

RECOMMENDED HISTORY READINGS

(texts not provided)

- Schirokauer, Conrad. *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt College Publishers, 1993. p. 32–34, 46–72
- Schirokauer, Conrad, and Donald Clark. Chapters 4, 5 (p. 93–98), 7, 8, 11, 13, 14 (section 2), and 17 in *Modern East Asia: A Brief History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.
- Huffman, James L. *Modern Japan: A History in Documents*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE LITERATURE

(texts provided)

The Conventions of Courtly Love

The excerpts in this first section all center on the tradition of courtly love as it developed in literature of the Nara (710–784) and Heian (794–1185) periods. Early poetry collections such as the Manyōshū and Kokinshū witnessed the appearance of conventional narrative/motifs for portraying a (typically doomed) love affair at the imperial court. These conventions were refined during the Heian period, most notably with Murasaki Shikibu’s endlessly inventive recasting of the tradition throughout her fifty-two-chapter The Tale of Genji. Finally, Sei Shōnagon’s Pillow Book satirizes the tradition of courtly love in passages that have not lost their freshness—or bite—in the thousand years since she recorded them. (Don’t miss the inept lover who stumbles about muttering the Heian equivalent of “Where are my socks?”)

- [ca. 794] Excerpts from *Man’yōshū*. “Your basket...” (33), “In the sea of Iwami...,” (34–5), “On the occasion of the temporary enshrinement of Princess Asuka” (36–7), “After the death of his wife” (37–40), three poems by Lady Kasa (41), “A dialogue on poverty” (46–8), “Dialogue poems” (52). In *Anthology of Japanese Literature: From the Earliest Era to the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, edited by Donald Keene. New York: Grove Press, 1955.
- [ca. 905] ARIWARA Narihira. (poems 410–11, 476, 616, 622, 632, 644, 706–07, 747, 884. ONO no Komachi [F]. (poems 113, 552–54, 623, 656–57, 727, 782, 797, 822, 1030. In *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry*, translated by Helen Craig McCullough. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- [ca. 1000] MURASAKI Shikibu [F]. Introduction and “Twilight Beauty.” In *The Tale of Genji*, translated by Royall Tyler, xii–xvii, 53–80. New York: Viking, 2001.
- [ca. 1000] SEI Shōnagon [F]. Sections 1, 12, 14, 30–31, 45–48, 62–63, 101–02, 112–14. In *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*, translated by Ivan Morris. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Buddhist Themes in Medieval and Edo Literature

Our second lecture focuses on Buddhist themes as they appear in the medieval era (1185–1600) and the Edo period (1600–1868). We will look at four themes: 1) reincarnation; 2) karmic retribution; 3)

the impermanence of all things; and 4) salvation through devotion to the Buddha/Buddhist doctrine. Be on the lookout for a sub-theme of #3—the uncertainty of the world—that led to the inclusion of startlingly secular passages in some of our texts.

- [8th c.–16th c.] [ca. 1120] Setsuwa tales 65, 105, 107, 115–7, 133, 146–9. In *Japanese Tales*, translated by Royall Tyler. New York: Pantheon, 1987.
- [8th c.–16th c.] [ca. 1120] Setsuwa tales 15, 22, 23, 31. In *Tales of Times Now Past: Sixty-Two Stories from a Medieval Japanese Collection*, translated by Marian Ury. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- [ca. 1200-1371] *The Tale of the Heike*, episodes 1.1, 1.6, 6.7, 9.12. In *Genji and Heike: Selections from The Tale of Genji and The Tale of Heike*, translated by Helen McCullough. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- [ca. 1331] YOSHIDA Kenkō. *Essays in Idleness*, sections 7, 25, 74, 82, 122, 137, 145, 149, 166, 189, 211. In *Classical Japanese Prose*, translated by Helen Craig McCullough. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- [ca. 1689] MATSUO Bashō. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*, translated by Yuasa Nobuyuki, 117–123. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.

MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE

Psychological “Realism” in Modern Japanese Literature

The first modern lecture deals with three stages of psychological “realism,” one of the prominent trends in literature from the Meiji period (1868–1912) to the present. In the texts of Meiji writer Higuchi Ichiyō, psychological “realism” appears as literary revision of the “idealized” mental struggles portrayed in traditional literature. Authors such as Shiga Naoya later reinvented psychological “realism” as a literary style with their creation of the stream-of-consciousness “I-novel.” Finally, literature after World War II initiated a new phase of psychological “realism” as social critique. Contemporary women authors, such as Takahashi Takako, are notable for taking advantage of this latest incarnation of psychological “realism” to critically assess the institution of motherhood.

- [1911] SHIGA Naoya. “For Grandmother.” In *The Shiga Hero*, edited by William Sibley, 129–137. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- [1914] NATSUME Sōseki. *Kokoro*. Translated by Edwin McClellan. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1957.
- [1947] DAZAI Osamu. “A Sound of Hammering.” *Japan Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1969): 194–202.
- [1971] TAKAHASHI Takako [F]. “Congruent Figures.” In *Japanese Women Writers: Twentieth Century Short Fiction*, edited by Noriko Mizuta Lippit and Kyoko Iriye Selden, 168–193. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991.

- [1990] OGAWA Yoko [F]. “The Diving Pool.” In *The Diving Pool: Three Novellas*, translated by Stephen Snyder, 1–53. New York: Picador, 2008.

Modern Japanese Fantasy

Our final section on Japan ends with a discussion of Japanese fantasy literature. We begin with texts that adapt familiar conventions from Western science fiction, such as Rampo’s “Hell of Mirrors” and Tsutsui’s “Standing Woman.” We then continue with stories that derive their fantastic elements from early Japanese prototypes. For example, Akutagawa’s “The Spider’s Thread” references supernatural folklore, while Enchi’s “A Bond of Two Lifetimes—Gleanings” delivers an unexpectedly feminist message through its rewriting of a Buddhist miracle tale.

- [1926] EDOGAWA Rampo. “The Hell of Mirrors.” In *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, translated by James Harris, 109–122. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1956.
- [1974] TSUTSUI Yasutaka. “Standing Woman.” In *The Best Japanese Science Fiction Stories*, edited by John L. Apostolou, 130–143. New York: Dembner Books, 1989.
- [1949] KINOSHITA Junji. *The Twilight Crane*. In *Playbook: Five Plays for a New Theatre*, 131–159. Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1956.
- [1918] AKUTAGAWA Ryūnosuke. “The Spider’s Thread.” In *Japanese Short Stories*, translated by Kojima Takashi, 187–192. New York: Liveright, 1962.
- [1957] ENCHI Fumiko [F]. “A Bond for Two Lifetimes—Gleanings.” In *Rabbits, Crabs, Etc. Stories by Japanese Women*, translated by Phyllis Birnbaum, 27–47. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1982.

Note:

- Author’s surnames are in all capitals. Japanese naming conventions in the traditional period are somewhat complex. Sometimes an author is referred to by his or her given name, formal title, or nickname. For example, in the case of Murasaki Shikibu, or “Lady Murasaki,” Murasaki is her given name and Shikibu is her title. In modern Japanese names, the surname precedes the given name.
- The date inside the bracket is the year the piece was first published.
- An [F] following the author’s name indicates the author is female.