



Yale Alumni ACADEMY

Suggested Reading for Inside Japan

April 13 – April 25, 2023

Everything listed here can be obtained through online book sellers, and a really good public library will have at least some of these titles as well. (Don't worry, there will be no required papers, quizzes, or exams!)

- Closer to the time of the trip, registered participants will receive a packet with a few readings from a 10th century collection of poetic stories, *The Tales of Ise*: several episodes take place in locations you'll be visiting in Tokyo. There are multiple translations: Professor Kamens recommend either *The Ise Stories* (R. Tyler and J. Mostow, trans.) or *The Tales of Ise* (H. McCullough, trans.) There will also be a few poems by various authors from other anthologies in this packet.
- On one of our excursions we'll be visiting temples in a rural area northeast of Kyoto called Ohara. One highly relevant reading is the final section, "The Initiate's Chapter," of *The Tale of the Heike*, which narrates the events surrounding a civil war that took place in the 1180s. This section tells about the aftermath of that war and focuses on a retired empress who lived in retreat in a convent in Ohara. Her retreat and encounter with a retired Emperor – her one-time father-in-law – is also the subject of a famous Noh play. For translations of *The Tale of the Heike*, Professor Kamens recommends either Royall Tyler's or Helen McCullough's. Prior to departure registered participants will receive a PDF of a translation of the play (*Ohara goko*, "The Imperial Visit to Ohara.")

- For history of the city of Kyoto itself, one book Professor Kamens particularly recommends is: Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japanese Premodern Capital*.
- Professor Kamens' favorite mid-20th century Japanese novel, which is set in Osaka, Kyoto and Tokyo, is *The Makioka Sisters*, by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. It's about a family coping with change in the 1930's. There is only one translation available, by Edward Seidensticker. It has been filmed more than once: you may be able to find a sub-titled version on *Criterion* or elsewhere (the most recent film version was released in 2011.)

Several well-known modern authors have written novels set in Shikoku, where we'll be spending several days. Here are some selections:

- Natsume Sōseki, *Botchan*, translated by J. Cohn (U of Hawai'i Press.) This is one of the earliest novels by this great modern writer of the Meiji period – and it's comic, unlike many of his later works.
- Ōe Kenzaburō, *The Silent Cry*. By the 1994 Nobel Prize Winner for Literature; published in 1967.
- Murakami Haruki. *Kafka on the Shore*. One of Murakami's earliest international "hits" (in 2002.) Like much of his work, darkly and sometimes wildly comic. Translation by Philip Gabriel.

N.B. In the above list, Japanese names are given in traditional form, with the surname preceding the personal name. But note that noted authors who are no longer living are often referred to by their personal (or pen) names: thus, "Sōseki," but not Haruki (for Murakami, unless you happen to be a personal acquaintance....)

If you would like to get previews of Professor Kamens' "take" on classical Japanese poetry (*waka*), and a sense of how he has taught about it at Yale over the years, review two of his books, published 20 years apart by the Yale University Press:

- (1997) Utamakura, *Allusion and Intertextuality in Traditional Japanese Poetry*.
- (2017) *Waka and Things, Waka as Things*