to stock up on books not yet read such as Nicolas Bouvier's 'Japanese Chronicles', having enjoyed the carefully chosen snippets of the Swiss author's beautifully written and meditative reflections, a contrast to the Donald Richie excerpt from 'Tokyo Nights' also in the first section which focuses on modern-day Ginza with its Western-style bars and cafes. The different writing styles and perceptions throughout the book complement each other well.

The book presents many gems. In the same way that Lesley Downer admitted to being very much taken with Henry Heuksen, Townshend Harris's Dutch-speaking interpreter, and Ernest Satow, British diplomat in Japan and scholar, I was taken with the Edmund Blunden and Oswald Wynd excerpts.

At the risk of being fussy, I have to admit being disappointed by the Nara section, which mainly concentrated on Hōryū-ji and focused on poems. Having been founded in 710 and having been the first great Japanese capital, I felt that it deserved more than 7 pages dedicated to it.

I also felt that there was an over-emphasis on Bashō, who seemed to pop up every now and then, though he was a traveller extraordinaire.

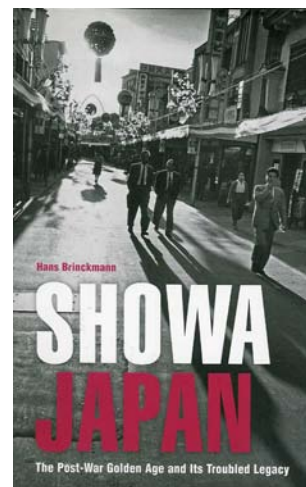
I thoroughly enjoyed reading Natsume Sōseki in the Tokyo section, and felt that excerpts from his novel 'Botchan', set in Matsuyama, could also have been included in the Shikoku section. This exclusion is a shame as Botchan's visits to the Dōgo onsen and his noodle-

eating excursions are flavoursome of the place and one cannot visit Matsuyama without tripping over Botchan 'dango' (three-skewered rice dumplings).

Screech alluded to the absence of Chinese writing on Japan, at the book launch, saying it was very interesting and perhaps bred of Chinese cultural arrogance. There is, however, much Korean writing on Japan, said Screech. Perhaps the next edition of the book could include some tasters from Korean and Korean-Japanese writing.

As Ingrams says, however, the guide does not pretend to be a comprehensive or exhaustive literary anthology: "The aim is to provide some inspiration to explore a country full of treasures, whether literally or through the imagination."

The book is certainly an inspirational treasure trove.



Showa Japan: The Post-War Golden Age and Its Troubled Legacy

by Hans Brinckmann

**Tuttle, Tokyo and Singapore,
2008, 212 pages including
index, glossary and plate
section. Hardcover, £27.00**

ISBN-13:978-4-8053-1002-1

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

When I began to read this book it seemed to be a walk through memory lane. Brinckmann's account of post-war Japan and the Japanese economic recovery covered familiar ground. However, for those who did not experience these years, Brinckmann provides a fair picture of how Japan seemed to a sympathetic foreigner. There are few new insights but the ground has been well trodden by others.

The title "Showa Japan" might suggest that this is a history of Japan in the time of the Showa Emperor, but this is not a narrative history and the reader looking for a factual account of Japanese politics, the economy and society will not find it here.

I found the second half of the book which looks at the post-bubble years and the challenges facing Japan today more interesting, because it raises fundamental questions about how Japan may develop in the twenty-first century.

Brinckmann notes the streak of "infantilism" in Japanese culture and the attraction of the "kawaii" or cute especially to young women. He found, however, an assertiveness and lack of consideration among young Japanese women, perhaps due to the fact that "Japanese women have yet to break through the glass ceiling" (Page 148).

He asks what has happened to the dreams and ambitions of the young and the tendency to acquiesce in what is prescribed by those in authority. He notes (page 121) that “The obvious downside to non-assertiveness is vulnerability to manipulation and exploitation by high-handed superiors and unscrupulous rulers. Below its façade of contentment hides a worrisome defencelessness to exterior forces, rooted to what at best is an accommodating disposition but too often can only be called indifference.”

