

2017/01/30

The Top 50 Japanese Novels of 2016



## The Top 50 Japanese Novels of 2016 Japanese Writers' House & Da Vinci



Here's the bestseller list from the January issue of *Da Vinci*—one of Japan's leading book review and cultural magazines—showing the top fifty bestselling Japanese novels published between October 2015 and September 2016. The list reflects nationwide sales data collected through polling various networks, including major bookstores. Japanese Writer's House is proud to present this essential bestseller list in English, made possible by our collaboration with KADOKAWA, the publisher of *Da Vinci*. Do take a look!



### 1 *Kimi no na wa. [your name.]*

Makoto Shinkai  
KADOKAWA

After having a strange dream in which they switch bodies, Mitsuha and Taki wake up to find that it has become a reality. However, a short while later, Taki finds that he has returned to his original body. Not knowing the name of her hometown and relying solely on his memory and sketches, Taki journeys in search of Mitsuha, but with unforeseen consequences... The original book-version of the hit anime!

### 2 *Konbini-ningen [Convenience Store Person]*

Sayaka Murata  
Bungeishunju Ltd.

36 and unmarried, Keiko has been working at a convenience store for 18 years. According to her, this manually operated store is a haven, a place where she feels completely at ease. Enter Shiraha, a newbie part-timer, who is all set to change things. Fluctuating between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal,' and throwing it into sharp relief, is *Konbini-ningen*, winner of the 155th Akutagawa Prize.



### 3 *Sabumarin [Submarine]*

Isaka Kotaro  
Kodansha

It has been 12 years since the release of *Children* and its much-awaited sequel is finally out. The protagonists are none other than family court examiners Jinnai and Muto. This time, they are dealing with a case in which a 19-year old boy without a driver's license hits and kills a man while driving. But behind this sensational incident lies a link to an unfortunate tragedy...

### 4 *Rikuoh [Sovereign of the Land]*

Jun Ikeido  
Shueisha Inc.

Business-novel expert Jun Ikeido has chosen the setting for his next book: shoe manufacturing. In order to sustain the company and continue operations, the 4th president of a veteran cloth-

manufacturer 'Kohaze-ya', located in Saitama, introduces and implements a new business plan that uses the company's know-how to develop a new product: running shoes. But can a small-scale enterprise ever become a global sports brand!?



### 5 *Anma to bokura* [Anma and Us]

Hiro Arikawa  
Kodansha

For the sake of filial piety towards Haruko - his father's second wife and his stepmother - Ryo, returns to Okinawa. While out sightseeing with Haruko one day, he experiences a miraculous moment where dreams and reality intermingle. Inspired by music artist Kariyushi58's famous song 'Anma,' comes this moving story about family.

### 6 *Shitamachi roketto 2: gaudi keikaku* [Downtown Rocket 2: The Gaudi Project]

Jun Ikeido  
Shogakukan

Following the 145th Naoki prize-winner *Shitamachi roketto* comes its sequel, *Shitamachi roketto 2: gaudi keikaku*. While the first book follows the story of a company that produces special rocket valve systems, the second sees the same company embarking on a mission to develop an artificial heart valve called 'Gaudi,' by employing unconventional methods.



### 7 *Kiboso* [Hope Manor]

Miyuki Miyabe  
Shogakukan

Centered on the investigation behind the truth of a confession, "I killed someone," left behind by a client's dead father... And a mother's concern for the safety of her partner that she lost contact with after an earthquake... Solving four mysterious cases is Private Investigator Sugimura Saburo's challenge. The newest book in the much-anticipated series.

### 8 *Tensai* [Genius]

Shintaro Ishihara  
Gentosha Inc.

A biographical account spanning half of former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka's lifetime, *Tensai* looks back on his unique modus operandi, his entry into politics, the normalization of Japan-China diplomatic relations, and his involvement in the Lockheed case. It brings to light the true spirit of the man who built Japan.



