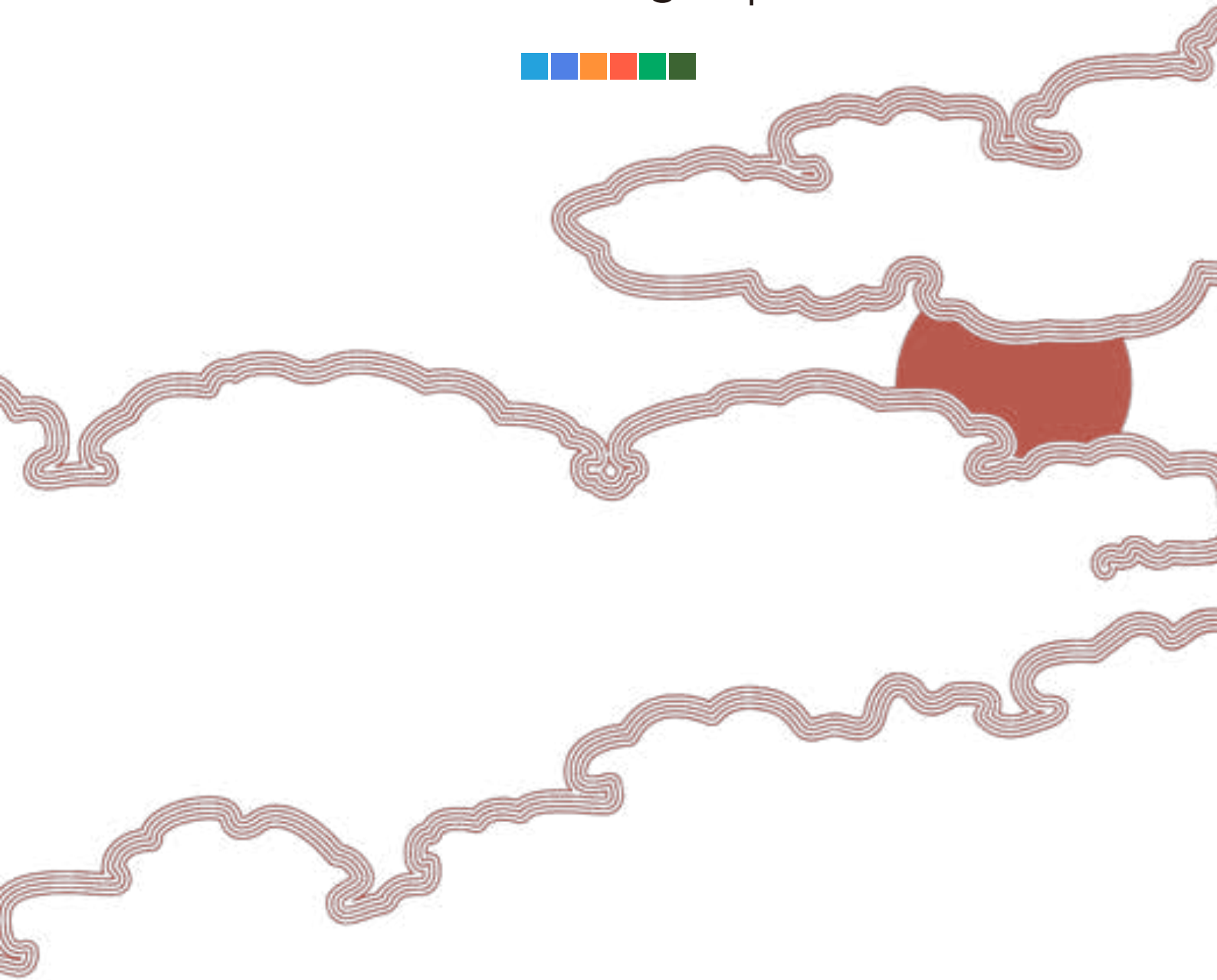


NIHON-GATARI-SHO

# 日本語り抄

Guidelines for Narrating Japanese Culture



Project Consigned by the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters,  
Cabinet Office, The Government of Japan

NIHON-GATARI-SHO

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## Guidelines for Narrating Japanese Culture

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## “Nihon Gatari” : An Introduction

### Forgotten Japan

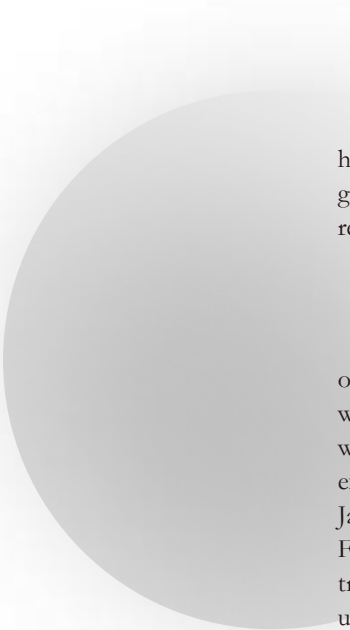
All things Japanese—its technology, its performing arts, and cultural content—are underpinned by a latent cultural context that has been passed down since early times. Until the modern era, Japan imported wisdom from overseas and cultivated a unique culture which was passed down through generations. The lofty cultural awareness, which formed the backbone of the country for such a long period, however, was superseded by military and economic growth in line with modernization and became increasingly invisible as the nation sought to follow the lead set by the outside world (Europe and America). Buffeted by the waves of postwar economic growth and Heisei era globalization, Japan’s cultural structure is still struggling to become entirely manifested. Without possessing awareness of its own cultural structure, where will Japan derive value, and how will it communicate that to the outside world? To convey the appeal of Japan beyond its shores, it is necessary to first look closely at the vivid cultural context that runs in its background, as well as the unique methods and styles that pulse through it.

### Japan’s Deep, Middle, and Top Layers

An effective approach in re-presenting Japan’s true nature is to revisit the country’s cultural facets in terms of their deep, middle, and top layers. In the depths of all that appears on the surface lies a continuing historical narrative. Thus, the cultural significance and value of Japan’s present can be more meaningfully established by tracing its course and features through their middle and deep layers. Our job is to re-edit Japan’s true story in such a way as to permit a look into its future.

First, the deep layer comprises the natural environment and origins of history. In a country beset by frequent natural disasters and limited in natural resources, the Japanese developed a sense of recycling-based values, wherein singular resources such as rice, wood, and paper were modified and re-used in a variety of different forms. The unique styles, methods, and concepts (e.g. *mochi*, *sake*, *shoji*, etc.) which emerged from this backdrop can then be regarded as Japan’s middle layer and, once recognized as such, can help clarify the underlying context of a wide range of current cultural phenomena.

Consider the arts of *haiku* poetry, *ikebana* flower arrangement, and classic cuisine served on separate small trays. Each emerged from older art forms, previously accepted as authentic and mainstream. Specific fragments or functions were emphasized, or cut out, from the original arts, giving birth to entirely new sets of values, as well as a host of new communities (*ba* and *za*) in which to share them. Concepts such as *chodo* (procuring appropriate devices and furnishings for an event), *shitsurae* (arranging and curating a space), and *omotenashi* (the art and spirit of hospitality and care) developed as methods for managing such communal gatherings. Cultural devices used to pass down these methods included: *Yusokukojitsu* (the study of traditional ceremonial codes) prepared by the court nobles; *matsuri* (local community festivals); and the *dojo* (training halls for practicing arts such as tea ceremony, martial arts, and calligraphy). From all this, developed the conventions and formalities—expressed in the three levels of *shin*, *gyo*, *so*) that ultimately formed the basis of Japan’s cultural education and etiquette, its customs, skills, and spirit.



What we see in Japan today, are manifestations on top of a much deeper historical background. Cosplay, J-pop, and kabuki may appear disparate at a glance. Once re-examined through their middle and deep layers, however, we realize that all three stem from the same narrative thread.

## Japanese Creativity and the Original Cool Japan

Throughout its history, Japan incorporated systems and mechanisms from overseas and churned them into its own unique blend. As foreign codes were refined into domestic modes, minority groups and nameless innovators would deconstruct mainstream forms to derive new styles. It was in the inter-exchanging between a foundation of tradition and cutting-edge innovation that Japanese culture was nurtured. The *ko-uta* ballads and short-sleeved kimono of Fukagawa *geisha* were the J-pop of the Edo age, while *kabuki*—now regarded as a traditional performing art—was a counter-cultural phenomenon instigated by the unconventional folk called *kabuki-mono*.

The media vehicles chosen to express such innovations included poetry, ukiyoe paintings, the tea ceremony, *noh* and *kabuki* theater, and artisan crafts. To take these numerous facets of culture, born out of entirely new sets of values achieved by a handful of creators and innovators (Zeami, Rikyu, Kenzan, Utamaro, etc. ) and simply referring to them as “Japanese tradition” is not enough. Only when viewed within their historical context and freshly re-presented can “Cool Japan” emerge in its vivid reality.

## For the Re-narration of Japan

“Nihon Gatari-Sho” presents a model for discussing “Cool Japan” from the perspective of “Japan Concepts” comprising various values that continue to live and breathe in Japan’s middle layer. As a new approach to re-editing the story of Japan, we would like to give a partial introduction to the techniques and resources of “Japan Editing”, which bridges Japan’s top, middle, and deep layers.

For Japan Editing

# Japan ● Concepts

## Marginal Japan

kiwa

marebito

Contextual Japan

Analogical Japan

Implicit Japan

Flattering Japan

## Extreme Japan

kabuku

wabi

Linking Japan

## Mixing Japan

musubi

awase

Transforming Japan

Imaginative Japan

*Kaiwai, kehai* – spaces in flux, where boundaries are ambiguous. Herein we find a source of images, which cannot be mechanistically simplified, and speak to us intuitively, in an undifferentiated state.

Arata Isozaki, “*Urban Design Methods*”

# Marginal Japan

Japan rises out of the margins. New values and hopes appear not from the center but rather from marginal areas. Just as almost all the traditions we see today arose from nameless artisans and derelicts, Japanese creativity has always been inspired by people going astray, not fitting in, or deviating. To understand Japanese aesthetics, peek along the *kiwa* (edges). It is at the edges, where *marebito* (strangers) most often appear.