This makes his fears about a return to an assertive nationalism “by no means groundless” (page 143).

He is understandably troubled by the Japanese electorate’s tendency to vote for the status quo. “Playing upon the nostalgia, fear of uncharted waters, and the national habit of self-debasement, [though there were many examples of bureaucratic arrogance during the bubble years when some Japanese thought their country was No. 1] the sclerotic political establishment aims to exorcise the spectre of an emerging diverse society. And turn Japan into a beautiful fossil on the world’s body dynamic” (page 158). He believes that Japanese society as a whole suffers from an historic and ongoing conflict between the fervent wish to be “more like the West” and a deep-seated tendency “to isolate itself”. In Brinckmann’s view Japanese society now faces “not a simple choice between collectivism and individualism, but between sticking to the static group-centred ways of the past and the dynamism of thoughtful minds set free to define their own role in a diverse society” (page 163). He fears that “the conforming, harmony-seeking, all-noses-in-the-same-direction ways of the Showa heyday still dominate this society at a time when they are no longer appropriate” (Page 194).

Before reaching this depressing conclusion Brinckmann reiterates a number of criticisms of Japanese ways which have been made by others including another Netherlander Ian Buruma. I share his view about the dangers of preaching the importance of patriotism, (described by that great 18th century English pundit Dr Johnson as “the last refuge of a scoundrel”) about the need for Japan to come to terms with its past and about the importance of ensuring that the media remain really free (and not tied by the Kisha club system).

There is plenty of food for thought by the Japanese in this book, but they are unlikely to read it. Foreigners who do read the book will find its conclusions generally depressing. But all of us who pontificate from time to time about Japan should remember that generalisations about people are usually at best half truths and that fortunately even in Japan not all nails that stick out are hammered down.



Ko Gakureki Wakingu Puua (高学歴ワーキングプア) [Highly Educated Working Poor]

by Shodo Mizuki

Kobunsha Shinsho, 2007, 217 pages

Paperback, ¥ 700

ISBN-13: 978-4334034238

Review by Fumiko Halloran

In pre-World War II Japan, anyone who graduated from college or university was considered to belong to an elite class as few then could afford the luxury of a higher education. If that person had a doctorate, or “hakushi-go,” he was admired for such a daunting achievement and was assured of a high position in government or academe.

In present day Japan, this picture is no more. Japan is glutted with so many Ph.D. candidates and holders that many cannot find jobs in their specialized fields. While those with Ph.D.s in medicine, pharmacy, and other practical areas fare much better, those seeking jobs in the humanities and social sciences are in the worst shape. How it became so is the theme of this provocative book by an author who has Ph.D. in human environment studies from Kyushu University.

First, some statistics: as of 2006, some 261,000 students were registered in graduate schools in master’s and doctorate courses. (These numbers do not differentiate between Japanese and foreign students). This is quadruple the number twenty years earlier. At the same time, 16,000 had completed the requirements for doctorates, the highest number ever. We should be aware of the difference between those who completed the doctorate requirements and those who were awarded the doctorate degrees. The former had either not submitted their theses or had submitted them but had not had them approved by the faculty yet.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monbu-kagakushō [文部科学省] or MEXT) defines those who had completed the requirements as those who stayed in the doctorate course for three years and left. Of the graduates in doctoral courses, only 57% landed in full-time employment. Among them, 50% in humanities and social sciences did so. Some newspapers pointed out that only 3% of organizations in the private sector planned to hire Ph.D. degree holders (according to a survey in 1998) and that in 2005, 12,500 Ph.D. holders were so called “freeters.” “Freeters” are part-time workers who hop from one job to another.

A natural question: Why is this happening? The author points to the year 1991, when the then Ministry of Education [文部省] proposed to reform the university system. Among its goals was to promote education and research to a world class level, which pushed

for improving the graduate school system. Seeing an opportunity to expand its programs, the Tokyo University Faculty of Law proposed a model that would have its faculty teach both undergraduate and graduate courses. As a reward, Todai received a 25% increase in its budget from the Ministry. Todai's move was soon followed by other national universities that wanted the same budget increase. Thus they began vigorously to recruit students to fill the graduate school quotas set by the Ministry.

Within the graduate schools, research universities (Kenkyu Daigaku -研究大学) such as the seven former imperial universities (Tokyo, Kyoto, Tohoku, Hokkaido, Nagoya, Osaka, and Kyushu), the Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tsukuba, Hitotsubashi, Kobe, and Hiroshima (all national) and Waseda and Keio, both private, had little problem attracting students. But the rest of the universities had to scramble to retain students in their graduate schools.

The author points out from interviews with students that they were encouraged by their professors without understanding what awaited them in the job market. They shared unrealistically optimistic views of the administrators and professors who promised job opportunities once students received their graduate degrees. In particular, small, local and private colleges were eager to establish graduate schools to raise their prestige and attract more students. The result was a sharp increase in numbers of graduate schools while job prospects were limited. Declining youth population and worldwide economic hardships did not help.

The most likely career for graduates is teaching at colleges and universities starting as research assistants to eventually attain the position of professorship. For many graduates, however, this is an impossible dream because of the glut in graduate degrees. In addition, local colleges and universities are often connected with major national universities whose faculty control the teaching positions of the local schools and fill them with their own students.

If you are not a graduate of a prestigious university nor a student of influential professors, you may not even be interviewed by a hiring university. Thus graduates work as tutors at college preparatory schools called juku, or as hourly part-time lecturers at universities, cashiers at convenience stores, waiters at restaurants, and laborers in construction. A man in his 30's interviewed by the author even became a professional pachinko gambler.

The author asserts that the Ministry of Education and the Todai Faculty of Law conspired to shift Japan's education toward the graduate schools in their own interest. He says the professors feared the declining birth rate could decrease the number of college students that, in turn, would decrease the number of teaching positions for Todai graduates. The Ministry feared the decline in budgets for educational programmes would cause a decline in the power of the Ministry.

And they feared that the shrinking student population would lead to reduced numbers of the lucrative senior posts in educational institutions that they had counted on as second careers after retirement, or "amakudari" or "descending from heaven." Most senior officials in the Ministry are Todai or other national university graduates who maintain close contacts with their alma maters, which the author criticizes. He claims that the students were sacrificial lambs, naively believing professors who painted bright futures in satisfying academic careers.

Critics have pointed out that it was students themselves who chose this path and they have always had the option to shift careers. The author's interviews revealed that many graduate students found it difficult to land jobs in the private sector because companies prefer to train employees on the job. And graduates cling to the hope that someday they will join the academic establishment.

The author argues that the situation is not the problem of individual choice anymore. According to some estimates, tax payers spend \$1 million to educate one doctorate holder, as national, public, and private universities receive central government subsidies out of tax revenues. If that doctorate student cannot be active in research and teaching at the prime of life, the return for the investment would be poor.

The government has tried remedies. For example, from 1996 to 2000, the Ministry of Education provided post-doctorate fellows offering salaries ranging from \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year and \$10,000 research grants. It sounded like a good program except that half of the 10,000 positions were for foreigners coming to Japan and Japanese students in graduate school. This did not solve the problem of those who had finished doctoral programs. The age limit was 35, which disqualified many doctorate holders. The seven top universities and the Tokyo Institute of Technology set up an internet job information network for graduates.

The author describes in detail the driving force of making education profitable as the government introduced business incentives to make all colleges and universities "hojin" [法人] or corporations that would be financially accountable. Already several colleges and universities have shut down due to accumulating debt.

