

Mansfield presented Orton with a copy of the poems of Noguchi. Her lifelong companion, Ida Baker, recounts how, also at this time, one night after Mansfield had gone to bed, she called out to Ida that she was 'thinking of going to Japan'.¹⁴ She also acquired two Japanese dolls, O Hara San and Ribni, anthropomorphised into little living beings, as here, in a letter to Murry, written on Christmas Day, 1915:

We are still quite babies enough to play with dolls and I'd much rather pretend about [O] Hara [San] than about a real person. I would so see her, with her little hands in her kimono sleeves, very pale and wanting her hair brushed'.¹⁵

J. Lawrence Mitchell notes that, 'The name O Hara San must be a mis-recollection of O Hana San ('Miss Flower'), the title of a poem in Yone Noguchi's *From the Eastern Sea* (1903)'.¹⁶ The 'Japonisme' of Mansfield continued throughout her life. A childhood friend, Sylvia Lynd, claimed she looked 'not unlike one of those little dolls [... from] Japan's less commercial days',¹⁷ and Virginia Woolf, reminiscing after Mansfield's death about a visit she had paid to her in 1919, wrote, 'She had her look of a Japanese doll, with the fringe combed quite straight across her forehead'.¹⁸ Mitchell comments on her 'love affair with things Japanese' and notes that 'her distinctive hairstyle, her Japanese dolls, her fondness for kimonos, and for Yone Noguchi's poetry – even perhaps her aesthetic of the miniature [...] – are all manifestations of this love affair'.¹⁹

To this list I would also add *The Book of Tea* (1906) by Kakuzo Okakura, which Mansfield had first read in Wellington in 1907, following her three years of schooling at Queen's College in London. The impact of this slim volume can be clearly seen in her personal writing. Gillian Boddy notes:

Writers such as Ernest Dowson, Walter Pater and Arthur Symons contributed to her early belief that the ideal short story would capture the transitory vividness of life 'to catch that moment'. This must have been further reinforced in Wellington by her reading of [...] *The Book of Tea*'.²⁰

At the Japan-British exhibition there was a tea house erected for visitors to witness authentic tea ceremonies, and where, according to the official programme, 'fair maidens of Nippon serve tea and dainties to delighted visitors'.²¹ Okakura's book was a popular purchase at the exhibition. He was a highly respected Japanese scholar, who wrote in English and helped to both promote and protect Japanese cultural heritage at this time. Outside of Japan he had an impact on a number of important figures, directly or indirectly, including Ezra Pound, the philosopher Martin Heidegger, and especially the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore. Under the guise of explaining the intricacies of the tea ceremony, Okakura presented philosophies from the Orient in a clear and concise manner. He was: