

100 Books *for* Understanding Contemporary Japan



The Nippon Foundation

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The Nippon Foundation

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Cover design and layout: Eiko Nishida (cooltiger ltd.)

February 2010
Printed in Japan

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Foreword

The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century sparked a social revolution by making information available on a previously unimaginable scale. The advent of the computer chip in the mid 20th century and the rapid expansion of Internet technology in the 21st century have further revolutionized access to information. It is now possible to exchange vast volumes of information through cyberspace in real time. This unprecedented access to information has made the realities of foreign countries feel much closer to us. However, we do not always receive a complete picture of life overseas. The sheer volume of information available makes choosing reliable sources a challenge, and we are often left with oversimplified views of what are in fact complex realities.

Trying to gain a more comprehensive understanding of another country or culture requires considerable effort, yet through this effort we can expand our horizons and gain insight into ourselves, which in turn impacts positively on our relationships with others. An understanding of other people is essential if we are to collaborate and coexist with people of different cultures and customs. The ability to understand each other creates infinite new possibilities for improving the world.

There is no question that the best way to deepen our understanding of a country is to visit in person, to see the country with our own eyes, and to talk and work with the people who live there.

I travel frequently in the course of my work, and I have often found that I am only able to fully comprehend an issue by talking to local people and complementing these first-hand encounters with well-written, informative books. Books can be an inspiration when it comes to enhancing our understanding of other cultures, and for making our own culture more easily understood by others.

Recently, more people are visiting Japan, learning Japanese as a second language, and consuming Japanese popular culture than ever before. But with so many sources of information at their disposal in today's interconnected world, where should they turn for reliable and authoritative insights?

With this in mind, we assembled a committee of ten individuals with an extensive knowledge of Japan to undertake the difficult task of selecting one hundred books to be included in this catalogue, which we hope will serve as a useful guide to those interested in deepening their understanding of present day Japan. The catalogue will also be utilized in a series of new initiatives aimed at facilitating access to information on contemporary Japan, including a program to donate books to selected individuals and institutions abroad.

We are deeply indebted to the committee members and the many other individuals who contributed their time and expertise to this project. In particular we would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Shotaro Yachi, former Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, who inspired us to undertake this initiative, and to Prof. Takashi Shiraishi, Vice President of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, who so ably headed the committee that selected the hundred books.

Yohei Sasakawa

Chairman of The Nippon Foundation

On the Selection Process

Our committee was given the responsibility of selecting one hundred books to help non-Japanese readers better understand contemporary Japan. The committee was made up of ten people with different backgrounds, including business, academia, media, government and NGOs, and who are widely read in things Japanese and beyond. Though we were assisted by many who kindly suggested titles and shared their resources, the final responsibility for selection rested with us, the ten committee members.

Most of the books chosen were published recently, not surprising given our focus on contemporary Japan. Some older books were however selected; books that we believe should be read for a better appreciation of the historical background of contemporary Japan.

We are confident that the books we selected are of outstanding quality and merit. But we should also note that many of the best Japanese books on contemporary Japan are not available in English translation, and that not a few excellent English books have been long out of print. As part of the second round of the selection process, we hope to select the best of these books for translation or reprinting.

We hope that you enjoy the books we have chosen and that they will help you gain a better understanding of contemporary Japan.

Takashi Shiraishi

Chair, Program Committee

100 Books for Understanding Contemporary Japan

Program Committee

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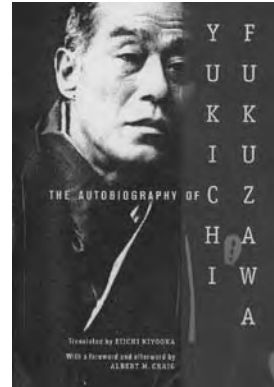
Politics / International Relations



The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa

Yukichi Fukuzawa

(Columbia University Press, 1966)



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The political scientist, Masao Maruyama, wrote that Yukichi Fukuzawa was “a Meiji thinker, and at the same time he was a thinker of the present day.”

Fukuzawa (1835-1901) wrote in this autobiography (*Fukuo Jiden*, 1897): “I was opposed to the closing of the country and to all the old regime of rank and clan. I was in the service of the Shogunate but had not the least intention of rendering service. I disliked the bureaucratic, oppressive, conservative, anti-foreign policy of the Shogunate, and I would not side with it.”

This is even now a brave stance for anyone to take and Fukuzawa’s anti-authoritarian views were very visible to his contemporaries. As Albert Craig has observed in his informative afterword: “He criticized the ‘faint-heartedness’ of those who went over to serve the new government ...”

This new Meiji government at one point asked Fukuzawa to take charge of the schools, pointing out that this was a great honor.

His answer was typical of the man. “What is remarkable about a man’s carrying out his own work? If the government wants to recognize the ordinary work of its subjects let it begin with my neighbor, the tofu-maker ...”

Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News

Ellis S. Krauss

(Cornell University Press, 2000)



It is said that the two institutions most affecting those in democracies today may be the state on one hand and mass communication on the other. It is also commonly thought that these become too powerful and too biased. In Japan, however, as Krauss here points out, NHK (the national broadcaster) has adopted an unusual neutrality, one which may open it to charges of anemia but not to accusations of unfairness.

Such “fairness,” however, owes little to any ideas of morality. Rather, this neutrality acts as a kind of defense, shielding NHK against the threat of interference by the state itself. In his considered analysis of NHK’s output Krauss freely admits biases but points out that they can be traced back to structural features of the broadcaster itself and not to state-imposed regulations.

Viewers of NHK get news which may be about the state, even about its bureaucracy, but which is also quite neutral and not affected by competing bureaucratic interests. Such news is objectionable to no one and hence governmental interference is thwarted.

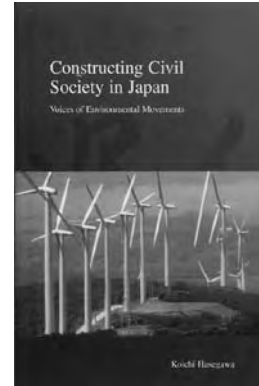
Given this stance, NHK TV may be seen as “a shaper of Japan’s political world, rather than simply a lens through which to view it.”

Constructing Civil Society in Japan:

Voices of Environmental Movements

Koichi Hasegawa

(Trans Pacific Press, 2004)



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The author here traces the growth of environmental politics in Japan. He argues that recent environmental concerns have created a more active public sphere, one that can provide a guideline for a sustainable society.

The typical image of the obedient Japanese following a typical traditional order is still internationally strong. Actually, however, the protests of those wanting reform are loud and diverse.

Consequently, this book also aims toward being a picture of modern Japanese society, focusing as it does on the dynamics of the environmental movement and the public space.

This vigor of Japan's independent environmental research reflects the severity of the pollution and the social and political pressures exerted by large-scale industrial development, supported both by industry and government.

As the author states, the environmental movement has shone new light on the needs of the citizens and through collaboration with both industry and government, has offered many pioneering efforts. Indeed, the environmental movement may well become a compass for modern society.

Earlier efforts to support environmental consciousness were too often limited to a single example. This book, though emphasizing both fieldwork and case studies, focuses on the many new social movements in Japan since the 1980s.

Cultural Norms and National Security:

Police and Military in Postwar Japan

Peter J. Katzenstein

(Cornell University Press, 1996)



This book suggests that certain norms must be considered in order to fully understand the reluctance of the Japanese police to use violence and the Japanese government's disinclination to make use of what amounts to a standing army (the Self-Defence Forces).

Among these are norms which the author calls "constitutive." In searching for reasons why contemporary Japan eschews police and military violence, the author concludes that these have their uses and that "norms matter for national security policy."

In the cases of "international terrorism" for example, the Japanese government has been reluctant to give up its non-violent stance, and in the case of domestic "terrorism" the police have taken a merely defensive position.

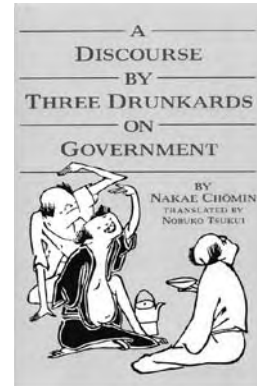
Among the author's conclusions is the prediction that Japanese security policies will continue to be formed by its domestic norms rather than by any international balance of power. A nation's values shape its evaluations of national security.

Though Katzenstein does not regard himself as a Japan expert but rather as an expert in political economy, his findings are welcome. In focusing on the police and military, he is the first to treat both comparatively in an English-language volume.

A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government

Nakae Chomin

(Weatherhill, 1992)



16

Nakae Chomin (1847-1901) studied in France, where he translated Jean-Jacques Rousseau into Japanese. Back in his own country he coined the Japanese term for “democracy,” and, in 1887, wrote this famous political allegory, *Sansuijin Keirin Mondo*, about three drunkards arguing about government.

These three archetypes stand for the then dominant Meiji political makers. One is the Europeanized intellectual, another is of a rougher kind, a sort of reincarnated Saigo Takamori, noted loyalist hero, and the third, Nakai Sensei, is Nakae Chomin himself.

They discuss the merits of democracy, making this treatise one of the first to reflect Japanese interest in the subject. The “gentleman of Western learning” is all for it, the “champion of the East” is not so sure, and Master Nakai presents himself as the sage who “loves drinking and discussing politics.”

Their questions and observations were central to the political thought of 1887, when concern over government and foreign policy was paramount. How to achieve democracy and how to win peace are still major issues in Japan, which is one of the reasons that this earliest writing remains so influential now, and why there are a number of contemporary politicians who strongly resemble these three.

Governing Japan:

Divided Politics in a Major Economy

J.A.A. Stockwin

(Blackwell Publishing, 1999)



This third edition of a standard and authoritative text provides a full introduction to the political institutions, processes, and culture of Japan, taking into full account the changes in recent years.

Stockwin has written widely on the subject of politics. This new edition of one of his most famous and influential books identifies those crises central to the Japanese political agenda at the end of the last century and how they were solved—or not.

These include emergencies within the sphere of political power, in the burgeoning bureaucracy, those caused by political apathy and by a lack of confidence in the economic management of the government.

The author also argues for a further reform in the system and amply demonstrates that moves toward political reform in the last decade reflect a malaise in society, in economy, in politics itself.

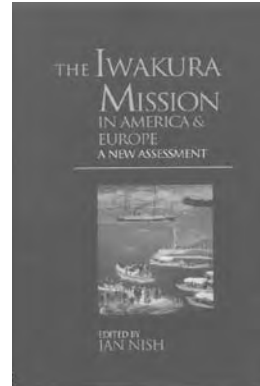
Among his suggestions is that the revision of the constitution could assist democratic control over the powerful governmental bureaucracy. Among the demonstrations is that Japanese politics can respond to the same kind of analysis used to study other countries, that, on the other hand, culture can prevent convergence.

The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe:

A New Assessment

Ian Nish (ed.)

(Routledge Curzon, 1998)



18

Most of the essays in this collection derive from the 1997 European Association for Japanese Studies Conference, all reflecting on a single event.

This was a major event in Japanese diplomatic history—the visit of the Iwakura Mission to America and Europe in 1872-73. True, it was not the first Japanese mission, and it did not accomplish many political aims, but it was composed of the most distinguished officials, many of whom had played important roles in the Meiji Restoration.

The Mission had a number of intentions, its primary purpose being to accomplish the revision of the unequal treaties Japan had been forced to sign. Here the Mission failed in that no country visited was willing to consider treaty talks.

Its other intentions were more successful. One was to learn about the scientific and technological feats of the places they visited. Another was to discover a proper political “model” for the country to emulate. They found their model in Germany.

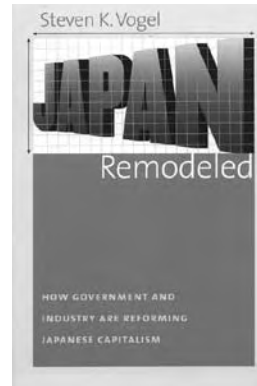
Even though the primary aim of the Mission was not accomplished, much else was. Diplomacy was but one aspect to be looked into. Another was to learn of the scientific accomplishments of the West and in this it succeeded.

Japan Remodeled:

How Government and Industry are Reforming Japanese Capitalism

Steven K. Vogel

(Cornell University Press, 2006)



Japan's market economy certainly has its ups and downs. In the 1980s it seemed to threaten all other countries. In the 1990s the threat faded during more than a decade of stagnation. Once into the new century, however, there has been a steady rebound.

In accounting for this the author, professor of political science at the University of California in Berkeley, through executive interviews and case studies, provides an understanding.

He notes that Japan's distinctive market economy derives not from any innate cultural difference but from history and politics. Business in Japan tends to favor a collaborative approach, one which suggests social harmony and at the same time makes profits.

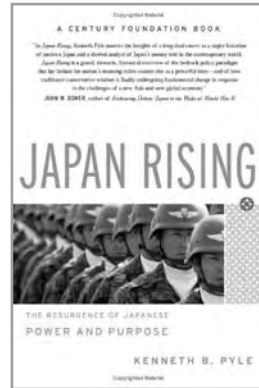
This is to be contrasted with American-style liberalization, an effect of which is often found ambivalent in Japan, where mergers and acquisitions are usually seen as disruptive. Though Japanese life-long employment is now revealed as more a desire than a fact, this ideal remains long-term.

The stagnant decade was spent restructuring. Merit-based wage compensation (rather than sheer longevity) began to be rewarded, subsidiaries were sold, production was moved to cheaper locations abroad. The general house-cleaning continues, but the pattern here revealed is distinctive.

Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose

Kenneth B. Pyle

(Public Affairs, 2007)



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A senior scholar of Japan who is also a foreign policy analyst, Kenneth Pyle here analyzes the large issues facing Japan, including how the processes of history and “national character” shape Japan’s role in the world.

In this book he gives an historical overview of the policies that made possible Japan’s rise as a powerful state, and how both conservative and traditional political thought is undergoing change in response to the larger world outside.

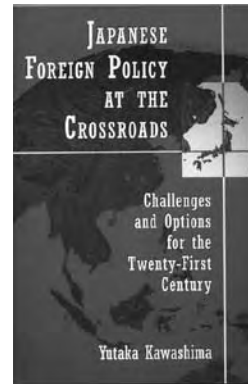
The author finds that Japan is “regaining its voice,” that the spirit quieted by defeat and then distracted by the needs of a mercantile foreign policy, is now emerging. Japan is becoming more positive in its posture and its intentions. There is debate about the Constitution, debate on Japan’s role in other nations’ wars, debate on how best to counter perceived enemies.

After such a lengthy period of postwar political passivity, the Japanese may well find their new disposition both exciting and liberating, believing that Japan ought to assert its own identity in the field of international politics. At the same time Japan must establish a new consensus on national goals. Yet as Japan becomes more entangled in international politics, trends will become harder to discern and their meanings more difficult to decipher.

Japanese Foreign Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century

Yutaka Kawashima

(Brookings Institution Press, 2003)



While teaching a course on Japan's foreign policy at Harvard, Yutaka Kawashima, ex-vice-minister of foreign affairs as well as former ambassador to Israel, was surprised to find that the material in English covering the recent evolution of Japan's foreign policy was so meager. For this reason he decided to write a book emphasizing foreign policy in the postwar era.

He divides his book into eight chapters, beginning with the history of Japanese foreign policy and following this with a section on Japan's security ties with the United States. This is an asymmetrical arrangement wherein the United States assumed an obligation to defend Japan and Japan permitted the U.S. to maintain military bases. The frustration this involves resembles the reaction of some Japanese in the early Meiji era toward the so-called unequal treaties with the Western powers.

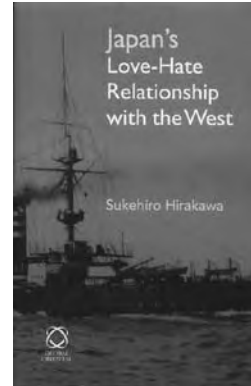
In this and later discussions the author surveys such issues as Japan's inability to come to terms with its past, its worries about economic vulnerability, and its troubled stand on nationalism and internationalism.

Here the author advocates internationalism. Japan "must work with as many countries as possible to deepen and widen the sharing of interests and values ..."

Japan's Love-Hate Relationship with the West

Sukehiro Hirakawa

(Global Oriental Ltd., 2005)



22

The author has said that he has felt a great discrepancy between Japanese views and Western views, not only within the general public, but also among academics specializing in international and intercultural relations.

His book is an attempt to bridge some of the gaps, in the process breaking some of the linguistic and cultural barriers. He is protected from the temptations of one-sidedness by his comprehensive knowledge of Western as well as Japanese history and literature, and by definition all of the essays in the book are driven by a strong commitment to cross-cultural elucidation.

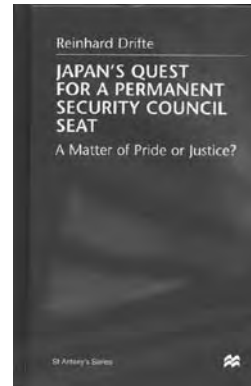
This enables him to see how, for example, Japan built its own colonies while at the same time denouncing British and American colonization, what he calls Japan's "anti-imperialist imperialism."

Hirakawa divides his work into three sections: Japan's Turn to the West; Japan's Return to the East; and From War to Peace. Here he is able to explain why modern Japanese writers so oscillate between East and West, feel such a major discrepancy between Japanese and Western and why the West remains so ambivalent toward Japan—academics and the public alike.

Japan's Quest for a Permanent Security Council Seat: A Matter of Pride or Justice?

Reinhard Drifte

(St. Martin's Press, 2000)



For more than thirty years Japan has been consistently pursuing the right to a seat in the UN Security Council. How and why this ambition came about is the subject that the author, Professor of Japanese Politics at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, sets for himself.

This necessarily involves a study of the workings of both the Japanese Foreign Ministry and what has been characterized as Japan's underdeveloped multilateral diplomacy.

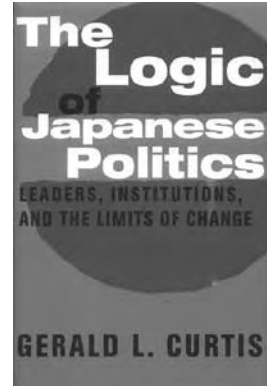
Among the many interesting findings in this book is the strong impression that Japan has made, wavering on so many issues, placating American pressure. At the same time the author provides the reader with insights into the Japanese position. In finding the country "not a leader, but a successful follower," he is voicing a common idea, one which many feel defines both Japan's effort to attain and in part the reasons for its having been denied a UN Security Council seat.

He also shows that the Japanese media consider membership justified. Today a two-thirds majority of the Japanese public opinion supports the bid for a permanent seat. The author's statistics qualify Japan as a valid member and express the hope that Japan may become an active multilateral partner.

The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change

Gerald L. Curtis

(Columbia University Press, 1999)



24

Interpreting a rapidly changing and vastly complex political system, this detailed chronicle shows the dynamics of a Japanese-style democracy at work. Offering a framework for understanding Japan's attempts to solve its present political problems, it also provides insights into future resolutions.

The author does not agree with the common notion that consensus and cultural uniqueness are defining elements in Japan's decision-making processes. Rather, he stresses the role of competition among the many individuals concerned in the continuation and reform of Japan's politics.

