

A personal portrait of Japan by one of the Low Countries' greatest experts on the subject

Japan

LUK VAN HAUTE

As soon as we hear the word Japan, we tend to think of geishas, samurai and sumo wrestlers populating a country wedded to ancient customs and traditions. That image is cultivated time and again in all kinds of publications, and it is one that Luk Van Haute aims to correct.

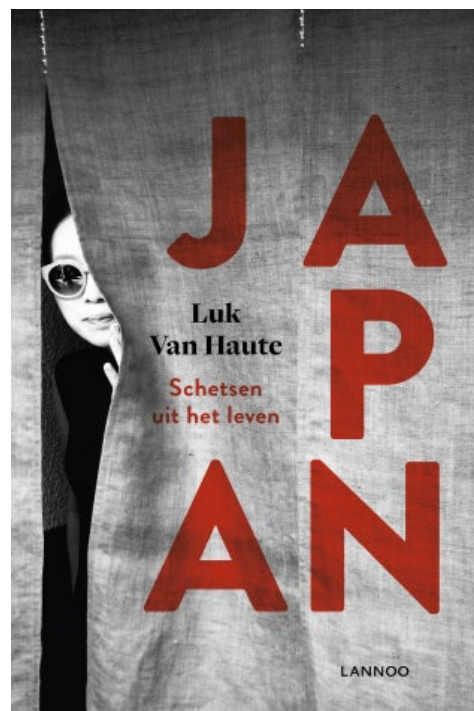
A panoramic investigation of contemporary Japanese society and culture.

KLARA

In doing so he opts for the *zuihitsu* genre, a traditional Japanese essay form in which the writer sticks close to personal experience and writes about his or her own impressions, avoiding definitive conclusions – you will search in vain for any of those in this book. Luk Van Haute paints a picture of Japanese society as far more diverse than some would have us believe. Aided by more than thirty years of personal meetings and conversations, experiences and encounters during countless visits to the country, he trains his spotlight on how the Japanese deal with foreigners, with neighbouring countries, with minorities, with the war years and with the role of their emperor. He takes us with him from the icy north to the tropical south, from the metropolis to areas hit by earthquakes and tsunamis, from the homeless to the superrich.

Van Haute manages to use his enjoyable stories to convince the reader that any us-and-them thinking is nonsense. And that in itself is of great value.

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Luk van Haute (b. 1963) is an expert on Japan as well as a columnist, film expert and translator of literature by authors including Haruki Murakami. He studied Japanology at Ghent University and Comparative Culture and Literature at the University of Tokyo. He has spent many years in Japan, as an employee of a film production company, as an interpreter, as a tourist, as an in-law, as an academic, as a journalist and as a literary translator, while regularly contributing to newspapers, magazines, radio and television on the subject of Japanese culture and society. For an anthology that he compiled and translated called 'Love's Death in Kamara and other Japanese Stories' he was awarded the 2015 Filter Translation Prize.

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