The author's assertion that the Ministry of Education and Todai Faculty of Law conspire to promote the graduate school system to their own benefit might meet rebuttal from the two groups. For example, Tamotsu Tokunaga, the director general on higher education at the ministry, asserts in Gaiko Forum [外交フォーラム] (October 2008 issue) that their goal to double the number of graduate schools by the end of 20th century was achieved, with half of science and technology major undergraduates proceeding to graduate schools. He gives credit to the graduate schools on improved quality of research, diversity of education, and international competition. But even he concedes that graduate school faculty see their schools as contributing to their own research,

rather than educating students to prepare them for careers. Meanwhile, more than 10,000 Ph.D. holders need full time jobs that fit with their training.

A different version of this review first appeared on the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Japan-US Discussion Forum and is reproduced with permission.

Kirschblueten-Hanami (Cherry Blossoms: Hanami)

directed and written by Doris Doerrie

2008, 127 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan



"Cherry Blossoms: Hanami" is a beautiful life-affirming and enhancing film inspired by Yasujiro Ozu's "Tokyo Story." The series of stunning shots of the Bavarian landscape, early on in the film, could have come straight from a German tourist board film.

Rudi (Elmar Wepper), according to his wife Trudi (Hannelore Elsner), has no sense of adventure and is a man of routine. He's done the same job for 30-some years, commuted on the same train and maintained the same lunch routine, living within his comfort zone in a beautiful Bavarian town. Discovering she is terminally ill, and keeping this information secret, Trudi persuades him to embark with her on a trip to Berlin to visit their daughter and son.

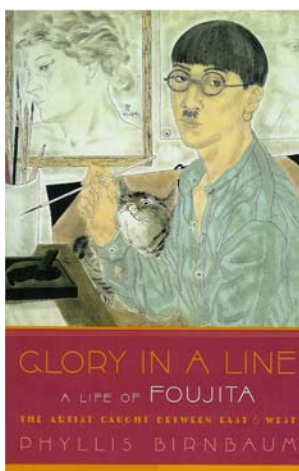
Rudi and Trudi's children have little time for their parents and wonder why they're visiting them, in fact. It is their partners who show the greater kindness and empathy, confirming the adage from "Tokyo Story" – "As long as life goes on, relationships between parents and children will bring boundless joy and endless grief." In a poignant scene, Rudi admits that he doesn't know his children anymore despite remembering them so well as kids.

The couple decide to continue their holiday in a Black Sea resort where Trudi unexpectedly dies in her sleep. A grief-stricken Rudi embarks on a visit to Tokyo to visit their other son, Karl (Maximillian Brueckner), in honour of Trudi who never got to see her cherished Mount Fuji and who loved butoh dancing.

Rudi's escapades in Tokyo echo those of Scarlett

Johansson and Bill Murray in Sofia Coppola's "Lost in Translation." Left largely to himself by workaholic Karl, Rudi begins to explore Tokyo alone, often encountering the seedier side of life in the way of snack bars and "soaplands."

Finding an empathetic friend in Yu (Aya Irizuki), a teenage butoh dancer, Rudi is able to talk to her about Trudi. The blossoming of the friendship culminates in a trip to Mount Fuji to see the sometimes elusive mountain, beloved of Trudi.



Glory in a Line, a Life of Fougita, The Artist Caught Between East and West

by Phyllis Birnbaum

Faber and Faber, 2006

331 pages including index and endnotes.

Hardcover £9.75

ISBN-13: 978-0-571-21179-1

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Leonard Fougita was the name Fujita Tsuguharu (or Tsuguji) adopted when late in life he became a Catholic. Fougita (1886-1968) is probably the most famous of the numerous Japanese artists who were attracted to Paris and settled in Europe. His father was a military man but accepted his son's determination to become a painter and consulted the famous Japanese author Mori Ōgai who suggested that the boy should study at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts where he enrolled as a student under the well-known artist Kuroda Seiki who, however, did not appreciate Fougita's efforts.