In so doing he interprets such important political developments as the Liberal Democratic Party's loss of power in 1993 after nearly four decades of full control. He explicates the historic electoral reform of 1994 that replaced the electoral system which had been in place since 1924. He chronicles the decline of machine politics and indicates the new importance of the non-party voter.

It is the personalities of power politics that often direct policy and here the author provides an analysis of the complex relations between Japanese leaders and institutions during the 1990s.

Machiavelli's Children:

Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan

Richard J. Samuels

(Cornell University Press, 2003)



A study of comparative politics, this influential work compares and contrasts Italy and Japan, both faced with similar modern problems. The author pairs political and business leaders in the two countries, emphasizing the role of human ingenuity when faced with political change.

The two countries share much—a failure of early liberalism, an approaching fascism, a number of imperialistic attempts, defeat in a war, and a problematic reconstruction, all the time obsessed with achieving modernity.

Samuels's approach parallels that of Machiavelli himself. Ironic, understated, this was a cool analysis, the conclusions of a man who tried to tell it as it was. It was just this candor that earned the Italian the suspicious reputation under which he still suffers.

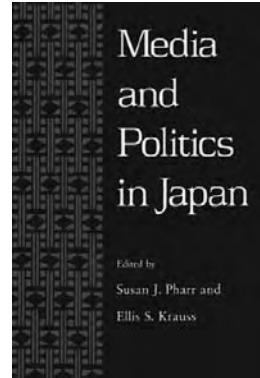
Indeed, Samuels also makes clear that leadership consists of a constant manipulation. It is personal leadership that is important because so much depends upon decisions made at critical junctures: the different choices made by Japanese and Italian communist party leaders after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Beginning with the late development of the founding states after the Meiji Restoration and the Risorgimento, similar developmental strategies are identified and the moving forces behind each are described, compared and contrasted.

Media and Politics in Japan

Susan J. Pharr / Ellis S. Krauss (eds.)

(University of Hawai'i Press, 1996)



26

Japan is one of the world's most media saturated countries. The combined circulation of its big-five newspapers is larger than any major U.S. paper; its public service broadcasting outlet, NHK, is second in size only to the BBC; there are many commercial TV stations and a full range of media-related journals and magazines. The mass media thus forms the most influential group in Japanese society.

Consequently, it also plays a major role in Japanese politics. It is this subject which is here explored through the thirteen chapters written by journalists and scholars - three Japanese and seven Americans. Editor Pharr contributes an historical introduction followed by an essay entitled "Media as Trickster in Japan." Co-editor Krauss writes about NHK TV news and politics and contributes a final essay on the media and Japanese political power.

Hiroshi Akuto writes on media in electoral campaigning; Toshio Takeshita and Ikuo Takeuchi on media agenda in Japanese local elections. In addition, Maggie Farley writes on Japan's press and the politics of scandal; Kyoko Altman on TV and political turmoil; John Creighton Campbell on media and policy change; and D. Eleanor Westney on the mass media as a business organization.

Network Power:

Japan and Asia

*Peter Katzenstein /
Takashi Shiraishi (eds.)*

(Cornell University Press, 1997)



This collection of scholarly papers examines the influence of Japanese dominance on the politics, economies and cultures of Southeast Asia. A major question probed is whether Japan has now attained, through economic power, the predominance it once sought through military means.

Japan's hegemonic system is not the first to work over the area. Before it were those from China, from Britain, from the United States. Which among these will predominate is among the questions here asked.

As the authors have elsewhere written: "Since 1990 ... Japan has been seen as capable of reestablishing a new version of its Co-Prosperity Sphere. The opposing liberal view holds instead that global markets are creating convergent pressures across all national boundaries and regional divides."

This collection takes the middle ground between these two views. Its comparative perspective can thus acknowledge the distinctiveness of Asian regionalism and Japan's changing role with it.

As the subtitle of this book indicates, it is concerned with Japan and Asia and not with Japan in Asia, thus suggesting a complex and at the same time problematical regional identity for Japan. It is to these questions that the authors devote their expertise and their insight.

Regime Shift:

Comparative Dynamics of the Japanese Political Economy

T. J. Pempel

(Cornell University Press, 1998)



28

Following the end of World War II both the United Kingdom and the United States fell into a steady economic decline. At the same time, in contradistinction, Japan was manufacturing its “economic miracle,” building upon the ashes of its former ambitions. The miracle, however, did not long continue.

At the end of the 1990s Japan was stopped in its tracks by a real recession while both Britain and the United States were experiencing economic booms.

In order to explain these shifts the author introduces the concept of “regimes.” These he defines as “the middle level of cohesion in the political economy of a national state.”

He finds the regime to be more limited than an economic or a political system, yet lasting longer than the administration of a prime minister or a president. A regime would be a sustained combination of coalitions and policy, something like the New Deal.

What occurred in the case of Japan was a “regime-shift.” The party system collapsed and the right-left split was replaced by competing conservative parties. The ruling bureaucracy was pushed into politics where its incompetence lost all public regard. Change has now become necessary and inevitable.

Securing Japan:

Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia

Richard J. Samuels

(Cornell University Press, 2007)



Japan's grand strategy for securing itself has a long, even venerable history—from the Meiji politicians who recognized the connection between military advance and economic success, to the consequences that led to Japan's defeat in World War II, and on to the postwar compact with the United States.

The author, MIT Professor of political science as well as chairman of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, here explains how the ideological connections explain today's debates. He argues that Japan will eventually achieve a balance between national autonomy and national strength, a position that will allow it reduced dependence on the United States and less vulnerability to China.

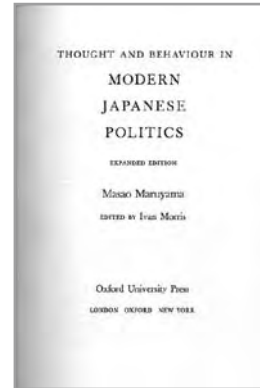
Over the last decade a revisionist group of Japanese policy-makers has consolidated power, taking steps to position Japan's military to play a global security role. Obvious on the books are plans to define and to legitimate Japan's new grand strategy, an often vigorously contested subject.

The revisionists who came to power early in this decade may supplant the earlier postwar doctrines with some of their own. Many are critical of the U.S. alliance and are eager to achieve greater sovereignty, but few would advocate a dangerously complete break.

Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics

Masao Maruyama

(Oxford University Press, 1969)



30

This is the enlarged edition of the 1963 translation of *Gendai Seiji No Shiso To Kodo: 1956-1957* (edited by Ivan Morris), a collection of essays written in the immediate postwar period by one of the most respected of Japanese intellectuals, published at a time when the most urgent question was just what had gone wrong with Japanese society.

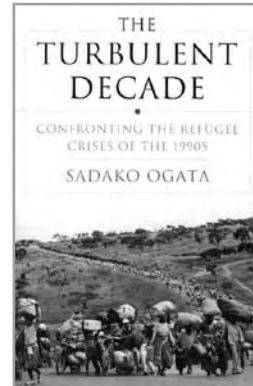
In these essays Maruyama indicates the foundations of his research on Japanese-style fascism. At the same time he attributes the problem to the intellectual autonomy of Japan's history of political ideas. In this argument the aborted development of Japanese modernity explains the failure of politics to control the military and the fascistic elements which then took over Japanese society itself.

The influence of Maruyama's work remains immense in Japan. Not content with the kind of democracy imposed by the occupying forces, he questioned the role of modernity in contemporary Japan, making a strong distinction between modernity on one hand and Westernization on the other. Here he played the role of an important opinion leader, participated in public debates, and strongly questioned the renewing of the the US-Japan Security Treaty. Rather, he spoke for Japanese pacifism, of which he was one of the major defenders.

The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s

Sadako Ogata

(W.W. Norton & Company, 2005)



Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, here reflecting on this turbulent decade of her life, writes that she headed a kind of “fire brigade” which tried to put out blazes before they became conflagrations.

She and her commission struggled with four major events: refugee problems caused by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, by the breakup of Yugoslavia and the resulting Balkan War, by genocide in Rwanda, and by the recent war in Afghanistan.

Though she and her commission fulfilled many a humanitarian obligation, the message of this memoir is that humanitarian action is inherently inadequate. What is necessary are concerted political and security actions by the powers concerned. And this is what is most difficult to achieve, this convergence of strategic interests.

What she wants to emphasize, says the author is “that refugee problems are essentially political in origin and therefore have to be addressed through political action.”

Some successful operations involve military-civilian cooperation but there are others that do not. Here Ogata has bravely included many examples of how both the U.N. and NATO forces interpreted their mandates so narrowly that the protection of civilians was all but excluded.

The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past, Present, and Future

Michael J. Green /

Patrick M. Cronin (eds.)

(Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999)



32

The military alliance between Japan and the United States is both important and contentious. It is now commonly thought that this bilateral arrangement should be more strongly redefined than merely reaffirmed.

A strategic relationship that has been in force since the 1951 signing of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, this alliance has not moved with the times and has made little accommodating change.

Now, say the authors of the various papers in this collection, the time for redefinition has come. China, economically emerging, poses new problems; the future of the two Koreas remains uncertain. Yet, Japan has so benefited from the U.S. alliance (much less defense spending, many more trade arrangements) that ideas about redefinition are not popular.

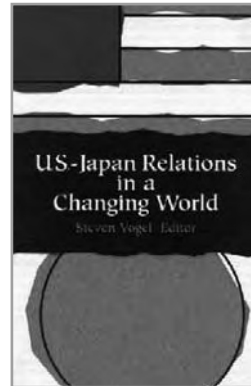
Indeed, it has been remarked that the various alliance justifications after the Cold War remain much the same as they were during the Cold War itself. Yet, it must be argued (as it is here), that a relationship formed during the Cold War must change with the changing times.

This is now generally agreed upon but the problem is how to accomplish this redefinition. Certainly economies will be interdependent but security operations are influenced by economic considerations.

U.S.-Japan Relations in a Changing World

Steven K. Vogel (ed.)

(Brookings Institution Press, 2002)



With the changes expected in the U.S.-Japan relationship in the next decade, this collection of essays—all originating from a U.S.-Japan conference in 2001, analyzes the many factors that have shaped this relationship. It is inevitable that both Japan and the United States will have to work hard to preserve their relationship's stability.

This book includes an introduction, the eight essays, and a conclusion, each examining different dimensions in this relationship. Looked at are the arguments for a “balance of power,” for economic performances, and the power of ideas as contrasted to military and economic powers.

Also considered is the role of international organizations in shaping U.S.-Japan relationships, and the similar role that finance is playing. Japan's financial liberalization is seen as promoting the convergence of the Japanese corporate governance against an increasingly deregulated American system.

Some doubt is also voiced over whether Japan can regain the technological advantage over the U.S. that it once enjoyed. More likely will be an expansion from such original issues as security and trade, to the important issues of the environment, immigration and human rights. This expansion will be likely to foster greater cooperation and collaboration, as well as more danger of conflict.

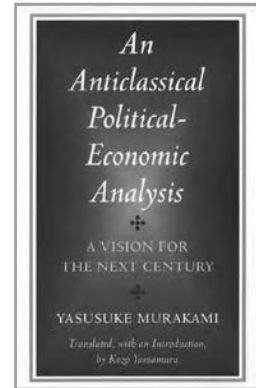
Economics / Business



An Anticlassical Political- Economic Analysis: A Vision for the Next Century

Yasusuke Murakami

(Stanford University Press, 1996)



36

This important and influential book questions the venerable concept that social progress is unified and unilateral. Standing against this “classical” definition, the author proposes many reasons for such “progress.” In so doing he indicates a new way that social scientists can think about central questions such as development, wealth, power, and international relations. And he does so from a Japanese perspective that is global as well as local.

By classical analysis Murakami means an analysis of power politics based on the nation-state system honoring the neoclassical assumption that competition and free trade are fundamental bases.

His own analysis takes the form of a concept the author calls “polymorphic liberalism.” This he then applies to three questions. How can a stable post-cold-war world-order be created? How can necessary economic performance be achieved while conflict and environmental deterioration are minimized? How to safeguard the freedom of all peoples?

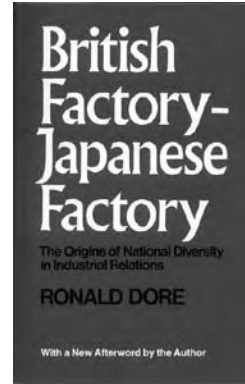
These cannot be answered by the nation-nation system at present in use which holds that unimpeded competition and free trade are reliable bases for increasing wealth for all. New paths must be sought and one message of this book is that the model of Japan offers some opportunities.

British Factory–Japanese Factory:

The Origins of National Diversity in Industrial Relations

Ronald Dore

(University of California Press, 1973)



The way that the Japanese work is often perceived as “different.” The author here sets out to find how different and why. He is not interested in impressionistic East/West comparisons but in making a strict comparison of two Japanese factories with two British ones making similar products.

The first half of his book illustrates the attitudes and assumptions that underline the “organization-oriented” system of Japan and the “market-oriented” system of Britain.

Much can be said for the orderliness, the mutual consideration, with which the Japanese manage their affairs; but they pay a price—the sacrifice of individuality and of independence. The British preserve these virtues but in doing so they pay a price in suspicion, obstinacy, inertia, and what the author calls “a shifting mixture of complacency and national self-doubt.”

But the purpose of this book is not to judge but to explain—to give, as the author says, a causal account of the genesis of the reasons why there should be two all but identical processes of creating all but identical electric generators; two very different ways of ordering the social and economic relations among the people involved.

The Economics of Work in Japan

Kazuo Koike

(LTCB International Library Foundation, 1995)



38

This book presents an analysis of Japan's labor economy stressing the way work is done and how human resources are managed. The author has said that his work has two purposes. The first is to show that Japan's labor economy has much in common with other industrialized countries, despite native and foreign claims that Japan is unique.

The second is to indicate that some differences do exist and it is these which must be studied. These include the means through which skills are formed, the nature of these skills, and intense competition that stimulates their formation.

Indeed, these arguments are central. Japan's labor economy is to an extent based upon this Japan-as-different argument. These differences are compared and studied.

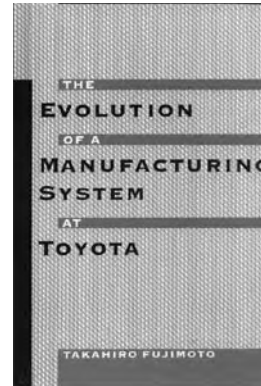
Permanent employment is examined through a comparison with such activities abroad. The procedures of dismissal between Japan and other countries are compared, as is the role of labor unions.

It is concluded that the skill at the source of Japan's competitiveness is the ability to deal effectively with problems and changes. Efficiency does not increase merely because of the sophistication of equipment and machinery. How well an enterprise responds to qualitative and quantitative change has a major effect on efficiency.

The Evolution of a Manufacturing System at Toyota

Takahiro Fujimoto

(Oxford University Press, 1999)



Toyota's place in Japan's manufacturing economy is assured. In particular, since the 1980s its production efficiency has attracted those wondering just how the firm has managed to achieve such a startling competitive advantage.

In this volume the author writes that Toyota was able to develop and sustain competitive advance by combining an orderly organization with a willingness to change. And by avoiding temptations to grow obese, but rather to stay fit and lean.

Accordingly, his book is divided into two parts. In the first the author presents an evolutionary framework using Toyota as an example. In the second he examines what he calls the three key elements in the manufacturing procedure.

It has been said that Toyota has never been too interested in theory, only practice. It views manufacturing as product flow. It knew Henry Ford's saying that the longer anything is in the factory or on the shelf, the more it costs.

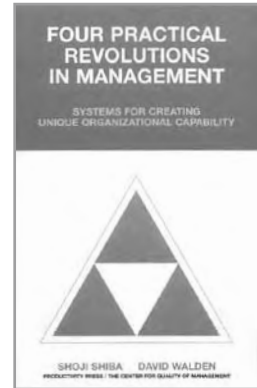
Though it is commonly thought that the Toyota method was the result of some kind of spontaneous generation, this volume shows that the Toyota system is the result of much thought and many experiences, and that it continues to evolve to this day.

Four Practical Revolutions in Management:

Systems for Creating Unique Organizational Capability

Shoji Shiba / Dave Walden

(Productivity Press, 1993)



40

In this important and influential book, Shiba and Walden describe and summarize an integrated set of management practices for improving overall business efficiency. Among the desired results are ways in which businesses can increase their ability to seek breakthrough opportunities.

This is to be accomplished through transforming company-thought to opportunity-recognition, since opportunities always favor a prepared mind. At the same time new relationships with business competitors should be fostered to create beneficial situations.

During this, businesses should focus on opening new activities elsewhere—for the Japanese this would mean China, India, and other parts of Asia. In all, it is important that businesses maintain a good balance between looking after internal efficiency and seeking out external opportunity.

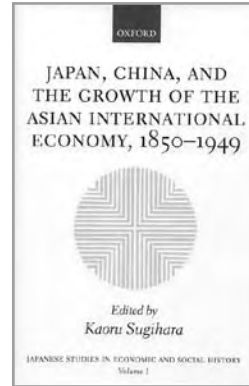
“In a globalized business environment, one should think radically and be willing to take risks,” Shiba once said. And indeed, breakthrough management is a radically new paradigm for exponential growth.

The revolutions having proved practical, Shiba and Walden published a second volume (2006) which emphasized the changing economic conditions in 21st-century Japan: *Breakthrough Management: Principles, Skills and Patterns for Transformational Leadership*.

Japan, China, and the Growth of the Asian International Economy, 1850-1949

Kaoru Sugihara (ed.)

(Oxford University Press, 2005)



Economic history in modern Asia is commonly written in terms of its impact on the West. This book, the result of a 1993 workshop held in Osaka on the role of China in the Asian economy, argues that the growth of trade and the migration of capital itself has been a strong factor in determining East Asian development.

The twelve papers in this volume (the first in a proposed series, “Japanese Studies in Economic and Social History,”) concern themselves with three major themes. The first is the importance of economic interactions between Japan and China, how—for example—Japan’s industrialization took advantage of the Chinese merchant networks in Asia. And how Chinese competition was a critical factor in Japanese organizational and technological upgrading in the periods in between.

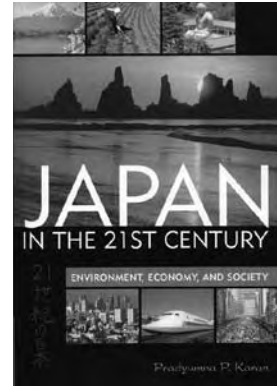
The second theme shows just how China’s entry into the international economy was shaped by the growth of intra-Asian trade, by migration, and by capital flows and remittances. The third theme is how intra-Asian trade enables us to understand the nature of colonialism and the climate of imperialism.

One review called this book “an important corrective to traditional accounts in its clear picture of how and why interactions between East Asian economies shaped the region’s economic development.”