### 9 *Ningyo no nemuru ie* [Where Mermaids Sleep]

Keigo Higashino  
Gentosha

Kaoruko, a housewife going through the motions of being married, decides to stay married only until her daughter Mizuho's primary school exam is over. But one day, a tragic accident leads to Mizuho becoming brain-dead. When her daughter's condition takes a turn for the worse, Kaoruko must make a difficult decision... Released on the 30th anniversary of the author's debut!

### 10 *Kaeru no rakuen* [Pleasure Garden of the Frogs]

Naoki Hyakuta  
SHINCHOSHA

A group of frogs looking for a peaceful place to live arrive at the seemingly harmonious country of Napaj. It is a country where the inhabitants abide by '3 Commandments' without question. But in these precepts, it appears that there is something strange...



### 11 *Nanisama* [Who do you think you are?]

Ryo Asai  
SHINCHOSHA



From the same collection of stories that sparked the live action film "Nanimono," comes another story Nanisama. Kotaro, previously a member of a band, aims to join a publishing company, and encounters people like Rika and Takayoshi... Six stories that complete "Nanimono" come together to make up this short compilation.

### 12 *Anmaku no Guernica* [Guernica Undercover]

Maha Harada  
SHINCHOSHA

Picasso's masterpiece with a strong anti-war message is 'Guernica.' When this famous tapestry disappears from the lobby of the UN headquarters, an international conspiracy is uncovered in the art world. An art suspense-thriller.



### 13 *Tokyo kaikan to watashi* [Tokyo Kaikan and I]

Mizuki Tsujimura  
Mainichi Shimbun Publishing

Tokyo Kaikan, known for hosting the Akutagawa Prize and Naoki Prize press conferences, forms the backdrop for this debut historical novel. Spanning a period of nearly 100 years, this book describes the glitter and glamour of the various people that visited the Tokyo Kaikan and their interwoven lives. A deeply impactful title.

### 14 *Youki na gangu ha mitsu kazoeru* [Three Cheerful Gangs]

Kotaro Isaka  
Shodensha

Talented pick-pocket Kuon saves Hijiri from being beaten up. A 'hyena' reporter who doesn't protect the privacy of the victim at any cost, Hijiri find outs that Kuon is a member of a gang called 'the cheerful gang'... A new release from this popular series for the first time in 9 years!



### 15 *Akinai seiden kin to gin - 2 hayase hen* [The Coming of Age of Sachi: Book 2]

Kaoru Takada  
Kadokawa Haruki Corporation

Sachi is a 14 year-old girl who works as an apprentice in a kimono shop in Osaka Tenma called 'Go Suzuya.' With talks of her becoming the second wife to the owner, what path will Sachi choose for herself? The young 14 year-old girl comes of age, in this second book in the series.

### 16 *Tsubaki bunguten* [The Tsubaki Stationery Shop]

Ito Ogawa  
Gentosha

Hatoko owns and runs the Tsubaki Stationery Store in Kamakura. And although the shop sells stationery, its main specialty is providing a letter writing service. Season's greetings, condolence notes, break-up letters... By writing all these letters, one after the other, what does Hatoko finally discover?



### 17 *Mata, onaji yume o miteita* [I dreamt the same dream again]

Sumino Yoru  
Futabasha

Nanoka looks down on all her classmates at school, and only has four friends: Minami, Abazure, her Grandma, and a black cat. With her four friends, Nanoka goes looking for the definition of happiness. However... This is Sumino Yoru's much-anticipated second novel.

### 18 *Kiken na venus* [Dangerous Venus]

Keigo Higashino  
Kodansha

In the veterinary hospital where Hakuro works, the phone rings. The caller, who introduces herself as his younger brother's wife, is a mysterious woman called Kaede. It appears that

Takuro's brother has somehow disappeared. But where has he gone? And what is Kaede's true nature?



### 19 An to seishun [Springtide]

Tsukasa Sakaki  
Kobunsha

From the author of the quotidian mystery, Wagashi no an, comes the much-awaited sequel: another story set around An, who loves sweets, and a Japanese confectionary shop called 'Mitsuya.' Only this time, there are new characters and new employees working in the shop, making the book even more interesting.

