



Editor: Sean Curtin

Managing Editor: John Toppon

Professor Ian Nish kicks off our last issue of 2009 with an article on Roger Dingman's fascinating new book on how the US Navy & Marine Corps trained its interpreters and translators during the Second World War. Professor Dingman demonstrates how this highly significant and normally overlooked part of the war effort had a long term and profound impact on post-war Japan, producing a host of prominent Japan specialists such as Donald Keene, Ted de Bary and John W. Hall to name but a few. Staying in the immediate postwar years, Sir Hugh Cortazzi reviews a book on British and American policy towards China, Korea and Japan in the period up to the outbreak of the Korean War. The author, Christopher Baxter, concentrates on Britain's attempt to reassert its lost regional interests and its frustrations in dealing with America and Australia. Baxter provides some rich material on Anglo-American tensions over Japan and sheds a clinical light on a murky chapter in the so called "special relationship." Susan Meehan brings us back to contemporary Japan with her final movie review from this year's "Premiere Japan at BAFTA" event (see last issue for three earlier reviews). Susan gives us her verdict on popular actor Yakusho Koji's debut as a director in a heartstring-tugging, feel-good tale of friendship and family love – "Toad's Oil (ガマの油)." Keeping us in the present day, Fumiko Halloran gives us some surprising insights into the prominent politician Yoichi Masuzoe, who many tip as a potential future prime minister. Fumiko assesses his political beliefs through his thought-provoking and candid work "Nagata-cho vs. Kasumigaseki." Sir Hugh Cortazzi gives his opinion of "The Sixty-Nine Stations of the Kisokaido" which presents a collection of prints by Utagawa Hiroshige and Keisai Eisen, two of the outstanding artists of the late Edo period. William Farr tells us why he thinks Shizuka Tendo's 2006 autobiographical "Yakuza Moon: Memoirs of a Gangster's Daughter" is worthy of note. We also look at the bilingual history book "Nihon no Rekishi wo Eigode Yomu" and the revealing yarn of investment banking woe "How I Caused the Credit Crunch: An Insider's Story of the Financial Meltdown."

Sean Curtin

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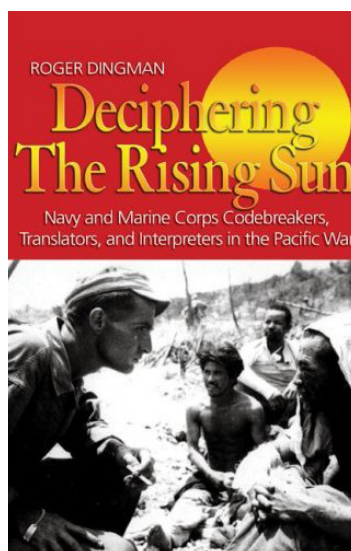
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### Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators and Interpreters in the Pacific War

by Roger Dingman

Naval Institute Press,  
Annapolis, 2009, 340  
pages, including notes,  
bibliography and index  
ISBN 10: 1591142113  
Hardcover, £18.99

Review by Ian Nish

Professor Dingman has based this enlightening study on extended interviews with former officers in the US Navy and Marine Corps who are now in their upper 80s. But he has also made much use of the unpublished memoirs to be found in the Navy Language School Collection in the Norlin Library, University of Colorado at Boulder where they were trained. It is a tribute to the US government – and the British for that matter – that they appreciated the importance of training linguists during the Asia-Pacific war and had the foresight to recruit and train personnel not of Japanese ancestry to study the Japanese language with a view to serving as language officers. Dingman concludes that it was a successful experiment and draws a painful parallel with the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq: "In June 2002 America teetered on the cusp of a war in Iraq that has lasted longer than the titanic struggle which the World War II language officers fought... It led to swift military victory, but true peace has proven elusive in the disastrously mismanaged, occupation that followed... those in our armed forces charged with carrying out their orders lacked knowledge of Iraq's history and culture and of the language of its people. (pp. 249-50)"

In 1942 the US government recognized the need to set up a school where its servicemen could be instructed in the Japanese language. After brief sojourns at Harvard and Berkeley, it was decided to locate it at the University of Colorado in Boulder. On 23 June 1942, barely two weeks after the Battle of Midway, the school opened with 152 officer candidates, recruited mainly by Albert Hindmarsh, who had as a young academic visited Japan in 1937 to study the language intensively. The students were trained by both American and Japanese instructors, using the Naganuma texts. In their teaching they maintained a balance between the spoken and written aspects of "this most difficult language."

