



# Cloud of Sparrows

By Takashi Matsuoka

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## Cloud of Sparrows By Takashi Matsuoka

Once in a great while a new novelist comes along who dazzles us with rare eloquence and humanity, with flawless storytelling and a unique understanding of another place and time. Takashi Matsuoka is just such a writer.

His magnificent new novel, set amid the violence and beauty of nineteenth-century Japan, takes us beyond the epic tradition of James Clavell's **Shogun** and into a majestic realm of samurai and geishas, ninjas and Zen masters. Brilliantly imagined, gloriously written, **Cloud of Sparrows** is at once a sweeping historical adventure and a love story of almost unbearable poignancy. It is storytelling on the grand scale from a novelist of astounding depth and grace.

## Cloud of Sparrows

It is the dawn of the New Year, 1861. After two centuries of isolation, Japan has been forced to open its doors to the West, igniting a clash of cultures and generations. And as foreign ships threaten to rain destruction on the Shogun's castle in Edo, a small group of American missionaries has chosen this time to spread the word of their God. Among them, Emily Gibson, a woman seeking redemption from a tormented past, and Matthew Stark, a cold-eyed killer with one more death on his mind.

Neither realizes that their future in Japan has already been foreseen. For a young nobleman, Lord Genji, has dreamt that his life will be saved by an outsider in the New Year. Widely reviled as a dilettante, Lord Genji has one weapon with which to inspire awe. In his family, one in every generation is said to have the gift of prophecy. And what Lord Genji sees has struck fear in many around him. As the Shogun's secret police chief plots Genji's death--and the utter destruction of his entire clan--the young and untried lord must prove that he is more than the handsome womanizer of legend, famed lover of Edo's most celebrated geisha, Lady Heiko, and that his prophetic powers are no mere fairy tale.

Forced to escape from Edo and flee to his ancestral stronghold, the spectacular Cloud of Sparrows Castle, Genji joins his fate with Emily and Stark, unaware of the dark forces that drive them. Together with Genji's uncle, Lord Shigeru, a legendary swordsman knee-deep in the blood of his own kin, and the enigmatic Lady Heiko, the unlikely band embarks on a harrowing journey through a

landscape bristling with danger--to prepare for a final battle.

Here, on a snowscape stained with blood, horror will mix with wonder, secrets will unravel, and love will duel with vengeance--as East and West, flesh and spirit, past and future, collide in ways no one--least of all Genji--could have imagined.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## Cloud of Sparrows By Takashi Matsuoka Bibliography

- Rank: #156666 in eBooks
- Published on: 2002-10-01
- Released on: 2002-10-01
- Format: Kindle eBook

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Following in the substantial footsteps of filmmaker Akira Kurosawa and *Shogun* author James Clavell is Takashi Matsuoka, whose action-packed debut novel, *Cloud of Sparrows*, unfolds as the age of the samurai warrior starts to wane. The year is 1861, and Lord Genji of Akaoka, last in line of the Okamichi clan, welcomes missionaries Emily, Matthew, and Zephaniah to Japan. Cut off from the West for more than 2,000 years, Japan is as completely unprepared for these outsiders as the missionaries are for geishas and honor killings. Genji, his geisha love Heiko, and the missionaries suddenly find themselves in the middle of several nefarious plots to overthrow the Okamichi leader from as far away as the shogun's palace and as close as Genji's own henchmen. Genji and his visitors journey together across treacherous terrain to seek refuge at the faraway Cloud of Sparrows palace. Although it's a rip-roaring yarn full of ambushes, swordfights, cross-cultural friction, love, and prophetic visions, the book does read a bit like a screenplay, cutting quickly from one scene to another. But the frequent shifts in the story's tempo succeed in making the novel all the more vivid, allowing simultaneous action and contemplation to deepen the story and its inhabitants. --*Emily Russin*

### From Publishers Weekly

Matsuoka's ambitious first novel is an epic saga of clashing personalities and ideologies in the tradition of *Shogun*, yet it distinguishes itself from its wide-eyed predecessor with a grimmer perspective on Japan's military culture. Set in Edo in 1861, the book chronicles the arrival of a group of American missionaries (two men and a woman, each hiding secrets) into a land bristling with feudal clans nursing ancient grudges and a central shogunate trying to maintain control in the face of corrosive Western influences (like Christianity). The young Lord Genji, a modern heir to the embittered Okumichi clan and its rulers' gift of prophetic vision, receives the missionaries as his guests. Their visit coincides with an effort by the Shogun's secret-police chief to destroy Genji, which leads to the accidental killing of one of the missionaries. In response, Genji, his mad uncle Shigeru (tortured with visions of "swarms of metallic insects," which presage the devastation of WWII), and Genji's lover, the devastatingly beautiful geisha Heiko, join forces with innocent American missionary Emily Gibson and Matt Stark, also an American, who is hiding under the mission's aegis while he hunts down a man who wronged him long ago, to stave off the imperial assassins and restore the honor of the clan. The novel boasts plenty of Edo-era pomp and pageantry, as well as some nicely convoluted court intrigue and lightly handled romance. But the author's central message appears to be a rebuke of the narrow-mindedness of the isolationist feudal tradition in Japan and its bloody track record: "It is our duty to ensure that all looting, murdering, and enslaving in Japan is done by us alone. Otherwise, how can we call ourselves Great Lords?"

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### From Library Journal

In 1861, as Japan is pried open by the West, Lord Genji has a vision that compels him to flee to his ancestral home, the Cloud of Sparrows Castle. Like Lord Genji, the publisher would seem to be blessed with the gift of prophecy: this first novel has been sold to seven countries and has been bought by Universal.

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## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

**Jennifer Perez:**

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Having book everyone in this world could share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire their own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the story that share in the books. But also they write about the information about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some research before they write on their book. One of them is this Cloud of Sparrows.

**Hilda Szymanski:**

People live in this new day time of lifestyle always try and and must have the time or they will get wide range of stress from both way of life and work. So , if we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not really a robot. Then we consult again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative inside spending your spare time, the book you have read is actually Cloud of Sparrows.

**Jose Miller:**

You may spend your free time to study this book this book. This Cloud of Sparrows is simple to bring you can read it in the playground, in the beach, train in addition to soon. If you did not get much space to bring often the printed book, you can buy the e-book. It is make you easier to read it. You can save typically the book in your smart phone. So there are a lot of benefits that you will get when one buys this book.

**Solange Smith:**

This Cloud of Sparrows is brand-new way for you who has curiosity to look for some information since it relief your hunger info. Getting deeper you onto it getting knowledge more you know or else you who still having tiny amount of digest in reading this Cloud of Sparrows can be the light food for you because the information inside this particular book is easy to get simply by anyone. These books produce itself in the form that is certainly reachable by anyone, sure I mean in the e-book type. People who think that in publication form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this reserve is the answer. So there isn't any in reading a guide especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you actually. So , don't miss this! Just read this e-book sort for your better life and knowledge.

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