

# Literature of East Asia: Japan

January 15, 2007

## 1 Classification

### 1.1 By Time

*Kodai Bungaku* (old Japanese literature, until Meiji-period)

- *Kodai*: *Jōdai* (Nara) and *Shūko* (classic, Heian)
- *Chūsei*: *Chūsei* (ME, Kamakura & Muromashi) and *Kinsei* (early mod, Edo)

*Gendai Bungaku* (modern literature)

- *Kindai* (mod, Meiji -1926)
- *Gendai* (present, 1926-today)

*J-Bungaku* (now)

### 1.2 By Genre

#### 1.2.1 Poetry

- Uta/Waka: modern uta: song; modern waka: song/poem
- Naga-uta: long poem; 5-7 5-7 ... 5-7-7
- Tanka: short poem; 5-7-7 7-7
- Renga: a couple of tanka, no storyline; 5-7-5 7-7 5-7-5 7-7
- Haiku: *haikai no hokku*, short version of renga: 5-7-5
- Kyōka: comic poem, no pillow words or strict lines
- Kayō: songs, Buddhistic, folk, ...

### 1.2.2 Prose (sanbun/setsuwa bungaku)

*Monogatari*: fairy tales, war tales, short stories, novels

- *Denki M.* (tradition), *Uta M.* (Genji: collection of short tales centered around poems), *rekishi M.* (historic), *gunki M.* (war)
- *Sôshi* (adventures, since Edo): *Otogizôshi* (~ fairytale, anonymous), *Ukiy-ozôshi* (realistic), *Kanazôshi* (storybooks in Kana), *Kusazôshi* (illustrated storybooks), *Sharebhon* (gay quarter novelette), *Chônin* (city people)
- *Shôsetsu* (short story)

*Nikki* (diaries)

*Hinamiki* (journals written in Chinese)/*Bekki* (daily notes)

*Zuihitsu* (stray notes, miscellaneous writings)

*Kikô* (travel literature, more serious than *Sôshi*)

### 1.2.3 Drama/Dance

*Nô* (aristocratic theater), *Kyôgen* (comic interlude in *Nô*)

*Ningyô jôruri* (puppet ballad drama: *jidaimono*: history drama and *sewa-mono*: 'present time' drama)

*Kabuki*

*Shinpa/Shingeki* (modern theater)

## 2 Exam

Material: book: 'A history of Japanese Literature' -> Japanese society: influenced by other societies all the time.

No years, general outline

2 questions from the books, prepare texts.

- Explain a term
- Read a given piece, tell where it comes from and interpret
- Interpret the book (subdivisions ed): in general. No examples.

## 3 Characteristics

Literature was *important* for the soc/pol/eco status. Gatherings during the Heian period were for nobility to compose. A poem reflected the character of a person: if it was not good enough, it was rejected. Therefore people were very sensitive, in the poem itself but also in the writing, the paper, ...

*Continuity* in the words and style stay throughout the whole history of Japanese literature. There is always a centripetal tendency: literature is judged in the center (from 1185 to 1600 these are different places because of the prefectures: during the Heian period in Kyoto, during Edo in Osaka), people in the periphery publish in the center.

*Who writes?* In the early times it is the nobility (but also warriors and even peasants) and monks. During the Kamakura period the military/samurai writings become important, but the nobility still holds the monopoly. Rise of the play. During the Edo period there is a stark stratigraphy, with growing cities and a rise in the Chônin population. During the Meiji-period most writers are the old elite (urban middle class).

### 3.1 Timeline

- 1185 *Kamakura*
- 1333 *Muromashi*
- 1600 *Edo*
- 1868 *Meiji*
- 1912 *Taishô*
- 1926 *Shôwa*
- 1989 *Heisei*

## 4 The beginning

### 4.1 Literature

**Bundan:** an organization of writers (mostly poems), from Kamakura until today. Writers join together to write poems, it is some sort of pleasant poem-party.