Japan in the 21st Century: Environment, Economy, and Society

Pradyumna P. Karan

(University Press of Kentucky, 2005)



42

This is the first full-length English-language textbook on Japan's geography, culture, politics, and economy to appear in almost four decades. It offers insights into the current realities of the country. It also investigates the political, economic, demographic and environmental challenges that face Japan.

In so doing, the author explores the opportunities that will shape Japan and consequently affect the world. He indicates strategies and policies that will make economic and political change desirable, and that will stimulate long-term prosperity and economic vitality.

Japan has become the world's second largest economy, something to emulate, to fear, a power without arms. The subject, volatile and changing, offers opportunities for important research and important ways through which to understand the singularities of this country. Japan shows old ways shaken and new ones developing at a hectic, sometimes heedless race.

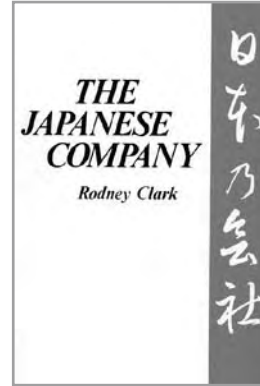
The author's interest is in the application of geographic theories and methodologies to analyze problems of environment, development and social change. He is here joined by Dick A. Gilbreath, the cartographer whose work illuminates this text.

The result is a combination of text, maps and photographs that provide an understanding of Japan's geography, culture, and economic and political development issues.

The Japanese Company

Rodney Clark

(Yale University Press, 1979)



The author has said that the aim of his book is to explain how the Japanese company is run and how its workings affect those associated with it.

Companies are, in his view, themselves political institutions and within them employees are subordinated to each other and to their common goals.

Indeed, within a given country, the company is second only to the state itself among its many institutions. But companies are not everywhere the same. Each has its own legal elaborations based on the nearly universal principle of incorporation. This means that each company has been shaped by varied circumstances but share certain similarities.

Such Japanese companies then organize the greater part of manufacture and commerce; they employ much of the population, distributing wealth and making some people rich and some people poor.

Companies are commonly incorporated and this is seen as necessary to success. Indeed the company is itself so thoroughly the most convenient form of commercial cooperation that, apart from the bureaucracy of the state itself, there is no alternative to it.

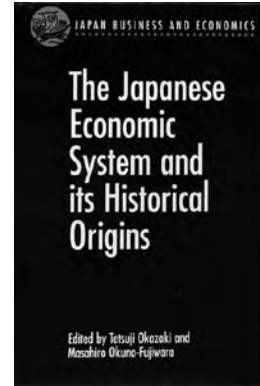
It is for this reason that Japanese companies have political significance in the sense that they are often engaged, as it were, in national politics.

The Japanese Economic System and its Historical Origins

Tetsuji Okazaki /

Masahiro Okuno-Fujiwara (eds.)

(Oxford University Press, 1999)



44

When this book appeared in Japanese in 1993, it attracted a good deal of attention from the scholarly community because of its openness and accuracy, and also because it offered new ideas, all based on careful research.

It consists of nine chapters by eight Japanese economic historians, and is the result of joint research examining the historical forces that created the present Japanese economic system.

The theory advanced is that the major elements of this system were due not to cultural or historical differences but were deliberately created during the years 1930-45 as a part of the wartime effort.

It is argued that until the 1930s Japan had had “an Anglo-Saxon economic model,” something that answered the economic wishes of England. In wartime Japan, however, something much different was required during militarization, something which much more efficiently answered their demands.

This included an employee-based corporate governance, a bank-controlled financial system, and the principle of “administrative guidance.” Though many postwar factors have become more focused, the system would not exist without the changes introduced during the wartime years. The extent to which this system continues is also explained in this multi-authored volume.

The Japanese Firm: The Sources of Competitive Strength

Masahiko Aoki / Ronald Dore (eds.)

(Oxford University Press, 1994)



This volume is comprised of a group of papers written by experts in their various fields, all deeply concerned with Japanese companies, their structures, their purposes.

The editors of this collection direct the reader's attention to four qualities which distinguish it. First is that the papers are interdisciplinary and catholic in their approach, relating the author's interpretation to those deriving from other disciplines.

A second distinction of the collection is that no one claims to have discovered the secret of the Japanese firm—some autonomous factor that would explain its competitive strength. Rather the rich complexity of the Japanese firm is comprehensively acknowledged.

It follows that the third distinction is the diversity of structure, particularly in the large corporation whose difference from its competitors in other countries is most marked.

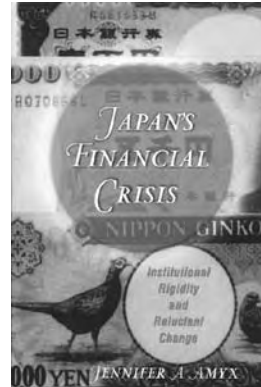
Thus (the fourth quality), the comparative perspective adopted, the issue of the transferability and adaptability of Japanese practices, whether they are even practical elsewhere.

Provided here, then, is an overview of the Japanese firm in all of its protean forms. A definition is provided and a question is asked: what sort of society will this sort of economy sustain and be sustained by?

Japan's Financial Crisis: Institutional Rigidity and Reluctant Change

Jennifer A. Amyx

(Princeton University Press, 2004)



46

Financial supervision in Japan, so successful in the 1970s, became dysfunctional from the 1990s. What had occurred and how it happened is detailed by the author.

The speculative asset bubble which had supported economic Japan burst, leaving the banks with the burden of non-performing loans. Such burdens are not rare in the world's banking centers, but what was unusual was the delay the Japanese government allowed itself before intervening to address the bad-debt problem.

What is here fully displayed is just how deeply Japan's Finance Ministry had penetrated political and financial circles, how the structure of Japan's ministries made this possible, and how the nature of Japan's institutional arrangements affected the government's capacity to manage change at all.

The author calls attention to two variables that brought about a shift in the Finance Ministry's policy networks: domestic political change under a coalition government, and a rise in information requirements for effective results.

One outcome was a move by the national legislature to dismantle the ministry, something unimaginable a decade earlier. The question that appeared was "how could institutional arrangements for financial policy making and regulation work so well for so long and yet also be guilty of leading Japan into such an economic abyss?"

Japan's Lost Decade

Hiroshi Yoshikawa

(I-House Publishing, 2000)



During the height of its prosperity in the late 1980s, Japan was “number one.” Yet only a few years later, at the beginning of the 1990s Japan’s economy suddenly reversed itself and fell into its longest-lasting and most severe recession since World War II. Thus began Japan’s “lost” decade.

The author—in his *Tenkanki no Nihon*, of which this volume is a translation—asked if Japan’s protracted slump can be attributed to a decline in the nation’s growth rate. Though this theory has gained acceptance since Japan’s labor force is certain to decrease with the aging of its population, the author maintains a different viewpoint.

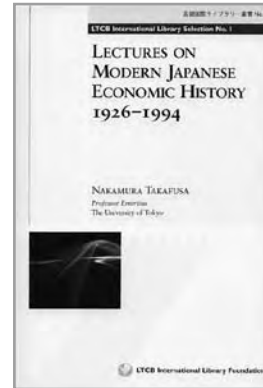
The real culprit is not insufficient demand, nor a decline in the potential growth rate. Rather, it is a combination of causes coinciding with the most decisive turning point—the end of the high-growth era.

Japan’s manufacturing industries continued to prop up the economy, using export as a means. Nevertheless, the economy failed to develop steady domestic demands. That is, domestic demand linked with improvement in the people’s standard of living, failed to rise—and this resulted in the excesses of the ten-year-long “bubble” and the lost decade that followed it.

Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History, 1926-1994

Takafusa Nakamura

(LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994)



48

This is a translation of the influential 1986 *Showa Keizai Shi* (Economic History of the Showa Era). In it the author recounts Japan's economic history from the 1920s until now.

The era began when Hirohito, the Showa Emperor, came to the throne in 1926 and it lasted until 1989. This period thus began in recession and saw Japan embark on the path of recovery, only to have these gains destroyed by eight years of war.

The late 1940s then brought economic recovery, followed by over a decade of growth that lasted into the 1970s and completely changed Japan's society as well as its economy.

The oil crisis of 1973-74 put an end to the era of rapid economic expansion and was followed by a period of more stable growth in which Japan found itself having to meet the new responsibilities of a global economy.

The author, regarded as one of Japan's foremost economists of his day, here gives a complete account of the economics of the Showa era, which began with the bank panic of the 1920s, passed through depression and war, and led to Japan's becoming the world's largest net asset holder.

Manufacturing Ideology:

Scientific Management in Twentieth-Century Japan

William M. Tsutsui

(Princeton University Press, 1998)



Japan is widely admired for its efficient yet humane management practices. These are widely thought to be the result of Japanese communitarianism, Japanese paternalism, and Japanese culture. Tsutsui's study of such workplace ideologies, however, finds that these acclaimed strategies are not all that novel, are not even especially Japanese.

The model for the ideology is American, a methodology that is known as "scientific management" or, more colloquially as "Taylorism," named after its originator. It was dubbed an "efficiency movement" and was introduced into Japan at the beginning of the 20th century.

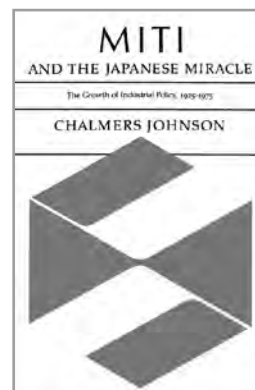
Since Japan could not afford an alternate American methodology, "Fordism," full assembly lines being too expensive, it remodeled Taylorism into something that eventually fit the country perfectly. Japanese managers founded a "revised" Taylorism that combined a respect for labor with mechanistic efficiency.

Much the same kind of tweaking occurred elsewhere, in the US, for example, but the Japanese version included a standardization in which the Japanese government played an active role in reducing competition, lowering costs, and injecting "Japanese spirit." In presenting this history of a constructed ideology, the author questions much of the mythology that has surrounded the West's idea of "Japanese" management.

MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975

Chalmers Johnson

(Stanford University Press, 1982)



50

In this seminal study the author posits the relationship between governmental institutions and economic activity. In it he sees not only free trade vs. mercantilism, but also socialism vs. capitalism, and ultimately a concern with procedures, which is liberty, vs. a concern with outcomes, which is equality.

Japan's postwar achievements—becoming the world's second most productive open economy—is seen as a successful example of a state-guided economic system. The Japanese economic bureaucracy, particularly MITI (the Ministry of International Trade and Industry) has been the leading player in the performance of the Japanese economy.

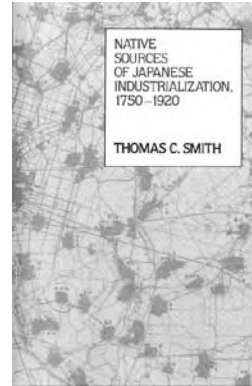
Indeed, the form and consequences, as well as the speed, of Japanese economic growth cannot be understood without an admission of the contributions of the MITI. Its achievements are central to the debate continuing between advocates of command economies of the communist type, and those favoring mixed market economies of the Western persuasion.

Among the many differences between the means of Japan and the means of the West, is that in Japan the state's role in the economy is shared with the private sector, and that both the public and private sectors have made the market work for developmental goals. This pattern has proved a most successful strategy.

Native Sources of Japanese Industrialization, 1750-1920

Thomas C. Smith

(University of California Press, 1988)



Here is a collection of important essays on the demographic, economic, and social history of both the Tokugawa period and the modern era by one of Japan's most eminent historians.

Gathered together for the first time, these ten essays provide an introduction to the modernization of the country and, as one critic has said "reflect both a sensitivity to Japanese social character and a sophisticated challenge to universal truths about modern industrial societies and human relations."

As in earlier works, the author here ascribes a major role in the formation of Japan's modernization to the evolution of an agrarian economy during the Tokugawa period, noting the change in the village from subsistence production to market production, and the consequent transformation of family farming.

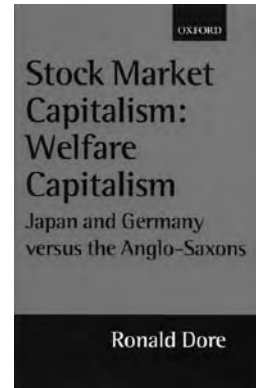
Crucial to the author's historiography is his willingness to write as a comparative historian. Often his views of Japanese history stress the necessity of questioning the assumed universality of the Western mode of industrialization.

Of his work Kenneth Pyle has observed that "his research and writing are critical to our understanding of how it was that the Japanese became the first non-Western people to achieve an industrial society."

Stock Market Capitalism: Welfare Capitalism: Japan and Germany versus the Anglo-Saxons

Ronald Dore

(Oxford University Press, 2000)



52

The author here places recent developments in Japan against the broader context of changes in the modern patterns of capitalism common to all industrial societies. His focus is on the tendency of shareholder-value to be seen as the sole legitimate objective of the corporate executive, as contrasted with the traditional alignment of Japan on the employee-favoring side of the divide.

Dore begins his argument with a discussion of “the original Japanese model,” then moves on to the changes and controversies that this model has occasioned both in Japan and elsewhere.

He parallels Japan’s achievement with that of Germany and in his conclusion he writes of the effects of economic models on the identity of a country. His, then, is a story of “modern capitalism” and his book concludes with the thought that “Germany will clearly lose much of its separate identity as it is absorbed in, or absorbs, Europe. Japan will still for a long while to come remain a much more autonomous entity.”

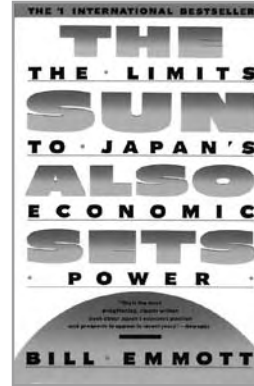
The book thus offers a guide to the changes in economic behavior experienced by two countries, Japan and Germany, and a demonstration of their differences to England and America.

The Sun Also Sets:

The Limits to Japan's Economic Power

Bill Emmott

(Touchstone, 1989)



Japan's economic ability to change has long puzzled foreign commentators. Japan's progressions and regressions seem to call for explanation.

One argument is that Japan is somehow "different" from any other nation. It is to this that the author, former Tokyo bureau chief of *The Economist*, turns his attention. He first clears the ground by demolishing the commonly held view that Japan is unchanging. Indeed, Japan's ability to adjust to new circumstances, to grasp new technology, has been seen as accountable for its economic success.

And perhaps for its economic failure as well. As one commentator suggested: "The book's title comes from the author's assertion that Japan's huge financial surpluses could shrink as rapidly as they appeared ..." During much of its existence Japan has been a debtor nation, borrowing more than it could produce. It must inevitably succumb to the laws of economics, one of which is "countries that build surpluses must eventually see them shrink."

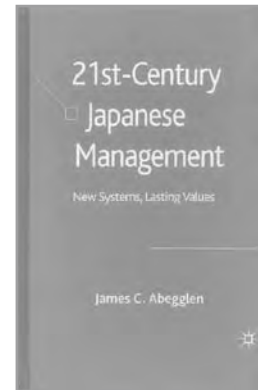
In the century and a half since Commodore Perry introduced Japan to gunboat diplomacy the country has gone through several periods of growth and matching periods of recession. Here, the author questions the international assumptions of Japanese efficiency, and assures us that the Japanese are not all that different from the peoples of the West.

21st-Century Japanese Management:

New Systems, Lasting Values

James C. Abegglen

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)



54

As long as the high growth of Japan's economy continued, various known methods were appropriate: investing in equipment, financing through bank debt, seeking success in market shares, hiring more workers in an anticipation of growth.

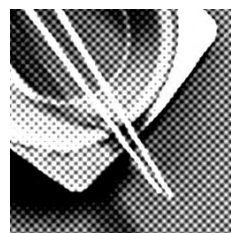
When this growth suddenly stopped, as it did in the mid-1990s, major changes in industrial structure became necessary, in financial assessments, in business strategies. This meant the redesigning of Japanese industries. How this was accomplished, as well as the way in which it wasn't, is the theme of Abegglen's book.

Many changes were made but the values that shaped Japanese companies—the company as a social organization—have continued. The author offers an understanding of the financial remedies that have been advised, while at the same time considering the underlying social continuity.

Through these considerations it is possible to indicate the future directions of Japan's economy into the new era after the decade of stagnation, and the return of steady growth and a relative prosperity.

Considered and discussed are Japanese-style management, the imperatives of research, the models envisioned (U.S. model/Japan model), the role of the foreign investor, and most of all the many possibilities of Japanese companies.

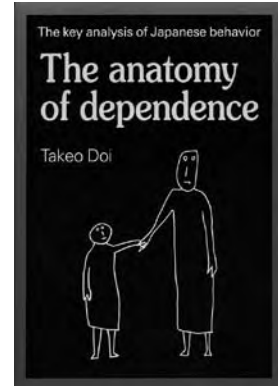
Society / Culture



The Anatomy of Dependence

Takeo Doi

(Kodansha International, 1973)



56

This famous book describes at length the author's concept of *amae*, which he describes as a uniquely Japanese need to be in good favor with and consequently be able to depend on the people around oneself. He likens it to children's assumption that parents will indulge them, and describes the Japanese ideal relationship as that of parent-child, emphasizing that all relationships strive for this closeness and protection though such an embrace does to some extent crush initiative and individuality.

It is Doi's contention that European languages lack an equivalent word for *amae*. This lack, he argues, implies a want of social recognition and a need for feelings of dependency in the West.

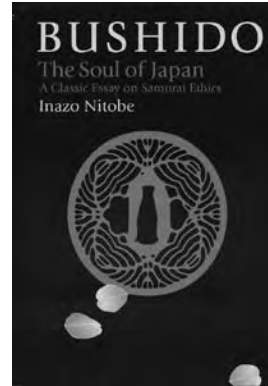
Though the feeling of being emotionally close to another human being is not uniquely Japanese, its expression in terms of *amae* is. At the same time, the rich, semantic meaning attached to the term does differentiate Japanese culture, in his view.

There is no doubt that this theory of *amae* is more developed in Japan and that the feelings it engenders are deep, but that it is unique to Japan is questioned by the fact that the work has been recognized as having a universal application.

Bushido: The Soul of Japan

Inazo Nitobe

(Kodansha International, 2002)



This classic, originally published in 1905, remains an important book. Bushido is characterized as “the way of the warrior,” “the samurai code of honor.” During the modernizing Meiji era, Bushido was reinvented and became an important force in the rise of Japanese nationalism.

This “new” Bushido had no written text until Nitobe wrote this book which presents Bushido not just as a martial discipline but as a system of ethics and morals, a whole school of thought that has no set dogma but consists of qualities and practices. These would include concepts such as courage, veracity, sincerity, honor, and loyalty, all of which he examines.

His learning and the demands of his subject meant that the result would be an eclectic book. He delved in Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism while seeking similarities and contrasts by citing philosophers going back to the Romans, the Greeks, and even various Biblical figures.

Writing in 1905, he could not know to what uses Bushido would be put during the Pacific War, could not see that as a historiographic term “Bushido” would also become a problematic construct. One which, however, now serves to describe a set of ideals which undoubtedly influenced many from the last days of the samurai until now.

