

# Autumn is the best season for reading!

## Let's read Kenji Miyazawa's works!



Kenji Miyazawa

When the season changes into autumn, you will often read or hear expressions like “Autumn is the best season for such and such”, or a “ ~ *no Aki*” in Japanese, in magazines or on television. It is said that this happens because the weather in Autumn is finally bearable again and it's a good time to take up a challenge.

You will hear and see lots of ' ~ *no Aki*' such as '*Geijutsu (Art) no Aki*', '*Sports no Aki*' or '*Shokuyoku (Appetite) no Aki*'. This time, as we are taking '*Dokusho (Reading) no Aki*' as a theme, we will introduce Kenji Miyazawa, a writer from Iwate.

Kenji Miyazawa is one of the great figures representing Iwate. Last year marked the 120th anniversary of his birth. Although he was born in Hanamaki, he was also deeply connected with Morioka where he spent his student years. Morioka appears in one of his stories, '*Pollanno Square (Pollanno no Hiroba)*' as 'Morio city', an imaginary city in a beautiful forest. Why don't you try one of his books in this season that's best for reading?

### Life of Kenji



Kenji, when he was 5 grade of Morioka Secondary School.

The world of Kenji Miyazawa was multifaceted and prismatic, showing his fascination with science, art, space, religion and agriculture, beyond time and space. However, his work and life-style were scarcely known when he was alive.

He died at the early age of 37, but he had produced about 900 *tanka* poems, 800 other

poems and 100 children's stories. Among them, only a few works were published during his lifetime, and he received a manuscript fee for his writing just once for the children's story '*Yuki Watari*'. It was after his death that his works, such as 'The Night on the Galactic Railroad' or 'Matasaburo of the Wind' were published from among the 3,400 pieces of his writing. Gradually, his practical life, based on the wish for 'real happiness for everyone', became widely known, and Kenji himself, highly regarded.

### Chronology of Kenji's Miyazawa's life

1896 (Meiji 29)	Born in present-day Hanamaki city, on August 27 <sup>th</sup>
1903 (Meiji 36)	Entered Hanamaki Kawaguchi Jinjo Koto Elementary School in April.
1909 (Meiji 42)	Entered Morioka Secondary School (current Morioka Daiichi High School) in April
1915 (Taisho 4)	Entered Morioka Agriculture and Forestry College (Current Faculty of Agriculture at Iwate University), second division of faculty of agriculture as a top student of the faculty in April.
1918 (Taisho 7)	Became a research student of Morioka High School of Agriculture and Forestry after graduating from the school in March.
1920 (Taisho 9)	Completed Morioka High School of Agriculture and Forestry as a research student in May.
1921 (Taisho 10)	Employed as a teacher of Hienuki Agricultural School (current Hanamaki Agricultural High School) in December.  “ <i>Yuki watari</i> ” was appeared in the December and January (1923) issue of “ <i>Aikoku Fujin</i> ” magazine.
1923 (Taisho 12)	Management of the agricultural school was transferred from Hienuki county to Iwate prefecture. The name of the school

	changed to Hanamaki Agricultural School in April.
1924 (Taisho 13)	Image sketch “Spring and Damon (Haru to Shura)” was published in April.  “The Restaurant of Many Orders” was published in December.
1926 (Taisho 15)	Resigned from Hanamaki Agricultural School voluntarily in March.
1928 (Showa 3)	Fell ill with high fever in August. Confined in bed after that.
1931 (Showa 6)	Recovered from illness and started to work at Tohoku Rock-Crushing Factory from January.  Fell ill again in September. Under medical care at home after that.
1933 (Showa 8)	Died from acute pneumonia at 1:00 p.m. on September 21 <sup>st</sup> . He was 37.

## The Best-known Works of Kenji

There are still many old buildings in Morioka, providing a lot of facilities where you can learn about its history and culture. Why don't you go to the sightseeing spots where you can explore the history and culture of Morioka, which you don't experience so much in ordinary, daily life?

### Night on the Galactic Railroad (Ginga Tetsudo no Yoru)

Giovanni is a lonely boy who is teased by his classmates because his father has not been home for a long time. While watching a starry sky on the night of the Star Festival, he hears a voice out of nowhere announcing, “Galaxy Station”. He finds himself on board a mysterious Galactic train travelling with his best friend Campanella through a galaxy. What are the encounters with people during this time, and the journey itself, meant to tell Giovanni? Also, what is the sad reality he discovers after the journey?



### The Restaurant of Many Orders (Chumon no Ohi Ryoriten)

One day, two young gentlemen are walking deep in the mountains with two dogs that look like white bears and a hunter who acts as a guide. The area forest they are walking in is so deep that they become separated from the guide and the two dogs die, foaming at the mouth. Some time later, a restaurant called ‘Western style dishes: Yamaneko-Ken’ appears in front of the, by now, ravenous hunters. They are very dubious about entering this restaurant. However, they are desperately hungry and want to eat something as soon as possible. So, they go deeper and deeper into the ‘Restaurant of Many orders’ without any concern.



### The Nighthawk Star (Yodaka no Hoshi)

The nighthawk is such an ugly bird that other birds dislike it, even just seeing its face. In particular, the hawk hates the nighthawk because it partly shares the same name, ‘hawk’. One day, the hawk finally tells the nighthawk it will seize and kill it, if the nighthawk does not change its name. The nighthawk asks the sun and stars to take it into their world, but no one will listen. The nighthawk becomes desperate for its life, abandons its homeland and flies high above the sky.



### Matasaburo of the Wind (Kaze no Matasaburo)

There is a legend in the village of this story about the son of the God of Wind called ‘Matasaburo of the Wind’. One day, a mysterious new student named Saburo comes to the school in the village. His classmates wonder if Saburo is Matasaburo of the Wind as his words and actions are so strange. However, he gradually makes friends with the other classmates. Is Saburo really ‘Matasaburo of the Wind’ or just a mysterious new student?

Kenji left so many other works in addition to the works introduced above. They include many poems and children's stories since translated into foreign languages. We would like to introduce some of his work that has been translated into English or Chinese that you can borrow from libraries in Morioka.

《English》

Tonan Library (24-90-2, Nagai, Morioka)

- *Little Masterpieces of Kenji Miyazawa 1* Includes: Yuki watari, Futago no Hoshi (Twin stars) etc.
- *Little Masterpieces of Kenji Miyazawa 2* Includes: Gauche the Cellist, Okinagusa (Nodding anemone) etc.

Morioka city library (9-45,1 chome Takamatsu, Morioka), Shibutami Library (55 Aza Tsuruduka, Shibutami, Morioka), Tonan Library

- *The Best of Kenji Miyazawa Short Stories*. Includes: The Restaurant of many Orders, Gauche the Cellist etc.

《Chinese》

Iwate Prefectural Library (7-1 1chome, Nishi-dori Morioka-eki, Morioka)

- *Children's Stories of Kenji Miyazawa 1* Includes: Matasaburo of the Wind, Pollano Square etc.
- *Children's Stories of Kenji Miyazawa 2* Includes: The Restaurant with Many Orders, Wildcat and the acorns, etc.
- *Children's Stories of Kenji Miyazawa 3* Includes: Night on the Galactic Railroad, The Nighthawk Star

Is there any other book you'd like to read? Kenji Miyazawa's unique view of the world has attracted many people. Many of his stories have been adapted as animations, films, or musicals. Why don't you enjoy the best season for reading with the works of Kenji, the writer who represents Iwate prefecture?

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