When the first class graduated in July 1943, they became marine second lieutenants. In the first stage some were introduced in Washington to work as code-breakers and specialized in radio interception and cryptographic work for the Navy. But code-breaking and translation were demoralizing; and it was not until 1944 that they became involved in combat. As the war progressed, they played their part as Marine combat interpreters in the island-hopping campaign. Meanwhile their naval colleagues were trained to function as Japanese-speaking intelligence officers. In the last months of the war they were generally attached to combat units and saw grisly service in Okinawa.

Two items of relevance to Britain and the Commonwealth may be made at this point. Britain could not rely on niseis [a native of the US or Canada born of immigrant Japanese parents and educated in America or Canada), except for those who were seconded from Canada. Nor had missionary families in Japan been as numerous as were the Americans before the war. So the British services had no pool of recruits on which they could draw in order to build up their linguistic resources. Apart from those trained at SOAS, Bill Beasley was sent by the Royal Navy to Boulder for training with the Americans. Some Commonwealth linguists also joined Allied Translator and Interpreter Service (ATIS), primarily an army facility, attached to General MacArthur's HQ in Brisbane, which made a large contribution to Japanese language studies during the war.

After the official Japanese surrender in 1945, many language officers played a critical role in facilitating the local surrender of garrisons in islands like Wake and Truk which made up what Dingman calls Japan's maritime empire. Later they became involved in war crimes investigations and the prosecutions in outlying stations like Manila. The same job had to be done for parts of Japan's continental empire in China and Korea. Their linguistic knowledge was invaluable in achieving the successful dismantling of the Japanese Empire. From the evidence Dingman has amassed, it seems that interpreters were able to empathize with the commanders whose surrender they took and smoothed the transition to peace.

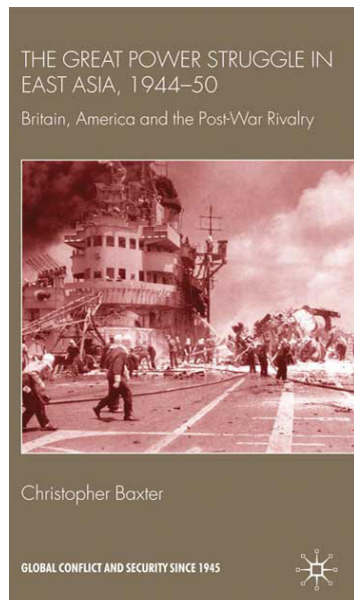
When they landed in Japan herself, language officers had

to act as agents of occupation, enforcing the instruments of surrender. Dingman claims (pp. 194-5) that "language officers stood at the forefront of those who helped bring about that change (in unfriendly US attitudes to Japan)." Given the American perception that the Japanese had been transformed, what was the role of these wartime combatants in the post-war occupation of Japan's home islands? They performed their roles as investigators, reporters but also as bridge-builders promoting American-Japanese understanding. This brings us to the question of fraternization. Evidently dance halls sprouted in Tokyo's Ginza soon after the war's end; and GIs enjoyed dancing with young Japanese girls there. Language officers visited Japanese homes. This was one area in which US and British perspectives differed. British troops when they came on the scene early in 1946 were subject to a non-fraternization order; and, however much that order was in practice violated, it remained in force.

Dingman concludes by looking at the later careers of the Boulder graduates. One year after Japan's surrender, Boulder language school closed and the staff were dispersed. So far as the former graduates were concerned, Dingman divides them into two categories: those who were "touched by Japan" and joined professions where Japanese knowledge was peripheral but where they retained Japanese sympathies. And those who were "beguiled by Japan" – that is, those whose experience in the war persuaded them to devote their lives to furthering Japanese studies. Thus "By 1946 Ted de Bary, Donald Keene and John W. Hall were already uniquely positioned by their wartime naval experiences to become the intellectual leaders of Japanese studies in post-war America (page 245)."

In the years that followed these and so many more (Beardsley, Robert Ward, Tom Smith, James Morley, Ardath Burks, Scalapino and Shiveley) pursued cross-cultural projects with Japan and produced seminal publications. These are mainly historians; but one could duplicate this list in the field of journalism, Japanese art and translation. In their way they all operated as "unofficial ambassadors" between Tokyo and Washington. Eventually in 1975 the "academic veterans" succeeded in inducing Congress to fund a Japan-US Friendship Commission that would enable later generations to study Japan's culture as they had earlier done in the extraordinary circumstances of war.