Edo Culture:

Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600-1868

Matsunosuke Nishiyama

(University of Hawai'i Press, 1997)



58

Though Nishiyama is one of the finest historians of Edo culture, his work has hitherto not been much translated. Here, in Gerald Groemer's translation, we are given a selection of his writings.

Divided into three sections, this selection first gives a history of the city Edo (now Tokyo) itself during its formative decades, and how it was socially shaped by merchant and samurai alike. Also, how the Edo aesthetic was formed by the various communal activities of the commoners within the city.

The second section indicates the degree of interaction between urban and rural cultures during the nineteenth century and shows how itinerant pilgrims, traveling players, and the like created an unprecedented cultural diffusion.

The third section is dedicated to music and the theatre. In it the author analyzes the relations of the various social classes to musical genres and aesthetics in general, the final chapter focusing on urban vaudeville.

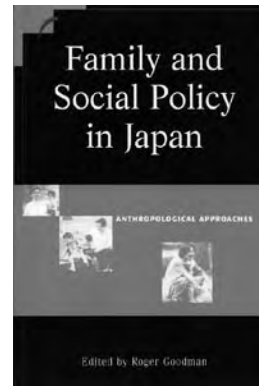
As the translator points out in his introduction, Nishiyama's main interest was the culture of the city of Edo itself. This is because "the culture of Edo the city gradually became the hegemonic culture of the Edo period." To this one might add that to the casual foreign viewer the culture of Edo then became the culture of Japan.

Family and Social Policy in Japan:

Anthropological Approaches

Roger Goodman (ed.)

(Cambridge University Press, 2002)



The nine essays here collected and edited by Roger Goodman originated as papers presented at the Japan Anthropological Workshop held in Osaka in 1999. They deal mainly with fairly recent changes: the aging population, the growing foreign population, education, child abuse, etc.

Goodman states in his introduction that anthropology can bring perceptions that differentiate it from other disciplines. For example, the anthropologist is in a position to make a distinction “between what people say they do, say they should do, and actually do.” Further, anthropology has the ability “to unpack the taken-for-granted assumptions that lie behind the production of policy.”

All of this is demonstrated in various degrees in the papers he includes to illustrate his thesis. At the same time some of these essays are enriched by analyses of legislation or analyses of social issues in the medium, thus straying from a strict definition of the confines of anthropology.

The result is a number of different perspectives on social issues. Revealed is that the relationship between the state on one hand and the individual on the other is not simply one-way. Individuals are also molders of policy.

Gender and Development: The Japanese Experience in Comparative Perspective

Mayumi Murayama (ed.)

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)



60

Though Japanese economic development is widely discussed, less attention is given to social development, and much less to gender-related issues. By examining Japanese experiences related to gender, the various authors in this collection seek insights relevant to developing countries.

The book covers such themes as economic development and gender disparities, population policy, rural livelihood programs, as well as female political participation, the sharing of domestic work, and discourses on the modern family.

Each chapter deals with the Japanese case in a comparative perspective with developing countries. The common message is a call for the creation of an interactive space to exchange individual experiences and insights between societies in order to formulate a more powerful gender and development agenda.

Among the topics considered in these papers are Japan's postwar family system and its implications, a two-country comparison as to how socialism has contributed to gender role changes, an investigation into the successes of women in local elections, etc.

In her introduction Murayama emphasizes the attempts made to integrate gender and development issues in Japan and in various developing countries. Her essay, at the conclusion of the book, includes her own thoughts on this growing integration.

Japanamerica:

How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.

Roland Kelts

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)



Japanese popular culture has considerably influenced the entertainment patterns of countries all over the world. In particular, manga and anime—pop-style cartoon narratives and animated cartoon films—have been eagerly accepted.

How this occurred is the basis of this account, but its basic question is how could such a rigid society as that of Japan produce a pop art that is so wildly imaginative. Among the author's contentions is that such kinetic story-lines, such apocalyptic narratives, such sex, such violence, might be permissible only in a place that had experienced nuclear devastation.

There are, however, many other reasons for the explosion of a pop-art ethos that in ten years could earn \$25 billion—the achievement of Nintendo's Pokémon manifestation. The author is particularly persuasive in his description of the “permission of the dark,” a kind of tacit approval which allows the particularly violent and sexual excesses of both manga and anime, and eludes any kind of social censorship.

Countering this is the example that violent crimes against women are exceedingly rare in a country that makes first-person rapist video games. There would thus seem to be some correlation between the actual and the virtual.

Japanese Science: From the Inside

Samuel J. Coleman

(Routledge, 1999)



62

There is a general impression that Japan has a relatively poor scientific record, that career structure and organization priorities have hampered both scientific research and the advancement of scientists themselves.

A reason for this often advanced is that the poor record is the product of cultural factors—the “Japanese way.” It is just this concept, however, that Coleman’s book attempts to counter.

In this ethnographic study he demonstrated the importance of moribund policy decision in holding back scientists. “As long as Japan is unable to translate its wealth and talent into substantial scientific contributions we are all the poorer for it,” writes Coleman.

He then analyzes the problem of career mobility in science in Japan, that the status quo in university and government laboratories, the relations between scientists and lay administrators, and the problems encountered by women scientists.

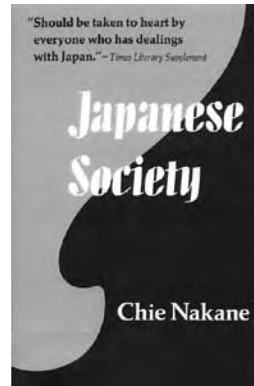
With the world’s second largest economy, Japan is still faced with excessive governmental control over education and research, with faculties still holding to ideals of age/grade promotion, and a preference for incremental advance over bold experimentation.

As Coleman writes: “Global science needs as many competent players as possible to address the thorny problems of health and environment.”

Japanese Society

Chie Nakane

(University of California Press, 1970)



The achievement of this now well-known sociological text is that the author presents not merely a society composed of independent groups and institutions but one that is united by a single overarching structure. The one basic structure here stressed is verticality (rather than the horizontal structure sometimes found in other cultures), a principle observed in the relations among Japanese, most illustrated in this thesis by those between someone who is senior and someone who is junior, that is someone more powerful and/or richer over someone less.

Though sometimes criticized for its simplicity, Nakane's principle has made contemporary Japan more understandable for many. In this book we see the roles of the traditional Japanese family now being reenacted by businesses, the samurai mentality transformed in the salaryman, the lord/peasant, landlord/tenant scenario of traditional Japan is seen as played out in the modern management systems.

Using the structural approaches of (in particular) British anthropology, the author explains her subject through an analysis of the historical social structure of Japanese society. The different sections of her book indicate both her aims and her means: "Criteria of Group Formation," "Internal and Overall Structure of Society" and "Characteristics of the Japanese Man."

Japan's High Schools

Thomas P. Rohlen

(University of California Press, 1983)



64

The author, an anthropologist, spent more than a year in Kobe observing a cross section of five urban high schools. These included not only the most elite but also those vocational schools that were plagued by delinquency.

In this book he reports on the character of the institutions through descriptions of school organizations, classroom instruction, adolescent peer relations, and much more. Placing these details into a larger context makes visible the factors that form Japanese high schools and makes them what they are.

The factors include the competitive university entrance system, the differences in student education, and differences in social background. In turn the influence of high school education on Japan is assessed, how the student level of today will be the worker level of tomorrow.

The inherent contradictions among these considerations are examined and the anthropologist must conclude that providing Japan with a trained and disciplined work force is accomplished only at significant cultural and human costs.

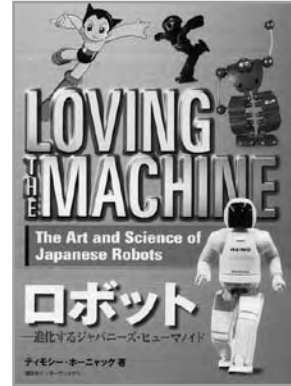
Rohlen not only renders an ethnographic account of five schools, he also draws a portrait of today's Japanese high school education, one in which the varied ethnographic findings are used to provide contextual analysis.

Loving the Machine:

The Art and Science of Japanese Robots

Timothy N. Hornyak

(Kodansha International, 2006)



Japan has long had an interest in humanoid robots. Other countries are now equally interested but a difference is that Japanese robots are built and marketed as friends. They are like pals or pets, they are warm and human-like.

In contradistinction, those of the West seem “all vacuum cleaners or war machines.” The U.S. has the terrifying Terminator while Japan has the friendly Atom Boy. Japan sees robots as potential colleagues rather than as potential adversaries.

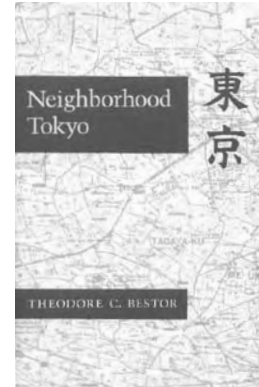
The reasons behind this attitude make up the thesis of this book. The author has said that the Japanese “are very successful at combining engineering and design in robotics. The result is that robots end up seeming a lot more like living beings, instead of just buckets of bolts ... Japanese feel an irresistible urge to treat them as fellow beings rather than lifeless automatons.”

There are numerous reasons for this. One of them is the demographic problem in Japan. The population is shrinking - by 2030 some third of all Japanese will be over 60 years old. The love for robots is based on the coming need of robots. Not only the elderly but also industry itself will be in need of helping robotic hands.

Neighborhood Tokyo

Theodore C. Bestor

(Stanford University Press, 1989)



66

This classic sociological account is an ethnographic analysis of the social fabric and internal dynamics of one small neighborhood—the residential and commercial district in Tokyo where Bestor carried out his fieldwork from 1979 through 1981.

It is a study of the social construct in (and maintenance of) a neighborhood in a society where such communities are said to be outmoded by the major trends of modernization and social change that have so transformed Japan in the last century. Bestor's is a study not of tradition in its aspect as historical continuity, but of traditionalism—the manipulation, and recombination of cultural patterns and symbols so as to legitimate contemporary social realities.

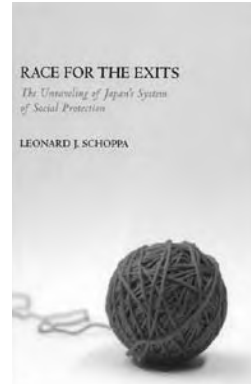
He examines the cliché that Tokyo is just a congerie of villages and then exposes a much more accepted “wisdom.” Urban neighborhoods, he says, are not rural villages and they do not exist as lingering remnants of moribund social forms. Rather, they continue as vital social units. Without the social “glue” that local institutions, shared values of community, and a sense of communal identity impart, neighborhoods could not effectively achieve the political and administrative ends that are so often the sole reasons for their existence.

Race for the Exits:

The Unraveling of Japan's System of Social Protection

Leonard J. Schoppa

(Cornell University Press, 2006)



Japan's system of social protection that grew up between the 1960s and the early 1980s was well-suited to its time. Now, however, there are a number of serious strains in the system. Japan is facing a declining supply of workers and many Japanese firms are struggling against a system of social protection that burdens them with high costs.

In addition, contrary to expectations, Japan's long-term recession has provoked no sustained political movement to replace the nation's malfunctioning economic structure. It would seem that the country's basic social contract has proved resistant to reform, if not to erosion.

As the author writes: "The only way the nation can steer itself onto a sustainable macroeconomic path is by adopting fundamental social and economic reforms designed to boost productivity, encourage the participation of women and immigrants in the workforce, and facilitate work-family balance so that families can choose to have more children."

Now, instead of reform, firms shift jobs overseas, lifetime employment is no longer an expectations and women give up trying to balance family and career. These trends have created grave economic pressures. As industries reduce their domestic operations the economy is further diminished. The unraveling continues and accelerates.

Science, Technology and Society in Contemporary Japan

Morris Low / Shigeru Nakayama /

Hitoshi Yoshioka

(Cambridge University Press, 1999)



68

Here is a book exploring the relationship between science, technology, and Japanese society. It aims to examine how this relationship has contributed to economic growth and national well-being. A team of three leading scholars in the field present a synthesis of competing views on the role of science, technology and medical care in contemporary Japan.

The presentation discusses government policy and the private sectors, communication in the age of computers, the role of the automobile industry, the part played by both quality control and the aerospace industry. Also considered are medical care, the role of gender, and consumer electronics and their effects.

Some chapter headings will give an idea of the book and its scope: Cooperation vs. Competition; Quality vs. Quantity; National Interest vs. Local Interest; Domestic Technology vs. the Exportation of Technology; Women vs. Men in the Science and Technological Workforce.

Through this book the reader may gain some insight into the interplay between the different values and interests involved, the power and knowledge contained, all affecting their outcome in Japan. Though Japanese science is sometimes seen as lagging behind, this account finds the nation turning to science and technology to guarantee its future.

Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan

Robert N. Bellah

(The Free Press, 1957)



A question sometimes asked is how Japan could transform itself from a quasi-feudal to a modern industrial state in just fifty years. It shares with the rest of the nearby Asian homeland the same religious influences, the same traditionalism that has, in the opinion of a number of scholars, inhibited modern industrial capitalism in, say, India.

Bellah answers this question by offering a strong argument that the industrialization of Japan came through a special religious configuration. It affected Japan in the same way that European capitalism was influenced by Protestantism.

Religion during the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868) supported a greatly stabilized society, one now freed of civil wars. At the same time this led to a concentration of political power in the person of the emperor. Religion was closely associated both institutionally and ethically with the controls of this central political force.

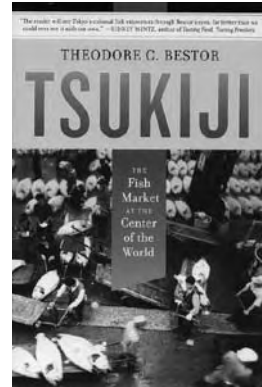
How this eventually affected the economy of the country is charted by the author. In short, the religious beliefs of the Japanese created a Protestant-like work ethic in Japan. It has been said that not since the publication of Ruth Benedict's view of wartime Japan has the field of Japanese studies been given such a comprehensive and ordered vision of motivations.

Tsukiji:

The Fish Market at the Center of the World

Theodore C. Bestor

(University of California Press, 2004)



70

This book is an ethnography of the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo. It offers a detailed account of the economic trends, the political constraints and incentives, the consumer preferences and the whole complex web of social activities that support this typical and necessary organization.

Of it the author has said: “Corporations, cartels, and markets should be of as much interest to anthropologists as communities or clans. The critical issues of organizing social relations around production, exchange, and consumption—activities that determine ownership, distribute surpluses, legitimate property rights, and structure access to common resources—are of no less anthropological significance than the study of a moiety.”

Here Bestor has carried out his extensive fieldwork. What most interests him is how economic transactions are embedded in social institutions and how markets are as much about social and cultural trends as they are about pure economics.

The ideas that organize Bestor’s book are here used to define a Japanese food industry which is no more or no less socially embedded than any other complex economic institution in any other society. *Tsukiji* is a study through which we can gain an understanding as to how culture can influence the patterns of economic activity.

**Literature /
Arts**



Anime: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle:

Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation

Susan J. Napier

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)



72

This is an updated edition of a popular book maintaining that Japanese animated film is more than just cartoons for kids, that it can also portray social and cultural themes.

Japanese animation, known as anime to its friends, is now a part of pop culture worldwide. It is a genre filled with historical epics, science-fiction thrillers, fairy-tales, fantasy—anything the creator and the public wants. Though sometimes dismissed as simple-minded entertainment, anime can also portray social and cultural issues such as teenage angst, gender inequality, and alienation.

More than half of all movies and television programs produced in Japan are anime, and more and more academics are studying and teaching anime.

Among the many attributes Napier describes in her book is that female characters are given just as many if not more heroic roles in anime, that they are more involved, more motivated, more plausible than male characters, and hence more interesting.

Another discovery is that anime fans find their films feel more real (though animated) than conventionally photographed Hollywood films. As one of them said: “It is comforting to see, not a Hollywood ending, but one you can identify with.”

The Cape and Other Stories from the Japanese Ghetto

Kenji Nakagami

(Stone Bridge Press, 1999)



Kenji Nakagami (1946-1992) won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize in 1975 for his novella, “The Cape.” In it and the two shorter stories which make up this volume, Nakagami draws on his background as a member of the outcast class of Japan, the *burakumin*.

Though Japan is often assumed to be one homogeneous culture, this is by no means true. The *burakumin* are but one of the several socially disadvantaged groups within this society. Numerous attempts have been made to abolish this discrimination but, as yet, nothing has completely eradicated the centuries-old discrimination displayed against these people.

Nakagami dramatizes their plight in the title story which is about an illegitimate son, member of a discordant family, whose conflicted feelings about his father merge with a desire for self-obliteration, leading inevitably toward tragedy.

The two stories “House on Fire,” and “Red Hair,” continue this narrative with their insistence upon the discrimination undergone, the despairing emotions experienced, and the desperate passions unleashed.

Often compared to Zola, Gorky, and Faulkner, Nakagami speaks for the downtrodden—those imprisoned by the very society in which they live. His voice is, as this collection suggests, a true call from Japan’s ghetto.

The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature: 1945 to the Present

Thomas J. Rimer /

Van C. Gessel (eds.)

(Columbia University Press, 2005 / 2007)



74

This two-volume history of contemporary Japanese literature assembles a series of works from the 1870s to the present. It, the editors hope, “will provide a relevant, resonant experience of Japanese culture not otherwise available.”

The first volume (published 2005) contains works by such important authors as Ogai Mori, Soseki Natsume, Kafu Nagai and many others covering the period “from the Restoration to the Occupation” (1868-1945). The second volume (published 2007) contains works by Kobo Abe, Yukio Mishima, Fumiko Hayashi and many other writers to cover the period from 1945 to the present.

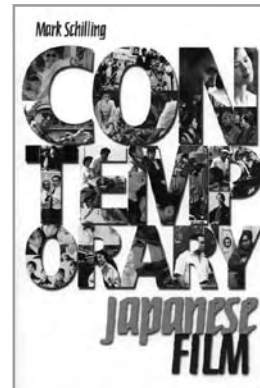
It totals 1728 pages and can thus contain entire works: in the second volume alone, one of Yasushi Inoue’s longer stories, a novella by Kenzaburo Oe. It also has space to indicate authors’ diversities: not only Oe’s novella but also his Nobel Prize address; not only Mishima’s long story, “Patriotism,” but also his modern Noh play “Yuya.”

The structure is kept purposely loose so that writing is not confined by the presentation, a necessity to which the editors are alive since each has had wide experience with anthologies. Van Gessel as co-editor of *The Showa Anthology*, and Thomas Rimer as author of the invaluable *Reader’s Guide to Japanese Literature*.

Contemporary Japanese Film

Mark Schilling

(Weatherhill, 1999)



Film critic for *The Japan Times*, Mark Schilling here contributes a look at the Japanese cinema of the 1990s. Covering the decade 1989 to 1999, his book is filled with reviews, analyses, and interviews. Interpretive essays provide insight into some of the issues and themes and create a coherent context against which innovations plainly show.

In his view, Japanese film at the end of the last century, and presumably on into this one, is in a period of ferment, as compared with some fallow periods before. A number of independent sectors are seen as challenging the conventions of industrial, mainstream Japanese cinema.

