



On 1 May 2019, Prince Naruhito ascended the throne as the 126th Emperor of Japan beginning the Reiwa era. The first Japanese emperor who studied outside Japan, he attended University of Oxford between 1983 and 1985 (his memoirs of those years were translated into English by Sir Hugh Cortazzi as *The Thames and I* (reprinted 2019)). His ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne continues a long history of relations between the Japanese imperial and British royal families. The 150 years of these relations are the subject of the Japan Society most recent publication *British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations, 1868-2018: 150 Years of Association, Engagement and Celebration* published in association with Renaissance Books. Professor Ian Nish, Professor Emeritus of International History at the London School of Economics, has reviewed the book for this August issue of *The Japan Society Review*.

From a different perspective of Anglo-Japanese relations, Naoko Abe explores the individual story of Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram and his passion for collecting and cultivating cherry trees in *'Cherry' Ingram: The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms*. An updated English translation of Abe's award-winning Japanese book, this publication goes beyond Ingram's

own life to capture the spirit of the times in which he lived, from the everyday lives of the upper classes in the British countryside in the late 19th and early 20th century to the horrors of war.

Another personal account of living in Japan, *Bridge to the Gods: Tales from Kyushu* written by Andrew Thomson is not only a charming description of his personal contemporary life in Kyushu, Japan's third largest and southern- and westernmost island, but also an exploration of the region's rich culture, cuisine, history and attractions. The book includes maps and pictures of the area and a glossary of Japanese words.

The final review of this issue is dedicated to the show *Scored in Silence* directed and performed by Chisato Minamimura. A mixture of performance, lecture, history lesson, and an experiment with new technology, *Scored in Silence* unpacks the untold tales of deaf *hibakusha* – survivors of the atomic bombs that fell in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and their experiences at the time and thereafter.

Another issue of *The Japan Society Review* full of insights and topics thanks to our volunteer reviewers. Enjoy the read!

Alejandra Armendáriz-Hernández

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Editor

Alejandra Armendáriz-Hernández

Reviewers

Alice Baldock, Laurence Green, Ian Nish and Trevor Skingle.

Image: Her Majesty the Queen enjoying a private moment with His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito during the imperial state visit to the United Kingdom in May 1998. Photo: Courtesy PA.

Detail from the cover of *British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations, 1868-2018: 150 Years of Association, Engagement and Celebration*.

British Royal and Japanese Imperial Relations, 1868-2018: 150 Years of Association, Engagement and Celebration

edited by Peter Kornicki, Antony Best and Sir Hugh Cortazzi

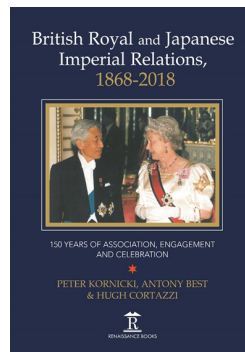
Renaissance Books and the Japan Society (2019)

ISBN-13: 978-1898823865

Review by Ian Nish

Sir Hugh Cortazzi stated that he wanted the papers for the final 10th volume in his long series entitled Britain and Japan Biographical Portraits to be delivered in time for his 90th birthday. This was intended as an inducement for sluggish contributors like me to speed up. He achieved his object: the volume was published in 2016. But he had a surprise still in store for us. He pulled a rabbit out of the hat, the present volume dealing with court relations between the two countries and the role they played, subjects neglected in the earlier volumes. In telling the story, Sir Hugh is joined by two experts in the field, Professor Peter Kornicki and Professor Antony Best.

Part I (Kornicki) deals with the reigns of two long-serving hereditary monarchs: Queen Victoria (1837-1901) and the Emperor Meiji (1868-1912). Meiji himself never left the shores of Japan. The junior Japanese princes came to Britain and to other countries from the 1870s onwards for education, language study and military training. Britain gladly obliged though its attitude was paternalistic towards the newcomer. Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, the second son of Victoria, visited Japan in 1869 despite security scares. He met the Emperor Meiji. The reception of this official mission was very favourable. Other British princes (Albert Victor, George and Arthur) made contact with Japan over shorter periods but it was generally in connection with their assignments in the Royal Navy. The limit to royal connections at this stage, Professor Kornicki thinks, was that 'Japan was simply not seen as an important world player until its victory in the Sino-Japanese war.' (p. 53) But success in that war in 1895 created its own problems for Britain. At the time of preparing the ceremonial for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, Japan threatened that she would not be represented by a prince unless he was given equal status with the European representatives invited. She won her case but had to ask!



