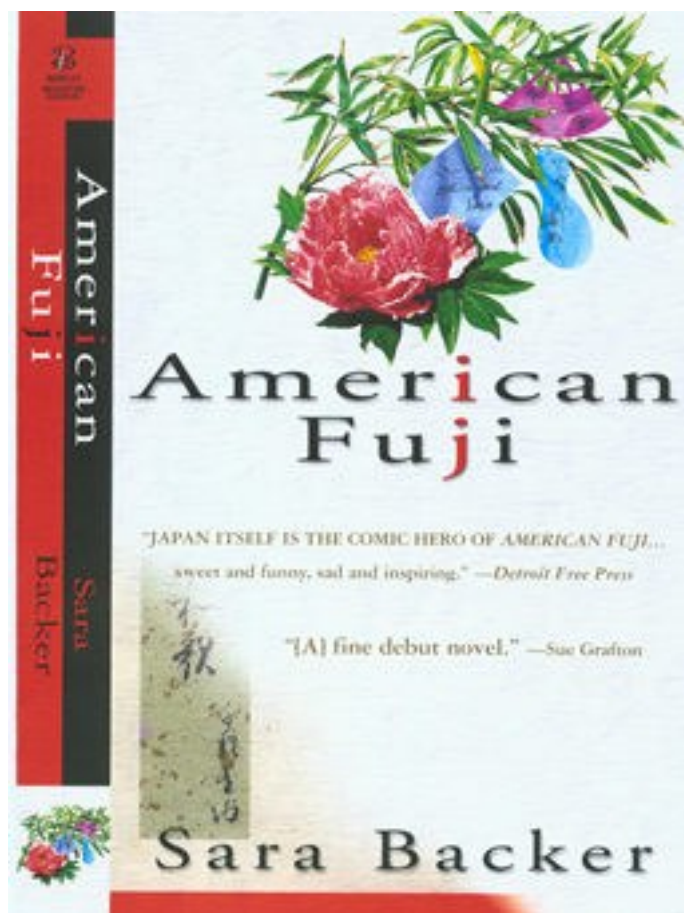


# American Fuji



[American Fuji\\_下载链接1](#)

著者:Sara Backer

出版者:Putnam

出版时间:2001-1

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780399146916

## Book Description

"Expect the unexpected. This is Japan." That's Gaby Stanton trying to explain to Alex Thorn why his questions about the mysterious death of his son, an exchange student

at a small Japanese university, are likely to go unanswered. But those words could also serve as the leitmotif for this exuberantly funny tale of Americans abroad in modern-day Japan.

After five years in Japan, Gaby herself has learned to expect the unexpected. Fired from her university position for no reason, she has taken the only job available to her: selling fantasy funerals to the Japanese. And because the firm she works for shipped Cody Thorn's body home, Alex has turned up on her doorstep, looking for answers. What ensues is a wild ride through the manners, mores, and prejudices of the Japanese.

Peopled with a cast of ill-assorted exiles from the West and with Japanese from every walk of life, *American Fuji* is many novels in one: a teasing mystery; a quest that is alternatively slapstick and tender; a revealing Baedeker to contemporary Japan; and a delightfully sophisticated romantic comedy. It is indeed about expecting the unexpected in a world where appearances are not all that they seem.

Amazon.com

Since the late 1970s, young Americans have made their way to Japan to teach English, pay off student loans, and generally have a good time. A happy byproduct of this exodus has been the American-in-Japan novel. The comic possibilities of the form are obvious: bumbling foreigner tries to learn the customs of the inscrutable East. In *American Fuji*, first-time novelist Sara Backer hits all the comic notes, but takes the time to examine the very real allure of living in another culture.

Gaby Stanton, fired from her job as a university professor in provincial Shizuoka, has a gig selling fantasy funerals to the dying Japanese rich. Her job puts her in the path of Alexander Thorn, a middle-aged American who has just arrived in Japan determined to decipher the mystery surrounding the death of his son, an exchange student. The perspective of the novel shifts back and forth between these two characters as Gaby and Alexander stumble on a yakuza ring, unearth medical secrets, and sprout romantic feelings for each other. The two gradually develop a Hepburn-Tracy-style combative relationship. Still, Backer's sympathies clearly lie with Gaby, a thirtysomething woman with health problems who relishes her automatic outsider status in Japan. If everything she does is strange to her host culture, then her illness doesn't matter. But the introduction of Alexander is a wise move, allowing Backer to show us Japan through the perpetually startled eyes of a newcomer.