Supporting this thesis are four hundred reviews of various representative films and a dozen profiles of leading producers and directors. Schilling sees the new independents as rejecting the formulas that characterize much major studio release. He also visualizes them reaching to new influences, often from other media—television, manga, music videos, computer games.

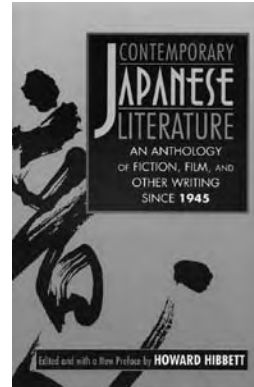
Films are still, in Japan as elsewhere, money-making devices, but Schilling believes that “the long-term prosperity of the industry depends on developing the right kind of human capital.” Here he indicates what this is.

Contemporary Japanese Literature:

An Anthology of Fiction, Film,
and Other Writing Since 1945

Howard Hibbett (ed.)

(Cheng & Tsui, 2005)



76

This “Anthology of Fiction, Film, and Other Writing Since 1945,” originally published in 1977, contains translations from nearly two dozen authors, many of them unknown abroad until this time—most of the translations being done expressly for this collection.

Not only are such authors as Jun’ichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata, Yukio Mishima and Kobo Abe included, but also such important writers as Junnosuke Yoshiyuki, Kenzaburo Oe, and Akiyuki Nosaka.

Many of the authors now acclaimed in Japan will be new to overseas readers, such writers as Taeko Kono, Shotaro Yasuoka, and Tatsuo Nagai.

In addition, this anthology is among the first to include film scripts as in their own right literature. Here we are given the scenarios for both Akira Kurosawa’s *Ikiru* and Yasujiro Ozu’s *Tokyo Story*.

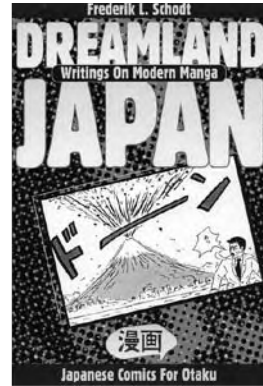
The editor, Howard Hibbett, himself a distinguished translator, contributes a general introduction and biographical studies of each author, making this one of the most authoritative of anthologies.

As he has written in his introduction to this work: “Japanese literature flourishes today in many forms. Far from withering in the electronic glare of a post-literate society, it has grown vigorously both as part of a luxuriant popular culture and as a protean art ...”

Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga

Frederik L. Schodt

(Stone Bridge Press, 1996)



Manga (Japanese cartoons, comic books) are so ubiquitous that many feel an understanding of the phenomenon is necessary for a comprehension of contemporary Japan. One who might well think so is Frederik Schodt, the scholar who first devoted himself to the study of manga.

Now, a decade or so after his first book, he offers this informally encyclopedic study which becomes the authoritative reference to different categories, popular titles, and publishers. In it he includes interviews with more than twenty-two contemporary manga artists, and devotes a full chapter to the work of the famous pioneer cartoonist Osamu Tezuka.

In this book Schodt also explains how manga differ from comics in the West. They have a wider range of subject matter, they stress plot and character over illustration, they often consist of serialized stories that may cover whole volumes.

Of this “dreamland Japan,” the author has said: “the manga industry is sort of a meta industry and it is increasingly the place where new ideas are first presented. If a story has been enormously popular as a manga, producers know that it will have a strong chance of success in other media.”

Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times

Miriam Silverberg

(University of California Press, 2006)



78

From the late 1920s on, the impact of the modern on traditional Japan had become so apparent that some new terminology was required. It took the form of a slogan: *eroguro nansensu*. Descriptive, it was also ambivalent. While seemingly critical it could denote admiration and while ostensibly anti-modern (and hence anti-Western) it was to be described through imported terminology—all three words in the slogan are English.

In her richly detailed account of this slogan as descriptive of mass culture of the time, Silverberg defines its parts. Erotic, meaning pornographic, also connoted an energized, colorful vitality. Grotesque may designate malformed but it is also descriptive of the culture of the jobless, the homeless, which underlined these periods. Nonsense can mean silly but it also makes an amount of sense if seen as criticism.

In all, the tripartite phrase, in Silverberg's reading, indicates the vitality of the time, it is "expressive of a politics that was quite cognizant of the power play involved in the attempts of culture to colonize" and the attempts of the Japanese government to paternalize and to control. Within this framework Silverberg is able to draw together an enormous number of references and representations.

Five Modern Japanese Novelists

Donald Keene

(Columbia University Press, 2003)



The five novelists are Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, Yasunari Kawabata, Yukio Mishima, Kobo Abe and Ryotaro Shiba. Each has a chapter devoted to him and his work. Since Keene had met all of these writers, and was a friend to some of them, he is able to speak not only of the writing but of the men themselves.

As is indicated in the preface to this work, discussions of the first three novelists derive from those in *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, part of Keene's monumental history of Japanese literature first published in 1984.

Though many details found in the larger history are here missing, Keene is able to present a more concise account of each of his authors and, in addition, to share material not available when the earlier volume was published.

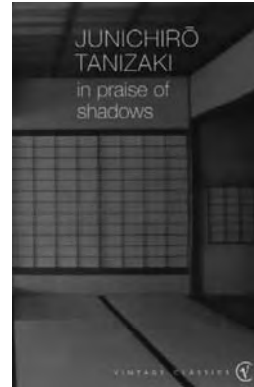
An example would be Ryotaro Shiba and his work. This writer, though extremely popular in Japan, is almost unknown abroad. "His writing," says Keene, "inspired a whole country, not with patriotic zeal, but with a quiet awareness of what being Japanese has meant through history."

Keene's chapters, part literary evaluation, part memoir, serve as introductions to his subjects. At the same time the major direction of Japanese literature is indicated as it evolved.

In Praise of Shadows

Jun'ichiro Tanizaki

(Vintage, 2001)



80

Here is the 1977 translation (by Edward G. Seidensticker and Thomas J. Harper) of the essay *In'ei Raisan*, first published by Tanizaki in 1933.

It is a series of thoughts on aesthetics and suggests that though the West has made much of the virtues of light, for the Japanese—much of whose traditional life was spent among shadows—beauty of the highest order was to be found in relative darkness.

He writes of the beauties of architecture, food, lacquer, the complexion of Japanese women, all revealed by the partial illumination of traditional Japan. He visits the various rooms of old-fashioned homes and writes that “the parlor may have its charms, but the Japanese toilet truly is a place of spiritual repose.”

Comparisons of darkness to light are used to contrast Asian and Western cultures. While the West in its striving for progress is searching for light, Asia—Japan in particular—is looking for the inner light that only darkness and shadows make visible.

The Asian, says Tanizaki, prefers “a pensive luster to a shallow brilliance, a murky light that bespeaks a sheen of antiquity. Of course this sheen of antiquity of which we hear so much is in fact the glow of grime.”

Japanese Women Writers: Twentieth Century Short Fiction

*Noriko Mizuta Lippit /
Kyoko Iriye Selden (eds.)*

(M.E. Sharpe, 1991)



Until recently, Japanese literature has been, with some exceptions, considered a male realm, works of Yasunari Kawabata and Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, Yukio Mishima and Haruki Murakami, commanding major attention. Now, however, it is slowly becoming recognized that, in the words of one critic, “it is at present mainly women writers who maintain the standards of traditional Japanese literature.”

This has resulted in a number of collections of writings by Japanese women, of which the present volume is an example. Originally a 1982 publication named *Stories by Contemporary Japanese Women Writers*, it is now, with the addition of two new stories and several revisions, once again available.

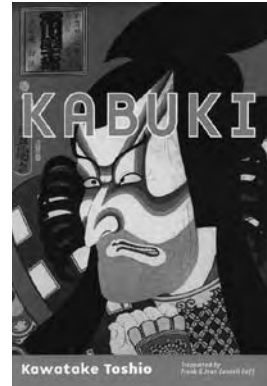
Included are not only works by such known writers as Fumiko Hayashi, Fumiko Enchi and Chiyo Uno, but also a number of stories by authors perhaps as yet unknown abroad but whose acquaintance is well worth the making. These would include: Yaeko Nogami, Taeko Hirabayashi, Yoko Ota, Ineko Sata and Takako Takahashi.

As one major daily wrote: “Here are Japanese women in their infinite and fascinating variety—ardent lovers, lonely single women, political activists, protective mothers, devoted daughters . . . a new sense of the richness of Japanese women’s experience, a new appreciation for feelings too long submerged.”

Kabuki: Baroque Fusion of the Arts

Toshio Kawatake

(I House Press, 2003)



82

This is the new, enlarged and revised edition of an important book on Kabuki, originally published by the University of Tokyo Press in 2001.

Among the reasons for its excellence is that it is by one of the leading experts in the field. Toshio Kawatake, scion of a distinguished family long associated with the Japanese arts, and the author of some eighty books, most of them about drama.

Consequently he is able to see connections in the history and present practice of the Kabuki, can join its apparently disparate techniques, and can place this drama in the context of world theater.

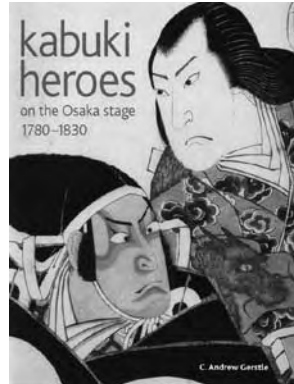
Kawatake here hypothesizes “two great strands of world theater,” the classical and the baroque. The first stems from Greek tragedy through the French classical drama, into the neo-classicism of Ibsen. It is the style in which a dramatic text is dominant and is regarded as mainstream Western theater.

The baroque, on the other hand, stems from popular improvisational drama, the *commedia dell’arte*, some of the Elizabethans, all the way down to expressionism and Brecht. It is here that the Kabuki joins world theatre. Unlike the classical Noh it is what we would call fusion theater.

Kabuki Heroes on the Osaka Stage, 1780-1830

Andrew C. Gerstle

(University of Hawai'i Press, 2005)



Kabuki was, and remains, an actors' theatre. The audience comes to see someone in a play more often than it comes to see the play itself. The phenomenon is familiar to us in our age of movie stars and pop-idols but it is not always remembered that Japan has long entertained a superstar concept. Kabuki actors have, from the inception of the drama, been a stimulus for actor-prints, for lavish albums, for single-sheet illustrations, all displaying the different ways in which actors and their performances were interpreted.

Such was the intention of the 2005 British Museum exhibition, of which this volume is a reproduction of the catalogue. Most of the exhibits are here reproduced, along with authoritative texts, focusing on Kabuki culture in Osaka and Kyoto during the liveliest period of the adulation of the actors, from around 1780 until the 1830s.

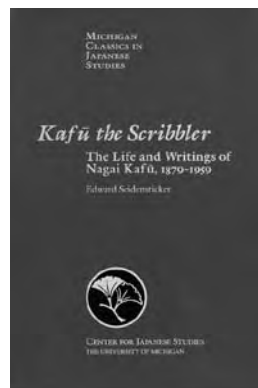
The creation of celebrity and fame is actually a statement about the collective participation required by urban culture. In traditional Japan this included the stage, the art studio, the poetry salon and the fan club. We here recognize (some 300 woodblock print reproductions are included) our own obsession with celebrity and may realize that this is not merely a modern phenomenon.

Kafu the Scribbler:

The Life and Writings of Nagai Kafu, 1879-1959

Edward G. Seidensticker

(University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1990)



84

This is the latest edition of the only representative collection of the writings of one of Japan's finest contemporary authors, originally published by the Stanford University Press in 1965.

Kafu is famous for his lyrical portrayals of the rapidly vanishing remnants of late Edo-period remaining in Meiji-era Tokyo. By extension, however, his elegiac stories and novels speak to everyone—since all of us live in a time of increasingly rapid change.

As one critic has phrased it, “Kafu was one of the first modern Japanese writers who, upon direct contact with the Western world, managed to create a literature that was rooted in tradition, and at the same time marked by universalism.”

Seidensticker's account of the author and his work is composed of a critical biography supported by translations from the works themselves, including complete several of the finest later works.

The accord between author and subject is extraordinary and the translations themselves have been called “superb beyond words.” Not only is Seidensticker one of the finest translators from the Japanese (*The Tale of Genji*, etc.) he is also, like Kafu himself, a critical connoisseur of Tokyo and author of some of the finest writing on the city.

Kokoro

Soseki Natsume

(Tuttle Publishing, 1969)



This is Edward McClellan’s acclaimed 1957 translation of the novel generally judged to be the greatest written during Japan’s Meiji Period (1868-1912). It was first published in serial form in the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper in 1914 and appeared in book form slightly later.

Kokoro, a term sometimes rendered as (Lafcadio Hearn’s definition) “the heart of things,” deals with the transition from the Meiji period to the modern era. It does this by recounting the friendship between a young man and an older man; the first, a student, the second (Sensei) his teacher.

The novel traces the relationship between master and disciple. The former introduces the student to the moral dilemmas of life. In so doing he uses himself as the example.

He feels morally responsible for the suicide of a friend and, in the end, he takes his own. The student inherits this tragic understanding of life—the modern intellectual’s sense of his own failure and his personal culpability.

Finally, however, the younger man comes to see that such failure is caused by the same alienation which Sensei himself felt. As one critic has said, “psychological guilt is less important than philosophical isolation,” and it is this sense of isolation which is a continued theme in Soseki’s work.

The Life of an Amorous Woman and Other Writings

Ihara Saikaku

(New Directions Publishing, 1963)



86

Saikaku (1642-1693) poet and writer of popular fiction, was one of the best sellers of his day and is now ranked among the classics of Japanese literature. He wrote his first work of prose fiction when he was 40 years old and its great success ensured that he would write many more.

In 1686 he again won popular acclaim with *The Life of an Amorous Woman* (Koshoku Ichidai Onna), the picaresque chronicle of a woman who loved love. She pursues a very active career but along a steeply downhill path.

Still, the work is more comic than tragic and though her predicament is serious enough (from respectability to notoriety) the treatment is anecdotal with many a salubrious detail in her descent from gentility to common streetwalker.

Though the work has been sometimes sentimentalized (as in the famous film version, *The Life of Oharu*), Ivan Morris's translation preserves the properly earthy tone.

Sometimes compared to Moll Flanders and Fanny Hill, Saikaku's nameless heroine ends up a very dubious Buddhist convert. "I myself embarked on the way of love when I was yet a mere flower bud, and, having first muddied myself, I came to purify myself by dwelling here."

Manga:

Sixty Years of Japanese Comics

Paul Gravett

(Collins Design, 2004)



Japan's output of manga (cartoon) publications is famous. Nearly forty percent of everything annually published in the country is some form of manga. Increasingly, too, the West is becoming aware of the phenomenon as it influences their local youth culture through computer games, advertising, film and design.

Paul Gravett's book presents a popularly written, fully illustrated history of the development of Japanese manga from 1945 to the present. In it he features extracts from various manga genres, full-page excerpts and gives special attention to such historically important figures as Osamu Tezuka, the creator of Astro Boy.

In the text he pays particularly attention to boys' comics from the 60s onward, to gender interest in girls' and women's comics, to the whole range of dystopic and apocalyptic manga, and to the role that censorship plays, or doesn't, in manga publication.

Obviously, manga are culturally important. As Gravett says in his introduction: "Manga are getting everywhere. This is not some passing craze or flavor of the month—manga is the fastest growing category of book sold in America. So far what we are seeing in English is only the tiniest toenail clipping of the big, scary Godzilla that is manga."

The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches

Matsuo Basho

(Penguin Books, 1966)



88

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) is perhaps Japan's most famous poet, having perfected the haiku and made the poem-diary his own. He felt strongly that a poet should combat convention and this took the more physical form of his many travels through which he hoped to enlarge both his poetry and his life.

This journey, also known as the *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, took him to the then most underdeveloped part of Japan, the northern area of Honshu. In all, he covered about 1500 miles in some 156 days.

He also during this time wrote his finest travel diary and penned some of his best poems. As one critic has written: "Poetry and prose harmoniously complement one another. Subsections are strung together by the same subtle principle of unity used in linked verse. The main theme is a universal one: a quest for the ultimate beauty of nature which had been lost in steadily decaying contemporary society."

The diary's title, though literal, might also be seen as metaphorical—the author traveling far his narrow road in search of a more simple nature, one which had once been ours. This is Donald Keene's authoritative translation.

The Midnight Eye Guide to New Japanese Film

Tom Mes / Jasper Sharp

(Stone Bridge Press, 2004)



In their introduction the authors say that they intended to write a book that would “focus on who we felt were the leading filmmakers working in Japan today.” These include a few oldsters (Seijun Suzuki, Shohei Imamura, Kinji Fukasaku) but most of the films here covered are by directors all fairly young.

The authors posit a watershed between past and present Japanese cinema. The film world of Kenji Mizoguchi, Yasujiro Ozu and, to an extent, Akira Kurosawa, was linked to that of the Japanese studio system. When this structure collapsed in the 1980s the entire business of making films had to be reinvented.

It is this process which Mes and Sharp chronicle. They offer profiles of twenty of the most important and influential Japanese directors working today, as well as reviews of more than one hundred “essential films that helped change the face of Japanese cinema.” These include those of Hirokazu Kore’eda as well as those of Takashi Miike.

They find it “more challenging to venture unto uncharted territory than walk well-trodden paths,” and in their book they attempt to give contemporary Japanese film its due, “carefully avoiding laments about the good old days.”

Oe and Beyond:

Fiction in Contemporary Japan

Stephen Snyder /
Philip Gabriel (eds.)
(University of Hawai'i Press, 1999)



90

Here are twelve chapters, each written by a different scholar of modern Japanese literature, each about a contemporary author—from Kenzaburo Oe to Banana Yoshimoto.

As the title of the book suggests, the editors have taken the stance of the novelist Oe as an entrance into an investigation of the state of contemporary fiction.

Oe has said that present-day Japanese fiction is largely “the experience of a youth politically uninvolved, disaffected, content to exist within a late adolescent or post-adolescent subculture.”

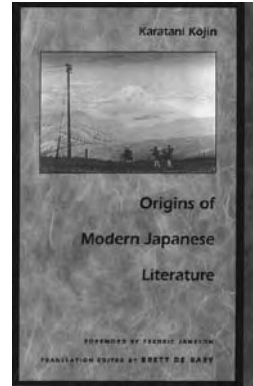
A result of a panel organized for the 1993 Mexico City conference of the Association for Asian Studies, the book examines this claim, drawing examples from a number of contemporary writers including, beside the above—Kenji Nakagami, Haruki Murakami, Shusaku Endo, Takako Takahashi, and Ryu Murakami, among others.

Despite the many differences illuminated, however, it is found that “narrative itself is reaffirmed . . . it is the urge to narrate that remains constant and remains the keystone of contemporary Japanese fiction.” This is one of the many qualities discovered by these scholars as they trace the contours of the Japanese literary landscape, as they delineate the literary state now and what it is likely to become.

