



# Junrei

[Pilgrimage]

By Hashimoto Osamu

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巡礼  
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Today's young Japanese minimalists, who wish only for their smartphones and a small set of bare essentials to accompany them, may think of paper books and fashionable clothes as inherently undesirable rubbish. At the same time, we cannot ignore the existence of the nation's compulsive hoarders, living in houses overflowing with trash they cannot discard.

The novel's protagonist, a man in his seventies, is possessed by the obsessive belief that discarding a thing "transforms and eradicates all meaning from the time I've lived." Having experienced Japan's World War II defeat as a sensitive youth, Tadaichi appeared destined to lead an innocuous existence as the inheritor of a hardware shop in suburban Tokyo. Yet his son died, his wife left him, and the family business fell behind the times with the end of the country's high-growth period, leading to an ugly present. The novel uncovers the background to his personal situation while telling the postwar history of the outskirts of the capital.

When families and society are on an upward trend, there is no end to renewal and rejuvenation. Once they start to decline, however, people are subjected to emotional instability and their desire for living is eroded. The refuse that ordinarily passes out of our lives with the times begins to pile up. . . . The story of one man's ruin cuts to the heart of the issues that are inherent in the end of our modern, mass-consumption society, providing considerable food for thought. (OM)

## Hashimoto Osamu

Born in 1948. Writes across a broad range of fields, including fiction, criticism, essays, and modern translations of classic works. Received the Kobayashi Hideo Prize in 2002 for *Mishima Yukio to wa nani mono datta no ka* [Who Was Mishima Yukio?]. Other works include *Yōben Genji monogatari* [An Altered Tale of Genji], *Sōjō Heike monogatari* [The Tale of the Heike in a Different Key], "Ai no botan'yuki" [trans. *Peony Snowflakes of Love*], and *Jōruri o yomō* [Reading the *Jōruri* Chanting Style].



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## 橋本治

1948年生まれ。小説・評論・エッセイ・古典の現代語訳など、多彩な執筆活動を行う。2002年『三島由紀夫』とはなにものだったのか』で小林秀雄賞を受賞。他に『窈窕 源氏物語』『双調 平家物語』『愛の牡丹雪』『浄瑠璃を読もう』など。

スマホと必要最小限の生活用品しか求めない、昨今の若いミニマリストからすれば、紙の本も流行の服も、はじめから不要なゴミに思えるのかもしれない。ところが一方では、モノを一切捨てずゴミ屋敷に立てこもる人びとの存在も、日本の社会は無視できなくなっている。

もし、モノを片づけてしまったら、<生きて来た時間が、「無意味」というものに变质して、消滅してしまう>。この長編の主人公は、そんな強迫観念にとりつかれた70代の男だ。多感な少年期に敗戦を迎え、東京郊外の荒物屋の跡取りとして無難な人生が続くはずだったこの男、<sup>なだいう</sup>恵市が、息子を亡くし、妻に家出され、高度成長期の終焉とともに家業が時代に取り残され、醜悪な現在に至る。その個人生活の経緯を、本作は東京郊外の戦後史と重ねながら掘り起こしていく。

家族も社会も、右肩上がりで成長しているうちは新陳代謝が滞ることはない。それが下落へ転じた途端、人間の情緒は揺らぎ、暮らしへの意欲はそがれる一方となり、ゴミは時代とともに流れ去ってはくれず、堆積し始める……。一人の男の破滅の物語は、近代の大衆消費社会の終焉に潜む問題を深くえぐり、示唆に富む。(OM)

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