The second Part (Best) is entitled 'A Royal Alliance: Court Diplomacy 1902-41'. There were high points and low points in this period which covered the reigns of two Emperors Taisho 1912-26 and Showa 1926-88; and the reigns of Kings Edward VII 1901-10, George V and George VI. Japan had been spectacularly successful in her development in the previous century and her progress industrially was greatly admired in Britain. The high point was reached in the two decades of the Anglo-Japanese alliance which was signed in 1902, revised in 1905 and again in 1911. The statesmen and rulers of the day praised it as the lynchpin of their foreign policy, but each time it was renewed with less enthusiasm. In Britain the sovereign opposed the award of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry, to non-Christian monarchs, until Japan's resounding victory over Russia in 1905. The following year a Garter Mission under Prince Arthur of Connaught, was sent to Tokyo and presented the Garter to the Meiji Emperor, King Edward VII having given way in his opposition. Prince Komatsu (Higashi-Fushimi) who was later to represent his country at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, performed the reciprocal mission in 1907.

Under the heading 'Two Funerals and Two Coronations', Professor Best points out that royal princes had to do much travelling in the years that followed. They had to attend the funerals of Edward VII (1910) and the Meiji Emperor (1912) and the coronations of their successors. So the royal rituals of cordiality were observed; but there were disturbing undertones. The British were irritated by the inroads Japanese were making into the economy of China and saw the position deteriorating with the revolution there in 1911-2, while Japan blamed Britain for not helping with her long-term plans for China.

Britain decided to renew the Anglo-Japanese alliance for ten years until 1921, feeling that it was opportune to keep in place the constraints imposed on Japan under the alliance. With the outbreak of the first world war, the position became very sensitive over the degree of Japan's commitment to the Entente cause. Towards the war's end, things had reached such an extreme that Britain decided to present the Emperor Taisho with a field-marshal's baton of the British army, and Prince Arthur of Connaught was asked to lead another mission, on this occasion a military mission. But there was the additional political hope of weaning senior Japanese military officers away from any pro-German leanings they had.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance was built into the court system after two decades. But it came

under criticism by outside powers at the Paris Peace Conference and was wound up at the Washington conference of 1921. It was finally laid to rest two years later. Japan believed that these post-war international settlements had been stacked against her. Many thinkers in both countries wondered what could be done to secure peace and stability in east Asia. Some contribution could surely be made by those who undertook royal missions. Crown Prince Hirohito visited Britain in the course of a European tour in 1921, which was a success for someone who was young and naturally shy. The following year Edward Prince of Wales, who was paying a visit to India was asked to proceed to Japan where his outgoing personality seems to have attracted the Japanese public. On his return from overseas, the Crown Prince became regent until his ailing father's death in 1926. After Hirohito's accession to the throne, Britain sent a further mission led by the Duke of Gloucester in 1929 to present the Showa Emperor with the Order of the Garter. This was reciprocated by Prince and Princess Takamatsu who had just married. After the business had been completed, the British government invited them as a gesture to stay a further week in Britain at its expense. From both sides these visits in the middle of a fraught period had an overtly political dimension: it was easiest to use the ruling families to restore some of the former cordiality.

Prince Chichibu, who had been partly educated in UK between 1929 and 1931 and was brother of the Emperor Hirohito, took important steps in this direction, assisted by his wife, Princess Chichibu, the daughter of the prominent ambassador Matsudaira Tsuneo, who was born in Walton on Thames and had received part of her education in Britain. He and his wife were together nominated to attend King George VI's coronation in 1937 and were accorded unexpected privileges, despite the outbreak of the war in China and the fraught atmosphere in Britain caused by the abdication crisis. Professor Best's view is that by the mid-thirties 'the court had become one of the last bastions of pro-British sentiment in Japan'. (p.120) Certainly a coterie of significant figures was appointed to senior positions at Court, including Count Makino Nobuaki, veteran of the Paris peace conference and well-known liberal, and ex-ambassador Matsudaira Tsuneo who held the office of Minister for the Imperial Household. From the end of the 30s royal relations entered what Best describes as 'a deep freeze'.