Origins of Modern Japanese Literature

Karatani Kojin

(Duke University Press, 1993)



Karatani Kojin is one of Japan's leading critics. In his work as a theoretician he has described Modernity as have few others. This is Brett De Bary's translation of his *Nihon Kindai Bungaku no Kigen*, (1980), a work that re-evaluates the literature of the entire Meiji period and beyond.

As one critic has said, Karatani's thought "has had a profound effect on the way we formulate the questions we ask about modern literature and culture ... [his] argument is compelling, moving even, and in the end the reader comes away with a different understanding not only of modern Japanese literature but of modern Japan itself ..."

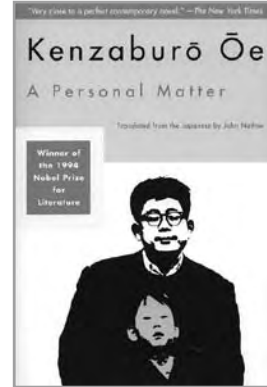
As a literary critic Karatani is at his most provocative when he discusses the discovery of the landscape both in painting and in writing, and in the later detection of the child as a valid human being, subjects which lead the author into considerations of ethnography, religion, and language, in the East and in the West.

Among the many authors discussed are Soseki Natsume, Doppo Kunikida, Katai Tayama, and Shoyo Tsubouchi. The conclusions and considerations reached are both bold and commanding. They have in their way molded the way of theoretical literary history.

A Personal Matter

Kenzaburo Oe

(Grove Press, 1969)



92

Oe won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994. Among Oe's major works was *Kojinteki na Taiken*, here translated into English by John Nathan as *A Personal Matter*.

In it Oe tells the story of a Japanese father whose son is born brain damaged. He must decide between an operation or letting the baby die. Trying to escape this dilemma he attempts to lose himself in sex, in alcohol, in nihilism. Finally, however, he decides for life.

Some critics have seen the novel not only as a philosophical statement but also as something of an allegory. Japan lost its moral certainty when it lost WWII and all of the culture which had supported this certainty.

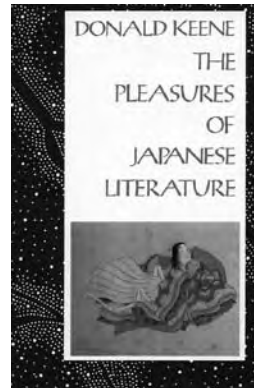
Postwar Japan found itself with no moral compass of its own, only the one that the West had lent it. Like a brain-damaged child, Japan had to create its own life, diminished though its native sources were. And, like the infant in his novel, it asserted its will to live.

At the same time, Oe himself experienced all of this within his own family, and the brain-damaged son went on to find fulfillment in music. The novel is thus not only an ethical study but also a moving human document.

The Pleasures of Japanese Literature

Donald Keene

(Columbia University Press, 1988)



This volume collects a number of public lectures given by Donald Keene in New York and Los Angeles during the late 1980s. They are devoted to Japanese aesthetics and literature and are less academic than his more scholarly works. These talks are indeed intended for a general audience.

Here he treats the general topics of Japanese aesthetics, poetry, fiction, and theater, and offers appreciation on these topics. His insights illuminate many aspects of the traditional Japanese culture that endure until today.

Among these aspects is the appreciation of “perishability,” that quality, so curious to the West, that celebrates the transient, that believes along with the fourteenth-century priest, Yoshida Kenko, that “the most precious thing in life is its uncertainty.”

Keene also takes into account Western inclinations. Of the Noh he notes that even plays that end happily “are performed today with the deliberation reserved in most part of the world for funeral rites,” and that “many in the audience doze” but are “somehow able to awaken at key moments.”

Yet the past survives in often surprising outlets for expression; a box of sushi, a display of lacquered sandals, even the fake maple leaves on a commercial street.

I Haven't Dreamed of Flying for a While

Taichi Yamada

(Faber & Faber, 2008)



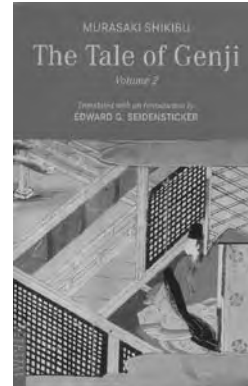
94

In this well conceived metaphysical fantasy, Taichi Yamada dramatizes a wayward *liebestod*, a backward love story that links with death in both directions. The narrator has an affair with a plainly older woman who, at each subsequent encounter, becomes younger and younger. He begins to worry. Will she next be a child? And the time after that—will she even have been born? Here the author returns to a favorite theme—memorably illustrated in his most popular book, 1987 *Ijintachi to no Natsu*, translated in 2005 as *Strangers*. In both, memory maintains, but it also kills. Also, these novels could be read as allegories where the here and now is questioned in the face of the old and the then. The old might have been better but at the same time in enfeebls because it isn't now—and “now” is all that counts since it is the only reality. This theme is never this directly stated, nor are the various mysteries ever explained, but the allegorical idea vibrates throughout these pages. The woman, growing steadily younger, says she feels like a ghost, and in a way she is one, moving backward rather than forward in time. What, then, he wonders, does this make him feel like?

The Tale of Genji

Murasaki Shikibu

(Tuttle Publishing, 1976)



The *Genji Monogatari* is the most famous work of Japanese literature. It is attributed to an early eleventh century Japanese noblewoman, Murasaki Shikibu, and is usually called the world's first novel, certainly the earliest novel still considered a classic. There are later movie and TV adaptations, and even a manga version.

Japanese writer Yasunari Kawabata said in his Nobel-Prize acceptance speech that “even down to our day there has not been a piece of fiction to compare with it,” and it remains the basic literary text against which all other can be compared.

The tale concentrates on the romantic life of Prince Genji and describes the various customs of the aristocratic society of which he was a member. Not only is he celebrated for his good looks, he is also distinguished by the loyalty he shows the women in his life.

There have been a number of translations of the *Genji*, all of them with their virtues. The earliest is the 1881 version of Kencho Suematsu, followed by Arthur Waley's of 1926-1933. Hellen McCullough translated portions in 1994, and Royall Tyler in 2001. This is Edward Seidensticker's, the first complete translation.

The Tales of the Heike

(Columbia University Press, 2006)



96

This is a new translation of substantial sections from Japan's greatest war chronicle—that famous account of the events which led to the downfall of the Heike clan and the ascendancy of the Genji clan, covering the years between 1131 and 1331.

Though it has been several times translated, in full or in part, the *Heike Monogatari* has never before been rendered by anyone the caliber of Burton Watson, the pre-eminent translator of classical Japanese and Chinese literature. Here he combines a colloquial tone with a certain formality of diction—an English style that allows him to parallel the Japanese and render nuances not heretofore visible.

These events are presented with an abundance of violent action, but the work is most distinguished by its tone. This is frankly elegiac. We view the events from a distance, the eternal evanescence of all things is detected in many an incident.

Watson's version, however, is not intended to be complete. It is edited to be a part of Haruo Shirane's new anthology of classical Japanese literature and would comprise about half the text of the original. The sections are connected by several *précis* (written by Shirane) which connect the parts of the story.

The Wild Goose

Ogai Mori

(The University of Michigan, 1995)



Ogai Mori's famous 1913 novel is set in 1881, a time of vast social change, one which the author comments on in his story of the hopes and dreams lost as the Edo era slowly gives way to the Meiji period.

Otama is a young, hopeful, daughter, the only child of a widowed merchant, forced to become a mistress in order to provide for her impoverished father. When she learns that it is a moneylender to whom she is promised, she feels betrayed and looks for a way of escape. A neighbor medical student, her own age, could—she thinks—rescue her. But whether or not the thought ever entered his head, he is off to continue his studies in Germany, and she is left hopeless behind.

The book is much admired not only for its grasp of the social changes that so affected Japan, but also for the fact that, unusual for its time, it so plainly sympathized with the dilemmas faced by women.

It has been several times rendered into English but this new translation by Burton Watson brings out the rich simplicity of the original style and makes appreciable the many subtleties of both the structure and the characterization.

History



The Abacus and the Sword:

The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910

Peter Duus

(University of California Press, 1995)



100

This is the definitive study of Japanese imperialism as directed toward Korea between 1876 and 1920. Divided into two themes, the account first examines the political process of extending Japanese control, the second treats the economic penetration, one movement reinforcing the other.

Imperialism in its Japanese form was the country's response to the presence of the Western imperialistic penetration into East Asia. Japan wanted to find its own place in this lucrative practice and felt that only its own colonial empire would compel the Western nations to accept Japan as a fellow power.

The intention was, at first, to institute basic "reforms" in Korea, and to seize economic advantages for Japan. The plan was to establish a protectorate in Korea and by 1904 the Japanese government had produced the consensus for an aggressive policy.

This move was backed by the assertion that it was necessary to its own security. In fact, however, Japan had already defeated China and Russia and it had annexed Korea with the full approval of both Great Britain and the United States. Security fears were more of an excuse, one used to justify aggression.

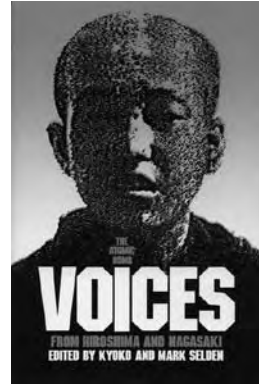
The result was a political and economic act the results of which still reverberate between the two countries.

The Atomic Bomb:

Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Kyoko Selden / Mark Selden (eds.)

(M.E. Sharpe, 1989)



On August 6, 1945, at 8:15 a.m., the atomic bomb was dropped above Hiroshima. It was a fireball with a temperature of several million degrees centigrade. On the ground the temperature instantly became three or four thousand degrees. One witness describes it. The streets were “rivers of fire,” and “the people themselves blazed like match sticks.”

More than a thousand persons died and more than a million homes were destroyed. By the end of the year the number had doubled—those dying of wounds and radiation, plus all of those killed in the second bomb dropping in Nagasaki.

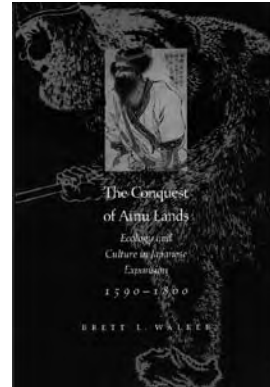
The editors of this anthology have here collected the memories of those who survived and remembered. “The memories of that day,” write the editors, “were literally burned into the consciousness of the survivors.” Here they have collected what remains: accounts, interviews, anecdotes, a few poems.

They also reflect upon other, more political, results—the US attempting to create awe at the unique power it alone possessed and ready to deploy it again, the Japanese seeking to foster victim-consciousness “centered on the inhumanity of the bomb, thereby shifting attention away from Japan’s wartime criminally aggressive acts.”

The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800

Brett L. Walker

(University of California Press, 2001)



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By the beginning of the 17th-century the Ainu people were both economically self-reliant and politically autonomous. Two centuries later they were neither. Most of the Ainu lands—Hokkaido and the islands further north—had been conquered by Japan, sometimes through military action, mostly through manipulations of trade.

At the same time, the Ainu themselves facilitated the takeover. The demands of Japanese trade created financial incentives for the Ainu to exploit their own territories.

The Ainu early united to fight against this intrusion, even at considerable cost of lives, but eventually the Ainu people were driven into smaller competing groups and soon their cause was lost.

By the late 19th century this outcome was acknowledged and both Japanese visitors and American advisors saw in the new northern colony of Hokkaido parallels between the fates of the Ainu and the American Indian.

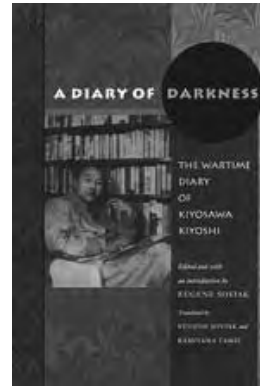
In America this had led to the 1887 Dawes Act, and it was this that provided a model for the 1899 Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act. The damage, however, proved fatal. The culture had been fragmented and the ecology had been undone. It was not that the Ainu had acquiesced to Japanese advances but that the Japanese means of subjugation proved so effective.

A Diary of Darkness:

The Wartime Diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi

Kiyoshi Kiyosawa

(Princeton University Press, 1998)



This wartime diary of Kiyoshi Kiyosawa (1890-1945), the *Ankoku Nikki*, was originally published in 1948 and soon attained an unusual level of acclaim and popularity. Among the reasons was that here was a book that criticized wartime leadership and had done so at a time (the diary begins in 1942) when others were notably silent.

Another reason for its continuing interest is that this is a chronicle of Japan's war years and offers all sorts of telling details. It is social history at its most interesting, one that, as the author has said, became an "inadvertent autobiography."

Originally intended as notes for a history of the period (one that due to the premature death of the author was never written) the diary is now considered one of the most important and compelling documents from wartime Japan. It here appears in the English translation of Eugene Soviak and Kamiya Tamie.

Filled with a criticism of Japanese military authoritarianism that had to be repressed publicly, with the rise of hysterical pro-military propaganda, with increasing poverty and disorder, and with the author's own struggles to avoid arrest, this is a courageous and perceptive account of wartime Japan.

Emperor of Japan: Meiji and His World, 1852-1912

Donald Keene

(Columbia University Press, 2002)



104

The Meiji emperor is most often portrayed as a symbolic figure, moved about and motivated by others in his court, a ruler with no will nor power of his own. His long reign (1868-1912) is commonly thought of as having marked his country's transition to modernity, but he is usually given little credit to its having accomplished this.

Donald Keene's biography of this emperor examines his life and indicates what he did. The rich detail of this account shows that he took part in the political and social affairs of his country and strongly influenced these events.

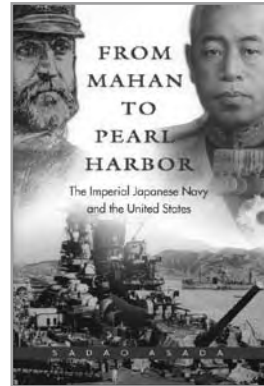
Despite his acceptance of modernism and, to an extent, Westernism, the Meiji emperor had an equally strong commitment to Japanese traditional life and its national morality. What he did not support was the rising militarism of his country. Even Japan's adventures in Korea and in China met with little enthusiasm from him.

In this definitive biography Keene gives the full history of the Meiji restoration but he tells it not in terms of various forces challenging the feudal order (the usual interpretation) but in terms of the calculations and the motives of the individuals involved, including those of the emperor himself.

From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: The Imperial Japanese Navy and the United States

Sadao Asada

(Naval Institute Press, 2006)



This major work by a leading naval historian begins from the influence of Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose classic study on sea power influenced Japan's decision to empower their own navy. This power was eventually used against the U.S., and so, in a way, it was Mahan's ideas that allowed the Japanese Navy to see itself as a potential enemy of the Americans.

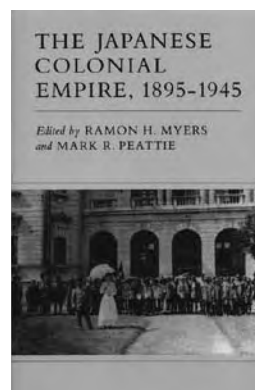
The work is not, however, about naval strategy nor is it a viewing of Japan's national policy, nor the militarism it created. Rather, it is a detailed history, based in many instances upon sources not hitherto available, of Japanese naval policy and its application to the war with America.

It was the military decisions of the Japanese armed forces that led to a war that took place in the important context of the bureaucratic skirmishes between the Japanese army and navy. In this reading it was the "ghost of Mahan" that hung over Japanese commanders as they led their ships against the U.S. and made their incorrect conclusions about relative Japanese and American strength. The Japanese Navy was responsible for its own defeat. It was a victim of its past successes and decades-long bureaucratic sniping had sapped its strength.

The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945

*Ramon H. Myers /
Mark R. Peattie (eds.)*

(Princeton University Press, 1984)



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Product of a 1979 conference at Stanford's Hoover Institution, this volume collects the contributions of thirteen scholars on the growth, collapse, and meanings of Japan's overseas holdings: Taiwan in 1895; Karafuto and the Kwantung territories in 1905; Korea, 1910; and Micronesia in 1914—all liberated when Japan surrendered in 1945.

Japan was the only non-Western colonist during this period and was a resented new-comer. Japan thought of its colonies, however, as mainly security buffers. It followed the examples of British rule over racially different peoples, and Germanic/Slavic expansions over peoples racially similar.

Actually, though, Japan gave neither the autonomy, implied in the British model, nor the homeland civil liberties and assimilation implied in the Germanic model.

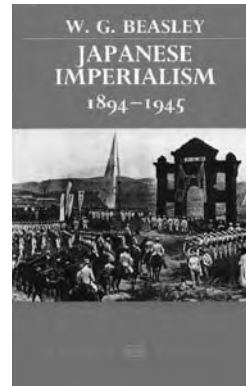
Thus Japan received little thanks for its enterprising empire-building even (or particularly) when this was disguised as somehow saving smaller Asian countries from Western predators.

Divided into four parts, this collection first discusses the meanings and origins of Japan's empire. The following sections offer a chronological account of the results of initial Japanese assumptions, and how Japanese exploitation deepened in accordance with Japan's economic needs. Questions proliferate and are answered in an objective manner in this impressive volume.

Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945

William G. Beasley

(Clarendon Press, 1987)



Japan is the only modern Asian country to have succeeded in building both a sound economy and (for a time) an empire. It is the author's contention that these accomplishments were related, that Japan's aims were from the first influenced by Western imperialism and that its growing economy was matched by an equal growth in both needs and ambitions.

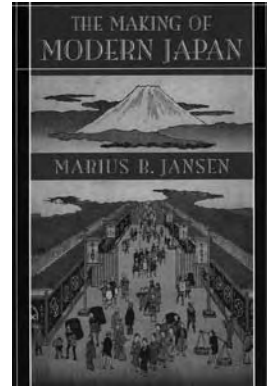
Of particular note is the attention that the author pays to internal political and economic reasons behind Japan's stated policies. In this manner the story of Japan's economic rise to the 1945 debacle is made understandable and, indeed, inevitable. Actual causes are revealed and only rarely is the self-serving notion of "Japanese culture" used at all.

In outline the story is a familiar one, but it has rarely been told in so concise and yet comprehensive a manner as it is here. Japan's response to modernism, its attempts at empire-building from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War, its intellectual justifications for such expansion as a "liberation" of Asian peoples from European colonialism, and the results for all this, are accounted for in a rendering that is neither pro-imperialist nor an apology for a colonial past.

The Making of Modern Japan

Marius B. Jansen

(The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000)



108

This magisterial work represents the culmination of six decades of scholarship. It chronicles Japan's political, economic and intellectual life from 1600 to 2000 and in so doing it provides a solid, authoritative and reliable interpretation of Japan's past and how this served as foundation for the country as it is today.

Considered are the implications and results of three periods of social change: the imposition of hegemonic order by the Tokugawa shogun; the opening of Japan's ports by Commodore Perry; and the defeat in WWII.

Charted are the social changes which begin with the founding of the shogunate in 1600, the emergence of castle towns with consumer populations, and the diffusion of samurai values. This was followed by the adaptation of Western models, by growing trade and, eventually, by the postwar occupation reforms which were imposed by General Douglas MacArthur.