#### 4.1.1 *Kojiki*

First Bundan work, written in 712. *Kojiki* means 'Old Time Writing' and is a story by O no Yasumarô (profession of 'remembering stories' = *Katanibe*). The writer is Hieda no Are, who wrote it down by order of the Emperor.

The style of the *Kojiki* is very much oral-based. It is written to legitimate the Yamato-clan and its emperors by an old mythology.

The *Kojiki* has three parts (scrolls):

1. Genesis of Japan, era of the kami
2. First Dynasty, outside of real time (15 Legendary Emperors)
3. First Emperor Jimmu Ojin in 660

Amaterasu, the Sun God, is the clangod of the Yamato. Because of the *Kojiki* he becomes the greatest clangod in Japan.

**Story:** the *Kami* come into existence out of Chaos, these are Izanagi and Izanami. They stand on a bridge and drop a spear in the 'soup', from that action the islands originate. From their mating other *Kami* originate (this is different from the Bible, where sex is negative). Here is a strong influence from the Confucianism which has a clearly stratified society: Japanese society at that age was matrilinear, but in the story Izanagi wants to speak first (expresses male dominance). Izanami passes away while giving birth to the firegod; Izanagi is outrageous and kills him. He then goes to the Hades to seek Izanami, but when he finds her she asks not to look at her. Of course he does, and when he sees the maggots creeping out of her face, he screams and runs away. He manages to escape but has to purificate himself, by this act, other *Kami* originate (ie Susanoo and Amaterasu).

#### 4.1.2 *Nihongi*

The *Nihongi* is written in 720. It consists of 30 volumes and it is one of the 6 official historical works. The *Nihongi* is inspired by Chinese examples.

The goals of the *Nihongi* are:

1. Knowledge
2. Legitimation of the rule
3. Competition with Chinese cronicals

[See: enclosure 1]

### 4.1.3 Fudoki (713)

Under Empress Genmei, literally 'Wind Earth Writing'. Only Izumo and Fudoki are complete. It is a collection of traditions, stories, myths, habits, descriptions, ... The Fudoki shows the difference in the cultures and the toponyms; it is written in Chinese, except for some parts with local tradition (hentai kana: phonetic).

## 4.2 Poems

There are both Chinese and Japanese poems. The subjects are based on the Chinese system; monks and nobility wrote in Chinese style (ie *Kaifuso* (715): Chinese poems by Japanese authors).

**Waka:** in the Kojiki are 112 poems, they are a tanka-prototype (Tanka is invented in the Heian-period). Their subject is mostly love and war. The oldest one is the *Manyoshu* (a collection of 1000 pages) and is an anthology of Otomo no Yamamushu, who compiles from the 5C to the 8C. There is an evolution from shōka to nagauta (250); it also contains 4270 tanka and 62 sedoka, good for +/- 4500 poems. The poets of Manyoshu are the nobility as well as warriors, peasants and emperors. Its subjects are mostly journeys, love, drinking songs and melancholy/sadness. The Japanese poems will eventually become more important.

## 5 Heian period

### 5.1 Waka

#### 5.1.1 Kokinshu, 905

"Ancient - Now Poems", a compilation of 25 years. The kokinshu is a collection of poems by order of Emperor Daigo. It was compiled by *Ki no Tsuru Yuki* (his most famous work is the Tosa Nikki, see infra). It was written by +/- 127 poets of noble class and there is also one poem written by the Emperor. The whole book contains as much as 1111 poems, ordered by subject (seasons, love, farewell...); this in contrary to the Manyoshu which is chronically ordered.

These poems often were written on an *Uta Awase*, this is an event where poets gather to write poems, mostly tanka, together. It is a very pleasant occasion.

#### 5.1.2 Tosa Nikki, 1st half 10C

This work is also written by *Ki no Tsuru Yuki*. He writes in the perspective of a female storyteller, but in a male style: he plays with conventions. The book is

a description of a journey of a woman who leaves Tosa for the capital together with the group of a governor. Mostly he describes nature, for nature expresses emotions. The relation between nature and Japan is very close, but only the kind of nature that is made by men: wild nature is dangerous. This is why there are only descriptions of ie gardens: the *Ideal of Nature*.

