

## Japanese Studies at Manchester

### Pre-arrival Reading Suggestions for the 2020-2021 Academic Year

This is a relatively short list of novels, films, manga, and language learning texts which will be useful for students to peruse and invest in before arrival. Students must not consider that they ought to read all the books on the list, or even most of them, but those looking for a few recommendations of novels, histories, or language texts, should find good suggestions for newcomers to the field. Many books can be purchased second-hand online for only a small price, and some of the suggestions listed under language learning will be useful to have on your shelf throughout year one studies and beyond.

#### **Japanese Society**

Ronald Dore *City Life in Japan* describes Tokyo society in the early 1950s  
Takie Lebra's book, *Japanese Patterns of Behavior* (NB US spelling)  
Elisabeth Bumiller, *The Secrets of Mariko*

#### Some interesting podcasts about Japan:

Japan on the record: a podcast where scholars of Japan react to issues in the news. <https://jotr.transistor.fm/episodes>

Meiji at 150: the researcher Tristan Grunow interviews specialists in Japanese history, literature, art, and culture. <https://meijiat150.podbean.com/>

#### **Japanese History**

Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*  
Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*  
John W. Dower *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*  
Christopher Goto-Jones, *Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction* (can be read in a day).

#### **Religion in Japan**

Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*

#### **Japanese Literature**

*The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*  
*The Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories*  
Shuichi Kato, *A History of Japanese Literature: From the Manyoshu to Modern Times*

#### **Novels**

Abe Kobo, *The Woman in the Dunes / The Box Man*

Murakami Haruki, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*  
Akutagawa Ryosuke, *Kappa*  
Natsumi Soseki's *Kokoro* / *And Then (Sorekara)* / *The Gate (Mon)*  
Nagai Kafū, *Rivalry*  
Dazai Osamu, *No Longer Human*  
Murata Sayaka's *Convenience store woman*

Machi Tawara's poetry collection *Salad Anniversary*

### **Manga to learn to read Japanese with or sample in English translation:**

Otomo Katsuhiro, *Akira*  
Tezuka Osamu, *Triton of the Sea*  
Mizuki Shigeru, *Ge ge ge Kitaro*  
Okazaki Kyoko, *Helter Skelter*

### **Film**

*Stray Dog* (1949)  
*Ikiru* (1952)  
*Ugetsu Monogatari* (1953)  
*Floating Clouds (Ukigumo)* (1955)  
*Yojinbo* (1961)  
*The Funeral* (1984)  
*Black Rain* (1989) NB This is the Japanese film *Kuroi Ame* directed by Shohei Imamura - not the eponymous (also 1989) film by Ridley Scott!  
*I Wish* (2011)

For a general history of Japanese cinema and excellent recommendations see Donald Richie's *Hundred Years of Japanese film: A Concise History* (Kodansha). For further suggestions see Jonathan or take Dr Kinsella's Animation course!

### **Language Study**

*The Japanese Language: an Introduction* (Oxford University Press)  
*Language and Society in Japan* (Routledge) by Nanette Gottlieb

#### Beginner

Those of you who need to start learning the kana writing systems (which we strongly recommend you do before arrival) may find *Let's Learn Hiragana* and *Let's Learn Katakana* (both published by Kodansha) very useful or there is a good single volume from Routledge called *Read and Write Japanese Scripts*.

Our textbook for year one courses is called *Genki* and it has good online materials freely available for studying kana. Please see the links below.

[Genki Online Self-Study Room](#)

[http://genki.japantimes.co.jp/self\\_en](http://genki.japantimes.co.jp/self_en)

Hiragana chart: <http://genki.japantimes.co.jp/site/self/site/hiragana/hiragana.html>

Katakana chart: <http://genki.japantimes.co.jp/site/self/site/gakusyuu/katakana.html>

We use: *The Oxford Japanese Grammar and Verbs* (Oxford University Press) and *The Oxford Beginner's Japanese Dictionary* (Oxford University Press) as standard reference books (and because we produced them!). Also useful are: *All about Particles* (Kodansha), *A Dictionary of Basic Japanese Grammar* (Japan Times), and *Kanji Look and Learn 512 Kanji with illustrations and Mnemonic Hints* (Japan Times).

### Intermediate and Advanced

*A Dictionary of Intermediate Japanese Grammar* (Japan Times) is a very useful reference and the companion volume *Dictionary of Basic Japanese Grammar* is indispensable. Although you have probably already done much of the content if you have done A-level, it will still prove useful. *Using Japanese: a Guide to Contemporary Usage* (Cambridge University Press) is a very good general summary of Japanese grammatical usage and the *Routledge Modern Japanese Grammar* with workbook is good as it takes a functional approach.