In 1913 Fougita managed to get away from Japan and arrived without his wife Tomi in Paris where he was introduced to Van Dongen and other artists including Picasso, Diego Rivera, Modigliani and Soutine. He plunged into the artistic life and enjoyed himself greatly but he never took to wine or other alcohol. Phyllis Birnbaum notes that Fougita's "studio was spotless and orderly, in contrast to the filthy disarray that came naturally to his friends." He adapted to French ways of life but he "often remembered Japan in alternating bouts of pride and shame." He found life in wartime (1914-18) France difficult and spent a year in London.

When Fougita returned to Paris he met Fernande Barry who in due course became the second of his five wives. The French accepted Fernande, but the Japanese community did not. Nina Hamnett said that Fernande "screamed at Fougita most of the time...Fougita was angelic and never answered back or said a word". Fougita concentrated on painting in oils. Gradually he moved away from bright colours and limited himself mostly to "black, brown and white." He was influenced



by a wide range of art schools including Cubism and Henri Rousseau, as well as Japanese traditions; French critics preferred his “more familiar Japanese effects.” During 1917 and 1918 he “exhibited close to four hundred works”. Phyllis Birnbaum thinks that “Foujita at last achieved his goal sometime around 1921, in a painting such as ‘My Room, Still Life with Alarm Clock’”.

Foujita met his third wife Youki (Lucie Badoud) in 1923. “She was his goddess, his charm, his key to bankruptcy.” She was a frequent model for his nudes. Foujita soon became the most famous Japanese in Paris. His fame “spread even further across France when Foujita figured in a protest involving a naked woman and artistic freedom.” The Japanese in France were “intensely critical of his boisterous public image.”

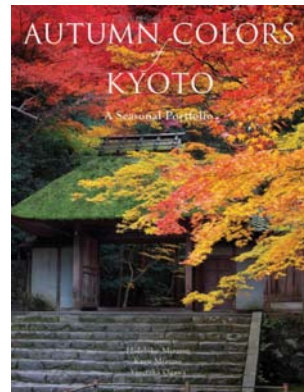
Foujita perhaps surprisingly did care and for two years he travelled in Latin America with a new companion Madeleine Lequeux, a former dancer at the Casino de Paris. In Brazil he received many commissions which at least covered his travel expenses. But Japan was becoming increasingly unpopular in Europe and he decided not to return to France but instead to Japan. Madeleine as a former showgirl had plenty of opportunities in Tokyo, but she was soon bored. She left him for a year, but soon after she had returned to Tokyo she died of a stroke.

Foujita’s paintings sold well in pre-war Japan and his conceit grew. In 1936 he declared: “I take pride in believing that I am the world’s number one artist.” He tried to diversify and extend his contacts “with the lives of the general population” and for a brief time took to making a film. He had begun his Japanese phase. Born into a military family and piqued by his current unpopularity in France he was easily won over by the military who recruited him as a war artist. There seems little doubt that Foujita’s patriotic ardour was aroused and that he threw himself enthusiastically into this new role, which took him to Nomohan and other war zones. He did a number of paintings of the Japanese occupation of Singapore, of the fighting on Guadalcanal and the Solomons. He had, he declared, “broken with France.” He became the administrator of the Japanese Army Art Association where he seems to have enjoyed the power it gave him over other Japanese war artists.

After the war Foujita found friends among the US occupation forces and he managed to return to France via the United States with his fifth wife, Kimiyo, a Japanese, like his first wife. They became French citizens in 1955 and retired to the country.

