

niponica

Discovering  
Japan

# にほにか

no. 33



• Special Feature •

## Journey Through Japanese Literature





*Genji Monogatari Emaki* ("The Tale of Genji Illustrated Scroll"), Takekawa chapter 2 handscroll  
Collection: The Tokugawa Art Museum  
©The Tokugawa Art Museum Image Archive/DNPartcom

• Special Feature •

# Journey Through Japanese Literature

Literature is not just about reading. It also provides a space for cultural interaction. You are invited to journey through ancient and modern Japanese stories with your favorite work in hand.

niponica  
にぽにか<sup>no.</sup> 33

*niponica* is published in Japanese and six other languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) to introduce to the world the people and culture of Japan today. The title *niponica* is derived from "Nippon," the Japanese word for Japan.



Kadokawa Culture Museum in Saitama Prefecture, home to the Bookshelf Theater pictured on the cover and other exhibitions  
©Kadokawa Culture Museum  
Cover photo by RK/@rkrkrk

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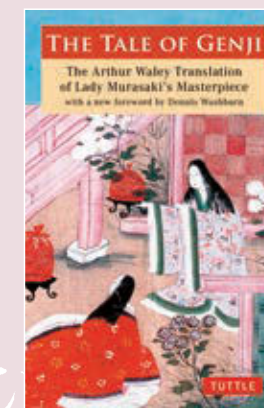
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# Learn About the World's Oldest Full-Length Novel

A masterpiece of dynastic literature in a romantic full-length novel by the 11<sup>th</sup>-century lady-in-waiting Murasaki Shikibu—Explore the appeal of a work of classic literature still read today as a refined example of Japanese aesthetics.

Kyoto flourished as a political and cultural center, reaching its peak during the Heian period (794–1185). As aristocratic society took root, the uniquely elegant dynastic culture of Japan blossomed.

It was at the peak of this golden age, in the early 11th century, that the world's oldest extant full-length novel, *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*), was written by author and noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu. The story centers on the life of prince Hikaru Genji, depicting the peaks and valleys of his life as he falls in love with woman after woman, rising to power within noble circles, and finally living out his later years in disappointment.

The work comprises 54 volumes, featuring over 500 characters and spanning 70 years in this fictional world. Murasaki Shikibu elegantly captures the comings and goings of court life on a grand scale. The novel has captivated legions of readers and has been translated into some 40 languages, beginning with an English translation done by a British literary scholar.

*The Tale of Genji* has also inspired derivations of many kinds throughout the ages. The best known of these are *Genji-e* (“Genji Scene”) paintings. There are so many paintings from the Heian period to the present day which attempt to reproduce the world of this novel that they form

Above: *Genji Monogatari Zu Byōbu*; *Wakana-jo Byōbu* (“The Tale of Genji scene on folding screen; Wakana-jo screen”) painted by 17th century painter Tosa Mitsuoki  
(Collection: Freer Gallery of Art, gift from Charles Lang Freer)  
Top right: 13th century manuscript of *The Tale of Genji*  
(Collection: Hosa Library, City of Nagoya)  
Right in the middle: English translation of *The Tale of Genji* by Arthur Waley  
Bottom right: Painting of *The Tale of Genji* author Murasaki Shikibu from the 19th century  
(Collection: Tokyo National Museum)

their own genre. The novel also profoundly influenced subsequent performing arts such as the incense and tea ceremonies, as well as noh and kabuki theatre, and even today it features as the subject of anime and manga. It is no exaggeration that *The Tale of Genji* pioneered the mixed genre arts at which Japan has excelled in recent years.

Those who have the chance to visit the spots in Kyoto and elsewhere associated with the story, or to see *Genji-e* paintings and other art in person, will enjoy envisioning the world that unfolds in *The Tale of Genji*. The novel is a wonderful guide for exploring the soul of Japanese culture by pondering a dynasty from more than 1,000 years ago.







# Where *The Tale of Genji* Comes Alive

## Ancient Imperial Palace Setting

### ❖ Kyoto Imperial Palace

Most of *The Tale of Genji* story unfolds in Kyoto. Many locations closely associated with the novel still exist today, and the most important of these is the Kyoto Imperial Palace.

This ancient imperial palace, where the emperors of Japan resided and held court before the capital was moved to Tokyo in the 19th century, is the birthplace of Hikaru Genji and the setting of many of the dramas that take place in the novel. Although the Kyoto Imperial Palace as it stands today has been reconstructed, the architecture faithfully follows the Heian period style to preserve the courtly atmosphere of that time. There is no better spot to experience the ambience of *The Tale of Genji* so directly.

Top left: The Shishinden main hall, which was the venue for many ceremonies  
Right: The Takamikura imperial throne  
(Photos: Imperial Household Agency)

## A Spectacular Aristocratic Procession

### ❖ The Aoi Matsuri

The Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival), held in early May, is a quintessential Kyoto festival highlighted by a procession of over 500 people dressed in Heian period court costume through the city streets. Officially known as the Kamo Festival, it is believed to have begun over 1,400 years ago, and it features in the Aoi chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.

Right: The festival procession known as Roto-no-gi



Above: Museum exhibit recreates a scene from *The Tale of Genji* in which the women of a noble family play the traditional board game go.  
Right: A Heian period oxcart (restoration) used to transport Japanese nobility

## Immerse Yourself in a 3D Genji World

### ❖ The Tale of Genji Museum, Uji City

This museum, themed after *The Tale of Genji*, is located in Uji City in Kyoto Prefecture, the main setting of the novel's latter chapters, which are commonly referred to as "Uji Jujo," or the "Ten Chapters of Uji." The unique museum offers visitors an opportunity to learn firsthand about the world of *The Tale of Genji* via exhibits detailing court life and clothing of the nobles during that period.