A common habit of poets is to look at old poems and continue in the same style or about the same subject; in this case in the way former poets looked at nature.

### 5.1.3 Taketori Monogatari

This is a story about a bamboo-cutter. He finds a girl and raises her, she gets a lot of proposals and the men have to do severe tests, but in the end the girl returns to heaven.

### 5.1.4 Ise Monogatari

The Ise Monogatari is a story written around a central poem, mostly love stories that end with suicide. This is contrary to the Manyōshū and the Kokinshū, who have almost no suicidal thoughts.

### 5.1.5 Kagerō Nikki

“Diary of a Fruitfly”; it is an autobiography of the Fujiwara court, it is about the doom of marriage and is in fact a prosecution against polygamy.

Diaries are mostly very idealistic and there is a large amount of escapism.

### 5.1.6 Maruka no Sōshi

“The Pillow Book”, written by *Sei Shōnagon*. It is *Zuihitsu* literature and contains loose writings.

The Pillow Book has three parts:

1. A diary about the whereabouts at court
2. Lists with sums of things (ie she thinks that hair is bad, that it is only allowed on people’s head)
3. Essays with considerations about people, things, nature, ...

### 5.1.7 Rekishi Monogatari

Historical literature, it is descriptive but not chronicals. *Ôkagamu* here tries to clarify events of the *Fujiwara no Mishinaga* (850-1025).

### 5.1.8 Eda Monogatari

This is also about the *Fujiwara no Mishinaga*; it has a female author and is merely a description of events. Women usually did not write about important things.

### 5.1.9 Konjaku Monogatari

“Stories of Now and Then”: Setsuwa stories (small anecdotes). These are about India, China and Japan, containing ghosts and demons. The Konjaku Monogatari is a description of court and its regular forms.

### 5.1.10 Genji Monogatari

Written by *Murashaki Shikibu*, it is a female roman. Shikibu was an early widow, a lady at court of middle nobility. Living at the same time as *Sei Shônagon*, the first concubine of the Emperor, she was ranked below her. The Genji Monogatari are written over a long period of time, so it is suggested that parts are written by someone else -maybe her daughter- due to the difference in style. It contains 54 volumes and was written over 75 years, it is translated by Arthur Waley.

Genji is the son of a concubine, so he cannot be the heir of the throne. Nevertheless he has a position at court by his name 'Genji'. He and the Emperor's new wife *Fujitsubo*, Genji's stepmother, become lovers; her son is the 'Emperor's son'. The Genji Monogatari is a chronicle of the different love affairs of Prince Genji.

Murakashi is one of the ladies he loves and marries in the first half of the book. The second half is about Prince *Nioi* and Prince *Kaoru*. Prince Nioi is the Imperial Prince and Genji's son; Prince Kaoru thinks he is Genji's son but he is not. Another detail is also that women faint for the smell of Genji's personal perfume.

Out of the enclosure: **Yugao**. *A love affair at court is considered sneaky: Genji has to leave the cottage before dawn, because the relation is not wanted due to the difference in rank. They do not trust each other, but the handwriting conceals the writer's status for she has a self-confident air. The belief in gods is often found in fairy-tales, and is expressed by noise with clapping, candles and bow strings (used to drive spirits, or shoot. Sound arrows also exist: they were used to frighten enemies or ghosts). Also there is superstitious belief, like lucky and*

bad days. The reason why Genji cannot react is because he feels alone (without servant) and because he is too young (ie a priest will act 'wiser'). This is also where Murasaki and Shônagon are different: Shônagon looks at the outside of people. When the body is brought out, the hair is falling down: this is frightening since it looks like the body is alive because of the moving hair. The narrator comments on the narration (Watakushi shosetsu: I-story: the feeling and life of the narrator is expressed in the novel). The scenes of horror are not different from the Western novel, since it too, is expressed with darkness, night, candles, storm, birds, ...

