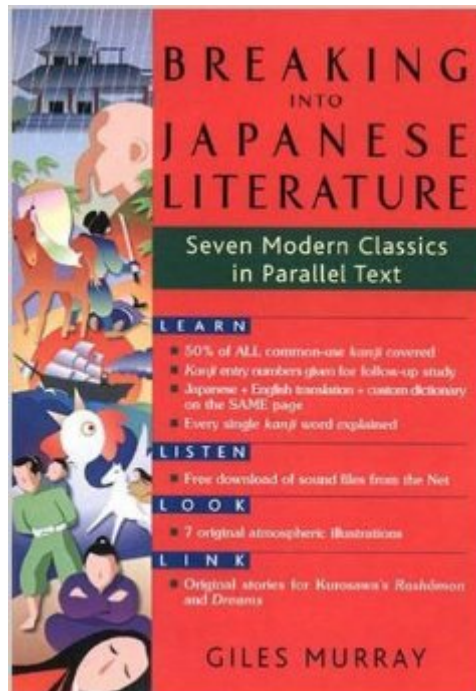


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Breaking Into Japanese Literature: Seven Modern Classics In Parallel Text



Synopsis

Reading great books in the original should be the culmination of language study, but reading Japanese literature unassisted is a daunting task that can defeat even the most able of students. Breaking into Japanese Literature is specially designed to help you bypass all the frustration and actually enjoy classics of Japanese literature. Breaking into Japanese Literature features seven graded stories covering a variety of genres: whether it's the spellbinding surrealism of Natsume Soseki's Ten Nights of Dreams, the humor of Akutagawa Ryunosuke's fable of temple life ("The Nose"), or the excitement of his historic thrillers ("In a Grove" and "Rashomon"), you are sure to find a story that appeals to you in this collection. The unique layout-with the original Japanese story in large print, an easy-to-follow English translation and a custom dictionary-was created for maximum clarity and ease of use. There's no need to spend time consulting reference books when everything you need to know is right there in front of your nose. To make Japanese literature fun, Breaking into Japanese Literature also has some unique extra features: mini-biographies to tell you about the authors' lives and works, individual story prefaces to alert you to related works of literature or film, and original illustrations to fire your imagination. Best of all, MP3 sound files of all the stories have been made available for FREE on the Internet. Breaking into Japanese Literature provides all the backup you need to break through to a new and undiscovered world-the world of great Japanese fiction. All the hard work has been taken care of so you can enjoy the pleasures of the mind. Why not take advantage? Learn o 50% of all common-use kanji covered o Kanji entry numbers given for follow-up study o Japanese + English translation + custom dictionary on the same page o Every single kanji word explained Listen o Free download of sound files from the Net Look o 7 original atmospheric illustrations Link o Original stories for Kurosawa's Rashomon and DreamsAll the stories in this book are available on the Internet as MP3 sound files read by professional Japanese actors. For students who want to consolidate their understanding of kanji, the entry numbers for any of the 2,230 characters in The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary have been provided when those characters feature in Breaking into Japanese Literature. This makes cross-referencing a matter of seconds.

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Customer Reviews

This is absolutely brilliant. The stories are interesting and captivating, and never too long to overtly intimidate or tire the reader. You start with really short stories, and as your confidence with reading literary Japanese increases, the stories get longer and more complicated. I have learned and cemented more from reading this novel than by any other method but immersion experiences in Japan. I have a huge collection of modern Japanese literature and, though it was inaccessible before, this novel has made reading, guessing, and understanding Japanese fiction a blast. Note: it won't stop being difficult, even after this. But the satisfaction of reading and comprehending a story in its original language, and being able to find fault in translations and such, is a really remarkable experience. Highly recommended, and I hope to see a volume 2! I would buy it in a heartbeat!

This book went beyond my expectations. First of all, let me say that you will never get frustrated while reading this. All the information you need is right there, including definitions of the words, furigana, and the English translation. It is also nice that they place the English on the right side of the book while the Japanese is on the left, which makes it easier not to cheat while reading but still keeps the English conveniently close. The words' definitions are on the bottom of the page, which makes them easy to find so you don't have to go looking up words in a dictionary or in the back. Another extremely useful aspect is the kanji listing number. This is in conjunction with The Kodansha Kanji Learner's Dictionary. Beside the kanji listed underneath the text is a number in brackets which indicates the number in the Kanji Learner's Dictionary so you can easily look up the kanji. It is really quite convenient. The overall stories are also fascinating and not at all childish as one might imagine. They are twisted and mysterious, and hold your interest easily. Yet they are short enough to reduce any feelings of boredom or fatigue you might feel from the effort of reading the text. As mentioned, the stories begin short and easy and progress into longer, more complicated

text. Beautiful, laudable choices for study. Finally, the ability to download the mp3s of the spoken text draws a blissful sigh of contentment from me. Not only can you practice reading it, but listening as well. So your pronunciation does not suffer and you can improve your speaking skills. There is nothing they could add to this book to make it any better than it already is. Buy this book and prepare to feel satisfied beyond what you expected.

There comes a time when any student of Japanese must dare to read his first book of Japanese literature in the original. "Breaking into Japanese Literature" was the perfect book to prepare me for this step. I have read many translations of modern and contemporary Japanese literature in the past few years and for every English book I read I made sure to buy the Japanese original as well (I live in Tokyo where second hand Japanese books can be found at about the 20th of the price of their translations so this is a very small investment). Now, after spending a few weeks with Mr Murray's book I have finally broken into that unused part of my library. I have been particularly pleased with the selection of authors and stories as I have always hoped to read Soseki and Akutagawa in Japanese. The stories are captivating, the translation is very careful and elegant and the narration provided online is a wonderful bonus. My Japanese teacher always advised me to read aloud in Japanese, the narrations provided here are not only very entertaining but also very useful.

I love this book. Where else can you expand your vocabulary, learn and retain new kanji, and develop your reading skills, all while reading a truly kick-ass story? And believe me, the stories are great. You've got "Dreams", a sometimes macabre, sometimes funny exercise in surrealism. There's "In a Grove", a page-turner of a murder mystery. My favorite is "Rashomon", which surprised me with its black humor. I also love the fact that the book is so compact. You can read it on the train (as I do) without announcing to the world that that you're another gaijin trying to learn Japanese. This is a tool whose value far outweighs its price.

The presentation of these stories makes it possible for a Japanese student at almost any level to read and enjoy a piece of lovely literature. The only absolute necessity is to master your hiragana. There is almost no katagana and about every single kanji is translated once at the bottom of each page, where it appears. This means that you can start reading any story, and a complete translation will be there for you. Even someone who already reads Japanese without difficulty will be charmed by the stories and the corresponding well acted mp3-files, which can be downloaded on the internet. This is easily the most interesting and well structured bilingual Japanese book I have found

so far.

I've studied Nihongo for 2 months and only know 175 kanji but bought this anyway to motivate myself. As expected it's beyond my reading level, but I was able to recognize some kanji and get a feel for how "real" JP differs from the exercises in Genki I-II. I'll read the easiest story again in 6 months and again in 1 year to check my progress. The MP3 file for Soseki's "First Night" is a treat for the ears and while I only understand the 1st sentence ("I had a dream") I have a better grasp of proper Japanese pronunciation and pace -- unlike Pimsleur CDs which are artificially slow by necessity. Even if you're a rank beginner like me -- I highly recommend owning this.

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