## Temple Stay for Murasaki Shikibu

### ❖ Ishiyama-dera Temple

Founded in the 8th century in Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture, Ishiyama-dera Temple is where Murasaki Shikibu is said to have stayed while working out her ideas for *The Tale of Genji*. The Room of Genji, where she is said to have written the novel, is still part of the temple's main hall to this day. The Ishiyama-dera and Murasaki Shikibu Exhibition, held each spring and autumn, displays materials related to *The Tale of Genji*.



Left: Ishiyama-dera Temple is a renowned moon-viewing spot. According to legend, the inspiration for *The Tale of Genji* came to Murasaki Shikibu upon seeing the moon reflected in the lake.  
Right: Bronze statue of Murasaki Shikibu on the temple premises  
(Photo: Ishiyama-dera Temple)

## Encounter Authentic Genji-e Paintings

### ❖ The Tokugawa Art Museum

This art museum in Nagoya City in Aichi Prefecture is home to the oldest extant *Genji Monogatari Emaki* ("The Tale of Genji Illustrated Scroll"), created in the first half of the 12th century. Handed down by the Owari Tokugawa family for generations, the original manuscripts are exhibited here each year in November, and there is also an exhibition of gorgeous wedding ceremony furnishings inspired by *The Tale of Genji*.



Above: *Genji Monogatari Emaki* ("The Tale of Genji Illustrated Scroll"), Takekawa chapter handscroll (see pages 2-3 in this magazine.)



Bottom: The museum houses 10,000 works of art handed down by the Owari Tokugawa family, powerful feudal lords of the Edo period.  
(Photo: The Tokugawa Art Museum)





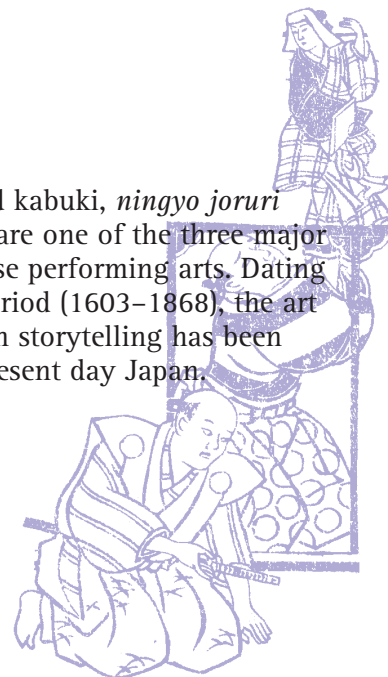
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# Ningyo Joruri

## Tales Told in Puppet Theater

Alongside noh and kabuki, *ningyo joruri* puppet narratives are one of the three major traditional Japanese performing arts. Dating back to the Edo period (1603–1868), the art of using puppets in storytelling has been passed down to present day Japan.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu



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In this type of puppet theater, a performer called the *tayu* narrates the story, while the *shamisen* three-stringed lute paints the scene in sound and the puppets vividly move in time. *Ningyo joruri* is a uniquely Japanese collaborative performing art in which three performers work in perfect unison to tell the story.

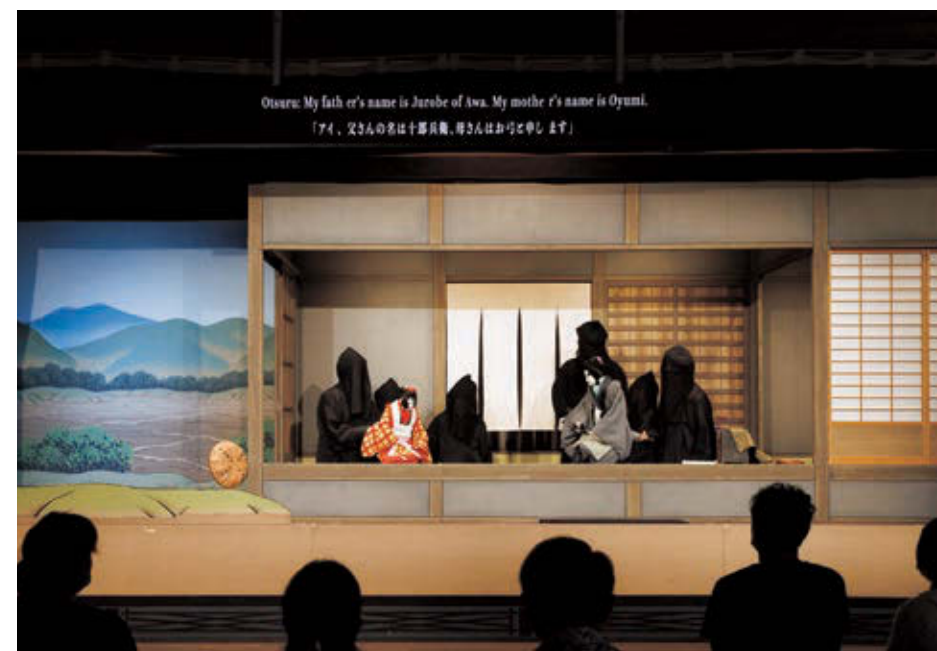
The origins of these puppet narratives lie with *katarimono*, a style of storytelling in which verses are set to music. Initially accompanied by the *biwa* (plucked lute) and the clapping of fans, this art form shifted to *joruri* narratives sung to music in the 16th century when the *shamisen* (three-stringed fretless lute) was introduced. *Ningyo joruri* then came into being in the 17th century in Osaka when *joruri* blended with the puppet theater. Though the idea of the puppet show may bring to mind children's stories, *ningyo joruri* has always

been entertainment for adults. Many of the stories are based on historical tales and incidents, or the love between parent and child, or affection between man and woman, as in the masterpiece *Sonezaki Shinju* ("The Love Suicides at Sonezaki," written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon; first performed in 1703), which is still popular today.