**The picture competition** is about a fight for the Emperor between princesses Akikonomu and Susaku. It is a contest of paintings and is judged on the taste: Akikonomu collects new artists, Susaku old ones. One shows already painted pictures, the other takes some pictures of Genji while he is in exile. This results in two groups; it is not about painting but about selecting in function of own taste. They are judged by the elder court woman with highest rank Fujitsubo: one person decides on good & bad taste. The real motive is that the two ladies rise in position: Akikonomu chooses Genji's side; Susaku takes Chujo's. The people who profit are actually these two men. These games are political tools in political everyday life, not just leisure. The story is absurd for Akikonomu wins the game but in the end the Emperor picks the other one.

## 6 Kamakura period

### 6.1 Books

#### 6.1.1 Heike Monogatari

Written in 1371, during the rise and fall of the Taira (Minamoto). These are war/epic stories and contain samurai ethics (but not bushido) from a Buddhist world view. There are three sections: *Taira no Kigomori*, *Minamoto no Yoshinaka* and ..... It was transmitted by *biwanôshi* (blind monks) in different editions. Described as heroic samurai themes.

See enclosure: ***Death of Atsumori*** and ***Atsumori: noh play***

*Atsumori does not want to kill the boy because he resembles to his own son, and the killing is useless. He has compassion for another human being. The handsome young warrior with blackened teeth (-> Taira family) was playing the flute the other day. Here is a dilemma in the ethics of a warrior: Atsumori is in conflict with his social obligation (killing) and his religion and belief. Giri-ninyô means the conflict between what society expects from you, and your own feelings.*

#### 6.1.2 Taiheiki

“The Chronicle of the Great Peace”

The biwa was a Persian instrument which was introduced in Japan during the Nara period. Taiheiki is, like the Heike Monogatari, war literature. Emperor *Go-Daigo* tried to regain power from the *Hôjô*-family, who send *Ashikaga Takanjî* in return. The latter collaborates though, so they send *Nitta Yoshisada*, who does the same. Go-Daigo now has so many allies that he can destroy the *Hôjô*. Unfortunately he makes the mistake of giving all high positions to family and friends, so the soldiers get displeased.

The work is anonymous, but it represents well how people felt by the disturbance of war. On pictures it is also visible that during the war, all the windows were away from the city (in contrary to Nero). In the war, mostly bow and arrow were used.

Ashikaga Takanjî is the prototype of the loyal samurai and receives alot of sympathy, but this is not objective. He betrays the *Hôjô* and after that he organizes an uprising against Go-Daigo.

### 6.1.3 Hôjôki

Literally:“Time never stays as it is.” It was written by *Kamo no Chômei* (died 1212 aged 64), who lived on a mountain during the Kamakura as a hermit [kluizenaar]. In the *Hôjôki* he writes his idea of life and world, in his diary is told how Kijôto was destroyed.

The basic feeling is 'Mujô', which means vanity or impermanence, everything will go on. His literature is in the Zen-Buddhistic style, which is the state religion in that period. He is mostly known for the plays with a *biwa*. It is not known when it was finished.

He has a family of Shintô-priests and has thereby a Buddhistic background. He could not be a Shintô-priest so he became a Buddhism priest; he worked in the office of poetry under ex-emperor *Go-Toba* (he is the importance of poems very clear).

## 7 Muromashi period

### 7.1 Poetry

#### 7.1.1 Tenga - Tanka

A *tanka* exists out of 5 lines: 5 - 7 - 5 - 7 - 7 (short poem of the *naga-uta*). If there are more lines, it is a *renga*. A *renga* has very strict rules; a *haikai* is the same, but funnier. A *tanka* is usually made by two poets, one poet writing the first 3 lines, the other writes the last. In a *tanka* you express what you see, in *renga* the answer will come immediately.

Upper unit: 3 lines: kami no ku 5 - 7 - 5

Lower unit: 2 lines: shimo no ku 7 - 7

Haikai: 3 lines + 2 lines ( 5 - 7 - 5): haikai no hokku -> Haiku

[enclosure: A Hundred Stanzas by Three Poets at Minase]

In the Middle Ages monks from Saigô ed wrote *rengashi*. *Sôgi* was a priest who studied poetry at the age of 30 during the *Ônin*-war (1476-1477), when he leaves Kyoto. Afterwards he returns and becomes a hermit, and official renga advisor. Most of his theoretical work concerning poems has unfortunately dissappeared.