Inevitably there have been many controversies about Foujita’s life and especially his support for the Japanese military in China and East Asia. Phyllis Birnbaum deals with these as objectively as possible and gives an interesting

account of Foujita’s life. But the most important question is the nature of and extent of Foujita’s achievements as an artist. Foujita clearly was a very accomplished artist and draughtsman, but where does he rank among twentieth century artists? Unfortunately this book, which contains only a single section of black and white photographs of works by Foujita, is inadequate to enable readers to make up their own minds on his artistic merits. Phyllis Birnbaum has done some meticulous research, but there are gaps (for instance there is nothing in this book about Foujita as an illustrator of that classic piece of irony about Japan ‘L’Honorable Partie de Campagne’) and this is not the definitive work about Foujita.



Autumn Colours of Kyoto: A Seasonal Portfolio by Hidehiko Mizuno, Kayu Mizuno and Yasutaka Ogawa

**Kodansha International, 2009, 104 pages
Paperback £18.00**

ISBN: 9784770030931

Review by Helen McCarthy

It is almost impossible to take an unattractive picture of Kyoto’s temples and shrines, especially in autumn, when the changing leaf colours create such spectacular effects. This book, however, takes the true gift of photography – the art of snatching moments of transient beauty out of time and freezing them for eternity – to new levels.

A sensitive foreword by Jihei Ogata XI, Grandmaster of Ueji Landcape Design House, emphasises the role of the maple in both the parade of autumn colour in Kyoto and the Japanese consciousness of human transience. The three photographers, all Kyoto natives, give every tree its due, with evergreens, bamboo, cedars and shrubs rendered lovingly alongside the maple at forty-nine historic Kyoto locations. The five chapters are divided by equally beautiful images of seasonal motifs in man-made form – hair ornaments, pottery, fans, even delicately moulded and coloured sweets.

Each chapter covers one of the five traditional areas of Kyoto – East, West, North, South and Central – and lists the best-known sites for autumn colours in each area. All but one are represented by a single, exquisite photograph. (Nanzen-ji temple gets two.) The pictures take the reader on his own interior journey, but the book also makes it easy to plan more concrete expeditions. Every photo has a short description, with interesting snippets of information about the site and its history. The number at the beginning of the text links to detailed maps at the back of the book, giving the exact location of each site.

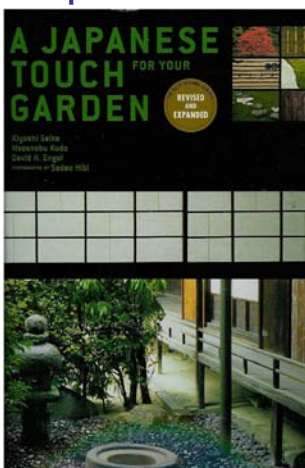
Within the basic theme of the beauty of Kyoto’s autumn foliage, the three photographers have taken a variety of



interesting approaches. Some shots are framed from within a building, giving the sense of an Edo-era maple-viewing party. Others use the geometry of the location to focus attention on a view as its makers intended, with a flight of steps framed by lines of lanterns or a glimpse from the road through a gateway; or they allow Nature to frame the image, with a forest of evergreens setting off maples and ancient roof tiles. Details of a torii gate or stone lantern stand out against the glowing backdrop of leaves, emphasising and celebrating the endless inventiveness and perfect harmony of nature.

If you have never visited Kyoto, this book will make you dream of going there. If you have, it's a wonderful reminder of the natural beauty that still abounds in and around the city. More importantly, it serves as a reminder of the beauty of transience, of the changing seasons of nature and of human life. These autumn leaves, frozen forever on film, capture a single season in a single year in the life of a city with almost fifteen hundred previous autumns and, one hopes, many more to come.

A Japanese Touch for your Garden



by Kiyoshi Seike,
Masanobu Kudo,
and David H. Engel,
photography by
Sadao Hibi

Kodansha International,
revised and expanded 2008,
94 pages. Hardcover £16.99

ISBN: 978-4-7700-3079-5

Review

by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

The aim of this book is stated to be how to "Give a Japanese touch to your entire garden or only to a corner of it, using a partition or fencing or shrubs. Or incorporate separate Japanese elements into your Western-style garden."