*Ningyo joruri* eventually spread from its birthplace in Osaka to rural towns across Japan. These performances were a particular hit in Tokushima Prefecture in the Shikoku region of Japan, where scores of theater troupes were formed in the Edo period and outdoor theaters for public performances were built on shrine grounds. More than 20 puppet theaters are still in existence today, with almost daily performances still held today at the Awa Jurobei Yashiki Theater in Tokushima City.



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1. Mother and child reunited in *Keisei Awa no Naruto—Junrei Uta no Dan* ("Courtesan at the Whirlpools of Awa—The Pilgrim Song Chapter").
2. Puppeteers wear discreet black robes and hoods to blend into the background on stage.
3. The *tayu* narrator and *shamisen* player perform in an area next to the stage known as the *yuka*.
4. Subtitles are displayed in Japanese and English above the stage at the Awa Jurobei Yashiki Theater.
5. Materials associated with *ningyo joruri* are on display at the Awa Jurobei Yashiki Theater.
6. Haigyu Noson Butai rural community stage in Tokushima Prefecture. Local residents gather once a year for a public outdoor performance.



The story most often performed at this theater is based on a local family feud, and poignantly depicts the love between parent and child. In one scene, as mother and child are reunited, the puppet's shoulders tremble slightly and she gently lifts her hand to her face in a gesture so realistic that the puppet appears to be shedding actual tears. What makes this realistic depiction possible is a unique method, unmatched anywhere else in the world, in which three different people manipulate a single puppet. Each puppeteer operates a different part of the puppet—the head and right hand, the left hand, or the legs—to achieve smooth, human-like movements with richly detailed gestures and emotions. The intonation of the narration by the *tayu* and the lingering notes of the *shamisen* add even more nuance. The voices, sounds, and movements of the puppets come

together to create an exquisite world of puppetry.

You can find *ningyo joruri* performances not only in Tokushima Prefecture, but all over Japan. The puppet theater spins nuanced tales of the rich inner lives of the people, making for an unparalleled experience.



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# The Murakami Haruki Experience

A library dedicated to the globally renowned novelist, Murakami Haruki, has opened in Tokyo. From the architecture and furniture to each book on the shelves, this intoxicating space is filled with the best of Murakami literary inspiration.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu, CHUOKORON-SHINSHA, INC.

Over his 40-year career as a writer, Murakami Haruki has produced numerous masterpieces, including *A Wild Sheep Chase* (*Hitsuji o Meguru Boken*), *Norwegian Wood* (*Noruei no Mori*), and *1Q84*. His novels have been translated into more than 50 languages. Fans around the world are fascinated by his uniquely sophisticated yet easy to read narratives.

Dedicated to bringing Murakami's work closer to readers, the Waseda International House of Literature (The Haruki Murakami Library) opened in October 2021 at Waseda University, his alma mater, in Tokyo. Passing through the arched entrance, visitors come face-to-face with "stairway bookshelves" stacked with books lining either side of an atrium. The architect, Kuma Kengo, sees Murakami's works

as "a tunnel connecting reality and unreality," and has designed the space accordingly, to give the visitor a sense of moving into the world of Murakami.

Descending into the basement, Murakami's study with desk and chair has been reproduced in great detail, down to the size of the shelves and even his favorite pencils. This replica of the environment where Murakami creates his works is an ideal spot to come for some inspiration.

The first floor of the library is filled with rare first editions and translations of Murakami's works in many different languages. Reading nooks are scattered throughout, inviting the visitor to pick up any book that catches the eye and settle in to a comfy spot to read. There is also an audio room, another great place to sit down for a read.

1. A stairway of bookshelves comes down to the basement. Built with bench steps for sitting and reading.
2. Warm wooden arch framing the entrance.
3. The library has translations in more than 50 different languages.
4. Murakami's study is reproduced as faithfully as possible, including desk, stationary, and sofa.
5. Audio room displaying vinyl collected by Murakami over the years.
6. An illustration of The Sheep Man from *A Wild Sheep Chase* (*Hitsuji o Meguru Boken*) drawn by Murakami himself is painted on the Gallery Lounge wall.
7. Still from *Drive My Car*, the 2021 film adaptation of the Murakami short story by the same name.

©2021 Drive My Car Production Committee

A jazz aficionado, Murakami has spoken publicly many times about the influence this music has had on his writing. He even ran a jazz bar called "peter-cat" at one time. Sitting down to read a favorite Murakami novel with an album from the author's own vinyl collection playing on the sound system makes for a truly special time.