[enclosure: Etiquette]

*Shôhaku* aka Botange continues to write, but he is a drinker and not highly esteemed because he mentions flower in a poem (not good!). *Sôshô* is of 'humble origin', which adds greatly to his success.

Emperor Go-Toba, 'the guardian of poets', once wrote the tanka:

*Miwataseba*

***Jamamotokasumu***

*Minasegawa*

***Jube wa akito***

*Nami omoiken*

Sôgi takes a poem from Go-Toba: this is a great honour and is called *honkadori*. A poem never stands alone, it even takes future poems in consideration.

### **process**

It takes about 4 hours to compose a 100 stanza tanka. This is fast, but these are professionals. There is also dictation, when someone writes down on paper with full name of the author and the second character of the poet's name (the first name is that of the master), on the first poem, this makes it his own.

In a poetry contest 0, 1 or 2 points are given, and the poems are immediately judged. Also the 1000-poems renga exists (this takes +- 5 days); the 100 stanza poems are composed on 4 A5 papers (8/14, 14/14, 14/14, 8/14).

Sôgi has written most of the poem; the rhythm is *jô-ha-kyû* (preparation, development, fast finishing). 'Jô' are the first and last 8. *Kireji* (cutting words) make a break and separate topics, 18 *kireji* are allowed (kana). In the 100 stanza poem, there are 4 flowerpoems and 8 moonpoems.

There are **5 topics of renga**: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter and The Rest.

A connection between two stanzas is made by a concept, an atmosphere or by words. Sentences overlap; there is also alliteration.

*Hon'i*: “essential nature”. Some words stand for a typical feeling or season: some flowers only blossom in certain seasons, ‘moon’ is only used in autumn-poems (and if not; you say so, ie ‘summer-moon’).

[Nô-theater. No contact with people, little steps to receive presents]

*Yoshida Renko* writes *Zuihitsu* literature. A work of his is *Tsurezuregusa*, in which he discusses what a good man is: a gentleman, who does not speak too much, drinks moderate, write poems, ...

## 7.2 Plays

### 7.2.1 Chônin

The chônin are merchants with more down-to-earth desires and therefore different aesthetic values, in theater etc. Their subjects are commonly **heroes**, **love affairs** and **suicide**. Here, two new kinds of theater form: Bunkaku/ninyô-jôjori and Kabuki. They still influence popular culture today (like ie ‘Matrix Pingpong’).

In the *ninyô-jôjori*-theater there are three puppeteers for one puppet: one taking the feet, one taking the body and left arm, the last taking the right arm and the head. In the beginning there was only one puppeteer.

### 7.2.2 Kabuki

Kabuki theater is a drama, focused on common people (> < Nô: elite). Kabuki is a little different, it is more shocking.

Kabuki began in 1603, when the female actor *Bokuni* does a religious dance performance at the Kamogatariver in Kyoto, together with various female family members. It was a great success. The performance was called **Onnakabuki** and had erotic as well as comic scenes, since the actresses played prostitutes. There were some quarrels because men were around.

In 1629 the government prohibits female actors on stage. The role of the female characters was then taken by (mostly) young men who played women: **Jawakasha kabuki**. In 1652 the government prohibits young men on stage too, because they became younger and younger. Thus it changed into **Yaro Kabuki**, where all actors were men.

The female character *Onnagata* was the ideal image of womanhood. In the Genroku period it even went so far as that women adapted their style to the kabuki actors, thus the male idea of how a woman should be, transferred by a

male actor. The *Aragato*, or the acting for a male character, was a 'wild style' (Ishikawa Darjurô).