We owe a debt to Roger Dingman for his painstaking and comprehensive research. At one level it depicts part of the life story of individual language officers who had a special experience of the Asia-Pacific war and of the peace-making that followed. At another, the book is of wider political significance about one of the political phenomena of the twentieth century: the swift transition within Japan from extreme wartime hostility towards the US to relative acceptance of allied occupation within a few weeks of the war's end. In this transition language officers played a role disproportionate to their numbers.



## **The Great Power Struggle in East Asia, 1944-50, Britain, America and Post-War Rivalry**

**by Christopher Baxter in the series Global Conflict and Security Since 1945**

**Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 250 pages including endnotes, bibliography and index ISBN: 978-0-230-20297-9, £55**

**Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi**

In 1945 when Lend-Lease ended, Britain was bankrupt. In the Far East the United States was dominant and the British were dependent on American good will but this was in short supply. The Americans were generally contemptuous of British fighting ability after the Singapore debacle of early 1942 and were unwilling to help the British to retrieve their commercial interests in China. They would not help Britain to recover any of its colonies even Hong Kong. The 'special relationship' was notable by its absence in the Far East in the years covered by this book.

This book, which deals with policy towards China, Korea and Japan up to the outbreak of the Korean War, concentrates on British attempts to reassert their interests and their frustrations in dealing with the Americans and the Australians who were frequently tiresome. It also demonstrates a lack of British realism about what could be achieved. As Baxter notes (page 26) "there was a general tendency in the Foreign Office to urge that we [the British] should undertake military commitments far beyond our manpower or our future financial and material resources."

The Americans agreed reluctantly that a British force might be useful if an invasion of Japan became necessary and allowed a British naval force to join in the final stages of the fighting in the Pacific. "Preparations [page 39] for the occupation of Japan were marked by confusion whereby both the British and Americans did not understand each other's position but assumed they did." The Americans eventually accepted a British Commonwealth contingent in the occupation of Japan, but it could not arrive until early 1946. It was barred from any role in military government and friction between the British and the Australians detracted from its limited and doubtful political value. The Americans were so determined to ensure that the occupation was an all American affair that the members of The United Kingdom Liaison Mission in Tokyo were, at least at first,

only allowed to travel outside Tokyo if they received American permission first (page 118).

British and American views differed on how to treat Japan after the war. There is a fairly widely held belief that the British wanted Japan to be treated toughly but Sir George Sansom, who had served so many years in Japan before the war and on whose "unrivalled knowledge and prestige" the Foreign Office relied greatly, produced in 1945, with Esler (later Sir Esler) Denning, a paper on policy towards Japan (page 43) which did not at that time accord with American views. Sansom argued against a long occupation and against the dismantling of industries. After the war much of Japan's population would be unemployed and possibly starving. "Such conditions were not likely to favour the evolution of a democratic type of government in Japan. Sansom favoured instead the institution of economic controls and the necessity of working through the constitutional powers of the Emperor. Japan could not survive without the ability to trade and economic controls could therefore induce the Japanese to introduce their own reforms, ensuring good behaviour." In this context Baxter notes page 44: "The British including Churchill who raised the matter at Yalta, had begun to question the desirability of demanding the unconditional surrender of Japan. They felt the suspension of the Emperor's powers – 'the most abject humiliation' – implicit in the term unconditional surrender, would delay the war unnecessarily." Later the British were advocates of an early peace treaty with Japan and at the official level were less anti-Japanese than the Australians. In this they were ahead of or at variance with British popular opinion which took much longer than Australian opinion to become reconciled to Japan.

In this brief review I have concentrated on a few of the interesting points which Christopher Baxter makes in relation to Anglo-American exchanges on policy towards Japan, but this book is equally revealing about policy discussions on China and Korea. Historians interested in Anglo-American relations in the immediate post-war years will find this trawl through the official archives fascinating and instructive.

As an official who served from 1951-54 under Sir Esler Denning as Britain's first post-war Ambassador to Japan I do not think he was, quote, the "imperialist" Baxter describes. He was a realist. He was also crusty, tough and opinionated. He was tall and broad shouldered not stocky as Baxter describes him. He certainly had his doubts about post-war Japanese democracy, but having served in pre-war Japan he had good reason for this. He was also suspicious of American motives and good faith based on his experience as political adviser to Mountbatten as supreme commander in South East Asia and the behaviour of John Foster Dulles over the American enforced Japanese recognition of China.

Premiere Japan 2009 at BAFTA 9th to 11th October 2009

## Toad's Oil (ガマの油)

directed by Yakusho Koji (役所 広司)

2008, 131 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan

Yakusho Koji, well-known for his roles in *Shall We Dance?*, *The Eel* and *Babel* makes his directorial debut with *Gama no Abura* (ガマの油 – *Toad's Oil*), which was the opening film at this year's "Premiere Japan 2009" event (see last issue for more details).