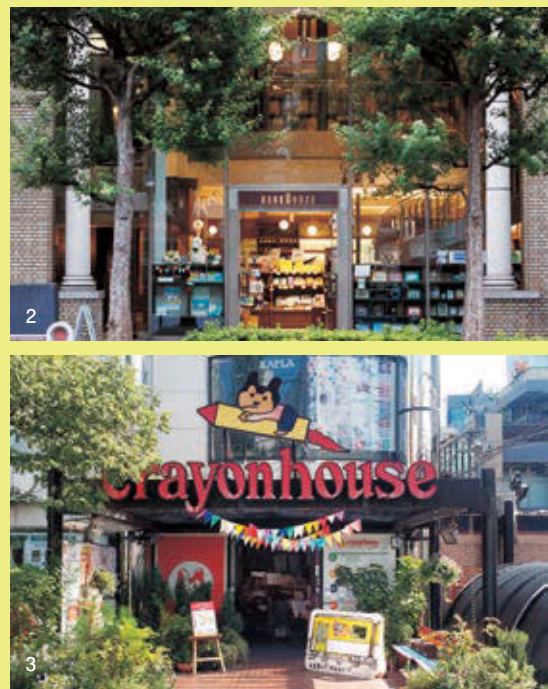
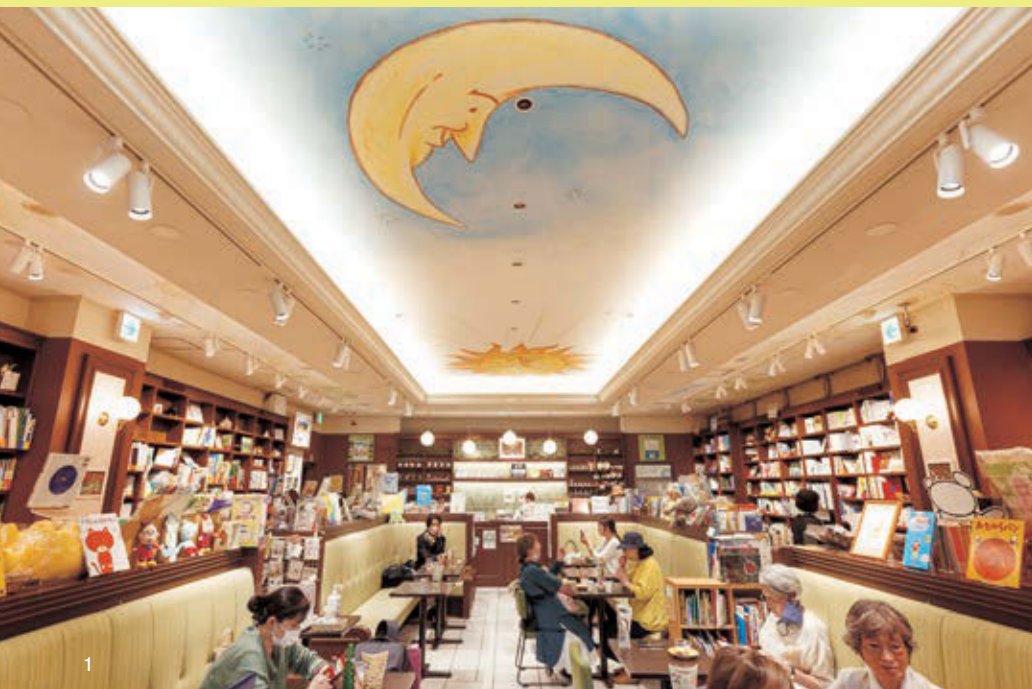
The facilities also feature a student-run cafe and research lab for meetings and events. More than simply a Murakami archive, the library reflects the author's intention to foster spaces for human connection. It offers a comfortable place for all kinds of people to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of Murakami's world and enjoy some conversation about the fascination of literature.



I think stories are a universal language. And stories are also the essence of a novel. So, through novels, we should be able to converse with so many people around the world and understand each other. We planned the Waseda International House of Literature with the idea that it could be a center for this sort of thing. My hope is that a lot of people will feel free to use it.

Murakami Haruki





©Gomi Taro/Photo courtesy of graniph inc.

Above left: *Shirokuma's Hotcakes* tote bag and socks  
Right: Masking tape and t-shirt with *The Goldfish Got Away* illustration

Top left: Shops specializing in picture books can be found throughout Tokyo, and some even offer cafe space, as well. Book House Cafe in Jimbocho (1, 2) boasts a collection of 10,000 books and a cafe with a ceiling painted with the sun and moon, while crayonhouse in Aoyama features lush greenery in front of the entrance (3).

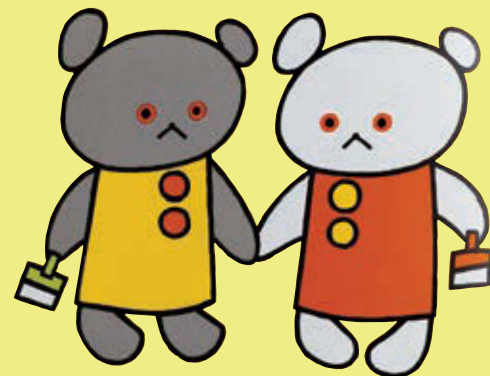


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Gakken Sta:Ful Co., Ltd.

# A Playful World of Picture Books

The people of Japan naturally love picture books. Not only children but adults, too, are fascinated by the depiction of unique themes in easily understood text and humorous pictures. Large cities in Japan abound with specialty shops offering a wide variety of products based on popular picture books. Delve into the colorful world of Japanese picture books loved by readers around the globe.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu



©Ken Wakayama/KOGUMA-SHA

*Topsy-Turvies (Fushigi na E)*  
Text and illustrations by Anno Mitsumasa; published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.

Curious little men guide the reader through a world filled with artistic visual illusions. All pictures, no text. English edition pictured. Published in seven languages to date.

*Polar Bear's Underwear (Shirokuma no Pantu)*  
Text and illustrations by tuperu tuperu; published by Bronze Publishing Inc.

A white bear has lost his underwear and searches for it with the help of a mouse. The removable dust cover in the shape of red underwear is an amusing touch. Italian edition pictured. Translated into 11 languages to date.

*The Peach Boy (Momotaro)*  
Text by Matsui Tadashi; illustrated by Akaba Suekichi; published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.