### Stage

The stage was very simple. There was a passway from the stage, called *hanamishi*, so the actors could get in contact with the public. Since 1664 the curtain came in use, and the stage also has flying devices. The early Kabuki pieces borrowed from the Nô theater, with *kyogen* (breaks) and *jôruï* (puppets). Nevertheless there is a different atmosphere: the characters are clear and the story is more complicated. A pose without moving is called *Miie*.

### Audience

The audience was never quiet. They used to shout the name of the actor (and break the creation of the story since they did not shout his characters' name). There also were 'moodblock' prints: with the actor's heads. This was prohibited so people started to depict them like animals.

### Types of pieces

1. Historical: *Jidai-mono*, stories about samurai etc.
2. Domestic: *Sewamono*. About suicide, in context of chônin, love stories, ... This was also often satirical actual and critical approaches.
3. Dance: *Shosagoto*

.....Chikamatsu Monzaemon is one of the first who played in the Kabuki....

### 7.2.3 Haiku

[see enclosure: Haiku]

Derived from Haiku no hokku: first 3 lines of haikai. It is the shortest poem of traditional poetry, from Haitai no renga (comical renga-form) by *Shiki Masaoka*. The problem with translation lies with the syllables, the rhyme and the words (our words are too long, we do not have that tradition; transportation in a different cultural context).

The rules are 5-7-5. Some words are **metaphors**: seasons are smells, feelings, ... (ie cold moon -> winter; cherry blossoms -> spring). **Cutting words**: ie *ki reji, ya, kana*. Are used at the end, perfect ending of poem/pause. **Sounds** are also very important; onomatopées show the state of things.

**Matsuo Bashô** 'banana tree' is the most famous poet of the Edo-period (1644). He was the son of a low-ranked samurai, and worked for a young lord, as friend and to compose poetry. When the lord died, he went to Kyoto, and invented a new style. At 29 years he was in Edo and finished his first volume with

poems. He needed more pupils though, to secure his life and payment. He then bought a small cottage in Fukugawa, the outskirts of Tokyo. His style is very satirical; when the cottage burns down he starts travelling, and studies Zen-Boeddhism 12 years before his death. In 1685 he buys a second hut for his pupils to settle, and in 1689 he journeys out of Japan: in this period he writes his most beautiful poems (ie *Oku no hosomichi* 'narrow road to deep north'). He and his companion and pupil *Sora* start in Nikobashi and go north, to visit places which are described by poets before. He also writes proza, something in-between haiku. *Sarumino*, 'The ape's raincoat', is his most famous poem. In 1691 he returns to Edo to a third hut, with a nanny and a lady friend (in a letter he complains he has no peace of mind). In 1694 he goes to Osaka but dies of a stomach-illness. His last poem is *Tabi ni yande*. The *Shōfu*-school is in Bashō-style.

Two parts, 1 haikai no renga -> 36 poems; Genjūan: notes of Basha, essay, short notes; hokku: roll of 35 haiku

**Ikara Saikaku** was born in Osaka in 1642. He went to the same school as Bashō and starts to write proza-pieces. He is most famous for his *Koshoku Otoko* 'The life of a man in laugh' (1682). This is about a man *Jonosuke*, who is looking for love affairs with women or men. Between 7 and 60 years he travels to an île consisting only out of women, and stays there. The novel was a great success because of the manners and feelings. He wrote mostly for common people.

*Ukiyo-sōshi* are stories related to the pleasure quarters (a common character is the dwarf, who can peep through key-holes). Saikaku also wrote a story of a woman seeking love affairs: *Otoko Onna* tells the story of her life; there is the topic of abortion, with a moral undertow.

[enclosure: 'comrade-loves of two samurai']

**Homosexuality** has a long tradition in Japan. It was introduced from China, and used to be very common in the Heian and Kamakura period. Mostly these were monks accompanied by young servants, or in a military context. In 'comrade-loves of two samurai', these two men find woman love less valuable than mens. The place where they live is a total mess, and they're criminals. Their social skills are non-existent, and their ideas are seen as ridiculous. It is specific, because they are both old. One of them still sees the younger lover; it is weird because samurais always want young boys (the elder teaches the disciple), so their love ends at a certain age but their relationship goes on. This is an example of society-values.