The history is one of changes but at the same time a consistency is present, one whose continuities outweigh developmental upheavals, and the waves of influence from outside have served to strengthen the Japanese sense of what is unique and native to it.

In telling this story the work offers a real social history—a history of how people actually lived in these times.

Modern Japan

Peter Duus

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998)



Though modern Japan is now more familiar to the rest of the world than it used to be, ignorance on how Japan got to be the way it is remains commonplace. In this book one of the finest of the current historians attempts, as he says, to bring this newly familiar Japan into sharper focus.

Japan was not always the economic superpower we today acknowledge it to be. In the middle of the 19th-century it was poorer and less technically adept than any of the Western societies which so abruptly intruded upon it. Determined to “catch up,” this is just what the Japanese did, first as students of Western models, then as competitors in the Western imperialist game, and finally as creators of that rapidly developing economic giant which is modern Japan.

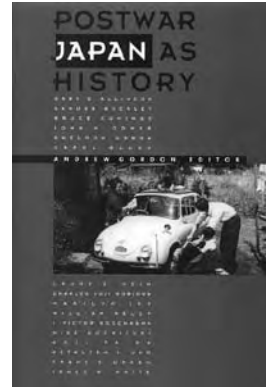
In telling this story, the author focuses on major political, economic, and social trends, but he also examines the lives of peasants, workers, farmers, the structure of the family, the position of women.

In doing this he deals first with the fall of the Tokugawa order (1800-1868); then with the pursuit of power and wealth (1868-1905); on to crisis and World War II (1905-1945); and then into an era of relative stability (1945 to the present).

Postwar Japan as History

Andrew Gordon (ed.)

(University of California Press, 1993)



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Japan's rise to world economic power occasioned much comment, but few have considered this as a result of, among other things, history. Here, sixteen scholars do just that.

They examine three related themes from postwar history, all describing ongoing historical processes; Japan's extraordinary economic growth and at the same time such unanticipated continuities as the endurance of truly conservative rule.

For over fifty years now Japan has been governed by a conservative hegemony that appears to sacrifice political pluralism to the necessities of economic growth. The bubble grew larger and larger. With the continued presence of U.S. economic comparisons, this gave rise to a kind of management culture, an ideology through which the people traded national wealth and industrial power for very meager increases in their own standards of living.

Pessimistically, one can see—as do a number of these scholars—the greatest discontinuity since the Meiji Restoration: the WWII defeat, the postwar occupation. It is this discontinuity that represents Japan's great problem, which is stasis itself.

Optimistically, others believe that despite all the mistakes and accidents, the continuity of Japanese culture itself will provide the source for more versatility and for greater success.

Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration

Marius B. Jansen

(Columbia University Press, 1994)



By the middle of the 19th century, Japan saw itself facing Western imperial ambitions. Having observed the fate of India and of China, it now sought different means. The result was the Meiji Restoration, a unified national state struggling to achieve international equality and leadership in Asia. It was, in effect, a real revolution.

Here the author tells the Restoration story by examining the career of Ryoma Sakamoto, originally from Tosa, one of the fiefs that played an important role in Restoration politics. In telling this story, the author necessarily concerns himself with the way in which the Restoration came about, rather than discussing it in terms now common in Japan—why it had to come about.

Though originally against such Western intruders as Commodore Perry and his followers, Ryoma understood that the only way to counter the West was to emulate it. He envisioned a Japan inspired by the kind of equality that he had observed in the United States.

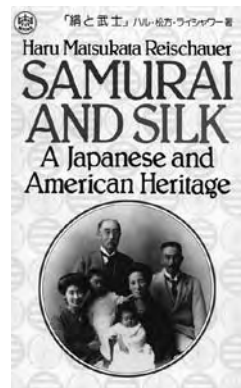
Ryoma, idealistic, individualistic, realized that in order to compete with an industrial outside world, Japan must itself change—after centuries of the Tokugawa Shogunate, leadership had grown impotent. He advocated strengthening the country. Japan had to modernize and in order to do so the government had to be overthrown.

Samurai and Silk:

A Japanese and American Heritage

Haru Matsukata Reischauer

(Tuttle Publishing, 1986)



112

Haru Matsukata led an unusually interesting life. Both parents had lived in the United States and both retained these ties. This occasioned some difficulty when she returned to Tokyo in 1937, but in 1945, after Japan's defeat, she found ready work as translator and correspondent, and in 1955 she married Edwin Reischauer, who was appointed as United States Ambassador in 1961. Rather than write a personal memoir, however, she here explores what she regards as her dual heritage, through the lives of her two grandfathers. Silk was the province of one of them, a man of peasant origins. The other was of samurai descent. Together, both of these grandfathers played roles in reshaping Japan. The author clearly sees them as playing a part in laying the foundations of contemporary economic power.

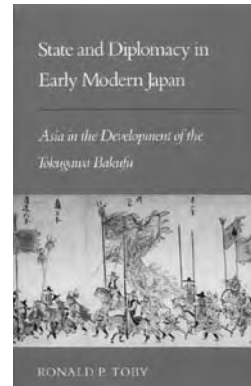
The samurai grandfather was eventually made Prince Masayoshi Matsukata and was twice prime minister. More importantly, as finance minister he helped create Japan's financial system. The "silk" grandfather emigrated to America and founded a financial empire there. As the author observes, their careers complemented each other. In her book she herself provides the saga of an author mediating between her two cultures.

State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan:

Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu

Ronald P. Toby

(Stanford University Press, 1991)



In most received versions of Japanese history we are told that Japan had during the Tokugawa period government (*bakufu*) shut its gates to the rest of the world and imposed its long-standing isolation. This, continues the common version, was because all foreign influences were undesirable. The perceived seclusion is called *sakoku*.

Toby's book, rather, seeks to describe how Japan manipulated existing diplomatic channels to ensure national security. Indeed, the term *sakoku* is one which originally came from works in English and Dutch.

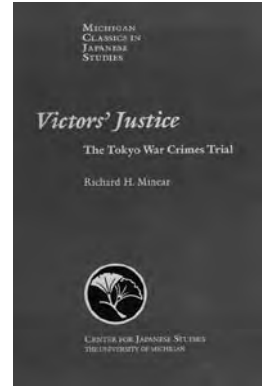
Rather, far from aiming at seclusion, Japan's diplomacy in the seventeenth century was orchestrated to achieve certain objectives, both outside the country and inside it. The aim was to build Japan into an autonomous center of its own. Since the country was "closed," elaborate and expensive foreign embassies were obliged to make the journey to Edo. Countries which were perceived as potential threats, such as Portugal and Spain, were excluded from this process.

Only those such as the Chinese and the Dutch, with whom trade was recognized as desirable, were allowed a supervised presence in Japan itself. Closing the gates to Japan was not the object. Rather, carefully judging just when they should be open and shut was the aim.

Victors' Justice: The Tokyo War Crimes Trial

Richard R. Minear

(University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2001)



114

The Tokyo war crimes trial took place over half a century ago, beginning in May, 1946, and lasting for two and a half years. Its purpose was to try leaders of imperial Japan for committed wartime “crimes.” Considered contentious at the time, the trial has since been heavily criticized, but never as cogently as in this now classic account of its aims and its proceedings.

In stating his aims the author quotes a legal advisor at the trials: “I do not hold a brief for Tojo [Hideki, Japan’s wartime minister and ex-prime minister]. I do hold a brief for justice, even to my enemies.” In pursuing this end Minear states that “my major concern has been to challenge the prevailing image of the trial, to demolish its credibility and its verdict.”

All of the processes of the trial are here assembled and questioned. The aim is to discover if Tojo was right when, before his execution, he said: “This trial was a political trial. It was only victors’ justice.”

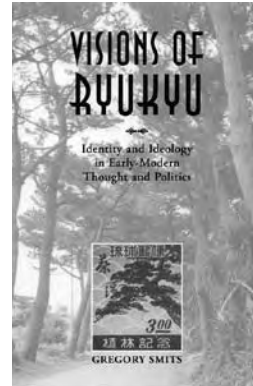
When this book was originally published the American war in Vietnam was underway. The unpopular actions of the U.S. military found parallels with Japanese wartime activities and made the concept of victors’ justice a very real one.

Visions of Ryukyu:

Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics

Gregory Smits

(University of Hawai'i Press, 1999)



For centuries the Ryukyu archipelago (Okinawa and its adjacent islands) formed a semi-independent state with a semi-colonial status. Japan laid claim but respected China's tributary relationship. Later, Japan (the Satsuma domain) invaded the place and in 1879 it was "annexed" to Japan but actually became merely its first colony. It is now officially one of Japan's prefectures but is still treated as somehow full-fledged.

One of the results of these centuries of ambiguity (1609-1879) is that the people living on these islands had to craft their own "visions of Ryukyu identity." The author of this history explores the various notions of this held, in particular, by local scholars. Through these the political implications of their visions are unveiled.

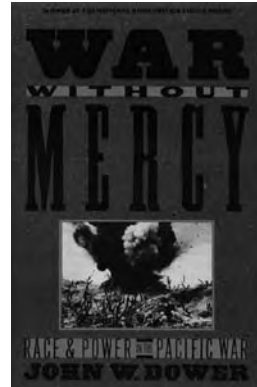
Smits explores historical perceptions of Ryukyu and the major circumstances that informed discourses on Ryukyuan identity. At the same time he examines the various strategies used to fashion, to promote, and to implement these visions.

The ambiguous position between Japan and China inspired thought and eventually one vision prevailed. The kingdom's destiny lay with the Ryukyuans themselves. Moral parity with Japan and China seemed at that time possible.

War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War

John W. Dower

(Pantheon Books, 1986)



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In this important book the author examines the propaganda of the US-Japanese conflict in WWII to explore what he calls “the patterns of a race war.” These include the deliberate structuring of racist stereotypes, the wide process of “othering” the other.

In doing so Dower discovers differences as well. Whereas racism in the West is characterized by the denigration of others, the Japanese are concerned with elevating themselves. Though not above belittling other races, they are more interested in wanting to believe they are unique among “races,” and that this has made them superior.

Consequently perhaps, they do not differentiate by color, at least not to the extent that does the West. The Japanese use a different set of considerations. There are, says Dower, the two categories of insider and outsider. The Japanese are insiders; the non-Japanese are outsiders. This is Japanese racism. Combined with American racism it produced “the war without mercy.” Such attitudes did not disappear with end of WWII. Rather, they adapted to peace, for “the archetypal demon of Japanese folklore has always had two faces, being not only a destructive presence but also a potentially protective and tutelary being.”

From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Who Was Responsible?

The Yomiuri Shimbun

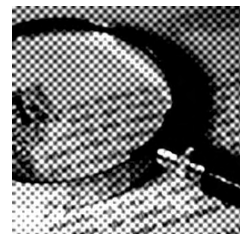
(The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006)



In 2006 the Yomiuri Shimbun published *Kensho—Senso Sekinin* (“Verification: Responsibility for WWII”), a full report of the findings of the War Responsibility Reexamination Committee which undertook to determine where the responsibility lay for the aggression against Manchuria, for Pearl Harbor, and for the Pacific War that ended in Japan’s defeat and killed the better part of a whole generation of Japan’s youth. That the Yomiuri Shimbun did so, stated Henry A. Kissinger, was “a matter of conscience and integrity.”

The paper’s editor-in-chief, Tsuneo Watanabe, said that he thought it the Yomiuri’s responsibility to tell its readers just who was responsible and that he hoped the finding would “serve as a cue for peoples elsewhere to examine and explore what kinds of miscalculations or blind beliefs could trigger wars in the future.” Though there has been, and remains, an amount of criticism that Japan had not confronted its past as has Germany, this book is a major step in doing so. Donald Keene has said that “many Japanese apparently prefer not to know what happened when the military forces of their country behaved in a manner that seems almost incomprehensible today ... this book deserves the attention especially of those who never knew or have forgotten the horrors of the long years of war.”

Selected Book Reviews

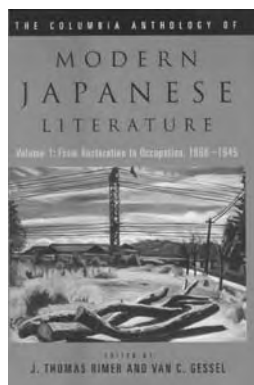


The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature

Edited by J. Thomas Rimer and Van C. Gessel

(Columbia University Press, Two volumes: 2005/2007)

Review by Donald Richie



This is, by far, the largest of anthologies of modern Japanese literature. In two volumes, it is 1728 pages long, its size making it also the most inclusive.

Earlier anthologies—those, for example, of Keene, Morris, Hibbett, Goosen, Rogers and others—were circumscribed by their length. Though excellent introductions to modern Japanese writing, they could not include everything the compilers would have wished for and we must remain grateful to their work for what it is.

This enormous new anthology, however, suffers from no such limitations. It has the space available to include many more authors, sometimes represented by larger works. The anthology also profits in that the aims of the editors are somewhat more inclusive than those of their predecessors. Given the amount of page space at their command, they do not have to play at pantheon building (who is better than who, who is most ‘representative,’ etc.) nor do they get stuck in genre.

Prior anthologies, say the editors, “sought to privilege the aesthetic traditions of Japan as they were transformed and manifested anew in modern works.” But other kinds of writing—“ranging from detective stories to political accounts”—can now here be sampled.

Such important writers as Tatsuo Hori and Sei Ito may now join in the canon. Kenji Nakagami belongs in anthologies (though he is left out of many) and here he is. So is Junnosuke Yoshiyuki, one of Japan’s least translated stylists. Jun Ishikawa, not often encountered, is present, as is Taeko Kono and Yoshinari Shimizu. The often underrated Yasushi Inoue is

also here. The late Eto Jun is represented by his defining essay on Natsume Soseki, in its first hard-cover appearance.

At the same time, believing that works valued by Japanese readers should be included, the editors have inserted a story by Rampo Edogawa and sections from that old pot-boiler, Koyo Ozaki's *The Gold Demon*. Mystery-story-writer Seicho Matsumoto is also here, perhaps on grounds of his popularity.

Other popular choices are Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto. They are here despite the doubts of the editors. Gessel writes that "it seems unlikely that either of these writers will be able to sustain an enduring readership or reputation." Their "postmodern lenses" have a limited attraction and their prose styles "lack the aesthetic beauty and flavor ... found in the works of earlier writers."

They are here because they are representative, as is Matsumoto, not of literature but of reading tastes. Anthologies can indicate the stylistic finest or can turn sociological (or anthropological) and indicate the taste of the public that buys this literature. Or anthologies can do both and this is accomplished here in this Columbia anthology.

Gessel and Rimer see that the history of modern literature in Japan is "largely the story of the interactions between the native tradition and the imported forms and styles," and the structuring is purposely loose so that the writing is not confined by the presentation. This is a necessity to which the editors are very alive, each having had wide experience with anthologies. Van Gessel is the co-editor of *The Showa Anthology* and Thomas Rimer is the author of the invaluable *Reader's Guide to Japanese Literature*.

They have here created the largest and fullest of all anthologies of modern Japanese literature. In addition, about half of the entries were for the first time translated for this collection. (The others are reprinted, often from obscure sources.) Here then is a new and expanded view of one of the most interesting of contemporary literatures presented with learning, consideration and affection. ■

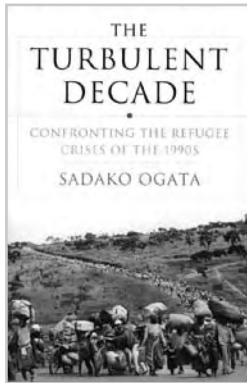
The Turbulent Decade:

Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s

Sadako Ogata

(W.W. Norton & Company, 2005)

Review by Keiko Chino



Contrary to the lasting peace expected by the international community, the end of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in fact caused new regional disputes and conflicts, and brought about disruptions and catastrophes. It was during this period that Sadako Ogata was inaugurated as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In the few weeks following her arrival in Geneva as the new UNHCR Commissioner, Ogata faced the Kurdish refugee crisis and the civil war in the former Yugoslavia even before she had finished repatriation work. Several months later, she found herself dealing with a disaster in Somalia that foretold a series of humanitarian tragedies in Africa. She tells us in her book that “The UNHCR worked in every continent on earth like a firefighter in a fire brigade.”

In this book, Ogata focuses on problems in the four areas of Kurdistan, the Balkans, Africa, and Afghanistan that she struggled with during her tenure as UNHCR between February 1991 and December 2000, and provides an in-depth analysis of her difficulties. As she relates in her book, the four conflicts included a wide range of issues and lessons in terms of scale, the degree of risk that refugees endured, and the diversity of mobilized partners.

It is a highly valuable work that offers precise chronological recollections and information from the central player in the refugee issue. Readers will be impressed with Ogata’s approach, as the first woman, the first Japanese, and the first academic to serve as UNHCR, with her challenging duties, with her approach that so exhibited firmness, promptness, bravery, and mobility.

Ogata was neither overwhelmed by the circumstances nor lost to

emotion despite the tragic and imminent problems at hand. Her attitude is made clear in the book when she writes, “The refugee issue is basically a political issue and should be settled politically.”

The last chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the policies and behavior of the United Nations and the major countries concerned, the UNHCR and humanitarian activities, including the creation of peace after conflict under the title “Humanitarian activities in wartime and peacetime,” reflecting the results of the four conflicts. Ogata indicates that the response to a humanitarian crisis is decided in large part by the strategic interests of the major countries concerned.

While the theme of this book is not specifically Japan or the Japanese, I recommend it because I want to applaud the fact that it was a brave Japanese woman who took the lead in humanitarian activities—the most universal and contemporary of activities—during the turbulent decade following the end of the Cold War.

Ogata mentions the importance of a happy home when she says in the farewell address she delivered to UNHCR office staff at the conclusion of her mission: “I will have to rediscover Japan because there have been many changes there during my tenure as UNHCR.” Her address will surely inspire new interest in her readers.

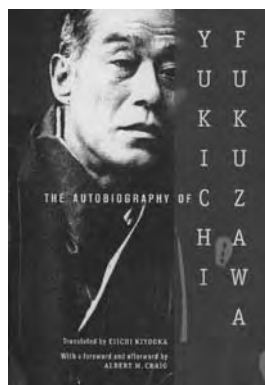
It should be of interest to readers how the author, who is now struggling on the front lines of Japan’s assistance and cooperation efforts as president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has rediscovered Japan. ■

The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa

Yukichi Fukuzawa

(Columbia University Press, 1980)

Review by Takenori Inoki



Yukichi Fukuzawa, a major figure in the creation of modern Japan, was an outstanding intellectual whose thought was characterized throughout by its practical and concrete substance rather than by ideological and abstract discussion. He was a contemporary of Toshimichi Okubo, Takamori Saigo, and Takayoshi Kido, three towering figures who exerted a significant influence on the politics of modern Japan. Looking at the long-term effect of his achievements as a prominent political

analyst, however, we can say that his influence on Japanese society was even greater than these three giants.

He experienced the great political transformation known as the Meiji Restoration in his mid-thirties. Although he was a bitter critic of the feudalistic Tokugawa government, his thinking combined both the depth of Edo culture and the new energy of the Meiji period. No one expressed a vision and method for the introduction of western culture and civilization to Japan in a clearer and more rational manner than Fukuzawa.

