



August 7th, 2004.

SEATTLE PUBLISHER TAKES READERS INTO THE MIND OF MODERN JAPAN

Kuhaku & Other Accounts from Japan delves into everything from taking out the garbage to cheating on your spouse

Chin Music Press Inc. announces the release of *Kuhaku & Other Accounts of Japan*, a collection of essays and artwork that takes an unblinking look at life in Japan. *Kuhaku* will be available at select bookstores in the US and Japan and online at Chin Music's website (www.chinmusicpress.com) for \$29.50 from the end of August.

Kuhaku consists of 14 essays, two works of fiction, dozens of pages of artwork and a unique glossary of Japanese terms that provides readers with opinionated, personal and often humorous insights. The collection includes works from 14 talented writers and artists on topics as varied as taking out the garbage to cheating on your spouse.

The book was designed by Craig Mod, art director of Chin Music Press, and edited by Bruce Rutledge, founder of the Seattle-based company.

"During my 15 years in Japan, I came across so many great tales that had yet to be published and other stories that hadn't received the exposure I felt they deserved," Rutledge says. "*Kuhaku* is a collection of these stories. It is travel writing with a twist: The Japanese writers provide windows into the mind of modern Japan. And the expat writers have spent so much time in Japan that they are trapped in that void where Japan is no longer foreign. It has become their home — albeit an ill-fitting and often frustrating home."

Contributions include:

- ◆ Sharon Moshavi on beating up a groper: "I smacked him with the flat of my hand. Then I did it again, and again. He just stood there with bloodshot, drunken eyes. I got even angrier. I kept hitting him ... Where in the world did all that anger come from?"
- ◆ Translated excerpts from *Tsuma no Koi: Tatoe Furin to Yobarete Mo* (Wives in Love: Even if it's Called Immoral

— from Astra K.K., July 2004) by Sumie Kawakami: "When doing the laundry, he would wash everything but my underwear, which he would leave at the bottom of the washing machine ... Is my existence so filthy?"

◆ Roland Kelts talking with Haruki Murakami: "(Murakami's) younger Japanese readers respond to what he calls a 'feeling of insecurity in a world of no system or discipline,' a kind of free-floating anomie that feels inevitable amid Japan's eerily sterile urban landscape."

◆ Expert advice on funerals and other customs from Cal Ranson: "When the fat priest arrives by scooter at his appointed time, feel free to ignore him and any ritual he performs near the body — he's only in it for the money."

◆ Canned coffee tastings with David Cady: "Smells like an unchanged diaper ... Initial band-aid overtones ease into a surprisingly smooth finish with hints of charcoal."

◆ And Wil Fennell's rantings from Kyoto: "Some of us live here, and that means something, even though it doesn't sound exotic or esoteric. All your talk about 'Japan' and the 'Japanese,' about 'Zen this' and 'satori that' — you don't know a thing about it, you pretentious pricks."

Plus, the guerrilla art of kozyndan, Peyote's retro sketches, a walk through the floating world with Sho Akuma, Robert Juppe Jr.'s Christmas with the dogs, Takehiko Kamabayashi on Japan's domestic violence crisis, and much more.

Chin Music Press gets its name — and its mission — from the varied meanings of the phrase "chin music." Mark Twain used it in 1872 to describe the eloquent way a preacher spoke. Flapper girls in the Roaring Twenties used it as a synonym for gossip. And it's still heard today from baseball announcers when a pitcher like Kerry Wood throws one of those high-and-tight fastballs that is meant to tell the batter: "Next time, it's your noggin."

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