Japan Concept 1

**kiwa**

Japan Concept 2

**marebito**



# kiwa

Marginal Japan



①

©Katsuki Tanaka/KITAN CLUB



②

① “Cup no Fuchiko” figurines, which were all the rage in 2013. Japan’s playfulness crystallized around *kiwa* (edges = *fuchi*). ② Japanese nail art is said to be among the best in the world. ③ High school girls pursue fashion around the margins of school rules. Loose socks were one such manifestation. ④⑤ Individuality, expressed in *tatami* mat edges and the collar under kimono.



③

Provided by: RISA + THE STARLIGHT  
The School Style Store

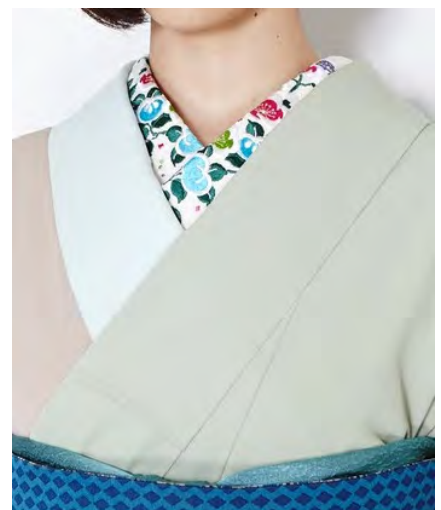
## Collars, Finger Tips, Feet and Ankles. Battles decided, along the edge.

*Take a closer look,  
Shepherd’s Purse blooming,  
Beneath an ordinary hedge.* Matsuo Basho

④



⑤



Provided by: FURIFU <http://furifu.com/>

"Kiwa" connects inside and outside,  
and serves as a marker towards  
which to advance.

Kiwameru (to attain mastery) is to  
"head for the kiwa".

### Japanese sense of framing : non-separation of inside and outside

*Kiwa* is a most important concept in Japan, which means much more than the physical edge of things. *Kiwadatsu*—the verb, "to stand out"—is comprised of *kiwa* and *tatsu* (to stand), and is a foremost quality sought in Japanese design. In the fiery accents of Jomon pottery; the layered combination of ceremonial robes; the hemmings of *tatami* mats, *fusuma* sliding doors, and *byobu* screens; and the collar under kimono—in *kiwa* dwells the *kiwami* (acme) of design.

This sensibility around framing differs from Western framing in that it connects inside and outside without a hard separation. In housing structures it can be found in the shape of hedges, eaves and *engawa* verandas. The spatial boundaries, where the home extends out into the world, have helped shape Japan's sense of community. Furthermore, as the "slowly paling mountain rim" (*yama-giwa* [= *yama-kiwa*]) is celebrated in the line, "In spring, it is dawn" of *The Pillow Book*, the Japanese have long found beauty in the *kiwa* of changing times—the critical last moment (*seto-giwa*), the moment before parting (*sari-giwa*), or separation (*wakare-giwa*).

### Analogy in Polytheism

Daily life in Japan offers a veritable thesaurus of terms pertaining to *kiwa*. These include words such as *kiwameru* (to master), *kiwadoi* (too close, risky), *kiwami* (acme), *kiwamono* (peculiar/odd things), *kiwakiwa* (borderline), *setogiwa* (the eleventh hour), *magiwa* (just before), *haegiwa* (hairline), *namiuchiwa* (water's edge), *madogiwa* (window sill), *sumi* (interior corner), *kado* (exterior corner), *heri* (hem), *fuchi* (rim), *hashi* (tip), *kire* (fragment), *kagiri* (limit), *sumikko* (corner), *bubun* (parts), *ma* (pause/space), and so on. Why such love for edges and boundaries?

Being a land of countless deities, the Japanese chose rhythmic succession of word and image as well as resonance of meaning, over the integrity and perfection of logic. The culture of *za* (guilds), as seen in *renga* linked verses and the *chanoyu* tea ceremony, was made possible through the association of analogous ideas and through creative collaboration. Something takes hold of the subtle workings of the human heart when images deriving from similar events or phenomena are superimposed onto each other—a tremor occurs in the interface, or *kiwa*, between adjacent entities.

Today, we can witness this sense of *kiwa* alive in the delicate adornings of nail art; in LINE stickers, which replace phatic responses for smoother communication; and in the clever wrapping design of rice balls in convenience stores.

# kiwa

Marginal Japan



#### Engawa (veranda)

The *engawa* separates, and also connects, inside and outside. It denotes free entry to all and is a place for interaction with neighbors.



#### Sandal Straps

*Hanao* straps that decorate the edges of the feet are an important element in kimono coordination. The photographs show *zori* sandals by Gion Naito.



#### LINE Stickers

Joy? Irritation? Sarcasm or innocence? The true meaning of these expressions can only be deciphered by the conversational relationship. They add an extra-contextual edge to communication.



#### False Eyelashes

100-yen stores provide a wide array of false eyelashes. Subtle differences convey the true charm of fashion in the *kiwa*.



## Cool Japan ●

*Valuing gaps, pauses, empty spaces and silence, the Japanese ambience places relatively more emphasis on the locational dimension than the European ambience.*

-Augustin Berque, *Le Sauvage et l'Artifice*. “*Les Japonais devant la nature*”  
 (“Japan: Nature, Artifice and Japanese Culture”)

# kiwa

Marginal Japan

## Toji Technology: In the subtle margins of taste

The artists and artisans of the Japan's Middle Ages were nomadic people—a network of *marebito* linking diverse aspects of the culture. These nomads possessed a remarkable ability to refashion time and space. Among them, was the artisan group of sake brewers called, *toji*

*Toji* are required to display highly refined senses and skills throughout the entire process of brewing sake. They rely on experience and instinct to sense marginal changes in aromas, flavors, and the workings of microorganisms such as yeast fungi in order to add finishing touches to a brand's taste.

Two words that describe the use of instincts to determine a right solution are: “*Ateru*” (to hit, as in “hit a target”) and “*kento*” (see+hit). The biologist and naturalist, Kumagusu Minakata, considered such instinctive guesswork a bonafide method for scientific discovery and referred to it as “*variate*” (do+hit). Such science of conjecture is alive and well in the skills of Japan's artisans.



Sekai Itto Daiginjo “Kumagusu”  
(Wakayama City, Wakayama Prefecture)

Sekai Itto is the sake brewing company, founded by the father of Kumagusu Minakata, and a highly regarded brand of sake. The name was bestowed by Shigenobu Ohkuma. The *daiginjo* sake “Kumagusu” was launched to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Kumagusu's birth.

## Japanese Kiwa in Western Uses: Modern Kitchen Knife Design



Hocho-Kobo Tadafusa breadknife  
(Sanjo City, Niigata Prefecture)

Unlike standard breadknives, only the tip is serrated. The outstanding sharpness of this knife results in a smooth cut, leaving hardly any bread crumbs. Another feature is that the knife can be re-sharpened for continued use. This knife is made in Tsubame-Sanjo, a town renowned for its blacksmiths and manufacturing.

The Japanese often use the term, *kire*, when describing sharpness of skill. *Kire* originally described the sharpness of the tip of a cutting instrument. Blacksmiths' mastery over *kire* and *kiwa* led to the development of Japan's kitchen knife culture. A variety of specialized knives were developed to meet specific needs – for scaling fish, for slicing sashimi, for chopping vegetables – while, alongside the skills of chefs, the art of cutting would evolve to encompass a wide range of techniques, including fine chopping, quarter slicing, half-circle slicing, and many more.

The blades of Japanese kitchen knives are usually single-edged, the benefits of which include the ability to produce beautifully clean cuts. In contrast, western knives are double-edged, which, although inferior in terms of cutting edge, have the advantage of durability. In contemporary times, Japan's artisans have worked on developing domestic western-style knives that combine the beauty and utility of both styles.

The GLOBAL series of Yoshida Metal Industry and Hocho-Kobo Tadafusa are two such examples which have attracted worldwide acclaim in creating the ultimate in kitchen knife designs.



①

## Japan's deities: strangers from afar

*"I'm a traveler. I go where  
the wind takes me, and as fancy takes me.  
I'll think as I walk along."*

From the film, *Otoko wa Tsurai yo*  
("TORA-SAN, Our Lovable Tramp") series



© SHOCHIKU

# marebito

Marginal Japan



②

① Ebisu – the god of good fortune – is an odd-looking deity who crossed the sea to arrive in Japan. ② A feature of Japanese gods is that they travel on *mikoshi* portable shrines. ③ The street peddler Tora-san, who occasionally returns home only to embark on a new journey, is a favorite *marebito* character among Japanese. ④ Billiken, surprisingly, comes from the United States. It is now famous as the god of Tsutenkaku Tower. ⑤ Coming out of the sea, Godzilla also displays qualities of the divine.



④

photograph: Shinzo Ota

⑤





# marebito

Marginal Japan

The interchanging of host and guest roles is a custom that originates from the concept of *Marebito* – “visiting deities”

## Occasional visits by strange guests

Japan is the land of the *marebito*. Literally translated as “rare people”, *marebito* is also spelled using the *kanji* characters which mean, “guest gods” or “guest people” and is a term coined by ethnologist, Shinobu Orikuchi. Orikuchi recognized the unspoken nature of Japan’s deities upon witnessing the Okinawan Shinto maiden ceremony, called *Noro*. The ceremony calls on deities from the utopian world of *Niraikanai*, far over the ocean. The gods never stay for long – they are visitors who, only at times, come from and leave for elsewhere. Unlike the god of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, who rules from the heaven above, the countless deities of polytheistic Japan are visiting gods – occasional guests to the human world.

## Gaijin: the key to revitalizing Japan

The welcoming attitude towards *marebito* helped shape unique Japanese customs for hosting guests, and can be found in many areas of everyday life. Banquet seating is a typical example: while a guest will be given the seat of honor, the positional relationship between host and guest is not as strict as it is in the West and changes depending on the situation. Should another important guest arrive, the host or the previous main guest may offer their seat to the new guest by turning their cushion over. Similarly, in a *rakugo* (comic storytelling) performance, entertainers always flip their cushions in respect for the next act. The shifting or switching between host and guest is a key facet of the *marebito* concept. Precious objects are placed on the household shrine, only to be taken down and replaced by another in time.

