



A History of Japanese Literature (Cambridge Library Collection - Literary Studies)

W. G. Aston

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The diplomat and Japanese and Korean scholar William George Aston (1841-1911) wrote several highly regarded publications, particularly on the Japanese language. This work is a chronological survey of Japanese literature from its early songs to the European-influenced works of the nineteenth century. It covers lyrics, poetry, prose and children's stories, and charts the major themes in the history of Japanese learning. At the time of publication in 1899, Japanese literature was little known to European readers, and Aston is careful to assume no prior knowledge of the subject, focusing instead on the most important works and writers, and providing contextual political and religious detail where necessary. His treatment of contemporary literature, and of works not typically discussed for their literary merit, was groundbreaking. The book as a whole remained unsurpassed for eighty years. Aston's introductory survey of traditional Japanese religion, *Shinto* (1907), is also reissued in this series.

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