

*"To some degree, to look at Japan today is to see the future challenges awaiting many countries in the developed world."*

OECD, 2016

## The Last Harvest

### A story of farm and family in modern Japan

This September Todom and Ayako Morimoto will harvest their paddy field for the final time, and with no offspring aspiring to succeed them they will leave their farm and its family history behind them.

Such stories are not unique in Japan where—beyond its shiny metropolises—an ageing population, a plummeting birthrate and a continuing retreat from agriculture pose searching questions for the nation and its future. And while considerable research has centred on the national impacts of these changes, less attention has focused on the consequences for individual families and places. It is this latter world that 'The Last Harvest' explores.

Drawing on the experiences of the Morimoto family, 'The Last Harvest' brings together words and images to tell the story of how social and economic forces of modern-day Japan have shaped—and are reflected in—the lives of a rural family and their Kumamoto prefecture home.

'The Last Harvest', however, is far more than a story of fading pasts and uncertain futures. It also shows how individuals, families and communities are addressing the challenges posed by economic and demographic change in Japan's countryside. The ensuing story of family and place offers a compelling and unique journey through modern-day rural Japan.

*"Other regions of the world will soon have to face these challenges, too. Just about every developed country is ageing and urbanising, though Japan is doing so the fastest. Its solutions to combating this decline may be significant for the rest of the world. So, too, may its failures."*

The Atlantic, 2017



### Wayne McCallum: Author and Photographer

A native of New Zealand and a Sylff Fellow, Wayne's passion for conservation brought him to Cambodia in 2004, where he continues to live and work. Author of the rainforest memoir 'A River and A Valley Far Away', he is also a regular contributor to several regional publications, including 'The Mekong Review'.



*"As a 'gaijin' (non-Japanese) I can see things and ask questions that native residents may not. And as a relative by marriage to a rural Japanese family—the Morimotos—I have both the exposure and the opportunity to inquiry that is usually beyond an 'outsider'. It is a unique and a humbling position and one that I seek to do justice to with my writing and photographs."*

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