A picture book based on an old Japanese fairy tale about Momotaro, a boy born from a peach, who goes on a journey, accompanied by a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, to defeat the ogres. Chinese edition pictured. Also translated into Korean.

*Sukh's White Horse (Suho no Shiroi Uma)*  
Text by Otsuka Yuzo; illustrated by Akaba Suekichi; published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.

A story about the relationship between a Mongolian nomad named Sukh and a white horse. French edition pictured. Translated into nine languages to date.

*The Goldfish Got Away (Kingyo ga Nigeta)*  
Text and illustrations by Gomi Taro; published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.

Where has the goldfish gotten to? Find the goldfish hidden in the pictures. Polish edition pictured. Translated into eight languages to date.

*Scribbles: A Really Giant Drawing and Coloring Book (Rakugaki Ehon Gomi Taro 50%)*  
Text and illustrations by Gomi Taro; published by Bronze Publishing Inc.

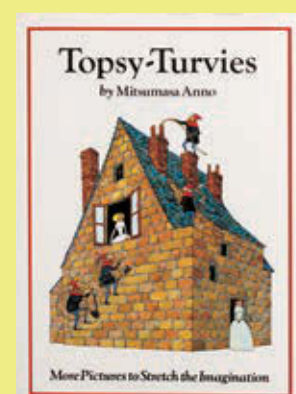
A picture book for the reader to scribble in. Add whatever you wish to the illustrations and text. Spanish edition pictured. Translated into 17 languages to date.

*Shirokuma's Hotcakes (Shirokuma-chan no Hottokeki)*  
Text and illustrations by Wakayama Ken; published by Koguma Publishing Co., Ltd.

A little white bear tries his hand at making pancakes with his mother. Chinese edition pictured. Other languages include Korean.

*Guri and Gura (Guri to Gura)*  
Text by Nakagawa Rieko; illustrated by Yamawaki Yuriko; published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc.

The story of Guri and Gura, two wild mice, who make a sponge cake from a large egg they find in the forest. German edition pictured. Translated into 12 languages to date.







## Hyouka

### Miyagawa Asaichi Market Street (Takayama City, Gifu Prefecture)

Produced in 2012, the mystery series *Hyouka* features a group of four high school students who solve mysteries that unfold around them. Set in Gifu Prefecture's Takayama City, where the author of the original novel, Yonezawa Honobu was born, the series carefully depicts the atmosphere of the town and its traditional buildings in great detail. The photo shows the site of the morning market, Miyagawa Asaichi Market Street on the bank of Miyagawa River, which flows through the city center.

©Yonezawa Honobu/KADOKAWA CORPORATION/Kamiyama Koko Kotenbu Alumni Association

## Chihayafuru

### Omi Jingu Shrine (Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture)

Airing in 2011, the television series centers on the world of *karuta*, traditional Japanese competitive card games. It follows a young protagonist, who aims to become the highest-ranking female *karuta* player, and explores her relationships and conflicts with friends. The detailed focus on such Japanese traditions as *waka* poems and kimono are part of the series' appeal. The setting is Omi Jingu, a shrine dedicated to Emperor Tenji—an emperor deeply associated with *karuta*. The shrine still hosts *karuta* tournaments today.

©Suetsugu Yuki/KODANSHA LTD/VAP/NTV



# Visit Anime Locations

Anime fans are making the trek to destinations that appear in popular films and television series. If you pay a visit to one these places, you may even find yourself in one of your favorite scenes.



# in Real Life

## Laid-Back Camp (Yurukyan)

### Lake Motosuko (Minobu Town, Yamanashi Prefecture)

Produced in 2018, the series is a gently unfolding depiction of a group of high school girls as they camp and go about their daily lives in Yamanashi Prefecture. The natural scenery and townscapes around Yamanashi Prefecture are depicted beautifully, and the story introduces all things camp-related, including camping etiquette and how to use the gear. The Koan Campsite overlooking Mount Fuji and Lake Motosuko is pictured here.

©Afro, HOUBUNSHA Co., Ltd. / Yagai Katsudo Circle Photo courtesy of Mt. Fuji Yamanashi Film Commission

## Anohana: The Flower We Saw That Day (Anohi Mita Hana no Namae o Bokutachi wa Mada Shiranai)

### Old Chichibu Bridge (Chichibu City, Saitama Prefecture)

The story of five former friends overcoming conflicts to reunite when the ghost of their childhood friend appears to them. The work is set in Chichibu City in Saitama Prefecture and features many of the city's actual buildings and landscapes. The photo shows the old Chichibu Bridge, a city symbol that opened in 1931.

©ANO HANA PROJECT





A Virtual Journey  
through Japan

# Animated Characters on the Streets of Japan

Across the country, manga, anime, and movie characters have leapt off the page and onto the street as symbols of the local communities that love them.



Fukuoka

## Galaxy Express 999 (Ginga Tetsudo 999)

The sci-fi manga *Galaxy Express 999* tells the story of two protagonists, a boy named Hoshino Tetsuro (right) and a mysterious lady Maetel (left), who travel through space in search of a mechanized body for the boy. Statues of the two stand outside of Kokura Station in Fukuoka Prefecture's Kitakyushu, the birthplace of the author, Matsumoto Leiji.

©Matsumoto Leiji/Leiji-sha

Kumamoto

## ONE PIECE

Luffy, the *ONE PIECE* protagonist who strikes out on adventures with dreams of becoming the Pirate King, cheers for Kumamoto, the city hit by a massive earthquake in 2016. As part of the *ONE PIECE* Kumamoto Revival Project, statues of many different characters appear throughout Kumamoto Prefecture, including this one of Luffy in Kumamoto City.