The respect for “visiting gods” embedded in culture also explains why Japanese people treat *gaijin* (foreigners) and imported goods with such deference. From the ancient Buddhist statues to the hired foreign specialists of the Edo and Meiji era governments, anything that came from overseas was given the *marebito* treatment. Even today, the Japanese vaguely realize that foreigners such as Donald Keene or Hakuho, as well as society’s radical outsiders such as Akihiro Miwa and Matsuko Deluxe, actually hold the key to revitalizing Japan.



### Maitreya and Senju Kannon

Buddhism arrived in Japan after being transmitted from India to China and the Korean Peninsula, becoming widespread during the age of Shōtoku Taishi. Bodhisattvas and Kannon, too, are guest deities.



### The Ministry of Justice's former main building

The Meiji government entrusted these *marebito* with the task of designing the buildings of its central institutions. This building was designed by the German architects, Hermann Gustav Louis Ende and Wilhelm Böckmann.



Provided by:  
Nihon Sumo Kyokai

### Foreign Sumo Wrestlers

The retired Kotoōshū from Bulgaria (the current Naruto stablemaster). Foreign wrestlers now account for 40% of wrestlers in the *makuuchi* senior-grade division.



©Hajime Isayama/Kodansha Ltd.

### Manga “Attack on Titan” (Hajime Isayama)

This hit manga has been adapted for TV animation and a live-action movie. The Titans of this story may be equated with *marebito*

*If one day you visit Japan, you must visit a festival (en'nichi) at least once. The best time to see an en'nichi is at night. The view against the backdrop of countless lanterns and lamps is something to behold.*

*"Nihon no Kokoro", Yakumo Koizumi (Lafcadio Hearn)*

## Dance of the *marebito*: the essence of Japan's performing arts

Orikuchi cites the Niino snow festival in Nagano Prefecture as a prime example of the *marebito* dance. Amidst calls of "ranjo, ranjo", the masked gods of Saiho, Modoki, and Kyoman appear one after another to provide and celebrate a bountiful harvest.

The mid-winter dance continues from late night until early morning. The gods then go on their way, leaving only a remnant feeling of an auspicious visitation. In contrast to Saiho, who displays a soft, gentle expression, Modoki wears a fierce mask with eyebrows gathered. The name Modoki infers "mimicry", and Orikuchi recognized its main role to be that of "re-narration" or "re-interpretation". Zeami – creator of *Noh* drama in its present form – also considered mimicry to be the essence of performing arts and aimed to project the image of Modoki onto the theatre stage.



Niino Snow Festival (Anan, Nagano Prefecture)

Regarded as one of the original ancient performing arts, the festival takes place in the grounds of Izu Shrine from the evening of January 14 through to the next morning. Shinobu Orikuchi introduces it as "a festival that students of Japanese performing arts must see at least once."



## The mechanics of mimicry: hints of a visitation

Oddly familiar, yet unmistakably weird, the telenoid developed by robot developer, Hiroshi Ishiguro (Osaka University) is quite eerie at first glance. Without exception, its strange looks invite suspicion from those who encounter it for the first time. It doesn't take long, however, for it to grow on them. Its neutral design means that onlookers can project onto the figure, any type of person – male or female, child or elder – making it the perfect *marebito*. Robots are measured by their ability to mimic. Festive ceremonies such as those in the Niino Snow Festival and traditional performing arts such as *noh*, *bunraku*, and *kabuki* may hold exactly what Japan needs for future innovation.

Provided by: Telenoid Healthcare Company

### Remote control android "Telenoid" (Prof. Hiroshi Ishiguro, Osaka University)

Developed by Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International (ATR) and Osaka University. The android is expected to promote communication among elderly persons in need of care, particularly those showing advanced symptoms of dementia.



Japan Concept 3

musubi

Japan Concept 4

awase

# Mixing Japan

Japan is intrinsically multi-faceted and multi-layered. At the heart of its culture pulses a standard of duality – heterogeneous players coexisting in harmony – as apparent in *wakon-yosai* (Japanese spirit-Western learning), *shinbutu-shugo* (syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism), Emperor and Shogun, and *wagoto/aragoto* (soft and rough style kabuki). Power sparks in the nodes which link diverse components. The art of Japan's editing manifest itself in the joining and mixing of boundaries – the *awase* of *kiwa*.

Japan is a “single-minded yet multi-faceted country”.

*Japan As Methodology* Seigo Matsuoka

# musubi

Mixing Japan



①

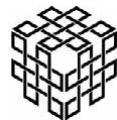


②



③

① Shimekazari straw festoons invite visitation by the New Year spirit. ② There are more than 100 types of knots in Japan. Chopstick rests by Nousaku, made from 100% tin, celebrate traditional knot designs. ③ Furoshiki wrapping cloths can be tied in a variety of ways to accommodate almost any object. ④ Decorative mizuhiki cords, used for tying the hair of miko shrine maidens, express the pure heart of Shinto.



## Out of a knot, a culture is born

④



*Rain is falling. It is raining.  
How I wish to go out and play.  
But alas, have I no umbrella,  
And the red straps of my geta  
clogs are broken too.*

“Ame” Hakushu Kitahara



hotograph: Shinzo Ota



# musubi

Mixing Japan

*Musubi* is a state of imminent birth: its power, implied in a simple knot.

## In the depths of Japanese mythology

While hairdressing and ribbon tying are components of cultures all around the world, no culture valued the act of tying (*musubi*) as much as Japan. The concept of *musubi* is implied in the furthest depths of Japan's mythological structure – the very first characters to appear in its creation story are *Takami-musubi* and *Kami-musubi*.

*Musubi* is composed of two words: *musu* (to birth) and *hi* (spirit). Accordingly, *musubi* refers to a state in which something is just about to emerge.

## Mizuhiki, Yokozuna, and Jangling Straps

The easiest example of *musubi* is surely the birth of a new child. Newly born boys are called *musu-ko*, while girls are called *musu-me*. The potential for the emergence of such life-giving power was manifested in the distinct forms of *musubi-me* (knots).

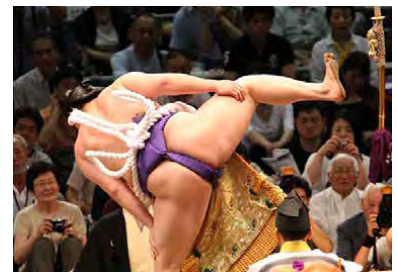
Emergence of the the divine was never expressed overtly, but instead, merely implied by the symbolic tying of knots. *Shimenawa* ropes or *nusa* paper streamers were tied to denote boundaries for areas or objects to which divine spirits would descend. Such practices of *musubi* were the origin of Shinto shrines.

In its simpler form, the *shimenawa* becomes the *mizuhiki* ties on gifts and special envelopes. Applied to the hair, it becomes a *chonmage* topknot. And, the ginkgo-leaf style topknot worn by sumo wrestlers is nothing but a living *shimenawa*. The concept and techniques of *musubi* can also be found in *omikuji* fortune slips and, in more contemporary times, the jangling strap charms lavishly hung by high school girls on their cell phones, or the *misanga* bracelets which symbolized prayers – whether they be for victory by the national soccer team or recovery from natural disasters.



### Kekkai: fixing the boundary

The *shimenawa* rope indicates circled space. The act of tying such a rope is believed to protect a place from evil spirits.



### Yokozuna

The Yokozuna appears in the final bout (*musubi-no-ichiban*) of a tournament day wearing a special rope, itself called *yokozuna*, displaying the power of *musubi*.



### Omikuji

Tying fortune slips carries the meaning of “firmly binding one's wishes” or “forming a connection with the gods”.



### High School Girls' Key Chains

Key chain charms are modern day versions of the bells that people tied and carried to avert evil. They are mobile *shimenawa*.

Four photographs: Shinzo Ota

*In Japan, beauty shifts from one thing to another, and is arrayed within large conjugations that envelop individual units.*

Roland Barthes, “*Empire of Signs*”

## The Awase of Musubi and Kiwa



Provided by: the360.life - TEST, REVIEW and BUY

### Convenience store riceballs

Different franchises use different names for rice balls: Lawson calls them “Onigiri”, Family Mart calls them “Omusubi”, while 7-Eleven uses both expressions.

Travel entails risk, no matter the times. For the networkers of Middle Age Japan, tying their *waraji* straw sandals and their packed meals was a form of prayer – a way to apply the power of *musubi* for protection in their journeys. The word, *omusubi*, for rice balls, comes from the act of tying *furoshiki* cloths around *bento* packs.

Today, we subconsciously sense the power of *musubi* in the *omusubi* lined up on convenient store shelves. The plastic wrapping seems almost magical; it keeps the seaweed fresh and creates the most exquisite sensation as we bite through the crisp seaweed to reach the soft rice inside. It is a delightful combination (*awase*) of *musubi* and *kiwa* – Japanese style at its best.

## Japanese customs in the tying of knots

The essence of Japanese customs is expressed in *musubi*. And, among the many types of *musubi*, nothing is more representative of such customs than the dashing gold and silver, or red and white *mizuhiki*.

*Mizuhiki* originally referred to the act of peeling plant skin by steeping it in water. The practice of tying knots with such plant materials became an important feature in court ceremonies and other formal occasions such as weddings and funerals. Later, *mizuhiki* were made from starched paper strands, which were dyed in various colors.

These paper *mizuhiki* were knotted in their making, as they are today, and gained immense popularity among common folk for gift presentations. They are sold in a wide variety of knot designs, ranging from the standard reef knots to single bowknots, *aioi-musubi*, *awabi-musubi* and so on. Each of these knots come in the three variations of formal, semi-formal and informal styles.



### Gift money envelopes

*Mizuhiki* can be found today on gift money envelopes sold in any stationary store and comes in more than 100 different knot designs. The number of strands are usually five, seven, or ten, in accordance with the cosmic dual forces (yin and yang) and the five elements in Chinese cosmology. Colors are red and white, or gold and silver, for auspicious occasions. Black and white, or indigo and white, are used for bereavements.