The final and longest Part written by Hugh Cortazzi bears the title 'Renewing and Developing

Royal Relations in a Changed World: 1945-2018'. In the changed world, Japan had to face the fact of her defeat in war; Britain had to accept her diminished role in east Asia. The United States was top dog. The Japanese depended on her for their economic recovery. The British likewise.

In 1962 Princess Alexandra aged 24 visited Japan after a university function in Hong Kong. Hers was a cultural tour but came to be associated with a government effort to penetrate the Japanese market. Japan was enjoying prodigious economic growth; and Britain sensed potential for the revival of trade. This initiative was reciprocated by Princess Chichibu, who had inherited his role as imperial patron in the Japan-British Society in Tokyo when her husband died in 1953. In this capacity she guided the paths of an increasing number of royal visitors. She accompanied Princess Margaret when she visited Japan to attend British Week in Tokyo in 1969. With the improvement of the Japanese economy, Britain arranged for Expo to be held in Osaka in 1970, with Prince Charles attending. The royal presence in these cases seemed to confirm that goodwill had been re-established in Anglo-Japanese relations and some of the bitter relationships of the war period had been forgotten.

On 31 August 1971 the Emperor announced that he would like to visit Europe despite the anti-Japanese sentiments being expressed there. In the case of Britain, the Order of the Garter was restored to the Japanese sovereign as a symbol of welcome. This was a state visit, indeed the first of the kind, the Emperor to some extent followed his own interests, visiting the Royal Society where he was awarded its fellowship because of his specialised research in marine biology and also the Linnean Society. For him these were high points in the story. Ambassador Sir John Pilcher who accompanied the mission reported on the favourable reactions in Japan and on the column inches devoted to it by the Japanese press. But he ends his account with the pessimistic reflection: 'that the misdeeds of the past still remain alive.' (p.169)

Certainly the press in both countries went to town on the 'insults' directed by the public at the Emperor; those who were looking for affronts could find them. But as one who stood on the pavement to survey the procession of the royal coach as it passed through central London I cannot say that they were in worse taste than usual. By Japanese conventions it may have caused consternation and a national insult. But the whole of the visit was observed by the general British public with respectful silence and calm.

In 1975 Queen Elizabeth II paid a state visit to Japan in the company of Prince Philip – the first state visit to Japan by a British monarch. It involved stays in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Ise. Those who imagine that royal visits can be arranged without diplomatic difficulty may read the background story of the queen's projected drive in an open car through central Tokyo with relish (p.177). Eventually it was agreed that she would travel in an open convertible Cadillac. Japanese and British TV audiences savoured the public exposure of the royals; and the Japanese general public for whom it was a new experience appeared to enjoy the concept of open monarchy. Ironically their stay coincided with strikes and transport showdowns, events more associated with 'igirisubyo' (English disease) than with Japan. But the Japanese press which had often made capital out of Britain's poor record for labour disruptions stayed reticent about Japan's dilemma.

On both sides there was an overwhelming view that the Queen's visit with its innovations 'marked a significant step towards reconciliation and renewal of old friendships.' It was followed by the Crown Prince's visit to the UK in 1976 and Prince Charles's journey to Japan with Princess Diana a decade later.

A new aspect of this record of royal visits is the experience of Prince Naruhito, the elder son of Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko, at a university where he had to sample the normal life of a British student. A significant number of the Japanese imperial family had attended courses at British universities for short periods before this so it was not entirely novel. But Naruhito broke new ground by undertaking post-graduate studies at Merton College, Oxford during the years 1983-5 and enjoyed the research experience.

In a memoir he wrote entitled *The Thames and I* (1993), he gives a brief sketch of the research he carried out on the waterways of central England and the contribution they made to the country's economic growth and to regional development in the 18th century. After his return to Japan, the prince wrote enthusiastically:

The name of the Thames conjures up in me feelings of affection and nostalgia transcending distance and time (*The Thames and I*, p. 126)

He leaves us an account of his experiences in college (where of course he was anonymous), punctuated by some very homely hints about 'doing my own laundry and ironing.' This gave him, he

claims, some degree of understanding of British life and attitudes as seen 'from the inside'. Apart from his studies, he entered into student life with gusto, whether it was classical music (he played the viola in chamber music trios) or the various sports available. He also toured widely in Britain and visited 13 European countries. Copies of his Japanese memoir were distributed to the students of Gakushuin University, surely a sign that Japan's ruling family had come to be viewed in a new light.

