

Ryū
[Drift]

By Higashiyama Akira

Kōdansha, 2015. 408 pp. ¥1,600. ISBN 978-4-06-219485-3.

流

東山 彰良

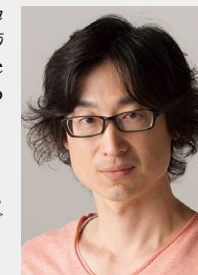
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Taiwan, 1975: In this year marked by the death of the generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, the novel's young protagonist, Qiusheng, loses his grandfather, brutally killed by a person or persons unknown. His grandfather had fought for the Kuomintang against the Communists in mainland China before fleeing to Taiwan after their defeat. There are stories that he was also involved in some grisly incidents during World War II, including the massacre of a Chinese clan suspected of working for the Japanese Army. But who would want to kill him now, when those events are far distant memory? And why? These are the questions that constantly gnaw at Qiusheng throughout an impressionable, reckless youth. When he is discovered taking an important exam on behalf of a disreputable friend, he finds himself stuck in a school for students with no prospects, regularly getting into fights and experiencing his first taste of the joys and sorrows of love. Later, visiting Japan and finally China, he comes face-to-face with the secrets surrounding his grandfather's death.

The author's family, originally from Taiwan, moved to Japan when the author was nine years old. This background gives the book literary significance as a story by a writer who could be categorized as an immigrant author, tracing his roots in Japanese. But more important still are the natural flow and humor of the writing and its thrilling story. Combining a requiem to his father's and grandfather's generations with a coming-of-age story, this is a remarkable bildungsroman with universal appeal. (NK)

Higashiyama Akira

Born in Taiwan in 1968. Lived in Taipei until he was five and then moved to Japan when he was nine years old. Won the Silver Prize and Readers' Choice Prize in the "Kono Misuteri ga Sugoi" (This Mystery Is Amazing) Awards in 2002 for *Tōbōsahō: Tādo on za ran* [Turd on the Run], the Haruhiko Ōyabu Award in 2009 for *Robō* [On the Roadside], the Naoki Prize in 2015 for *Ryū*, and the Chūōkōron Literary Prize in 2016 for *Tsumi no owari* [An End to Sin].



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東山 彰良

1968年台湾生まれ。5歳まで台北で過ごした後、9歳のときに日本に移る。2002年『逃亡作法—TURD ON THE RUN』で『このミステリーがすごい!』大賞銀賞/読者賞を受賞。2009年『路傍』で大藪春彦賞、2015年『流』で直木賞、2016年『罪の終わり』で中央公論文芸賞を受賞。

台湾、1975年。偉大なる総統、蒋介石が亡くなったその年、主人公の秋生の祖父は何者かに惨殺される。祖父は、かつて蒋介石率いる国民党の一員として共産党と戦ったものの敗れ、台湾に渡った。大陸では戦争のとき、日本軍の傀儡だった中国人の一族を滅ぼすなど、かなり血まぐさい事件にかかわったこともあるらしい。しかしそんな記憶もはるか遠くなっただけ、いったい誰が、なぜ祖父を殺害したのか？ 秋生はその謎を胸の内に抱えながら、多感な、そして無軌道な青春時代を過ごす。幼なじみの悪友に頼まれて高校を替え玉受験したのがばれて、底辺校に進まざるを得なくなった秋生は、喧嘩に明けくれ、恋の喜びや悲しみも知る。やがて秋生は日本、そして中国を訪れ、祖父殺害の驚くべき秘密にじわじわと近づいていく。

作者の一家は台湾人で、作者が9歳のときに一家で日本に渡ってきた。いわば移民作家が日本語で自らのルーツを掘り下げた文学として、この作品は貴重な意味を持つ。しかもその文章は実にのびやかでユーモアに満ち、血沸き肉躍る物語の楽しみに満ちている。自らの父、祖父の世代へのレクイエムであると同時に、青春小説として普遍的な魅力を持つ傑作の誕生だ。(NK)

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