# awase

Mixing Japan

① The origin of Japanese play can be found in *awase*. The card game, *Hyakunin-Isshu*, where players compete to collect cards that match with “one hundred poems by one hundred poets”, is a representative example of *awase* and *kisoi*. ② In the special dishes prepared for New Years, colorful ingredients are assorted and piled in multiple layers. ③ The layered arrangement of colors in ceremonial robes is referred to as *Kasane*. Rules for color arrangement changes according to season. ④ In the *Yosakoi Soran* and other *matsuri* festivals, teams compete in coordinated dancing.



①

## Mix, Layer, Compete, and Play

*We love, and we love,  
And in this feeling,  
We are one and the same.*

*You may be the white bush clover,  
I may be the white lily.*

Yosano Akiko, “Midaregami  
(Dishevelled Hair)”

②



③



④



## From *awase* to *kisoi*, and then to *soroe*: the prototypes of Japanese play culture.

### Match, layer, compete, and arrange

*Awase*, *kasane*, *kisoi*, *soroe* is a four step concept that may be the most characteristic feature of Japan's editing style. *Awase* matches and compares two contrasting objects or ideas by positioning them apart on two sides of a partition – left and right, or east and west.

The act of taking the matched information (*awase*) and layering them on top of each other (*kasane*), naturally leads to comparison and competition (*kisoi*). This in turn, produces winners and losers. However, unlike a tournament in which losers are cast aside, entries on both sides are again, matched, aligned, and restructured (*soroe*) to create new values.

Each step considers the next. Thus, in Japanese culture, competition takes place with an eye to subsequent alignment, layering takes place with the following competition in mind, and the initial matching begins in consideration of that layering.

### *Kisoi* in the Global Market

The early part of the Heian Era saw numerous forms of *awase* popularized, including *uta-awase* (poetry contests), *senzai-awase* (gardening contests), *kai-awase* (clamshell contests), and *ko-awase* (incense contests). In *Uta-awase*, for example, court nobles would split into two teams and try to emulate each other in composing poems based on given themes. In any *awase* activity, emphasis was placed on displaying creativity, rather than winning or losing, while adhering to the rules of the gathering. *Awase* is the prototype of Japan's play culture.

From board games, such as *shogi* and *go*, to indoor amusements, such as the tea ceremony and incense-smelling ceremony, the Japanese developed small-scale entertainment forms with extreme degrees of elaboration. This is related to the fact that *awase* placed importance on portability.

Today, we can see the influence of *awase* in computer games. For example, one of the key concepts in developing the “Pokémon” series was that it be a “game of trades”. To this end, developers turned their eyes towards the Game Link Cable of the pioneering portable game device, Gameboy. The joy of playing “Pokémon” was further diversified by creating a system based on the core elements of collection, nurturing, and battling, rather than competition alone. The origins of Japanese play are packed with hints for creativity that arise from artful combinations.



Provided by: Mikawa Kobo

#### Kai-awase (shell-matching game)

Players compete in composing poems based on pictures drawn on the inside of shells. Shape, picture, and word all play a role in this game of *awase*, *kasane*, *kisoi*, and *soroe*.



#### Bull Fighting

Photograph: Shinzo Ota

Rather than a simple contest to decide the strongest, the unspoken rule is to choose two equally matched beasts to make the fight more exciting – a perfect example of the *awase* concept.



#### Reds vs. Whites

Whether it be singing contests or sports festivals, the Japanese like to compete red and white teams. Caps are reversible, with red on one side and white on the other.



#### Pokémon Trading Card Game

This monstrously popular game – 23.6 billion cards sold in more than 70 countries as of 2017 – is an evolution of the traditional *karuta* game. Fans are enthralled by techniques and settings which differ from the “Pokémon” video game. ©2019 Pokémon. ©1995-2019 Nintendo/Creatures Inc./GAME FREAK inc.



*Japan stands before us, with both the great weight of good traditions and a youthful flexibility which allows a fair, straight look into new things.*

Bruno Taut, “Nippon”

## Toward awase-waza: joining Judo Style and Sumo Style



### Judo Awase-waza ippon

*Awase-waza ippon* is the rule that counts two scores of *waza-ari* as an *ippon* victory. Once abolished in 2016, the rule has now been restored. At the same time, the IJF has eliminated the rule which allowed matches in extra time to be decided by the imposition of *shido* (instruction) against behaviors that violate the spirit of judo.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of globalizing Japan: one is judo style, and the other is sumo style. In the judo style, Japan transmits global rules outwards. To make judo an official Olympic event, its weight divisions and judging scheme were widened outwards to the world. In other words, judo evolved from a national sport into the international sport of JUDO.

In contrast, in the sumo style, Japan adheres to its own domestic rules. The ring and the stable system are maintained and traditions are preserved. Even so, starting with Takamiyama, the exploits of foreign wrestlers including Asashōryū, Hakuhō, Kotoōshū, Baruto and others have gained massive public appeal. The international flavor of sumo is in no way inferior to that of the Olympic Games.

Then again, the International Judo Federation (IJF) has decided to restore *awase-waza ippon* as a new rule at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Doing this will lead to more *ippon* decisions and make the distinction between winning and losing clearer.

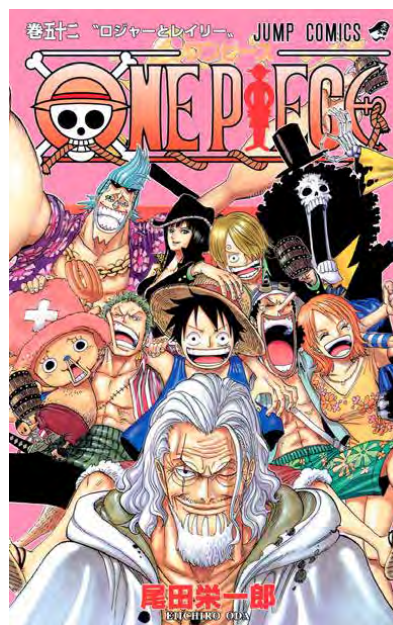
Both judo and sumo styles reflect how Japan approaches globalization. Instead of going for an either-or choice, both styles should be further refined in true *awase-waza* spirit.

## Combining strength: the reality of fellows and self

Japanese architectural thought contains the concepts of *uchi* (indoors), *soto* (outdoors), and *naka* (inside). The respective boundaries are ambiguous, and shift according to mood and context. The most obvious example is the *engawa* veranda, which can be considered as either *uchi* or *soto*. The situational nature of the space becomes fixed only with the appearance of a guest.

People who are allowed to go inside (*naka*) are called *nakama* (fellows), which implies that Japan's sense of fellowship and team unity stems from an awareness of space and placing. *Uchi* becomes constricting when its gravity is too strong; *soto* is isolating when refused from within. From the old tale of Momotaro (Peach Boy) to the contemporary adventures of ONE PIECE and Pokémon, the Japanese love stories of team collaboration – perhaps reflecting a wish for connection in *naka*, somewhere between *uchi* and *soto*.

Members carry out work for the team, according to their respective territory and status. And important here, is the concept of *Bun* – a person's capacity, role, or quality – most apparent in words like *ji-bun* (myself), *bun-zai* (social standing), *mochi-bun* (responsibility), *wake* (= *bun*)-*mae* (share) and so on. A person is stronger, more capable, when his or her *bun* is flexible and dynamic. Japan's teamwork is about the combining (*awase*) of *bun*.



©Eiichiro Oda / SHUEISHA

### Manga “ONE PIECE” (Eiichiro Oda)

This hit manga has recorded worldwide sales in excess of 400 million copies (as of 2017). The story which follows the adventures of Luffy and his band of Straw Hat Pirates has also been used for studying organizational and leadership theory.



# Extreme Japan

At its roots, Japan has two deities who represent opposite extremes – Amaterasu, a *Nigitama* (peaceful spirit), and Susanoo, an *Aratama* (wrathful spirit). The dichotomy can be seen reflected in various areas of the culture. There is Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion) to represent the Kitayama culture, and Ginkaku-ji (the Silver Pavilion) to represent the Higashiyama culture. *Kabuki* has its *wagoto* (gentle style) and *aragoto* (bravura style). There are the thatched huts of *wabicha* (frugal tea ceremony) as opposed to the golden tea ceremony houses. Japan can be punk – flashy and noisy. Or, it can be bluesy – deep and tranquil. Add to flash, the *kabuki* way. Subtract to refine, the *wabi* way. Just don't hold back - go to the extreme. Either way, it's Japan.

## Japan Concept 5

### Kabuku

## Japan Concept 6

### wabi

If we awaken and recapture the basic human passions that are today being lost in each moment, new Japanese traditions will be passed on with a bold, triumphant face.

Taro Okamoto, *Nihon no Dento* (Japanese Tradition)





① Photograph: Satoshi Takase



②

# kabuku

Extreme Japan



③

## Eccentrics at the Cutting Edge of Fashion

① Lavish preferences of truck drivers are reflected in vehicles decorated like illuminated floats. ② The crazy KAWAII of Kyary Pamyu Pamyu. ③ The band KISHIDAN. Yankii style, characterized by *tsupari* hairstyles and customized high school uniforms. ④ *Kabuki*-style cosmetic face masks made by Imabari Towel. *Kabuki's Kumadori* is a powerful makeup for warding off evil spirits. ⑤ Making lavish use of combs and hairpins, *oiran* were the fashion leaders of Edo.

⑤

*The “face-showing” event is a glimpse into the sleepless world of night.*

Saikaku Ihara



④

# kabuku

Extreme Japan

The outrageous folk of *noh*, *kabuki* and youth culture.

## Basara Spirit at the Root of Noh

*Kabuki* takes its naming from *kabuki-mono*, a term given to those who dressed themselves in strange and bizarre attire. The verb *kabuku* –written with the Chinese character translated as “to lean” – means “excessive” or “too much”.