©Oda Eiichiro/Shueisha Inc.



Shiga

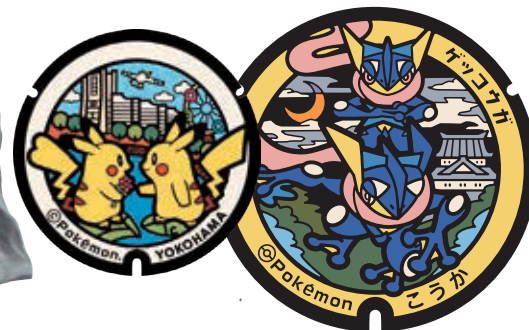
## Pokémon

From video games to anime to trading cards, the unique and familiar characters from the ever-popular *Pokémon* series now appear on manhole covers across Japan. There is Greninja in Koka City, Shiga Prefecture, as well as Pikachu in Yokohama City, and many other *Pokémon* characters in cities throughout the country.

©Pokémon. ©Nintendo/creatures Inc./GAME FREAK inc.

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Toyama

## Doraemon

This Fujiko F. Fujio masterpiece depicts the daily life of a cat-shaped robot from the 22nd century, Doraemon, and an elementary school boy named Nobita. The vacant lot from the series has been recreated in Fujiko's hometown of Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture.

©Fujiko F. Fujio Production

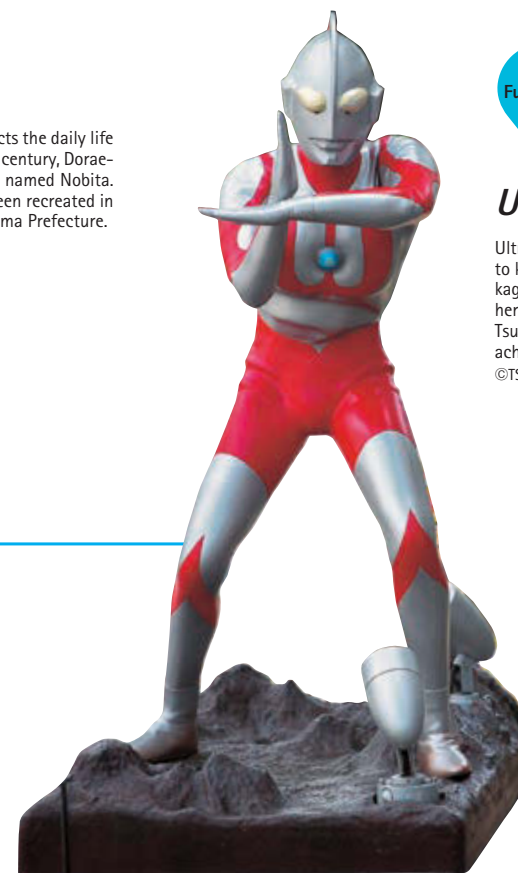


Fukushima

## Ultraman

Ultraman, who came from the distant M78 nebula to keep peace in the universe, is still on duty in Sukagawa, Fukushima Prefecture. The birthplace of the hero's creator, Tsuburaya Eiji, is also home to the Eiji Tsuburaya Museum, which presents the director's achievements and appeal.

©TSUBURAYA PRODUCTIONS Co., Ltd.



Tokyo

## Godzilla

Godzilla, an enormous monster that emerges from the sea to destroy cities, can be seen in Shinjuku, Tokyo. Godzilla's head appears among a group of buildings, a powerful image of a monster seemingly still bent on destruction today.

TM & ©TOHO CO., LTD.



Tokyo

## Captain Tsubasa

This manga series follows the soccer-loving Ozora Tsubasa and his adventures on the world stage with the talented soccer goalie Wakabayashi Genzo. A statue of Tsubasa stands in Tokyo's Katsushika, the hometown of the author Takahashi Yoichi.

©Yoichi Takahashi/SHUEISHA



Tottori

## Case Closed (Meitantei Conan)

*Case Closed* is a manga featuring a high school detective who was given a mysterious drug that transforms him into a boy. The author Aoyama Gosho is from Hokuei, a town in Tottori Prefecture, where a statue of the protagonist Conan stands along with a dedicated museum.

©Aoyama Gosho/SHOGAKUKAN Inc.



Kanagawa

## Mobile Suit Gundam (Kido Senshi Gandamu)

*Mobile Suit Gundam* is the story of Amuro, a young man with a mobile suit called Gundam, and his companions who grow through battles with their nemesis, Char. Visitors to Yokohama in Kanagawa Prefecture can, for a limited time, catch sight of a standing life-sized Gundam that moves. Scheduled for public viewing until March 31, 2023.

©SOTSU CO., LTD./SUNRISE





# Castella

## A Baked Confection Born in a Port Town and Loved by a Literary Giant

Photos: Arai Akiko

Castella, a sponge-cake-like confection made with flour, eggs, and sugar, is baked in a square mold and generally sold in boxes, cut into about 3-cm wide slices for eating. Castella originated in Nagasaki Prefecture in Japan's Kyushu region. Situated at the western tip of the country, Nagasaki opened as a trading port in the late 16th century and remained the only gateway for trade during the Tokugawa shogunate when foreign traffic and trade were restricted.

Although this delicate cake is said to have come from a confection introduced by Portuguese missionaries around the 16th century, there is actually no Portuguese sweet called "castella." Some trace its origins to Portugal's *pão de ló*, and others to *bizcocho* from Spain. Whatever the case, castella has been baked in Nagasaki since the 1620s, and from there it spread to the rest of Japan.