When the Showa Emperor died in January 1989, the Queen was represented at the lavish state funeral by Prince Philip who flew in his own plane from Kenya and crowned heads from around the globe attended. It was the passing of an era. But state visits have continued. The Heisei Emperor paid a state visit to the UK in 1998 and, after a bout of illness, came again with his wife Michiko in 2012 to congratulate Queen Elizabeth II on her diamond jubilee.

Naruhito became Crown Prince, in which capacity he made further visits to the UK. In 1991 he and the Prince of Wales gave speeches of support at the 'Japan Festival 1991'- a large-scale cultural festival of over 60 official events to mark the centenary of the Japan Society in London. Its aim was to promote greater knowledge and understanding of Japan's culture and get rid of any misconceptions (p. 194). Similar patronage was offered to 'Japan 2001', a festival running for 11 months dedicated to theatre, music and art, the climax being the Matsuri held in Hyde Park.

There is much in Part III which is based on insider knowledge. It is rich in contemporary quotations, invaluable for showing the contemporary assumptions of the participants. This book will for long be the standard work; and the reader will find it convenient as a reference work for Sir Hugh has included a remarkable amount of detail. As elsewhere in the book, the endnotes are authoritative and encyclopaedic.

The publishers, Renaissance Press, must also be commended for the rich collection of illustrations they have unearthed from the past history of Anglo-Japanese relations and the generous selection of plates they have reproduced. The valuable appendix to this study provides an illuminating chronology of Royal and Imperial visits between 1868 and 2018.

In studying the relationship between the British royal and Japanese imperial families, the three contributors to this study show that there was not an uninterrupted progress towards friendship in the past. On the contrary, the two countries have had a bumpy ride. Japan was steered into the community of nations

in the early 20th century through its association with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance with all its ups and downs. After it ended, Japan seemed to adopt a nationalist posture which brought it increasingly into contention with Britain. The situation deteriorated in the 1930s and drifted slowly to war. In the aftermath goodwill was only slowly re-created. There were reservations on the British side about the harshness of the past; and the cordiality of royal contacts played its part in repairing this issue. This book has convinced me that as two of the few remaining constitutional monarchies in the world, Britain and Japan should stick together and that healthy communication between our two royal houses may help to smooth over difficulties which arise in the future.

As Sir David Warren writes in his Preface, this volume is a splendid tribute to the late Sir Hugh Cortazzi who by his sheer energy over four decades of retirement steered many volumes on Anglo-

Japanese British side relations through the publishing process. His long-cherished purpose was to increase our understanding of modern Japan and her tangled connections with Britain. He prodded my generation to study the history of these countries; and in his many writings he led by example!

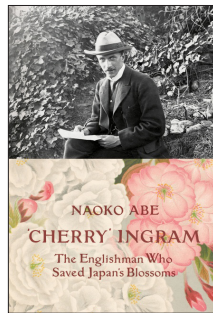
Prince Charles is able to write in 2006 of 'the close friendship between the United Kingdom and Japan which is reflected in the solid bond between the Imperial and Royal Families'. (*The Thames and I*, Renaissance Books. p. v) But what of the future? At the end of the book the editor warns against too much optimism: 'the continuance of close and friendly relations between the two monarchies cannot be taken for granted'. (p. 212) They need, Sir Hugh argues, to be cultivated and contacts planned. After 150 years there is still room for stimulating them with a variety of new approaches and bodies like the Japan Society are sufficiently diverse in their interests to play their part. §

'Cherry' Ingram: The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms

by Abe Naoko

Chatto & Windus (2019)
ISBN-13: 9781784742027

Review by Laurence Green



If we are to read history as the story of great individuals, then few would be better placed to symbolise the ties between Japan and Great Britain across the 20th century than Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram. Born in 1880 and living until he was a hundred year old, the scope of Ingram's life – and his passion for cultivating and preserving cherry trees – feels appropriately epic in stature. This marvellous biography, penned so eloquently by Naoko Abe, crucially captures not only the story of Ingram's own life, but the spirit of the times in which he lived; the last days of Empire, and of a Britain and Japan struggling to balance ageless tradition with the relentless rhythms of modernisation. It is an elegiac tale, tinged with the same bittersweet beauty of Ingram's beloved cherries, but one that resounds with humanity and the desire by good, honest people to preserve what matters most to them.