The essence of *kabuki* can be found in *furyu*, also called *furyu-kasa* – an aesthetic value from medieval Japan, meaning “excess in extravagance”. People who were especially outlandish – sometimes to the point of lunacy – were called *basara*. For city dwellers, such lunatics were considered loud and annoying; at the same time, people envied them for their ability to go crazy over their obsessions.

The trend of lunatics and *furyu* were absorbed into *sarugaku*, a prototype of the *noh* play. It was Kan’ami, the founder of the Kanze school of *noh*, who recognized the value of lunacy which lay at the heart of *furyu* and *basara*. It was the beginning of *noh* as an artform in its own right.

## From Kabuki to Kyary Pamyu Pamyu

The establishment of *noh* marked the end of the old *furyu*, which subsequently became *furyu* (tasteful elegance) in the Edo era. The Edo shogunate prepared licensed red-light districts and playhouses as venues for managing transient folk such as courtesans and popular entertainers. Such places were called *akusho* (bad places), and it was here that *kabuki* was born, destined to captivate the Edo masses.

The concept of *kabuki* can be seen in modern day youth fashions. The postwar *yankii* subculture with its *bankara*, *tsuppari* and *sukeban*, as well as the *gyaru* girl and *gosloli* (Gothic & Lolita) fashions of the 2000s and beyond developed as counterpoints to mainstream fashion trends. Drag queens, underground idols, Kiyoshiro Imawano and Kyary Pamyu Pamyu are all *kabuki-mono* pioneering the trends of today.



### Ukiyoe

Beautiful women and stage actors were frequent themes of *ukiyo-e*. The giant portraits of actors were akin to the movie star posters of today. Sharaku’s prints are bold in trimming and *basara* in style.



### Kabukicho, Shinjuku

This district was named after the kabuki theater, which was intended to be built as part of a post-war revitalization project for the devastated district of Shinjuku. Construction of the theater was eventually suspended, but the district itself now embodies the spirit of *kabuki-mono*.



Provided by: NORITAKA TATEHANA

### Heel-less shoes by Noritaka Tatehana

Made famous by Lady Gaga, these shoes were inspired by the tall wooden clogs worn by *oiran* courtesans. Whatever the era, fashion leaders are always avant-garde.



Photo: Taro Karibe

### Tokyo Rainbow Pride

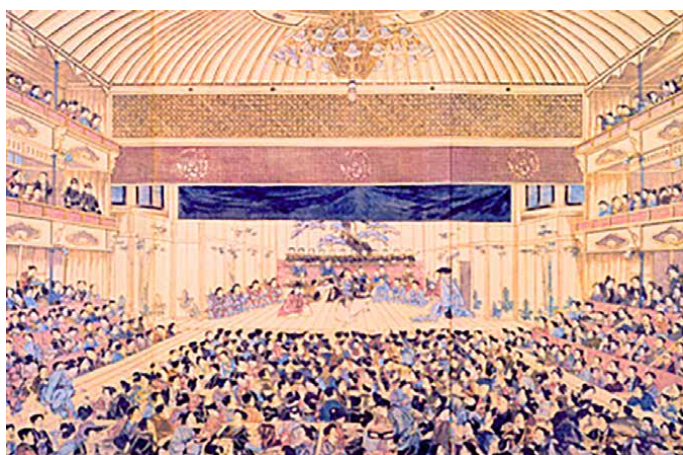
The connection between the LGBT movement and *kabuki* culture is very interesting. *Kabuki* itself transcended gender from the get go, with female performers playing male roles.



*Their favorite flower is of course the cherry blossom, precisely because the period of blossoming is so poignantly brief and the danger that the flowers may scatter even before one has properly seen them is so terribly great.*

Donald Keene, “*Nihonjin no Biishiki* (Japanese Aesthetics)”

## Edo Aragoto and Kamigata Wagoto



### Kabuki

Popular today – the *kabuki* stylization of manga. Following “Super Kabuki II ONE PIECE”, “NARUTO” is being performed as a new *kabuki* production. Meanwhile, as an avant-garde trend, the independent efforts of Kyoto-based Kinoshita Kabuki are receiving high acclaim. The picture shows the interior of the Kabukiza Theatre around 1893.

Kabuki’s roots date back to the beginning of the 17th Century, when the female performer, Izumo no Okuni, danced on the banks of Kyoto’s Kamogawa river in the guise of a male *kabuki-mono*. *Onna-kabuki* performances by women dressed as men soon exploded in popularity, followed by *wakashu-kabuki*, performed by young men. These *kabuki* troupes were the *Takarazuka* or Johnny’s groups of the Edo period.

In time, older men began performing *yaro-kabuki*, which became the precursor to *kabuki* as its known today. Ichikawa Danjuro emerged as a superstar during the Genroku era, wearing *kumadori* makeup and performing in the *aragoto* style, featuring extravagant appearance and dynamic characters. Meanwhile, in Osaka, a more elegant and delicate style of *kabuki* was preferred. The contrasting styles—*aragoto* of the east with its emphasis on bold patterned performances, and the softer *wagoto* of the west which preferred realism—would thus expand the range of diversity in *kabuki* culture.

## The Pop and Crazy World View of Harajuku KAWAII

Harajuku is a mecca for eccentrically dressed girls wearing *gosloli* and gaudy fashion. Of course, this is no modern *akusho*, but it is an important “asylum” that permits the extravagant attire of *kabuki-mono*. Art director, Sebastian Masuda, regards the district as a monster in and of itself. The popular tourist destination, “KAWAII MONSTER CAFÉ”, is a concept restaurant filled to the brim with the pop and crazy world view of Harajuku KAWAII.

Apparently, Kyary Pamyu Pamyu used to visit “6%DOKI DOKI” (the first shop Sebastian opened in Harajuku) before she became famous. Once Kyary asked Sebastian to be arts director for the video of her debut song “PONPONPON”, Harajuku KAWAII gained global fame in no time at all.

Someday, we may find unique variations of KAWAII culture developing in different regions of Japan. If so, we may have the fortune of witnessing a *kisoi*, similar to that between east and west styles of *kabuki*.



© KAWAII MONSTER CAFÉ

### KAWAII MONSTER CAFE HARAJUKU (Harajuku, Tokyo)

“Colorful Rainbow Pasta” and “Colorful Poison Parfait Extreme” on the garish menu! The MONSTER GIRLS attract tourists as an embodiment of the cafe’s concept.



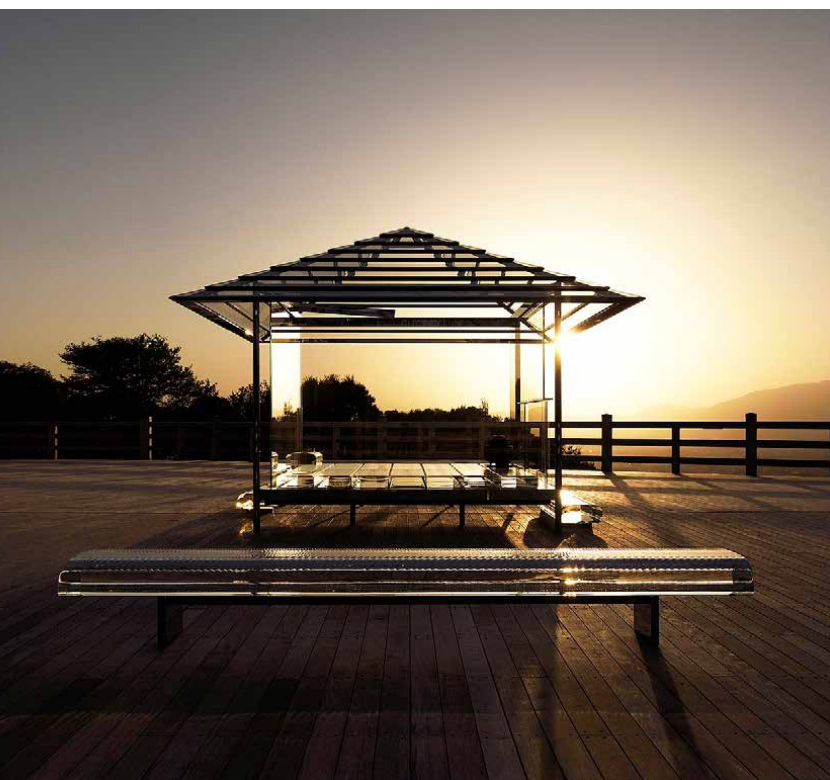
①

## The Imagination of Subtraction

*As I gaze out, neither blossom nor  
Autumn leaves are here; In a beachfront  
thatched hut on an Autumn evening*

Fujiwara no Teika

④



# wabi

Extreme Japan

②



③



Black Raku tea bowl named "Shūgiku". Made by the 15th generation Raku Kichizaemon. On the underside of the lid of its box, a poem by Tao Yuanming is inscribed by Kichizaemon: "Beautiful color of fall chrysanthemum. I, wet with dew, pick the petals. Floating them in my sake, I forget mundane things." (seal) *Kichiza* (potter's stylized signature)

① MUJI pursues simple, functional beauty. ② Bonsai are an artificial symbolization of the Japanese views on nature. ③ *Raku* tea bowls were first made under the instruction of Sen no Rikyū. This is the black *Raku* tea bowl "Shūgiku" by the 15th generation Raku Kichizaemon (Raku Museum). ④ The glass tea room "Kōan" by modern artist Tokujin Yoshioka. ⑤ The simplicity of *Hinomaru bento* (white rice with a single pickled plum on top).

⑤





The essence of *omotenashi* (hospitality): conveying one's utmost sincerity with what is available.

### The Beauty of “Sorry”

One of the key concepts of Japanese culture is *wabi-sabi*. The word is often used to describe desolate and lonely states; however, surprisingly little is known about their original meanings.

*Wabi* shares its roots with the verb, *wabiru* (to apologize). It originates from the feeling of making an apology; an apology for not being able to offer more. The sentiment of *wabi* lies in offering the best one can while sincerely apologizing for one's inadequacy. The frugal art of tea we know as *wabicha* developed from such a sentiment.