One literary figure closely associated with castella is Natsume Soseki (1867–1916), the author known as

the father of modernism in Japanese literature. Born when Japan was beginning to move forward as a modern nation, Soseki's works reflect the conflicts inherent to the rapid westernization of Japan. Apparently, Soseki had a real sweet tooth, and castella features in several of his novels. His masterpiece, *I Am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa Neko de Aru*), features a humorous scene written from the cat's point of view of a young guest who secretly gobbles up a slice of castella while the master of the house is away from the table.

Soseki even writes in his diary about receiving castella as a gift during a visit with a friend in Kyoto:

*Peering up at the five-storied pagoda against the warm spring sky,*

*Wandering with a heart, and a pocket, full of castella.*

This diary entry conjures up a sweetly comical image of Soseki cradling his favorite treat as he walks the streets of the ancient capital, which is bound to bring a smile.

Nakagawa Yasuhide, the president of Bunmeido Sohonten, a confectionary shop with a long history in Nagasaki, says that the traditional cake did not taste the way it does today until the late 19th century, when sweet *mizuame* syrup was added to the ingredients. "Adding syrup makes the batter moist. Japanese people tend to dislike a dry texture. By adding *mizuame*, castella, a sweet that we adapted from Europe, became a Japanese confection," he says. To ensure moistness, the batter is stirred several times, even during baking. This allows the cake to cook evenly and have a moister texture.

Still a common gift and souvenir in Japan today, castella has remained consistently popular despite the usual booms and busts in popularity that most sweets endure. Confections and literature imbued with historical crossroads never grow old and will continue to fascinate the people of Japan.



2



3



4

1. Bunmeido Sohonten's Nagasaki Castella. Most castella cakes today are sold pre-cut into easy-to-eat slices.

2. Momo Castella (peach castella) decorated with icing is a traditional Nagasaki sweet served at celebrations.

3. *I Am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa Neko de Aru*) is a humorous novel featuring a black cat as the main character, who narrates stories about his family of owners and the people around them. It was originally published in 1905. (Collection: Natsume Soseki Memorial Museum)

4. Founded in 1900, Bunmeido Sohonten retains the traditional style of a historical confectioner. Nagasaki is home to over 100 castella shops.

Right-hand page: The great writer Natsume Soseki enjoyed castella. This sponge cake-like confection has a deep sweetness and moist, bouncy texture.







Steeped in Haiku and Hot Springs

# Matsuyama

Matsuyama has long flourished as the home of Japan's oldest and most famous hot springs, as well as a mecca for literature as the birthplace of haiku poet Masaoka Shiki. Here, words and thermal waters bubble to the surface, inviting the visitor to slow down and enjoy the moment.

Photos: Kurihara Osamu, PIXTA, photolibrary



1. Dogo Onsen Honkan public bathhouse, said to be one of the models for the bathhouse in the Studio Ghibli animated film *Spirited Away* (*Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi*). Exterior during the Dogo Onsen-Phoenix collaboration Dogo REBORN Project. Project has ended, and exterior has changed.
2. The Kaminoyu (spring of the gods) bath at Dogo Onsen Honkan. The ceramic tile mosaic on the wall features a pair of egrets. (Photo: Matsuyama City)
3. Iyo Railway tramcars run through the city. Some are modeled after steam locomotives.
4. A statue of an egret on the roof of the Dogo Onsen Honkan. The bird has become a symbol of this hot spring, as legend has it that a wounded egret was healed by the hot spring waters here. (Photo: Matsuyama City)
5. *Botchan dango* dumplings named for the Natsume Soseki novel *Botchan*, which is set in Matsuyama.





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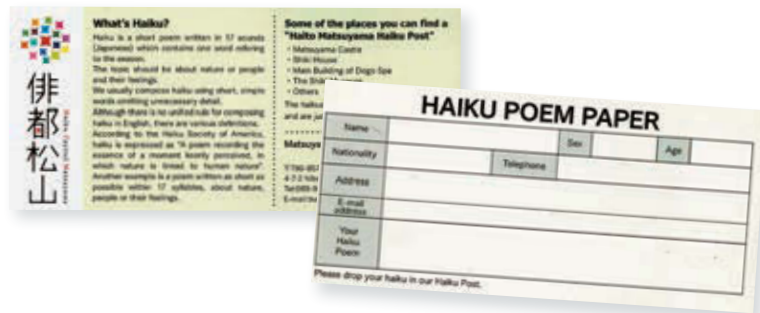
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6. A monument featuring a Ma-saoka Shiki haiku stands in front of Matsuyama City Station. Come spring as of old When such revenues of rice Braced this castle town! The poem is recognized as a symbol of Matsuyama.

7. There are 90 haiku post boxes located on the Matsuyama Castle grounds and elsewhere throughout the city. Forms for posting haiku in these special mailboxes are available in many different languages.



8. Matsuyama Castle stands atop a 132-meter-high hill. The castle commands a panoramic view of the city.

12. 13. Visit 10FACTORY to taste an array of different mikan juices, including citrus *unshiu* and citrus *ryo*.

14. *Nabeyaki udon* served at Kotori. The restaurant typically serves these noodles with *inarizushi* (fried tofu pouches stuffed with sushi rice), at left.

15. *Tai-meshi* cooked in an earthenware pot at the restaurant Aka.

Located in Ehime Prefecture, Matsuyama is the largest city on the southwestern island of Shikoku. Thanks to the calm Seto Inland Sea to the west, this area is blessed with a mild climate year-round. Streetcars running slowly through the town center are an everyday sight in this quiet, peaceful city, which is laid out around Matsuyama Castle, constructed during the Edo period (1603–1868).

