

Autumn, 2024  
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## Signs of Autumn

This year, a TV drama starring Murasaki Shikibu, the author of *The Tale of Genji*, is attracting people's attention. It is the oldest Japanese full-length novel completed about one thousand years ago and has been read for over a thousand years.

The main character is the radiantly beautiful and talented prince, Hikaru Genji. Seeking the image of his beautiful mother, who passed away when she was very young, he falls in love with many women. Now, he is also famous as a manga character.

The author, Murasaki Shikibu, was a court lady who worked at the Imperial Court and wrote beautiful prose about the aristocratic society of the era when imperial culture was developing. She wrote it a thousand years ago, which is



surprising considering the literacy rate of that time. Murasaki Shikibu was fluent in classical Chinese, mainly used by men, and was a master of the string instrument *sou*. She understood *mono no aware* (deeply felt emotions), and is one of the Thirty-Six Immortal Poets.

In addition to *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu also wrote many waka poems, diary entries, and letters about the Imperial Court in her *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, which contains a famous passage entitled *The Signs of Autumn*.

*As autumn approaches, the Tsuchimikado residence is enveloped in a beautiful atmosphere that cannot be described in words. The treetops around the pond and the grass along the banks of the Yari-mizu River (brought in the flow of water to enjoy the atmosphere) are all beautifully colored, and the surrounding sky is also filled with a truly breathtaking charm.*

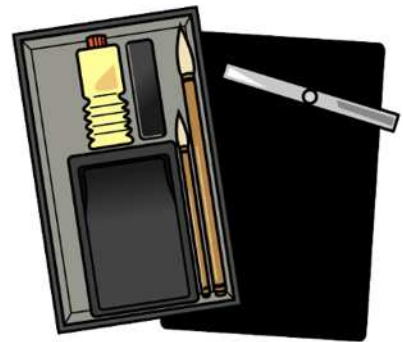
*The continuous chanting of sutras (for the Empress' safe delivery) is enhanced by these, making it even more moving. As the wind gradually cools, the constant sound of the stream continues all night, making it difficult to distinguish between wind and water. (Modern Japanese translation)*



Unlike today, at that time, there were almost no means of transportation and no air conditioning. And perhaps it was because the main way of communication was limited to writing, their sensitivity to nature and other people's

hearts was honed. Murasaki Shikibu's intuition, the sharpening of her five senses in a limited space, and her perception of the signs of autumn were amazing. It makes one feel a kind of envy, doesn't it?

Perhaps, we, people who live today would also like to have the luxury of putting down our smartphones occasionally, taking a deep breath, pouring a little water into the inkstone, and enjoying the scent of the ink, grinding of the ink. We could look up the moon, think about the changes in people and nature, and slowly pick up our brushes to write.



## Information from Nerima City Regional Promotion Section

### <Welcome to Information Desk at Cultural Exchange Square>

We provide all sorts of useful information in some languages for your daily life, including Japanese language classes and so on.

【Venue】 3-1-1、Hikarigaoka, Nerima City

【Telephone number】 03-3975-1252

【Open】 Weekday 10:00a.m.-1:00p.m.

Saturday, Sunday, holidays 1:00-4:00p.m.

※Closed: When Culture Exchange Square is closed, and the end of year and new year holidays.

【Languages】 English : Tue. Thu. Sat. Chinese: Wed. Fri. Sun.

Korean : Mon. ※Please make inquiries for other languages.

### <Please visit the Information Desk at Nerima City Office>

Counseling service in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog and Japanese is available at Nerima City Regional Promotion Section. Counseling on phone is also available.

【Venue】 Regional Promotion Office, 9<sup>th</sup> floor of Nerima City Main Building  
6-12-1, Toyotamakita, Nerima City

【Telephone Number】 03-5984-4333

【Open】 1:00p.m.-5:00p.m.

【Languages】 English : Mon.~Fri. Chinese : Mon.~Fri.

Korean : Fri. Tagalog : Mon.

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### We hold events where Japanese and foreigners can interact with each other.

#### For more information

【Nerima City Official HP】

<https://www.city.nerima.tokyo.jp/gaikokunohitomuke/bunka.html>

【QR】



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