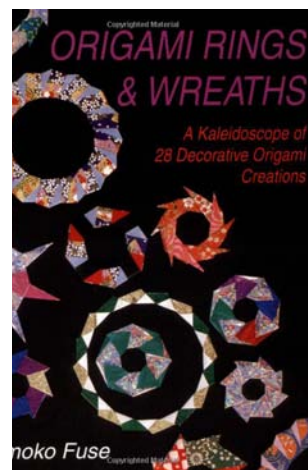
The book is well produced and provides a succinct overview of Japanese garden design. The first section covers "The Courtyard Garden," "The Stone Garden" and

"Tree and Water Garden." The second section covers the elements of Japanese gardens such as layout, stone groupings, stone lanterns, water basins, bamboo fences, plants and trees as well as techniques such as shaping and pruning trees. Much valuable information is summarised and the photographs are good and helpful, for instance those on pages 50 and 51 showing different patterns of stones and on pages 56 and 57 explaining the various styles of Japanese lanterns used in Japanese gardens.

Despite its value as a summary of the basic elements in constructing a Japanese style garden the book does not really fulfil its stated aim. I did not feel that the book really helped me to decide how best to bring a real (and not a mock) Japanese element into a traditional English garden. Often the most difficult issue arises from the existence of English buildings and other traditional features which are difficult to disguise or reduce the imported Japanese element into an unsatisfactory and artificial contrivance.

The book is perhaps designed more for the American than the British market and does not give practical guidance about where and how materials such as stone and bamboo fences can be found here. The list of Japanese gardens in the United Kingdom and Ireland in the appendix on page 93 is inadequate.

The British Gardener seeking practical advice on adding a Japanese touch to his or her garden would find much more useful than this book 'The Japanese Way Garden Designs' by the late Maureen Busby, published by the Japanese Garden Society in 2008.



**Origami Rings
and Wreaths – A
Kaleidoscope of 28
Decorative Origami
Creations**

by Tomoko Fuse

Japan Publications Trading
Company,
2007, 94 pages
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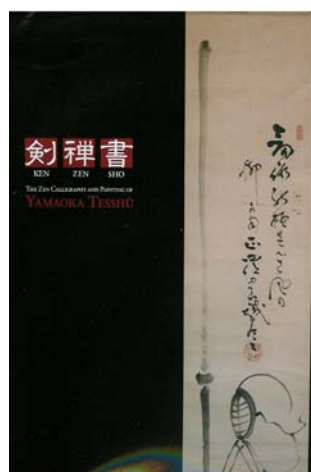
Review by Jayne Kerry

Origami, the Japanese art of paper-folding is an ancient and intriguing art form which is now popular worldwide. This book focuses specifically upon creating rings and wreaths which would inspire many intrepid crafters. There are instructions for 28 different ways to create rings and wreaths using a number of folded paper shapes; the smallest design uses 8 sections whilst the most intricate uses 16. Instructions are very clearly set out, appropriately coded using symbols and colour, with good visual support in the form of diagrams and illustrations. There is plenty of challenge in this book for both the beginner

and more experienced paper folder. Nevertheless, full concentration is required, especially in the early stages of learning and practising a new design, although very satisfying once achieved!

The book includes full colour photographs of every completed design, giving ideas of how co-ordinating and contrasting colours and patterns can work well together. There are also colour photographs of the front and back of each design in order for crafters to check that they are recreating the designs accurately.

Throughout the book a standard size of paper is given as 7.5cm x 7.5cm, although paper could be cut larger or smaller, depending upon what the finished ring or wreath is to be used for. Completed rings and wreaths could be used in a variety of ways, for brooches, greetings cards, calendars, ear-rings, Christmas decorations, wedding invitations and so on; in fact for all occasions or celebrations and can be co-ordinated to suit any colour scheme.