### Japanese Aesthetics – Augmenting Margins with Imagination

The concept of *wabi* already existed in the age of *Manyōshū*, as evidenced by words such as *wabi-uta* (poem of disappointment), *wabi-goto* (words of worry, refusal, or desperation), *wabi-bito* (the miserable), and *wabi-goe* (despondent voice). It was Murata Jukō—the founder of *wabicha*—who elevated *wabi* into an aesthetic value as well as a mysteriously appealing worldview. Whereas it was conventionally thought that a proper tea ceremony couldn't be performed without authentic Chinese teaware, Jukō developed a revolutionary approach based on the idea that the true spirit of tea could be reimaged by exercising great sincerity and care with the utensils one has on hand.

Jukō discovered the beauty of associations and combinations that spring from individual ingenuity. This thinking led to the radical and incredibly modest philosophy of *mani-awase* (making do) and *tori-awase* (using and combining what is available). *Wabicha* continued to refine the aesthetics of subtraction, finding beauty in “negation” and the “negative”, and through the *renga* poet, Takeno Jo, would reach its culmination in Rikyu.

*Wabi-sabi* is a sensibility which spilled out of the cup that held the orthodox, conventional, and established. Therefore, any attempt to capture it through public discussions or expressions is incongruous to its nature, and will only lead to something that is neither *wabi* nor *sabi*. With the spirit of OMOTENASHI too, the more extravagant it becomes, the more it will move away from the *motenashi* (the art of handling) originally conceived by Jukō. True Japanese hospitality begs to be sought in the spirit of *wabi*.

# wabi

Extreme Japan



#### Ochazuke (rice with tea)

An exquisite combination of rice and tea makes a supreme dish out of meager ingredients.



#### Minimalist Lifestyle

“Living without possessing”—a lifestyle that incorporates only what's important. *Danshari* (decluttering) is another related trend..



Photograph: Noriaki Yokosuka

#### A Piece of Cloth knitwear (1977 spring/summer)

Issei Miyake's “A Piece of Cloth” derives inspiration from a primordial approach to wear. Folding, creasing, cutting, and boring holes are some of the ingenious methods applied in its production.



#### Tree-Free Tableware WASARA

The Spirit of *Omotenashi* in the paper plate. “The Art of blank spaces” contained in simplicity. Organic forms accentuates the detail of cuisine, and even promotes elegance in the bearing of persons who handle them.

*Wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is a beauty of things modest and humble. It is a beauty of things unconventional.*

Leonard Koren, “Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers”

# wabi

Extreme Japan

## The *wabi* of *onjaku* (warm stone), *kaiseki*, and *ichiju-sansai*

At a tea ceremony, a simple meal is served before tea. This was previously referred to as *furumai*, *kaishoku*, or *kaiseki*. Retaining the same pronunciation of *kaiseki* (party seating), the word later came to be spelled using characters that mean “bosom stone” derived from the *zen* concept of *onjaku*, referring to the warm stones that monks would hold against their chests for comfort against cold weather. Therefore, *kaiseki* in no way refers to gorgeous course meals in high-class restaurants. Moreover, it is not necessarily synonymous with Japanese cuisine. Its origins can be traced back to Buddhist vegetarian dishes from southern China, and the word means a meal sufficient to temporarily tide over hunger for just as long as the warm stone remains warm.

*Suimono* (clear broth soup), *kuzukiri* (kudzu starch noodles), and *somen* (vermicelli) were all foods that emerged with tea ceremony *kaiseki*. The cuisine underwent further culinary refinement during the Edo period, eventually resulting in the rule of *ichijusansai* (one soup and three side dishes).



HIGASHIYA GINZA *Ichiju-sansai* (Ginza, Tokyo)

“HIGASHIYA GINZA” is a contemporary Japanese “tea salon” in pursuit of traditional beauty. Their standard lunch meal includes seasonal tea, main dish, three side dishes, seasonal soup, boiled rice, pickled vegetables, and fresh wagashi. The contents change according to the 24 divisions of the solar year.



Provided by: Big John Corporation

## Faded Jeans that Melt into the Japanese Landscape

Jiro Shirasu is said to have been the first person to wear jeans in Japan. Half a century since the first domestic jeans went into production during the 1960s, tough denim jeans are now an essential everyday item for Japanese people. More than a simple fashion item, denim jeans have melted into the Japanese landscape. Faded jeans hung out to dry in the windows of urban apartments take on the appearance of urban style manifestation of *mani-awase*.

“Fading” is also a key point in the Japanese style. It was a Japanese corporation that developed stone wash processing to fade jeans. Damaged jeans, which highlight negatives such as color fading and wear-and-tear, match well with the Japanese sense of *wabi-sabi*. Whether they be called *G-pan*, *jinzu*, or *denimu*, jeans are a permanent fixture in the *wabi* style of modern Japan.

### Big John Damaged Denim (Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture)

The first domestically produced jeans are said to be the “Canton” jeans made by Maruo Clothing (present Big John Corp.) in Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture. In 1980, the company developed a new processing technique which used warped yarn manufacture vintage-style jeans.



# Books for Japan Editing

## Japan in the Eyes of Outsiders

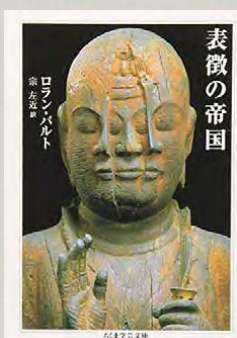


### Unbeaten Tracks in Japan

Isabella Bird (author), Kenkichi Takanashi (translator), Heibonsha 2000  
A British woman's travelogue depicting life in the remote regions of Japan at a time when the nation was being engulfed by the waves of westernization during the Meiji Era. Discover the forgotten faces of marginal Japan.

### L'Empire des signes

Roland Barthes (author), Sakon So (translator), Chikuma Shobo 1996  
Isabella Bird (author), Kenkichi Takanashi (translator), Heibonsha 2000  
Tempura, Japanese gardens, kabuki actors, pachinko... A deconstruction of common sense and surprise reactions to Japan from "Degree Zero". Poetic Japan as analyzed by a symbolologist.



### Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan / Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan II (new editions)

Lafcadio Hearn (author), Masayuki Ikeda (translator), KADOKAWA 2000 and 2015  
Hearn's representative work delicately and poetically depicts the lovable people and customs of a disappearing Japan.

### WA—The Essence of Japanese Design

Rossella Menegazzo and Stefania Piotti (authors), Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha 2017  
Influences on the beauty of Japanese traditional crafts are studied in new and old objects categorized by material such as wood, paper, and iron, to reveal the quintessence of Japanese design.



### Nihonryoku

Seigo Matsuoka and Everett Brown (authors), Parco Publishing 2010  
A reexamination of forgotten Japan through the eyes of outsiders. Japan's true strength can only be drawn out with the help of multiple viewpoints.

### YOKAI NO SHIMA – Nihon no Shukusai—Banbutsu ni Yadoru Kamigami no Kaso

Charles Fréger (author), SEIGENSHA Art Publishing 2016  
A powerful piece of work capturing the strange, and beautiful faces of Japan expressed in folk festivals and ceremonial events, as seen through the eyes of a French photographer.



Japan: Nature, Artifice and Japanese Culture, Augustin Berque (author), Katsuhide Shinoda (translator), Chikuma Shobo 1992  
Bigo ga Mita Meiji Nippon, Isao Shimizu (author), Kodansha 2006  
A Potter in Japan by Bernard Leach, Bernard Leach (author), Soetsu Yanagi and Hiroshi Mizuo (translator), Kodansha 2002  
Lost Japan, Alex Kerr (author), Asahi Shimbun Publications 2000  
Living Japan, Donald Keene (author), Yasushi Adachi (translator), Kodansha 2002  
Chijimi Shiko no Nihonjin (The Compact Culture), Lee O-Young (author), Kodansha 2007

The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture, Ruth Benedict (author), Matsuji Hasegawa (translator), Kodansha 2005  
Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination, Anne Allison (author), Motoko Jitsukawa (translator), Shinchosha 2010  
Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers, Leonard Koren (author), Yukiko Naito (translator), BNN, Inc. 2014  
Nihon to Nippon - Yomitobashi Nihon Bunkafu Seigow Remix, Seigow Matsuoka (author), KOUSSAKUSHA 2014



# Books for Japan Editing

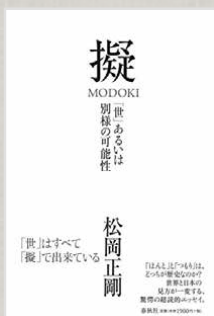
## Japanese Imagination



### **Muen, Kugai, Raku: Liberty and Peace in Medieval Japan,**

Yoshihiko Amino (author), Heibonsha 1996

In medieval Japan, there were people who, eluding worldly relationships and society's laws, lived in peace, safe from the dangers of war. This work shows the development of destinations known as muen, kugai and raku, and their connection to poverty, hunger, and deprivation.



### **MODOKI "Yo" arui wa Betsuyou no Kanosei**

(Fake: "Reality" or Potentially a Different Story)

Seigo Matsuoka (author), Shunjusha 2017 and Peace in Medieval Japan, Yoshihiko Amino (author), Heibonsha 1996

The human world is built on modoki (mimicry). From noh, kabuki, the tea ceremony and the haikai tradition of poetry, to modern subcultures, Japan continues to emerge between the "real" and "imaginary".



### **Yankii Jinruigaku—Toppashatachi no "Art" to Hyogen (Anthropology of the Counterculture: The "Art" and Expressions of Breakthrough People)**

Tomonotsu Museum (supervision), Film Art, Inc. 2014

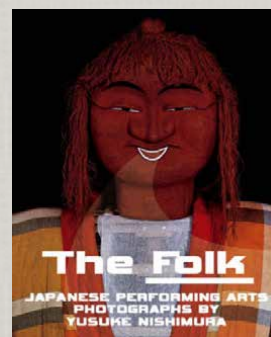
Typified by vulgarly extravagant styles including exaggerated quiffs, remodeled school uniforms, biker gang fashion, hot rod cars, and decorated trucks, yankii hoodlum culture is the surprising offspring of Japan's aesthetic sensibilities.