'Gama no abura' is an old wives' tale, a legendary curative ointment made from toad's oil, extracted by incarcerating a toad in a small box lined with mirrors. The toad's fright at seeing such a foul reflection causes it to break out in greasy sweat which is then collected and used to prepare the panacea.

Yakusho Koji's frenetic character, nicknamed "easy

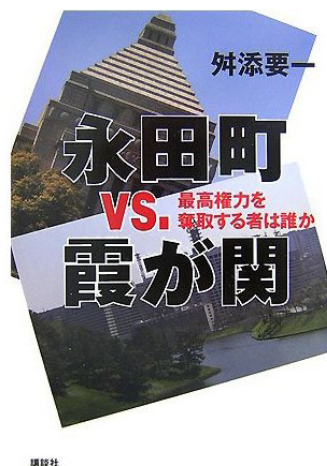


money gambler" by his son, owes his millionaire status to successfully playing the stock market. In the manner of the trapped toad, surrounded by computers rather than mirrors which alert him to the state of his shares, he frenziedly trades alternating between howls and hysterical laughs at each loss and manically punching for joy and shooting toy pistols on recouping and surpassing his losses.

Once the scene is set, Takuya, his delightfully likable and telegenic son, played by Eita (瑛太), sets off from his lavish mansion to meet his ebullient, bordering on the irritating, girlfriend Hikari (二階堂ふみ). The date is cut short when Takuya mentions having to meet his best friend, Akiba, due to be released later that day from a reform school. Leaving a petulantly jealous Hikari, Takuya is hit by a van and falls into a coma.

Desperate for Takuya to regain consciousness, his parents and Akiba keep a constant bedside vigil and "easy money gambler" strikes up a telephone relationship with Takuya's girlfriend, Hikari who is kept blissfully unaware of Takuya's condition.

The story unfolds with the occasional surreal turn. While it eventually succeeds in conveying a message of the importance of friends and family and love, it seemed rather disoriented and the allusion to the legendary 'gama no abura' forced. The stars of the film are, undoubtedly, Takuya and Akiba, played by K-1 fighter Junichi Sawayashiki (澤屋 敦純一).



Nagata-cho vs.  
Kasumigaseki  
[永田町VS霞が関]

by Yoichi Masuzoe [舛添要一]

Kodansha, 2007, 253 pages, ISBN: 978-4-06-214042-3, 1500 yen

Review by Fumiko Halloran

This book is about the complicated relations between politicians in Nagata-cho, where the Diet building is located, and bureaucrats in

Kasumiga-seki, where most government ministries are situated. It is work that is interesting more because of who wrote it rather than for the subject itself.

Yoichi Masuzoe was the Minister of Welfare and Labor [August 2007 to August 2009] and served in Prime Minister Taro Aso's last cabinet, before it lost power to the administration of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama. Masuzoe held the same position under two previous prime ministers, Shinzo Abe and Yasuo Fukuda. Despite his junior rank in the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) delegation in the House of Councillors, or Upper House, having only been elected in 2001, he was appointed in 2006 as chairman of the LDP's Upper House Policy Council (Seisaku Shingikai). This was unusual since the chairmanship usually goes to a veteran skilled in negotiating not only within the LDP but with the opposition parties. Masuzoe and the Lower House chair of the counterpart council, Seimu Chosakai, controlled drafting and revisions of legislations by all parties and ministries, every one of which has a vested interest in expanding their power.

Yoichi Masuzoe belongs to no faction but is backed by several senior LDP leaders, some of whom contemplated selecting him as a successor to the enormously popular Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (2001 to 2006). Born in 1948 in Fukuoka Prefecture, he graduated from Tokyo University Faculty of Law with a major in political science. He was a research fellow at the University of Paris International Relations Institute and the University of Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies.

Returning to Japan, he taught French politics and diplomacy at Tokyo University. In the 1980s, he left Tokyo University after criticizing its bureaucratic attitude toward education, and became a television commentator. In 1999, he ran against novelist/politician Shintaro Ishihara in the Tokyo gubernatorial election and lost but garnered 840,000 votes. In 2001, he got elected to the Upper House with 1.58 million votes. In 2007 he was re-elected to the Upper House.

