

Library Journal

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(A * indicates a starred review)

*RICHIE, DONALD. *The Japan Journals, 1947-2004*. Stone Bridge, dist. by Consortium. 2004. 512p. ed. by Leza Lowitz. photogs. index. ISBN 1-880656-91-4. \$29.95. HIST

Richie went to Japan in the 1940s as a typist for the American Occupation, but he quickly escaped from the sequestered world of the conquerors. As a live-in outsider, he has reported ever since on Japanese society and cultural history, renowned both in the United States and in Japan as a deeply learned but nonacademic interpreter—a cross-cultural public intellectual. The material in this volume was extracted and organized by Lowitz from previously unpublished sporadic diaries and jottings. They give a running commentary on Japan's rise from wartime destitution into the rich society of the 1980s boom, then its development into overbuilt and washed out postmodern complacency. There is some personal trivia, but most entries are alert and sometimes surprising glimpses of modern Japanese writers and filmmakers. Richie should be designated a living national treasure, but failing that, his books should be acquired by every large public and academic library with an interest in Japan.

-Charles W. Hayford, Northwestern Univ., Evanston, IL