### **21-Seiki no Minzokugaku—The Commons in a Digital Age**

Akihiro Hatanaka (author), KADOKAWA 2017

Selfie sticks, anime mecca pilgrimages, kappa suffrage ... views of a futuristic past that is profoundly old yet refreshingly new. This work presents reality in the new age through a folkloristic approach to Japan's cutting-edge technologies and trends.



### **The Folk**

Nishimura (author), Little More Books 2015 Yusuke

Awestruck by the beautiful costumes and powerful dancing of traditional performing arts that have been passed down throughout Japan, Nishimura spent years capturing images of local festivals around the country. These photographs abound with wonderfully mysterious forms and brilliant indigenous luster.

**Nihon no Matsuri**, Kunio Yanagita (author), Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan 2013  
**Nihon no Minzoku - Matsuri to Geino**, Hideo Haga (author), KADOKAWA 2014

**Nippon no Maturism – Bon-odori – Matsuri to Deau Tabi**

Hajime Oishi (author), Keiko K. Oishi (photographs), Artes Publishing 2016

**Kyokai no Hassei**, Norio Akasaka (author), Kodansha 2002

**Yokai no Chusei**, Shochō no Chusei (The Medieval Period as a Frontier and as a Symbol), Hideo Kuroda (author), University of Tokyo Press 1986

**Ijinron – Minzoku Shakai no Shinsei**, Kazuhiko Komatsu (author), Chikuma Shobo 1995

**Kawaramono no Susume – Shie to Shura no Kioku**, Masahiro Shinoda (author) Genkishobou 2009

**Fragile – Yowasa karano Shuppatsu**, Seigo Matsuoka (author), Chikuma Shobo 2005

**Fushikaden / Sando with translation into modern Japanese**, Zeami (author), Mikio Takemoto (annotations), Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan 2009

**Noh**, Mutsuo Takahashi (author), PIE International 2010

**Kabuki Hasseishi Ronshu (Kabuki generation history essays)**, Masakatsu Gunji (author) Bunzo Torigoe (editor), Iwanami Shoten 2002

**Oinaru Koya – Edo Kabuki no Shukusai Kuukan**, Yukio Hattori (author), Kodansha 2012

**Kando – Misemono to Tekiya no Ryoiki**, Hisafumi Sakairi (author), Shinjuku Shobo 2006

**Misemono Kenkyu**, Musei Asakura (author), Chikuma Shobo 2002

**Misemono-goya no Bunkashi**, Masaki Ukai, Minao Kitamura, Toshiaki Kamijima (editors and authors), Shinjuku Shobo, 1999

**Godzilla to Nausicaä – Umi no Kanata yori Otozureshi Monotachi**, Norio Akasaka (author), East Press 2014

**Ramen to Aikoku**, Kenro Hayamizu (author), Kodansha 2011

**Yankii Bunkaron Josetsu (An Introduction to Countercultural Studies)**, Taro Igarashi (editor and author) Kyoichi Tsuzuki et al (author), Kawade Shobo Shinsha 2009

**Sekai ga Doyo no Yoru no Yume Nara – Yankii to Seishin Bunseki**, Tamaki Saito (author) Kadokawa Shoten 2012

**Zoku no Keifugaku – Youth Subcultures no Sengoshi**, Koji Namba (author), Seikyusha 2007

**ROADSIDE JAPAN – Chin Nihon Kiko**, Higashi Nihon

**ROADSIDE JAPAN – Chin Nihon Kiko**, Nishi Nihon

Kyoichi Tsuzuki (author), Chikuma Shobo 2000

**"Kawaii" Ron**, Inuhiko Yomota (author), Chikuma Shobo 2006

**Sekai Kawaii Kakumei—Naze Kanojotachi-wa "Nihonjin ni Naritai" to Sakebunoka**, Takamasa Sakurai (author), PHP Institute 2009

**Gyaru to Bokura no 20-nenshi – Joshikosei Zasshi Cawaii! no Tanjo to Shuen**, Shoichi Hasegawa (author), Akishobo 2015

**Kawaii Bunka to Technology no Kakureta Kankei**, Okan <Chi no Togo> Series Editing Committee (Editing), Tokyo Denki University Press 2016

**Nihon-teki Sōzōyoku no Mirai—Kūru Japanoroji no Kanōsei**

Hiroki Azuma (Editor), NHK Publishing 2010

**Shokuhin Sanpuru no Tanjo**, Yasunobu Nose (author), Chikuma Shobo 2017

**Shokuhin Sanpuru Hyakkaten**, Mana Takemura, Nanae Konishi (authors and editors), Gambit 2016



# Books for Japan Editing

## Finding Forgotten Japan



### Ikishi Yo no Omokage

Kyoji Watanabe (author)  
Heibonsha 2005

The civilization of Japan before it opened to the world appeared truly resplendent in the eyes of foreign guests. Tracing the diaries of such visitors, this work makes an earnest inquiry into the qualities modern Japan has lost.



### Nihonryu

Seigo Matsuoka (author),  
Chikuma Shobo 2009

This unusual theory of Japan starts by correlating Japan to the children's song, "The canary that forgot its song", as a culture that has lost sight of its roots and cannot envision its future. It comments on methodologies such as mitate, suki, shukou, omokage, and utsuroi of the multi-faceted yet single-minded Japan.



### Teshigoto no Nihon

Soetsu Yanagi (author), Kodansha 2015

This book introduces Soetsu Yanagi's journey to find "beauty in use" in the handcrafts of nameless and unknown artisans around Japan. Soetsu Yanagi was the founder of the mingei (folk art) movement, and this work chronicles the artistry he found in the essential utensils of everyday Japanese life.



### The Book of Tea

Tenshin Okakura (author), Naoko Thornton Fuwa (translation into Japanese as Cha no Hon), Shunpusha 2009

The tea ceremony is a means of cultivating the spirit and attaining supreme social manners. The spirit of worshipping the beauty found in everyday things is a wake-up call for Western civilization and acts as a bridge between East and West.



### nenge

Shinichiro Ogata, Satoshi Kawamoto (authors), SEIGENSHA Art Publishing 2017

This book introduces the collaborative efforts, of artistic innovator Shinichiro Ogata and plant artist Satoshi Kawamoto, in search for the "flower of our times", that is neither ikebana nor western-style flower arrangement.

Nihon wo Shiru 105 Sho, Corona Books Editing Department (editing), Heibonsha 2001

Wasurerareta Nihonjin, Tsuneichi Miyamoto (author), Iwanami Shoten 1984

Nihon to Iu Hoho - Omokage, Utsuroi no Bunka, Seigow Matsuoka (author), NHK Publishing 2016

Nihon Suki, Seigo Matsuoka (author), Chikuma Shobo 2007

Kacho Fugetsu no Kagaku, Seigo Matsuoka (author), Chuokoron-Shinsha 2004

Utsukushii Mono - Essays by Masako Shirasu <Art>, Masako Shirasu (author), Keisuke Aoyagi (editing), KADOKAWA 2015

Inochi to Katachi - Nihon Bi no Minamoto wo Saguru, Kenkichi Yamamoto (author) Kadokawa Shoten 1997

Nihon Bi wo Tetsugaku Suru - Aware, Yugen, Sabi, Iki, Kyubun Tanaka (author), Seidosha 2013

Nihon no Gokan - Kobori Enshu no Bi-ishiki ni Manabu, Kobori Sojitsu (author), KADOKAWA 2016

Suki Gatari, Yoichiro Ushioda (author), KADOKAWA 2016

Cha to Bi, Soetsu Yanagi (author), Kodansha 2000

"Iki" no Kozo (The Structure of "Iki") and two other works, Shuzo Kuki (author), Iwanami Shoten 1979

In'ei Raisan (In Praise of Shadows), Junichiro Tanizaki (author), Chuokoron-Shinsha 1995

Teshigoto no Nihon, Soetsu Yanagi (author), Kodansha 2015

Mingei no Nihon - Soetsu Yanagi to "Teshigoto no Nihon" wo Tabisuru, The Japan Folk Crafts Museum (supervision), Chikuma Shobo 2017

Nihon Saihakken - Geijutsu Fudoki, Taro Okamoto (author), KADOKAWA 2015

Shinpi Nihon, Taro Okamoto (author), KADOKAWA 2015

Katachi: Nihon no Katachi - Japanese Sacred Geometry (new edition), Takeji Iwamiya (Photograph), Kazuya Takaoka (art direction), PIE International 2011

MADE IN JAPAN- Su no Monotachi (Things as Just They Are / Des objets tels quels), Kouichi Uchida (author), Anonima Studio 2011

TSUTSUMU - Traditional Japanese Packaging, Meguro Museum of Art, Tokyo, (editing), BNN, Inc. 2011

MIYAKE ISSEY Exhibition - The Work of Miyake Issey, Issey Miyake, Tamotsu Aoki (supervision), Kyuryudo 2016

Design Bussanten Nippon, Kenmei Nagaoka (concept / composing) Japan Design Committee (producer), Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha 2008

Mou Hitotsu no Design - Nagaoka Kenmei no Shigoto (d books), Kenmei Nagaoka (author), D&DEPARTMENT PROJECT 2018

Tsukuru Chikara - creators for everyday life

Tsunagu Chikara - ideas for next Japan

Seikatsu Kogei Project (author), Little More 2011 & 2012

The Boundary Between Kogei and Design, Naoto Fukasawa (supervision), Rikuyosha 2016

[Sekai-ichi no Kinzoku no Machi] Tsubamesanjo no Hamono to Kanamono - Kurashi no Dogu 135sen, Nakagawa Masashichi Shoten Co., Ltd. (editing), Heibonsha 2016

## Passing on the Narrative of Japan

Japan can boast a wealth of resources which deserve to be communicated on the international stage: its diverse natural environment with seasonally changes faces, exquisitely delicate craftsmanship, cuisine and sake which bring the best out of ingredients, cutting-edge technologies, and a globe-captivating pop culture.

However, if such precious resources are simply sliced up and put on sale, apart from the respective historical contexts in which they were nurtured, they will fast become lost among the surfeit of commodities that exist in the world. Thoughtless competition will only lead to continuing deterioration of Japan's long-standing cultural heritage, and in the end, we may even lose sight of what it was that we wanted to sell in the first place. Before that happens, we must carefully gather the memories and vestiges of this land so that we can re-narrate its stories toward the future.