The Chōnin have a new vision: they are **Hedonists** (they enjoy life, based on sex) ~ *Gesaku*, ie *I. Seikaku*. *Jippensha Ikku*: beginning of journey literature (Tokkaido hizakurige: road from Edo to Kyoto): it describes the habits and specializations of a certain neighbourhood.

At the end of the Edo-period, Chinese literature becomes increasingly popular. There even are books about Japan in China, ie *Suikoden*: stories about Chinese heroes (tattoos: Chinese influence on Japanese society). Children have a classical education: they go to *terakoya* 'templeschools' and thus mainly read Chinese books. Nowadays it is based on a Western education, so the influence of Chinese literature decreases.

## 8 Meiji: 1868 - 1912

The first generation of Meiji-writers can still write Chinese; they also have knowledge of German, English, ... The first phase of the Meiji-period is the **translation-phase**, here Western books are being translated. In the second phase Japan will create an **own modern style**, but this involves problems concerning ideas.

In these period, two books have to be mentioned. *Tsubouchi* with *Shajo* 'the essence of the novel', 1885, and *Futabei Shime* with 'Drifting cloud', 1887. These books are both about the writing of literature. Their definition of literature is that a novel has to be psychologically realistic, the language has to be closer to common language and life. Literature cannot be didactic, one should not write to teach something but reveal it out of pure realism. In any case they write about themselves.

*Watakuchi Shosetsu* writes the 'I' story, where he shows his feeling through a character in the book. He is the founder of a literary movement, de *Shizen Shuki*, which stands for naturalism and psychological realism. In this movement, two authors should be mentioned.

- *Natsume Soseki* (1867-1916) had a Chinese, then an English education (in Tokyo, with his foster parents). He studies English and becomes a teacher. His books are mostly about students in relation to a Sensei.
- *Mori Ogai*: was raised in Tokyo with a Western education, later he moves to Germany to study medicine. *Maihime* 'Dancing princess' is told from an I-person, and is about a Japanese person with a German friend.

## 9 Taishô 1912 - 1926

Famous authors are *Akutagawa Tyunosuki*, who writes with an intellectual aestheticism, about society problems. His works are rather for the proletarian people. One of his subjects is the *Kappa* (a story-creature: when he bows the water in his head falls down), it is criticism on capitalism. *Tanizuki Junichirô* writes decadent literature about obsessions, ie 'The old fool', about an old man

who falls in love with the wife of his son. He want a stone image of her feet on his grave.

This literature is famous abroad, but not in Japan. Literature for the proletarian people was a movement during the '20.

## 10 Shôba 1926 - 1989

The '30-ies were conservative-minded, imperialism was the goal of Japanese politics. Because of this, literature and culture was being oppressed, and progressive literature disappeared. *Tenkô* are communists who write how bad it is to write communistic (?). During WWII there is a writer who leaves together with the army to describes what he sees: Japanese heroes in China. However, some authors are not courageous at all, and they are therefore forbidden to write.

From '45 on, an important writer is *Mishima Ukiô*, who committed suicide on '70. He was born in Kyoto and raised by his grandmother. He had a lonely youth but a good education, his style is a typical 'romantic nihilism', a style which is seen in his book 'Confessions of a mask'. In '70 he commits seppuku as a symbol of the Bushido-ideal. He did that after a failed [staatsgreep], but he might have had a writer's block. Another book of his is 'The golden pavilion': it a about a pavilion that is burned down, and the reader has to discover why himself.

*Kawabata Yasunaru* is the first Japanese Nobel-prizewinner, in '68; *Ôe Kensaburô* is the second in '94. He wrote *Kôjintek na Taiken* 'Personal experience', about a boy who is mentally handicapped. Further, we have *Yoshimoto Banana* (female, °64) who writes about the life of the young generation in 'Kitchen'; *Hitomi Kanehara* (female), who wrote a story about the relation of a girl and a punk: 'Precious earrings'.