### 19 Poizon dottaa. Hoorii maza [Poison Daughter. Holy Mother]

Kanae Minato  
Kobunsha

In Poison daughter. Holy Mother, where 'toxic parents' continues to be the theme... and in My Dearest, describing a feud between two sisters, Kanae Minato returns to her characteristic and original story-telling style. Poison Daughter, Holy Mother is a compilation that showcases six of her best stories



### 21 Umi no mieru rihatsuten [The Barbershop by the Sea]

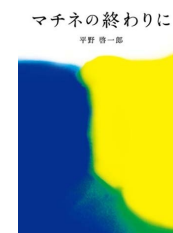
Hiroshi Ogiwara  
SHUEISHA

"I dropped by the seaside barbershop and the talkative owner there began to tell me the story of his life..." This collection of six short-stories is filled with unexpectedly heart-warming narratives that bring to light the subtle feelings of distance that exist between two people, and their different realities. The winner of the 155th Naoki Prize.

### 22 Machine no owari ni [At the end of the Matinee]

Keiichiro Hirano  
Mainichi Shimbun Publishing

Makino, a 38 year-old guitarist, and Yoko, a 40 year-old journalist, are instantly attracted to each other from the moment they meet. But their star-crossed love affair is fraught with misunderstandings, and finally, they are forced to go their separate ways. This is a novel about a love affair between two adults that makes us think about our pasts and the future.



### 23 Shosetsu no kamisama [The God of Novels]

Sako Aizawa  
Kodansha

Kazuya, a high-school student, is an author whose books are not selling. At the suggestion of his editor, he collaborates with another author, Shina, who is of the same age and very popular, to write a novel. While they are writing their story, Kazuya discovers that Shina is hiding a secret. Will the two writers ever be able to complete their novel?

### 24 Kanashimi no Irene [Sadness of Irene]

Pierre Lemaitre  
Bungeishunju

Camus is investigating a gruesome murder. Before long, he stumbles upon the frightening truth that had been kept hidden... This is the debut book of the French author who became widely known for his book Alex, finally available in a translated version!



### 25 Shinjitsu no 10 metoru temae [10 Meters from the Truth]

Honobu Yonezawa  
Tokyo Sogensha

This is a compilation of short mystery stories recounting the activities of freelance journalist Machi. Exposing a venture that went bankrupt, a story that follows the disappearance of Mari, the mysterious suicide of a high school student on 'lovers leap,' and more... This compilation reveals the facts behind six incidents.

**26 Stigmata [Stigmata]**

Fumie Kondo  
SHINCHOSHA

Menenko, who competed in the Tour De France, a bicycle race that takes place on the highest mountain ridge in the world, is a world hero. However, he is banished from the industry after being implicated in a doping scandal. But what were his true motives? Before long, the entire race is cast with the shadow of impropriety and turbulence...

**27 Tsumi no koe [The Voice of Sin]**

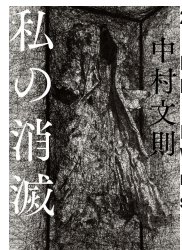
Takeshi Shiota  
Kodansha Inc.

While going through his late father's possessions, Toshiya finds a cassette tape. On the tape is a recording of his own voice from when he was a child. It also appears to be the same recording that was used in the 'Ginga and Yorozudo' extortion case 31 years prior... A story based on the Glico Morinaga case.

**28 X no higeki [The Tragedy of X]**

Hiroshi Mori  
Kodansha

Fumiko works as a researcher for a Hong Kong-based company. One day, during a conference meeting, a man named Enda throws a question at her concerning an airplane accident that occurred in Aichi Prefecture. But what is his real motive? The final book in Hiroshi Mori's popular mystery series trilogy is finally out!