Masuzoe became prominent through his best-selling book on caring for his ailing mother who had developed Alzheimer's disease before she passed away. His association with this led to his appointment as the Minister of Welfare and Labor in the Abe cabinet. The ministry he presided over had serious difficulties in tracking the records of pension recipients as well as other administrative problems. Masuzoe was often on television defending or criticizing his own ministry and explaining the issues as he saw them. He is a colourful character with a big ego to match and once owned prize-winning race horses. He is the author of many books, was divorced twice and married three times, and has a tendency to use strong words in public, often stirring controversy.

This book, however, shows still another side of him: He is a policy wonk. He attends numerous policy study group meetings, prepares for questioning in the Diet hearings by intense discussion with research staff and plays tough games with bureaucrats. He tells readers about the ins and outs of how legislation is drafted, goes through the revisions process, looks at who wants the revisions, how compromise is reached, and other factors that shape the end result.

Masuzoe argues that the LDP has gone through profound changes after the Koizumi reforms. Earlier, the Japanese political system ran like this; at the top of the LDP policy formation sat the Policy Research Council chairman in the Lower House. Under the council were many "bukai" or committees. Committee members were backed by bureaucrats and business executives, each pushing his or her own agenda. The business community donated campaign funds and organized votes; the bureaucracy provided knowledge and information on issues. In return, the Diet members who specialized in various industries, called "Zoku Giin" (tribe legislators), protected the interest of the business and the bureaucracy by winning beneficial budgets.

Masuzoe points out that the prevailing assumption was that Japan's economy would continue to expand. After the "Lost Decade" in the 1990's, the political map suddenly changed as economic growth plunged. Unable to accept drastic budget cuts and streamlining the system, Japan's deficit kept growing.

At this critical time, Koizumi appeared as a ruthless budget cutter. He streamlined the bureaucracy by

establishing a group free of business and bureaucratic influence, which was the Economic and Finance Policy Advisory Council headed by Dr. Heizo Takenaka. Masuzoe gives high marks to Koizumi's policy, although he admits that Koizumi tended to ignore the Diet--not an orthodox way to run a parliamentary system.

The era of high economic growth, the role of the Diet members merely winning battles on budget for interest groups, and reliance on the bureaucracy to shape policy is over, Masuzoe asserts. He criticizes Diet members who do not spend enough time on legislative activity and declares that those not steeped in policy debate will become obsolete and forced off the political map soon.

However, he is a realist as well. He does not promote the idea of legislative initiative in drafting bills as the benchmark of a successful record, arguing that bills not going through vigorous scrutiny and "nemawashi" negotiations among all interest groups fail to get passed in the Diet. He contends, instead, that Diet members take the initiative in forming policy by utilizing the bureaucracy's resources without succumbing to their own agenda. Similarly he does not dismiss the role of "Zoku Giin." He argues that these members are knowledgeable on issues and skilled in the legislative process. Therefore they should be a valuable asset if their attachments to special interest groups can be reined in.

Masuzoe proposes that each party have its own think tank, modelled after the Council on Foreign Relations, American Enterprise Institute, and Heritage Foundation. He says the LDP Policy and Research Council's committees each have research staff who are well informed. In the Upper House, the LDP has its own think tank that assists the members in drafting legislation.

Masuzoe believes that to improve as policy organizations, the LDP and opposition parties need to take turns in running the country, a surprising view from someone who when he wrote the book was a member of the governing LDP rather than a vanquished opposition party. He asserts that by 2007 the long reign by the LDP had led to incestuous relations between Nagata-cho and Kasumiga-seki. A principle of competition by policies, not special interests, should prevail in an ideal political world. Now the LDP are the opposition, it will be intriguing to follow Masuzoe's political path to see if he is serious in this argument.

*A different version of this review first appeared on the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Japan-US Discussion Forum and is reproduced with permission.*



yakuza moon

memoirs of a  
gangster's daughter

Shoko Tendo

## **Yakuza Moon: Memoirs of a Gangster's Daughter by Shizuka Tendo**

**Routledge, 2006,  
234 pages including  
photographs,  
ISBN: 9784770030429,  
Hardcover, £13.99  
Review by William Farr**

At once a horrifying and powerful exposé on the limits of personal endurance, *Yakuza*

*Moon* is the true story of one woman's struggle against the odds. Born into a family where the head of the household also happens to be a local yakuza boss, Tendo has the cards stacked against her. Local neighbours and children who verbally attack her as some sort of representative of the yakuza make Tendo brutally aware of the power of her father's position.

Tendo's father, at once kind and traditionally Japanese – almost Bushido in his philosophical outlook – comes over however as a Mr. Hyde figure in his youth. He sits as an overarching figure throughout most of the book, either by virtue of sporadic violent outbursts or in weak dotage, yet he remains an important figure for Tendo.