**剣禅書 Ken Zen Sho
The Zen Calligraphy and
painting of Yamaoka
Tesshū**

**edited by Alex Bennett
and Sarah Moate**

**Bunkasha International
Corporation, Tokyo, 2008,
Paperback £18.00**

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Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

This book was prepared as a catalogue and guide for an exhibition, held between 3 September and 14 December 2008, in the Toshiba Gallery of Japanese Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It commemorated the 120th anniversary of the death of Yamaoka Tesshū (1836-88) and was based on the collection of his calligraphy which belonged to the late Terayama Tanchū (1938-2007) who was himself a master of 'ken-zen-sho' (the sword, Zen and calligraphy). The book has a foreword by Rupert Faulkener, introductions by Sarah Moate and Alex Bennett, an essay by Terayama Tanchū on the relevance of "Swordsmanship, Zen and Calligraphy" plus an afterword by Takemura Eiji. Some 34 colour plates illustrating calligraphy, mainly by Tesshū, are accompanied by translations and explanations. Copies of this book may be purchased from the Victoria and Albert Museum's shop and from the Bunkasha International (Kendo) web site.

Yamaoka Tesshū was a samurai who began to learn swordsmanship at the age of nine. He also learnt calligraphy, studied Confucian philosophy and later Zen. He became an instructor at the military academy of the

shogunate ('Kōbusho'). In 1867 just before the outbreak of the civil war which led to the Meiji Restoration he was sent to negotiate on behalf of the shogun with Saigō Takamori, who was in command of the forces opposed to the shogunate. After a heated discussion an understanding was reached which ensured that there was a relatively peaceful transfer of power. After the Restoration, Tesshū held a number of important posts including that of governor of the Shizuoka domain and of Ibaragi prefecture. In 1872 he became a lifetime retainer of the Emperor and worked for the Imperial Household. He founded the Zenshōan temple in Tokyo where his grave is located and where books and manuscripts relating to swordsmanship, tactics and military philosophy are kept. These include a rare manuscript of the thirty-five articles on strategy by the famous Miyamoto Musashi whom the students of 'Ken-Zen-Sho' revere as the outstanding master.

Tesshū is "renowned for his statement that swordsmanship, Zen and calligraphy are identical in their aspiration to the no-mind. Known in Japanese as 'mu-shin', it is a state beyond thoughts, emotions and expectations." Tesshū, according to Suzuki Daisetsu, the interpreter of Zen to English readers, knew that "A man has to die, and leave his ordinary consciousness in order to awaken the unconscious." Alex Bennett in the introduction part 2, notes that in 'budō' (the martial Way) 'the goal was to 'give life' rather than take it. The martial traditions ...gradually developed a 'spirit of non-lethality' akin to Zen." Swordsmanship, Zen and calligraphy (brushwork) were equivalent to one another; "one was not superior to the other, as long as the adept surrendered himself unconditionally to his ascetic quest." Sarah Moate in the introduction part 1 says of calligraphy that "In Zen terms it reveals the depths of the Zen calligrapher's state of being, as discernible in the physical traces of 'sumi' ink brushed on paper in the immediacy of the moment, which are directly and spontaneously painted with no retouching." Tesshū's calligraphy of a snowman ('yuki daruma -雪だるま') expresses what he saw as the essence "vast emptiness, nothing sacred." These quotations are not an adequate summary of the philosophy of 'ken-zen-sho', but they do reflect some of the issues which someone not trained in Zen faces when trying to understand and appreciate the images in this book. Zen which is central to swordsmanship and calligraphy cannot be summed up in a logical way.

The essay by Terayama Tanchū is an excellent survey of the three themes of swordsmanship, Zen and calligraphy. He points out that calligraphy "was perceived as being far more profound than just writing visually pleasing characters. For this, the most important ingredient was spirited utilisation of one's 'primary life.'"

Anyone interested in Zen calligraphy will find much of interest in this book.