**29 Watashi no shometsu [Annihilation]**

Fuminori Nakamura  
Bungeishunju

If you turn this page, you may lose everything that you have in your life... When the pages of this narrative are turned, the story unfolds. Memory loss, malice, brainwashing... This is a powerful novel with disturbing words scattered throughout it.

**30 Saka no tochuu no ie [The House on the Slope]**

Mitsuyo Kakuta  
Asahi Shimbun Publications

One day, housewife Risako, is chosen to be a substitute judge at a criminal trial. The accused is Mizuho, a mother who killed her own infant. Before long, Rikako finds herself entangled in the case and caught up in Mizuho's circumstances...

**31 Saitei [Nasty]**

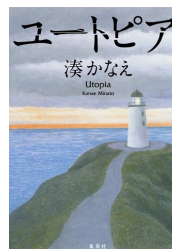
Mana Sakura  
KADOKAWA

This is the debut book by an author who is an active female porn star. Featuring girls like Ayano, who have kept their activities a secret from their families, this is the story of four female porn stars and the lives and personalities of the various people that surround them.

**32 Utopia [Utopia]**

Kanae Minato  
SHUEISHA

Nanako, Mitsuki, and Sumire are three women living in a seaside town, who meet by chance. In order to be helpful to society, they decide to volunteer at a foundation called Clara no Tsubasa. However, thanks to their overly good intentions towards each other, their relationship gradually crumbles...





### 33 *Kanji no akko-chan* [Executive Secretary Akko]

Asako Yuzuki  
Futabasha

This third title in the popular series will make you think about what it means to work. Whether it's dealing with the 'Satori (Enlightened) Generation' male employees or hostile features reporters, this time, too, the entertaining Akko gets the better of them with her clever wit!

### 33 *jajjimento* [Judgement]

Yuka Kobayashi  
Futabasha

In a Japan in which the crime rate has increased greatly, a new law is born – the Law of Revenge. But in a world where a crime can be lawfully avenged, can the victims truly be saved?



### 35 *Shoten Girl 5* – Light Novels and Literature [Book Store Girl 5]

Kei Aono  
PHP Institute

Ayaka works as the store manager of a small bookstore inside Toride Station, where she ends up employing self-proclaimed NEET Tanaka as a part-time employee. However... This is the fifth book in the highly popular series.

### 36 *Tama yori hime* [Princess of Jade]

Chisato Abe  
Bungeishunju

This author's newest Japanese fantasy describes 'Sandai,' a spirit-world in the mountains inhabited by the Gods. In this book, Shiho, a high school girl who becomes a scapegoat for the mountain gods beseeches the protagonist to uncover and reveal the secrets of Sandai.



### 37 *Kohii ga samenai uchi ni* [Before the Coffee Gets Cold]

Toshikazu Kawaguchi  
Sunmark Publishing

Funiculi-Funicular is a café, where it is rumored that you can go back in time. Amongst the people that visit this café are four women, who are waiting to go back to a past that they cannot forget. But when faced with their past, what do these women discover?

### 38 *Okitegami kyoko no kakeibo* [The Record Book of Kyoko Okitegami]

Ishin Nishio  
Kodansha

Kyoko is a well-known detective whose memory gets reset each time she sleeps. A murder in a mountain cottage, a game of escape from an amusement park... The pace quickens in this volume as she gets closer and closer to solving the mysteries!



### 39 *Akogare* [Attraction]

Mieko Kawakami  
SHINCHOSHA

Mugihiko and Hegarty are primary school students. Told from both their perspectives, this story recounts the feelings of 'attraction' that they experience during their innocent, coming-of-age years. This is the author's first new novel in 4 years.

**40 Banno kanteishi Q no saishukan [The Final Volume of Universal Appraiser Q]**

Matsuoka Keisuke  
Kodansha

The popular series finally comes to an end with this volume. Universal Appraiser Riko's last case concerns the theft of Munch's painting, "The Scream." And will her relationship with Yuuto Kasahara ever reach its conclusion!?