The family garage in Tendo's youth is littered with expensive cars and motorbikes, but as time passes the family hits hard times and loan sharks come calling. Tendo's house and home is destroyed as the worm turns on the once powerful yakuza boss. Financial "feast or famine" become the watchwords of Tendo's youth.

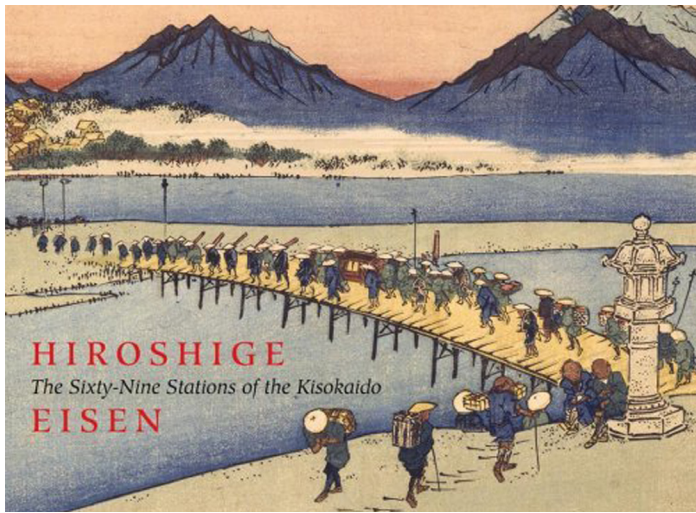
Yet in this midst of all this confusion Tendo is surprisingly doing well at school, in spite of the criminal underworld she inhabits. But one crazy night with her older sister tips the balance. Tendo slips into a world of drugs and abuse at the hands of yakuza lovers, only swinging back every so often to normal relationships. The yakuza lovers treat her appallingly, beat her relentlessly, yet the abuse cycle is difficult for Tendo to break free from. The normal lovers seek either to turn Tendo into a concubine, or save her from herself. Both viewpoints and attitudes towards her ultimately fail as Tendo has too much of her own self to uncover and come to terms with. Her older sister is in a similarly abusive pattern of behaviour and struggles to stand on her own feet whilst supporting a gambling addicted boyfriend. Members of Tendo's family often have to move away to other cities to escape impending trouble in the form of loan sharks or ex-lovers.

But the book is an exercise in catharsis, and whilst the epilogue at the end of the book by Manabu Miyazaki

explains that Tendo hates the yakuza, this does not appear to be the case, so perhaps a degree of hostility is lost in translation. Rather, Tendo accepts the yakuza as a reality of her past; she cannot avoid who she was, and so she turns to yakuza symbols as a way of coming to terms with her cultural heritage. This begins with a trip to the tattooist. Tattoos in Japan whilst being a clear badge of the yakuza, are portrayed by Tendo as a way for her to extract herself from a difficult upbringing by placing herself clearly within it. The tattoos that she has emblazoned upon her body grow and become a major living work of art. This is coupled with a growing self-awareness as the young woman reinvents herself aesthetically.

The gangster's daughter falls pregnant at a significant point in this self-development, at which point reality jolts her into understanding the importance of her own life, and how others rely upon her for strength. Ultimately Tendo makes peace with her past, concluding that her reality is defined by the people that make it, without whom her life is lessened in its meaning. So as her mother, followed by her father, die the clarity of who she is and who she wants to be, becomes clearer. At this point in Tendo's journey - as she comes up for air - she realizes that her life is a vital message to the world because of the path that she has walked. Our heroine at this point decides to live out her childhood dream and write for a living.

This journey is critically empowering for women. The long suffering girl's inner strength is astonishing, as is her ability to rise like a phoenix from the flames many times after being so close to the edge. A number of times Tendo throws in the towel and gives up on life; but whether through fortunate circumstance or an inner will which encourages her to stay alive for the sake of life - she endures. Whilst some books such as Joe Simpson's *Touching the Void* take the reader to the inner depths of personal hell and back again through the journey of an individual in a natural environment, this book is surely the lifetime urban equivalent of having climbed Mount Everest a least twelve times over. Some of what happens to this unfortunate woman is arguably self-inflicted, but Tendo is the result of a difficult upbringing and is fiercely strong in spite of it. Sadly many in society go through a Tendo-like journey and do not come positively out of it on the other side. Many individuals live forever in the hell of a maturity that has been tarnished by a childhood of abuse. This is not the case for the author of *Yakuza Moon*.



