

# Essays in Idleness and Hojoki (Penguin Classics)

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New to Penguin Classics: two of the most important Buddhist tracts from Japan

Both of these works on life's fleeting pleasures are by Buddhist monks from medieval Japan, but each represents a different worldview. In *Essays in Idleness*, his lively and sometimes ribald collection of anecdotes, advice, and observations, Kenko displays his fascination with earthly matters. In the short memoir *Hojoki*, however, Chomei recounts his decision to withdraw from worldly affairs and live as a hermit.

For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

KENKO (1238-?) was born in Kyoto. He became a monk probably in his late twenties, and was also noted as a calligrapher. Today he is remembered for his wise and witty aphorisms.

CHOMEI (1155-1216) was born into a family of Shinto priests at a time when the stable world of the court was rapidly breaking up. He became an important poet of his day, and at the age of fifty withdrew from the world to become a tonsured monk.

MEREDITH MCKINNEY (translator / introducer) is a translator of Japanese literature, both contemporary and classical, and has translated *The Pillow Book* and *Kokoro* for Penguin Classics. She lived in Japan for twenty years and is currently a visiting fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra. [*Essays in Idleness* is] a most delightful book, and one that has served as a model of Japanese style and taste since the 17th century. These cameo-like vignettes reflect the importance of the little, fleeting, futile things, and each essay is Kenko himself \* Asian Student \*

Other Books

Wabi-Sabi. Wabi Sabi ist ein jahrhundertealtes Konzept, das Schönheit in der Unvollkommenheit erkennt und die Vergänglichkeit aller Dinge akzeptiert. Damit ist es das ideale Gegengift zu unserer perfektionistischen, konsumorientierten Zeit. Die Japanologin Beth Kempton zeigt, wie sich Wabi Sabi bei uns zu Hause, bei der Arbeit und in unserer Haltung zu uns selbst umsetzen lässt. Die Wertschätzung alter Gebrauchsgegenstände, die Wahrnehmung des Augenblicks und der respektvolle Umgang mit Natur und Mitmenschen gehören ebenso zu Wabi Sabi wie die positive Umdeutung vermeintlicher Makel und das Friedensschließen mit sich selbst.

McKinney Meredith): *Essays in Idleness and Hojoki* (Penguin Classics, London 2013)  
Kerr, Alex: *Another Kyoto* (Sekai Bunka Publishing, Tokyo 2016) Kerr Alex: *Lost Japan* (Penguin, London 2015) Kodansha International (Hrsg.): *The Kodansha ...*