While the writing sometimes falls short of grace, Backer has an infallible sense of the kind of detail that brings Japan alive. She has no qualms about taking a page to explain how, say, Japanese banking works, and her confidence in her material makes the novel fly. The book is given surprising depth by the two main characters. Both are discontented with their lot, and neither is at all traditionally appealing. (Of Alexander, Backer writes, "He had the face of a man who could win the election, but not this year.") By giving us such warty characters in such an oddball setting, Backer has fashioned a novel with some real staying power.

--Claire Dederer

From Publishers Weekly

"Sometimes, one must accept what has happened without understanding it." Poet and short story writer Backer's highly entertaining, seriocomic debut novel explores this intrinsic Japanese philosophy from a unique perspective--that of a single American

woman living and working in Japan. The concept of blind acceptance, difficult for any American to understand, is especially frustrating for Gabriela "Gaby" Stanton, 36, fired from her beloved teaching job at Shizuyama University for mysterious reasons. Gaby now works for Mr. Eguchi of Gone with the Wind, a company that sells fantasy funerals, including burial on the moon. Middle-aged Alex Thorn is also a victim of the collision of East/West culture. Alex has come to Japan seeking answers concerning the death of his 20-year-old son, Cody, an exchange student attending the university where Gaby taught. Cody died in a motorcycle accident, and his heart was removed for a transplant. But Cody had adopted a Buddhist philosophy that strictly prohibits organ donation. Alex's search for the details of his son's death lead him to Gaby, since Gone With the Wind shipped Cody's body home to America. Backer adeptly evokes her characters' emotional dislocation as Gaby and Alex negotiate a country where natives often can't read their own language and group needs supersede those of the individual. (Mar. 19)Forecast: The novel's ending should satisfy an American readership's need for closure, but its slow unfolding may defy their accustomed sense of pacing. Patience, reader-san, "There is much to be learned from following a path." If booksellers emphasize the novel's quality (and point out that Backer was the first American and the first woman to serve as visiting professor of English at Japan's Shizuoka University, and that an early draft of American Fuji was named a finalist in the James Jones First Novel competition), success should ensue. Rights sold in the Netherlands and France.

#### From Booklist

Gaby Stanton, an American living in Japan, is a former university professor who now works at Gone with the Wind, a company selling elaborate, expensive, fantasy funerals. Her identity as a foreigner makes her an outsider, but it's preferable to being back home, where a debilitating colon disease made her feel like even more of an outsider. But then Alex Thorne blazes into Gaby's well-balanced life, looking for answers about the death of his son, Cody, who was a student at the university where Gaby used to teach. Alex has a receipt from Gone with the Wind for shipping his son's body home, but Gaby can't find any record of it at her office. To add to the mystery, Cody's heart is missing. Ignorant of the complex Japanese codes of conduct, Alex has been unable to find out anything about his son's death. He turns to Gaby for help, and she reluctantly agrees, taking them on a quest for the truth that leads to results neither expects. A winning debut novel.

Kristine Huntley

#### From Library Journal

This debut novel by Backer, a former professor of English at Shizouka University in Japan, is about American (and other English-speaking) expatriates in Japan. One would think, given the author's background, that something more than a fairly conventional romance novel might emerge, but unfortunately that is not the case. Despite Backer's thorough knowledge of Japanese people and places and occasional keen insights, her story is sadly derivative. If you believe the Japanese people to be arrogant, insular, misogynist, and xenophobic, then this is the book for you. Backer's Japanese characters show themselves to be narrow, bigoted folk who call foreigners names and ask them insulting questions at will. Toward the end, Backer gives each of her main characters epiphanies that help them realize the grace and beauty of Japan, but by then the reader will simply be unable to ignore the preceding diatribe. This is an optional purchase.DTom Cooper, Richmond Heights Memorial Lib., MO

## About Author

A published poet and short-story writer Sara Backer was the first American and the first woman to serve as visiting professor of English at Japan's Shizuoka University. An early draft of American Fuji was named a finalist in the James Jones First Novel Competition, and a play she wrote as a Djerassi artist in residence was chosen for performance at the Edward Albee Theatre Conference in June 2000.

Book Dimension:

length: (cm)23.7 width:(cm)16.1

作者介绍:

目录:

[American Fuji\\_下载链接1](#)

## 标签

美国文学

## 评论

美国人的视角看日本，因为是发生在20年前的故事，很难评价到底真实与否。作为一个外国人，很多事情都是你想象不到的，请不要说其他国家的种种不合理。任何社会形态的存在都是合理的，只是你是否适应而已。

-----  
烂尾了

-----  
[American Fuji\\_下载链接1](#)

-----  
[American Fuji\\_下载链接1](#)