## The Sixty-Nine Stations of the Kisokaido: Hiroshige and Eisen

by Sebastian Izzard

George Braziller Publisher (New York), 2008, 159 pages, Introduction, map, select bibliography, 70 full-colour prints.

ISBN978-0-8076-1593-5

Hardcover, £34.50

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

This book makes a valuable companion volume to the recent publication by Taschen of Hiroshige's One Hundred Views of Edo which I reviewed in Issue 17 Volume 3 Number 5 (December 2008). The Taschen volume of upright prints was produced as in full size reproductions of an outstanding set. This volume of oblong prints is based on a careful selection of fine early impressions. Anyone interested in the prints of Hiroshige or in Japanese landscape prints of the late Edo period will want to add this book to their collection.

The Kisokaidō, often referred to as the Naksendō (road through the mountains) as it traversed the mountains of central Japan, was an alternative to the better known and more travelled Tōkaidō (eastern sea road). It was longer and more difficult but passed through much fine scenery. It became popular with foreign travellers in the Meiji period who wanted to "get off the beaten track" but who had difficulty in getting permission to travel in the 'interior' of Japan away from the Treaty ports (see transcript of my lecture to The Japan Society on 16 June 1987 in Proceedings number 108 for 1987-8 pages 71-87).

As Sebastian Izzard in his introduction explains this collection of prints by two outstanding artists of the late Edo period is "a tour de force of artistic vision and printmaking craftsmanship" and "comprises the artists' most extraordinary and best loved landscapes, urban scenes and visual anecdotes." Yet most of these prints were not based on sketches made on the spot but rather on local guides. Neither Eisen, nor Hiroshige, seems to have thought it necessary or even desirable to journey along the

road and observe the actual scenery for themselves.

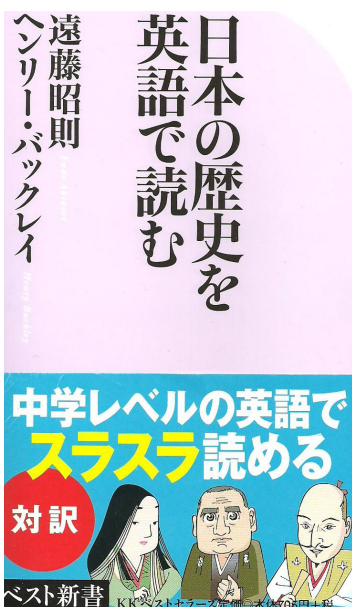
This series was started by Eisen in 1835. He worked chronologically producing a print for each station up to Honjo, the eleventh, and then arbitrarily selected stations further along the route which attracted him, producing a total of 24 prints. Eisen who had an element of artistic genius, also seems to have been both eccentric and an alcoholic. Perhaps because he was so unreliable he was replaced by Hiroshige who did a further 46 prints to complete the series. Izzard notes that Eisen was generally more interested in the human element than in the view itself. "Hiroshige, on the other hand, sheds his earlier reliance on guidebooks and local customs to create sweeping compositions with stunning bodies of colour designed to reflect the atmosphere of each locale in the moment he portrayed it."

Among the most striking of the prints in this volume are prints depicting people and places in the dark or in the rain. The use of dark blue in many of the prints is noteworthy. Izzard notes that "the boom in landscape prints in 1830s had been fuelled by the sudden and widespread availability of the imported synthetic blue pigment known as *bero-ai*, named after Berlin, the capital of Prussia... A fad for blue prints (*aizuri-e*) developed, and fostered a demand for landscapes printed in shades of blue." Perhaps the most noteworthy general features of these prints are the imaginative manner in which each scene is composed and the way in which vibrant colours are artistically blended. These were the elements which so impressed and inspired the Post-Impressionists.



Each print is accompanied by a detailed note about the content of the picture and information about the impression. It is interesting to note the way in which signs are used in some of the prints to advertise the publisher or various products.

A few of the prints in this series are well known because they have featured in books about Japanese prints and Japanese artists, but many will be known only to specialists. In going through this work I noted many that were unfamiliar to me and a number which I thought particularly attractive and impressive. I must leave it to readers to make their own choice as there is no space in a brief to review reproduce even a small selection of the prints.