**40 Kagi no kakatta otoko [The Man who was Locked up]**

Alice Arisugawa  
Gentosha

In an incident that occurs in a small Osaka hotel, a man is found to have committed suicide under suspicious circumstances. Criminologist Hideo Himura comes forward to solve the mystery. For the first time in 13 years comes a new novel from this popular series.

**42 Kudakechiru tokoro o misete ageru [I'll show you where it's scattered]**

Yuuko Takemiya  
SHINCHOSHA

Kiyosumi saves a female student who is being bullied, but the person who should have saved her is Hari. From him however, Kiyosumi hears a loud shout and faces rejection. What could this mean? Gradually, the darkness that the girl carries inside her is revealed...

**42 Mama naranai kara watashi to anata [Mismatched]**

Ryo Asai  
Bungeishunju

Kaoru thinks highly of efficiency, while Yukiko values useless things; Mei Kiba, who works as a "friend-for-rent," while Yuuta, simply cannot understand such a thing... This is a novel brimming with differences in values.

**44 Iru konnintan [The Tale of An Inharmonious Marriage]**

Yukiko Motoya  
Kodansha

"One day, my face became the same as my husband's. Since then, there have been strange, spooky things happening..." This is a novel that fundamentally questions the way a couple ought to be. A compilation of 4 titles that won the 154th Akutagwa Prize.

**45 Walk in Closet [Walk in Closet]**

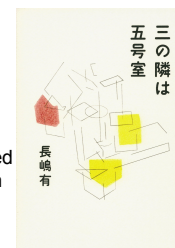
Risa Wataya  
Kodansha

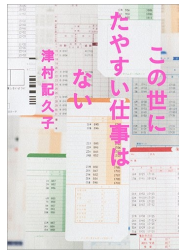
The author's first new title in 2 years, this two-part compilation is a story of camaraderie between women, with fashion as the theme. 'Stalkers in the country-side' is a narrative about an energetic potter, who is troubled by his women stalkers.

**46 San no tonari ha gogo shitsu [Room No. 5 is next to No. 3]**

Yu Nagashima  
Chuokoron-Shinsha

It is said that in the Number 1 Fujioka Manor, Room No. 5 has a "strange layout." This is a story narrating the modest, everyday life of people who lived there and how the impressions they left behind span across generations. An ambitious novel.





#### 46 *Kono you ni tayasui shigoto ha nai* [There is no job that is easy]

Kikuko Tsumura  
Nikkei Publishing

Monitoring novelists... pasting posters along alleyways... by trying her hand at five different jobs, the protagonist finds the answer to the question, "What does it mean to be employed?" An eccentric 'work-fantasy' novel.

#### 48 *Kamisama no goyounin* [The Servant of the Gods]

Natsu Asaba  
ASCII Media Works Bunko/KADOKAWA

The fifth title in this popular series about Yoshihiko, who is openly employed as a servant of the gods and for whom each day is the same, spent poring over ancient records. This time, will he end up having to pay his own way in order to go to Kyushu?



#### 49 *Shometsu sekai* [World of Destruction]

Sayaka Murata  
Kawade Shobo Shinsha

In a world configured solely by logic, reproduction has lost its value, conjugal sex is considered abnormal and men can get pregnant through artificial insemination. But is this really a utopia? Or is it not? An impactful, dystopian novel from this author.

#### 50 *Kin medaru otoko* [Gold Medal Man]

Mitsuyoshi Uchimura  
Chuokoron-Shinsha

Izumi was born in 1964, the year of the first Tokyo Olympics. Ever since he won first place in a race at his elementary school, he has always aimed to be number one. Despite failing repeatedly, he was a man who just did not give up.



#### 50 *Bogiwan ga kuru* [The Bogiwan will come]

Ichi Sawamura  
KADOKAWA

In a normal day like any other, there is a hint of a strange, creeping presence. It is a monster called Bogiwan, a fiend that the protagonist's deceased grandfather was terrified of... Winner of the 22nd Japan Horror Fiction Award Grand Prize.

Translated by Malavika Nataraj

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