

# [PDF] Japanland: A Year In Search Of Wa

**Karin Muller - pdf download free book**

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**Books Details:**

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Author: Karin Muller  
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## **Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** Having previously traversed the Ho Chi Minh trail and the Inca path, Muller retains an engaging freshness as she goes about "prying open the doors to traditional Japan." She observes some well-known traditional communities (geishas, samurai), some less familiar (taiko drummers, pachinko parlors) and some more recent (the criminal yakuza, the gay community). A keen listener, Muller lets an ensemble of voices speak, among them a swordmaker and a crab fisherman. She's also a participatory learner, taking on tasks like harvesting rice. The diverse activities and excursions to far-flung places make this a fine travel memoir, but it's the backbone of Muller's voyage that gives her book resonance and richness. The deterioration of her relationship

with her host family is a looming presence; even as it collapses, Muller acquires an intimate sense of customary values from the urbane Genji Tanaka and his conservative wife, Yukiko. Muller's search for the traditional, culminating in her participation in a 900-mile trek to 88 sacred Buddhist temples, also shapes the narrative. Muller went to Japan to find *wa*: a quality of dedication, inner strength and spiritual peace. Her memoir isn't an account of achieving those goals, but it is an engrossing, rewarding record of her travel toward them.

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**From** At age 34, American documentary filmmaker, writer, and judo maven Muller spent a year in Japan searching for the meaning of life. Her narrative account is both raucous and revelatory, full of piquant observations of Japanese culture, from sumo wrestlers and samurai warriors to a 1,400-year-old ascetic mountain cult known for walking on hot coals. Muller's renderings of her Japanese host family, who lived in the Tokyo suburb of Fugisawa, are wonderfully edgy: tall, salt-and-pepper-haired judo master Genji, whose stern manner is offset by a mellifluous laugh; frosty-hearted Yukiko, the Japanese equivalent of a Stepford wife; and single 28-year-old daughter Junko, who, much to her family's chagrin, shows no signs of settling down. The author, who headed to Japan in pursuit of *wa* (the Japanese word for harmony), returned with a reverence for geishas, an appetite for sauteed crickets, and an appreciation for the contradictions that suffuse life in Japan. A companion PBS documentary, *Japanland*, will provide another avenue of sharp commentary from Muller, whose previous books and films have documented her adventures in South America and Vietnam. *Allison Block*

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