## Reading Japanese History in English [日本の歴史を英語で読む]

by Akinori Endo  
[遠藤 昭則] and  
Henry Buckley

Besutoshinsho, 2009, 192 pages

ISBN: 978-4-12225

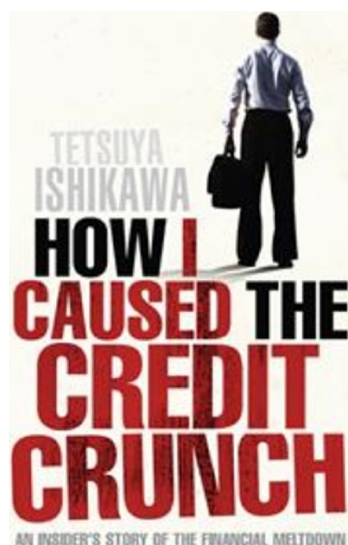
9,740 yen

Review by Sean Curtin

This handy bilingual work is definitely for anyone who wants to enhance or brush up their Japanese history vocab while improving their overview of Japanese history. In 86 compact chapters the authors take us from Palaeolithic [旧石器時代] Japan to the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty [サンフランシスコ講和条約] in 1951 and the subsequent Japan-US Security Treaty [日米安全保障条約].

On each page the English and Japanese sentences are numbered which makes it easy to match up the corresponding sections, while key words and phrases are underlined with the Japanese equivalent below. The work provides a concise overview of prewar Japanese history. It is packed full of useful historical vocabulary and sentence structures which are incorporated in an easy-to-follow historical framework. The reader seamlessly glides through the Jomon [縄文時代] and Yayoi [弥生時代] periods before cantering into the first recorded mentions of Japan in Chinese manuscripts. Almost everything can be found in this comprehensive work including all the historical milestones such as the Yamato Regime [大和政権], Prince Shotoku [聖徳太子], the Taiho Code [大宝律令], the Nara Period [奈良時代], the Kamakura Shogunate [鎌倉幕府] and Tokugawa Ieyasu's [徳川家康] establishment of the Edo Shogunate [江戸幕府]. Some periods and events will be familiar to readers others more obscure. The authors also briefly look at daily life and customs in some of the periods covered.

This is an extremely useful reference book for anyone who deals with Japan on a regular basis but is not a history expert. It is also a fine example of how far Japan-English reference books have come in the last 30 years. When I started studying Japanese at university in the eighties there were not many useful bilingual reference books or works on the market, now there are many excellent quality books on a diverse range of subjects. Today's students of Japanese do not know how lucky they are, while yesterday's students (and even the more mature amongst us) can greatly benefit from reference works such as this which can fill minor gaps in our knowledge.



## How I Caused the Credit Crunch: An Insider's Story of the Financial Meltdown

by Tetsuya Ishikawa

Icon Books Ltd, 2009

ISBN 978-1848310674

£8.99

Review by Natasha Hamilton

*While this book is not directly about Japan and Tokyo is not at the centre of the narrative, the insights the Japanese author, Tetsuya Ishikawa,*

*provides on the investment banking world are gripping.*

You wouldn't ordinarily pick up a book about the financial crisis on your summer holiday, but I made an exception for this book after reading the first page or two. Its factual and slightly fictional accounts of the underbelly of the investment banking world are entertaining and informative. While keeping the reader gripped with tales of sex, money and greed, the book also deftly explains the intricacies of the arcane financial instruments which are now grimly associated with the credit crunch, all of which the author has had direct experience. It explains the crisis from a Joe Public's view while not coming over too sympathetic for unemployed investment bankers.

In August 2008, Tetsuya Ishikawa was made redundant from his job at a global top-tier investment bank. [He was an investment banker at ABN AMRO, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley.] The story is a fictionalized account of Ishikawa's seven years at the forefront of the credit markets and an exposé of the human failings behind the credit crisis.

The main character and narrator, Andrew Dover, arrives on the scene fresh out of Oxford University. He soon finds himself in command of vast, unimaginable sums of other people's money. A novice to the mysteries of hedge funds, subprime mortgages and CDOs, he nonetheless throws himself into the mad, decadent world of banking - awash with money, sex and greed. Soon he finds himself reaping the benefits in his colossal annual bonus and an international luxury lifestyle, fixing complex deals for billions of dollars in the exclusive bars, brothels, poker clubs and trading floors of London, New York, Frankfurt and Tokyo.

While some details and names have been changed, what makes the book exciting to read is the fact that the book is actually inspired by first-hand accounts of working at the cutting edge of the global economy from an individual with real insight into the financial world. [Tetsuya Ishikawa worked at the forefront of the credit markets, structuring, syndicating and selling credit derivative, CDO and securitization products to investors.]

*Natasha sent a different and much shorter version of this review to Money Market who published it in October 2009*