His Autobiography *Fukuo Jiden* is a truly great work in which he describes his life in the flow of history. After familiarizing himself with Western Studies in Nagasaki, he attended a school run by Koan Ogata in Osaka. He went to Edo, the then capital of Japan, at the request of his clan and opened a school to teach Western Studies in 1858.

He visited the U.S. in 1860 and six European countries between 1861 and 1862. In 1867, he again visited the U.S. The experience of direct contact with cultures and societies in the west allowed him to add an understanding of the power of western countries to his already deep knowledge of the political situation in Japan. He organized his experiences into a book entitled *Seiyō Jijō* (Conditions in the West).

Knowing that the Tokugawa government's reign was waning, he left government service to concentrate his energy on educating human resources at his private school, Keio Gijuku (currently Keio University), with the conviction that the greatest contribution he could make to Japan was through education. He later turned down a request from the Meiji government to serve in the administration, being convinced of the need to build up the nation based on the independence, freedom, and equality of the individual from the viewpoint of the public.

Two of his most famous works—*Gakumon no Susume* (Encouragement of Learning) and *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku* (An Outline of a Theory of Civilization)—extol freedom and equality, and discuss the necessity of cultivating intellect and morals for the development of civilization. They are truly outstanding classics clearly showing the direction that Japan should move in.

Fukuzawa wrote his autobiography with the help of Yoshijiro Yano. After revisions and additions to the draft produced by Yano, the autobiography was completed and published as a 67-part series appearing in *Jiji Shimpo* (Current News), a magazine launched by Fukuzawa, between July 1, 1898 and February 16, 1899. The autobiography was published in book form in June of 1899, one and a half years before Fukuzawa's death.

Fukuzawa's charm and warmth are brought out in this autobiography through his gentle humor, and the depth of his intellectual energy is evidenced by his sharp wit. In fact, it is an exceptionally interesting work among the autobiographies written by notable Japanese figures. The work highlights his youth (from the end of the Edo period to the early Meiji period) with 12 of its 15 chapters devoted to this period of his life. His life after the early Meiji period is covered only in the last chapter, "Half a Lifetime of an Old Man."

Although the book is not free of ambiguity, error and omission, having been written as it was in his later years, it is an important guide to understanding how Fukuzawa formed his thought and to knowing the real character of influential leaders of Japanese opinion in the Meiji period. ■

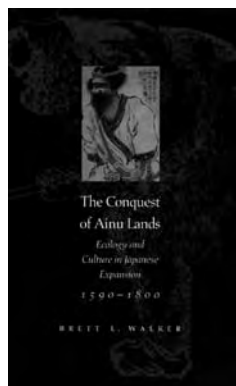
The Conquest of Ainu Lands:

Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800

Brett L. Walker

(University of California Press, 2001)

Review by Masayuki Yamauchi



Few areas of Japan are as strange as the Hokkaido (*Yezo*) of the modern age. The area that the Matsumae *han* (feudal clan) governed under Tokugawa's shogunate system was just one part of southern Hokkaido, and the majority of the indigenous Ainu population lived along the rivers and coasts that lay beyond the control of the *han*. Until recently, most Japanese regarded the *Yezo* as a frontier or foreign country.

Matsumae was an unusual feudal lord given that his *han* did not produce rice, though he was awarded the position of 10,000 *koku* (about 1,500 tons) of rice. The Ainu belonged to an area of land that can only be described as a tribal chiefdom. Inspired by a new historical perspective of the West in the study of United States history, the American scholar Brett L. Walker attempts to see *Yezo* as a frontier where races and cultures came together, and more specifically as a neutral zone founded by the interaction of cultures and politics between different groups of nationalities with different conditions and historical backgrounds. In this sense, he successfully brings a novel perspective to the modern history of Japan.

Lord Matsumae, who was commonly referred to as the "Lord of *Yezo* Isle", was given the authority to manage trade when Toyotomi Hideyoshi ruled Japan. He gave fishing grounds inhabited by Ainus to his retainers as trading points. There were boundaries between the places where Japanese settled and those where Ainus lived, but there were many loopholes. Warriors of the Matsumae *han* who lived on trade and the Ainu's resources were idiosyncratic, almost equivalent to the merchants during the Edo period in which a Confucian sense of social standing was firmly established. Walker proposed that it was this ambiguity that made the Matsumae *han* less conscious about security and national defense, indirectly causing them to forfeit territory to the Tokugawa government on two occasions. He also

argues convincingly that the rebellion by Samkusaynu in 1669 was not merely resistance by an ethnic group, and that the Tokugawa government and the Matsumae *han* became involved in the battles that were waged between Ainu chieftains over animal harvests for trade with Japanese.

The Matsumae *han*'s monopoly on trade imposed increasing severity on the Ainu as time went by. In fact, when the Matsumae *han* was established around 1590, the Ainu used to exchange five bundles of dried salmon for one big bale of rice, but they exchanged the same amount of salmon for just one small bale of rice 80 years later. Ainu who had become familiar with the value of rice, *sake*, and metal products through trade with the Japanese were forced to accept unfavorable terms. Walker presents an incisive analysis, stating that the Ainu renounced the use of force to protect their lands because their daily life depended economically on trade with the Japanese.

Walker introduces the image of the afterworld entertained by Ainus that depicts the natural environment of *Yezo* as a sacred place full of *kamui* (spirits) in the shape of bears and fish. A bear that surrenders itself to the warm-hearted, gentle, and kind Ainus dies in the midst of singing and dancing, and is sent to the kingdom of God with many gifts presented by the Ainu. The bear comes back to the earth many times to see the kindly youths and their dancing. They are shot and killed by arrows every time they come back, but are satisfied with the heartfelt entertainment. In other words, nature, humans (Ainus), and bears coexist comfortably, without invading each other's territories. It is a beautiful piece of folklore.

The Ainu population, numbering twenty to forty thousand, decreased from the late 17th century onwards. Walker attributes the decrease to the effects of rampant so-called "ecological imperialism", such as smallpox and syphilis. Ironically, however, the Ainu's medical situation improved because the Tokugawa government gave them kind and favorable treatment. It was not the Matsumae *han* but the Tokugawa government that produced the "good present days" and created the myths of the "Disappearing Race" and "Docile Ainus." In this way, the author succeeds in multilaterally analyzing the ecology of the Ainu, trade with the Sakhalin and Kurile (Chishima) Islands, the transmission of epidemics, and the role of ritual, with the help of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. On a final note, let me just add that the book is available in a lucid Japanese translation by Toshiyuki Akizuki, himself a researcher of the history of the Northern Territories. ■

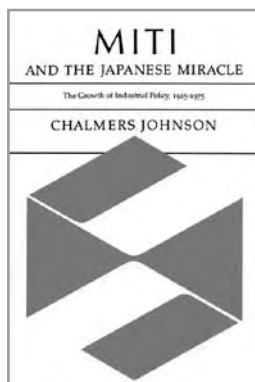
MITI and the Japanese Miracle:

The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975

Chalmers Johnson

(Stanford University Press, 1982)

Review by Glen S. Fukushima



This is the most influential book on Japanese political economy published in the past quarter of a century. Since its publication in 1982, it has shaped the world's (including Japan's) view of the successes—and failures—of Japan's economic organization and performance in the postwar period.

The author, Chalmers Johnson, is a comparative political scientist with a deep knowledge of economics, history, and Asia. In this book, he shows over a 50-year period how Japan's MITI

(Ministry of International Trade and Industry) led the country's industrial policy, a cooperative effort between the public sector and private sector to ensure the growth of Japanese economic power.

The significance of the book is hard to overstate. It is the first scholarly analysis in English of Japan's postwar industrial policy based on primary sources. As such, it is a path-breaking study that deserves the label of a "classic."

Second, it is a model of institutional analysis that spawned a series of studies of other Japanese ministries, agencies, and institutions.

Third, by examining the relationship between government, business, and politics, Johnson explicated the "Japanese model of capitalism." This was to draw considerable attention in the late 1980s and 1990s, as the end of the Cold War led to a collapse of the capitalism-versus-communism dichotomy and the need to understand the different forms of capitalism, most notably the Anglo-American, Continental European, and Japanese.

Fourth, the book stimulated a vigorous debate not only about the Japanese political economy, but about the "East Asian developmental state" more generally—including the examples of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia—and its implications for academia, policy, and business.

Fifth, in addition to its academic and intellectual contributions, the book influenced the real world of companies, governments, and

journalism. It is rare for a 400-page book in small print with 20 pages of footnotes and 14 pages of appendices published by a university press to gain the wide readership the book received. But Johnson's trenchant analysis influenced corporate policies toward Japan, government negotiating strategies toward the Japanese government, and journalists' coverage of the Japanese economy.

The Japanese reaction to the book was mixed. While on the one hand agreeing that the Japanese government contributed greatly to the country's postwar "economic miracle," many Japanese found Johnson's argument uncomfortable to the extent that it led foreign companies and governments to urge the Japanese government to open Japan's market to trade and investment from abroad. Thus the official Japanese response to such foreign requests was to point out that Johnson's arguments were valid up to 1975 (the end point of the book's analysis), but that after that Japan had become a "free market," so the government was powerless to solve trade or economic problems. In the parlance of the times, such issues were supposedly "beyond government reach."

Johnson's critics argued that he focused too much on the role of the government, not assigning enough credit to the private sector for Japan's postwar economic growth. Others pointed out that he gave too much credit to MITI and not enough credit to MOF (Ministry of Finance) or to the role of the FTC (Fair Trade Commission). Still others claimed that it was precisely the government's heavy-handed role in the economy that led to Japan's "lost decade" and faltering competitiveness in the 1990s.

Despite such criticisms, the book has withstood the test of time as the most authoritative academic analysis of Japan's industrial policy and the book that both defined the research agenda for policy analysts of Japan and shaped the thinking and approach toward Japan of a generation of business people, government officials, and journalists. It remains the single best study of how the Japanese political economy got to where it is today. ■

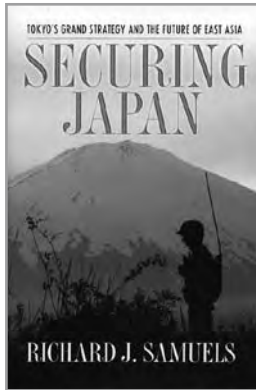
Securing Japan:

Tokyo's Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia

Richard Samuels

(Cornell University Press, 2007)

Review by Takashi Shiraishi



This book is one of the most balanced studies on Japan's security policy and underlying strategic thinking currently available in English. The author, Richard Samuels, is a scholar of Japanese studies and political science who has written a number of outstanding books and articles on Japanese politics and political history, including Japan's energy policy, science and technology policy, and an entertaining comparative history of Japan and Italy. In this book, he carefully analyzes the debate,

which has been underway in Japan for years, over Japan's security policy and strategy.

According to the author, the domestic political situation was stable during three separate periods in Japanese history, periods in which the national security strategy was pursued on the basis of a broad national consensus. The first was the policy of a "rich nation and strong army" in the 19th century, the second was "hegemony in Asia" in 1930-45, and the third was the strategy of "being a mercantile state and hitching a cheap ride on the US for security." Since the end of the Cold War, however, Japan has been developing new security policies to respond to new threats—the rise of China, North Korea, the likelihood of abandonment by the US, and Japan's relative decline. Simultaneously, a wide-ranging debate over two core values, autonomy and prestige, is underway in Japan, and a new national consensus on Japanese strategy will be built on this debate in the near future.

According to the author, there are four key views regarding security strategy in Japan. The first is that Japan should become "normal." "Normal nation-alists" believe that military strength is the way to prestige, which is the prime value of security. The second view is that of the "neo-autonomists," who believe that military strength is the way to autonomy

from the US. For these two groups, autonomy is the prime value of security. The other two groups, liberals and “left” pacifists, believe that prosperity is the core value. In the author’s view, Japan, primarily led by normal nation-alists and liberals, will maintain continuity with the Yoshida Doctrine of the Cold War, and at the same time build a new national consensus by maintaining vitality based on techno-nationalism and putting emphasis both on the alliance with the US and the partnership with Asia. That is, Japan will not overly depend on the US nor become excessively vulnerable to the threat of China. The author calls this new consensus a “Goldilocks consensus.”

This conclusion seems reasonable. However, the point that neo-autonomists and pacifists should be considered as important as normal nation-alists and middle-power liberals in the current debate over Japan’s grand strategy is highly questionable. Pacifists effectively lost public trust when the Socialist Party opportunistically dumped its pacifism to remain in power in the mid 1990s, while neo-autonomists, illustrated by Samuels in this book using a cartoonist and publicists, are engaged in nothing but a niche business for less than 5% of Japanese readers. In this sense, both groups are marginal in Japanese politics. It is natural, then, that a consensus can be created only between normal nation-alists and middle-power liberals, which Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda describes as the “resonance” of the Japan-US alliance and the partnership with Asia. ■

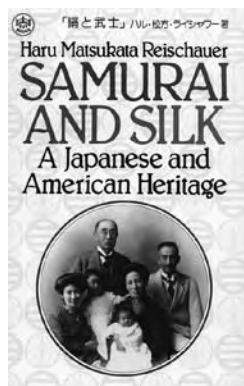
Samurai and Silk:

A Japanese and American Heritage

Edited by Haru Matsukata Reischauer

(Tuttle Publishing, 1986)

Review by Izumi Koide



The one-hundred-year period from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century saw major historical changes both in the West and Asia. Especially Japan, an island country located on the eastern fringe of Asia, underwent significant change during that period. Japan had restricted its external relations through its national isolation policy since the early 17th century. In the mid-19th century, however, Japan was forced to open the country by the US and then faced a world where imperialism was emerging. Japan therefore tried to avoid colonization by establishing a modern state among powerful nations.

This book describes a family story, centering on the author's two grandfathers, Masayoshi Matsukata (1835-1924) and Ryoichiro Arai (1855-1939). During the one-hundred-year transition period, Matsukata and Arai respectively helped to build Japan as a modern economy, the former as a political leader and the latter through direct trade with the US.

Matsukata, who was born into a lower-class samurai family in the influential Satsuma domain (now Kagoshima Prefecture), belonged to the ruling class that promoted change in the period during which Japan evolved from a feudal society to a modern state, and acted as a pivotal member of the new central government established in 1868. Initially he became well-versed in taxation through local administration and applied his powers to land tax reforms. He visited Paris in 1878 when the world exposition was held there, and stayed for nearly one year to study European agriculture, commerce, industry, and the fiscal system. He learned about fiscal policy from then French Financial Minister Leon Say and was profoundly influenced. He was appointed finance minister in 1881 and put the national finances on a sound footing during the period from 1881 to 1885, including establishing a central bank, the Bank of

Japan. He became prime minister in 1891 after the Imperial Diet was established, and later acted as both prime minister and finance minister. As a key player in the Meiji government, he helped to strengthen the modern financial basis, for instance, by adopting the gold standard.

Ryoichiro Arai came from a rich farming family in a small village now located in Gunma Prefecture. Ever since Japan started trading with the West, Gunma Prefecture had been the leading silk producer, and silk was the country's main export. However, foreigners controlled trade and information on overseas markets. Ryoichiro's elder brother, who was engaged in silk production, wanted to trade directly, and so sent Ryoichiro to the US in 1876. Ryoichiro went to the US with samples and settled in New York, where he liaised between Japanese exporters and American buyers, focusing on the quality of products to secure credit. During his more than sixty years in the US, foreign earnings from silk exports grew to account for 40% of Japan's imports: this money was used to import machines and mineral resources to Japan that formed the foundation for industry. Hence, the silk trade created this basis.

This book is fascinating as the author describes how her two grandfathers established the basis of the modern Japanese economy from different dimensions, and includes her own experiences as a member of the family. The book covers not only their public achievements but also their character development and family lives. It also includes stories of their descendents, including Kojiro Matsukata, Saburo Matsukata and Shigeharu Matsumoto. The author had two homelands because she was born in Japan, enjoyed an American-style education, and married an American scholar who later became US ambassador to Japan. This family story told by her succeeds both as a biography and as a historical work. Based on careful research, she offers a lively description of Japan's modernization. ■

Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration

Marius Jansen

(Columbia University Press, 1994)

Review by Shinichi Kitaoka



The development of modern Japan was based on a number of fundamental conditions that were already in place by the time of Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853. However, this development would not have been possible without the changes the country underwent during the final years of the Edo Period. Low-ranking Satsuma and Choshu samurai warriors played a central role in overthrowing the 250-year-old Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868, and abolishing first the feudal clan system in 1871 and eventually the warrior class itself. These were momentous changes.

However, it is only in relatively recent years that the Meiji Restoration has come to be seen in a positive light. For many years, the study of history in Japan was largely influenced by Marxist historiography, and was mainly discussed in terms of how slow and distorted the development of Japan was in comparison to the Western world. With few exceptions, the Meiji Restoration was seen in a negative light as a half-hearted revolution.

The first positive evaluation of modern Japan came from foreign, not Japanese, scholars such as Edwin O. Reischauer, John Hall, and the author of this book, Marius Jansen (1922-2000). Referred to as modernization theorists, they were criticized by Japanese left wing scholars as spokespersons for American imperialism. However, there is no doubt today that their reputations as scholars of Japan have been firmly established. Looking back to when these scholars were most active, I believe that those days were the golden age of Japanese studies in America.

This book describes the radical transformation from the late Tokugawa Shogunate to the Meiji Restoration, focusing mainly on Ryoma Sakamoto (and Shintaro Nakaoka) of Tosa. Jansen begins with the political situation

first in the whole of Japan, then in Tosa, and then delves into the thoughts and actions of samurai warriors, such as Sakamoto and Nakaoka, in Tosa. In this way, he repeatedly narrows the focus and gives a vivid account of the volatile political situation leading to the final days of the Tokugawa Shogunate and Ryoma's growth and triumph.

Sakamoto Ryoma (1835-67) is a political hero in Japan, but initially he was simply an anti-foreign exclusionist opposed to the intrusion of Western countries. However, after he traveled to Edo, he became acquainted with Katsu Kaishu, learned more about the Western world, and matured into an outstanding politician. He organized the Kaiantai* with the support of the Tosa Clan, and united the previously antagonistic Satsuma and Choshu, the two big powers that eventually overthrew the Tokugawa Shogunate, and began to present his views about being a modern nation. Regrettably, Ryoma was assassinated before the new government was established, but his vision continued to have a major influence on Japan's politics even after the Meiji Restoration.

The manner in which Jansen writes this book is especially effective for readers who are not well-versed in the history of Japan. In this sense, the book may rank above the popular *Ryoma ga Yuku* by Shiba Ryotaro. In fact, Shiba may very well have received some hints from Jansen's work.

This book is outstanding among Japanese studies in the U.S. in terms of the importance of the theme and appeal of the central character, not to mention the fact that it demonstrates Jansen's excellent analytical and literary abilities. ■

* Kaiantai was something between a primitive navy and a cargo company. It helped the anti-Bakufu group by providing munitions and other contraband from Nagasaki to Satsuma and to Choshu.



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