Any mention of Matsuyama must include Dogo Onsen, the signature hot spring of this city. Appearing in Japan's oldest history book, *The Chronicles of Japan (Nihon Shoki)*, and in *The Tale of Genji (Genji Monogatari)* written in the 11th century (see page 4), this hot spring has a very long history. Today, visitors still enjoy the famous Dogo Onsen Honkan public bathhouse along with other bathhouses and footbaths that dot the landscape.

Strolling through the city, haiku monuments (stone monuments carved with haiku poems) are also a common sight. This is because Matsuyama is called the haiku capital of Japan, given that this is the birthplace of Masaoka Shiki, a famous poet who created new trends in haiku in the Meiji period (1868–1912). Haiku is a standardized form of poetry originating in Japan, with 17 syllables in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively. Haiku makes generous use of *kigo* (words or phrases associated with a particular season). Haiku invites the reader to ponder the changing of the seasons and tune into the ephemeral emotions of the fleeting moment. One of the world's shortest forms of poetry, haiku has recently found popularity among the younger generations as well, as a way to express one's heart simply.

If reading haiku is interesting, composing one is even more fun. The rule of 17 syllables is the same in any language. Look around you and try to describe the scenery in words that evoke the season. Write your own haiku and place it in one of Matsuyama's many haiku post boxes. Submitted haiku are reviewed by a selection committee, and winning poets receive a commemorative gift. More and more haiku written in languages other than Japanese are winning prizes, so definitely give it a try!

A short walk from the city center is Iyozu-hiko-no-Mikoto Shrine, dedicated to Ehime no Mikoto, the god in Japanese mythology from whom Ehime Prefecture takes its name. The Tsubaki Matsuri (Camellia Festival), held around February to beckon spring, is a tradition eagerly anticipated by locals each year. A one-hour train ride outside the city

is all it takes to get to Shimonada Station, with its spectacular ocean view and Uchiko-za, a theater built some 100 years ago.

Matsuyama also boasts plenty of local food specialties. This area is one of the largest producers in Japan of *mikan* mandarin oranges, and Matsuyama serves up juice freshly squeezed from this local fruit known for its perfect balance of sweet and tart citrus flavor. Another signature dish is *tai-meshi*, or seasoned rice cooked with sea bream from the Seto Inland Sea. Or you may want to indulge in the *nabeyaki udon*, a noodle dish made in a hotpot, loved by locals for its delicious broth.

Savor the sights and flavors of a stroll around town, and commemorate that unforgettable moment in a haiku for an extra-special memory of your trip to Matsuyama.



9. Iyozu-hiko-no-Mikoto Shrine is commonly known as Tsubaki Shrine (Camellia Shrine). The shrine's wooden *ema* plaques for writing prayers or wishes are decorated with a camellia motif.

10. Shimonada Station on the JR Shikoku Yoson line stands on the Seto Inland Sea coast. (Photo: JR-Shikoku)

11. Uchiko-za is a wooden theater built at the beginning of the 20th century. (Photo: Uchiko Town)



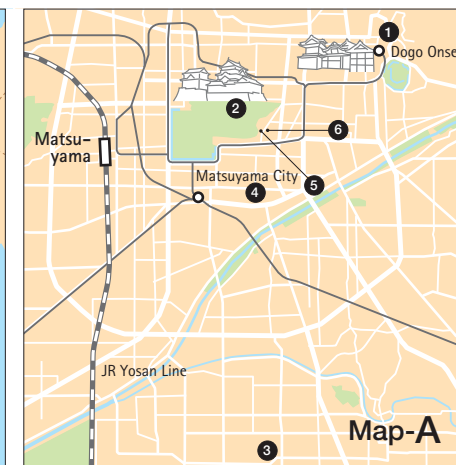
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## Map of Matsuyama Area

- ① Dogo Onsen Honkan
- ② Matsuyama Castle
- ③ Iyozu-hiko-no-Mikoto Shrine
- ④ Kotori
- ⑤ 10FACTORY
- ⑥ Aka

### •Access

From Haneda Airport, Matsuyama Airport is about 1.5 hours by air. From Matsuyama Airport, Matsuyama Station is about 15 minutes by bus.

### •Contact information

The Official Website of Tourism Matsuyama  
<https://en.matsuyama-sightseeing.com/>





Bottom left: The pen's nib has 8-12 grooves.

Upper right: When the nib is dipped in ink, a phenomenon called surface tension causes the ink to flow up into the grooves.

Bottom right: A single dip draws in enough ink to write and address a postcard.



Japan-Original, Beautiful Writing Implements, So Easy to Use

# Glass Pens

Photos: Hongo Jin



Write in your journal or compose a letter to a friend with a truly special pen and ink. These days, when writing with digital devices has become the norm, more and more people are finding joy in writing letters by hand. Glass pens take these special moments to the next level.

A writing implement with a glass nib dipped in ink, this pen is more than merely a beautiful instrument. Gliding effortlessly over paper and retaining ink well, it is also eminently practical. Simply rinse the nib in water and wipe dry to easily switch between a variety of different colored inks to suit your mood or purpose. Watching the nib take on a vivid color as

the grooves draw in the ink is yet another delight of using a glass pen.

The invention of this writing implement is attributed to a wind chime maker in Japan in the early 20th century. At first, only the nib was made of glass. Eventually, though, the body too became glass, and these pens became known as writing tools as beautiful as any work of art. Each pen is handcrafted by a master—no two are exactly the same shape or color. Find a special glass pen that catches your eye and is a joy to hold—you may have a companion for life.

Cooperation: Glass Studio Kasho