If we are to present the appeal of this country as “Cool Japan”, then it is about time we strive to carefully ascertain exactly just what is “cool” and what is “Japan”.

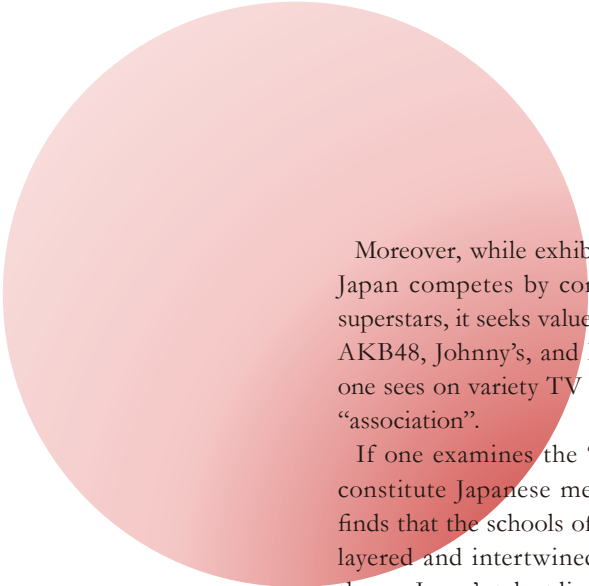
### Japan Style: Methodologies for Cool Japan

The diverse attractions of Japan are underpinned by specific sensibilities, talents and methods that pulse in the veins of its culture.

Japan's signature skill may be said to reside in “analogy”. Powers of association and inference as exemplified in *mitate* led to the creation of a wealth of performing arts, customs, and cultures. The ability to envision expansive scenery within the frugal world of *wabi*, the conjecturing skills of craftsmen aiming for the *kiwa* of taste, and the highly contextual exchange of LINE stickers all derive from the power of analogy. In Japan, the analogical was always given priority over the logical.

Such analogy has also been displayed in the process whereby Japanese have arranged values imported from the outside according to their own styles. The *kana* syllabary system was developed out of characters imported from China, while Buddhism was rearranged to co-exist with the gods of Shinto. From Café lattes came matcha lattes; from Chinese lamian noodles came shoyu ramen and miso ramen noodles; from Gothic style came *gosloli* – in every area of life, foreign imports which appealed to the Japanese mind were rearranged creatively to fit snugly into Japan.



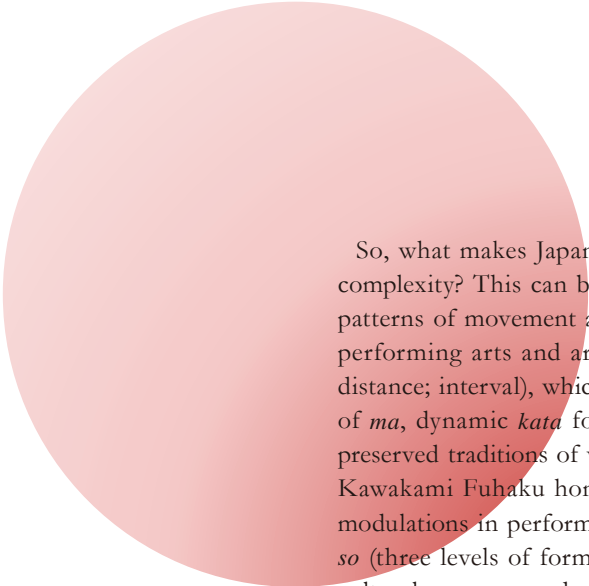


Moreover, while exhibiting the power of analogy and a talent for arrangement, Japan competes by combining strengths. Rather than looking to individual superstars, it seeks value in *awase* and *kasane*. Phantasmagoric idol groups such as AKB48, Johnny's, and EXILE, together with the tiered platforms of celebrities one sees on variety TV shows, compete through displaying ingenuity in terms of “association”.

If one examines the “3As” of Analogy, Arrangement, and Association that constitute Japanese methodology and trace the origins of “Cool Japan”, one finds that the schools of thought that drive such flexible approaches are diversely layered and intertwined. Rather than logically dealing with a single universal theme, Japan's talent lies in the imagination and creativity required to analogically respond to the situation and context of the occasion at hand. The ability to closely observe and infer social culture in this manner resulted in a sense of aesthetics and virtue which places importance on awareness of mood and atmosphere, consideration to others, and providing sincere *omotenashi*.

### **Rising from the Margins of Chaos**

Japan permits complexity. The world that surrounds us, whether it be economy, society, climate, or life, inherently abounds with “complex systems”—systems, in which parts and whole mutually interact to generate “emergences”. The study of complex systems is an ongoing field of research, started by the Santa Fe Institute in the 1980's, which deals with phenomena that cannot be fully grasped by conventional means of element reduction. Japan's culture of *za*, as typified by *renga* (collaborative poetry) is actually a great example of how a complex system could be managed in its entirety—emergences and all. In *renga* poetry, groups were formed for the purpose of entertainment through the process of *awase*, *kasane*, *kisoi*, and *soroe*. The individual and the group would stimulate each other through a complex interweaving of meaning and evolve according to spontaneous emergences of creativity. From such a culture, developed the way of tea, as well as radical aesthetic values exemplified by the *hie-sabi* (cold and desolate beauty) of Shinkei. *Hie-sabi* subsequently mixed with *zen* to bring forth the imagination of *karesansui* (dry landscape gardens), which led to the blank spaces of Mirei Shigemori, Isamu Noguchi's beauty in imperfection, the shocking black of Rei Kawakubo, and the minimalism of MUJI. Japan's “aesthetics of subtraction” is indeed rooted in the margins of chaos which emerge from the *kiwa* of *awase* and *kasane*.



So, what makes Japan adept at handling the complex without disassembling complexity? This can be explained by the influence of *kata* (standard forms or patterns of movement and procedure) that were developed in passing down its performing arts and artisan skills. *Kata* goes hand in hand with *ma* (spacing; distance; interval), which is something that does not permit formalization. Out of *ma*, dynamic *kata* forms were born and passed down within families who preserved traditions of vocational skills. Performing artists such as Kan'ami and Kawakami Fuhaku honed such *kata* into structures such as *jo-ha-kyu* (artistic modulations in performances), *shu-ha-ri* (three stages of mastery), and *shin-gyo-so* (three levels of formality) enveloping the entire process of learning. *Kata* is cultural memory condensed and preserved as form, made possible by the Japanese capacity for analogy.

Behind the *Kanban* system of Toyota—which previously posed threat to America's Big Three auto makers—as well as the thrilling exploits of compact Japanese athletes at the Olympics, is the power of *kata*. *Kata* makes possible the managing of complex movements in all their complexity.

### VUCA and Japan Style

It is said that the world has plunged into an age of VUCA—an acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. With the entire globe now confronted by conditions of extreme unpredictability, VUCA is also a recognition of the times in the 21st century.

Japanese corporations are just one of the players being buffeted by this age of rapidly advancing globalization. Looking back however, we can see that such conditions all reflect features that Japan has adroitly incorporated into its own culture. While riding waves of volatility, Japan has played with the uncertainty of erratic elements, leveraged complexity into everyday life, and lived in harmony with the ambiguous.

Together with its countless deities, Japan has already accepted VUCA environments and converted them into cultural abundance. As the world falls deeper into confusion in this age of VUCA, it is time for Japan to re-examine the methodologies it has honed and display them to the world with pride. The concepts of the “Japanese 3As”, which underpin Cool Japan, are surely an option that should be presented to the struggling global community. The culture that Japan wants to share with the world is not just a simple national commodity. Now is the time to let Japan Style sprout through the cracks of global standards.





## Japan Editing ~ Editing the Story of Japan

In order to ensure the sprouting of Japan Style in every corner of the country, it is vital to spread the practice of re-narrating local cultures and industries, together with their cultural context, as the stories of Japan. And, for this purpose, a re-editing will be necessary so that the appeal of what appears in the top layer be described in relation to the cultural background that exists in the middle and deep layers. This publication introduces a number of models for conducting such narration in the form of “Japan Editing”. We have attempted to re-narrate the surface manifestations of Cool Japan by approaching the matter from the “Japan Concepts” that swell and bubble in the middle and deep layers.

The resources and viewpoints for “Japan Editing” introduced here constitute only a small part of the stories of Japan. However, through accumulating such narrative modules, it should be possible to construct a solid and productive platform for taking the appeal of Japan into the world. Our wish is for each and every Japanese to try narrating Japan in his or her own words. Cultural mechanisms will also be needed to support such civilian activities—for example, learning programs around the country, cultural think-tanks for discovering and archiving stories, and diverse opportunities for combining (*awase*) and layering (*kasane*) the findings. When people throughout Japan start telling the true stories of Japan in all its vivid color, “Cool Japan” will finally become an authentic cultural asset of this country. We hope that this work can act as a cue to such a movement.

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Editorial Engineering Laboratory

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Titles omitted. In order of Japanese syllabary



NIHON-GATARI-SHO

# 日本語り抄

## Guidelines for Narrating Japanese Culture



Project consigned by the Intellectual Property  
Strategy Headquarters, Cabinet Office

Supervision : Seigow Matsuoka

Planning and composing : Akiko Ando

Editing and contributions : Yoko Nire, Nazuna Kiyozuka, Quim Jong Dae

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The Cabinet Office and relevant ministries and government offices are deepening the government's Cool Japan strategy with the help of inputs from experts and related persons. To effectively convey and deploy Cool Japan and ensure that foreign persons consume Japanese products, cultural property and services with higher added value, an important theme concerns how to effectively transmit stories about the appeal of such things via their underlying historical and cultural context. With that in mind, the Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters of the Cabinet Office entrusted this project to Editorial Engineering Laboratory with the aim of demonstrating a model that can be referred to when compiling stories and contexts that will benefit the attractive conveyance and deployment of products, services, tourist areas, local cultures and so on by Cool Japan enterprises, local governments, related agencies and the like.