The book quickly presents a compelling image of Ingram, a picture-perfect archetype of the Edwardian gentleman-at-leisure if ever there was one. Detailing his privileged upbringing and illustrious family

background (his grandfather was the founder of *The Illustrated London News*), the early chapters feel almost like an episode of the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are*. these are richly evocative of the era, kick-starting a veritable Who's Who of prestigious figures from the British upper classes that continues throughout the book. As Ingram's relationship with Japan develops following trips in 1902 and 1907, those familiar with the early interplay of relations between Japan and the West will spot references to many familiar faces: Kaempfer, Hearn, Mitford, amongst others. That said, while those knowledgeable about the relevant periods of Japanese history will undoubtedly glean the most from this volume, Abe is at pains to illustrate that this English edition of the book (adapted from a Japanese version released some years back) has been fully fleshed-out with the relevant material to ease newcomers into the appropriate cultural and historical context.

Indeed, Abe – a Japanese journalist and writer now living in London with her British husband – feels particularly well placed to catalogue Ingram's life; the reporter's eye for meticulous detail and a strong central narrative paired with some rather charming personal anecdotes that lend a warmer touch and almost novel-like turn of phrasing at times. For a book that must rely largely on words to convey the irrepressible beauty of the cherry blossom, it feels only natural that it should be allowed free reign in using a rich panoply of description – ensuring an emotiveness

to the language that elevates this above and beyond a simple factual account of Ingram's life. And for when words fail, an added surprise is the book's ample collection of archive sketches, hand-drawn by Ingram himself – a man of many talents, indeed!

From enthused amateur to elder-statesman-like expert, Ingram's passion for the cherry tree and a trainspotter-like obsession to cataloguing and collecting new varieties is palpable. The book recalls countless memorable escapades – chief among them Ingram's efforts to restore the 'great white' *taihaku* variant to Japan. Following four years of failed efforts to send a sample cut from his garden back to Japan, he finally hit on a solution – wedging the tender scions into potatoes and sending them via the Trans-Siberian Railway; ensuring they arrived quickly enough and moist enough to avoid the perils of withering en-route.

Ingram's own words, recorded meticulously in his diary entries, resound with an earnest poeticism and self-evident love of natural beauty. The effect is rather like bathing deeply in successive washes of the titular cherry blossoms, each new colour gradation lapping gently at your senses. This is a book for nature lovers through and through, and you will come away feeling like you've been given a crash course in horticulture – something we imagine Ingram himself – whose 1948 tome *Ornamental Cherries* became an instant classic – would very much approve of.

Going beyond Ingram's own life, the real heart of the book rests in its counterposing of the glorious idylls of the British countryside in the late 19th and early 20th century with the horrors of war and the resulting loss of a somehow simpler age of innocence. For both Britain and Japan, it seemed, the old way of doing things – of engaging with and cherishing the

wild as opposed to smoothing it off and homogenising it – was doomed to die a slow death in the face of modernity; all the more so when these images of idealised pasts were mutated and co-opted into gross visions of nationalism. The pain-staking detail given to the horrors faced by British Prisoners of War, as well as the final fleeting moments of Japanese *kamikaze* pilots, are almost too much to bear. And yet, they feel symbolic, not only for presenting a snapshot of the tangled, complex relationship between Britain and Japan before and after World War Two, but also for how Ingram had to confront his own feelings for Japan. By using Ingram's life as an 'in' to the thornier moral complexities of history, readers are guided through the material with a sensitive, yet unflinching hand.

For those new to the history of Anglo-Japanese relations and the symbolic significance of the cherry tree, there could be no better introduction than this. Abe's book is accessible in the extreme, and with British appetites for all things Japanese whetted by the forthcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, now feels like the most opportune timing to play to as wide as possible an audience with a book like this. And for those who have already read countless blow-by-blow replays of Japanese history from the Meiji Restoration onwards, Abe's own take makes for a lean refresher. The universality of Ingram's story – and how it links into wider narratives about Britain and Japan – has clear appeal: the book was selected as a Radio 4 Book of the Week on its week of publication.

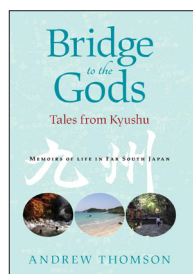
At once both a cracking story and a serious work of scholarly ambition, Naoko Abe's account of Ingram's life succeeds through virtue of being more than simple biography. It is a love letter to the joys that life can unveil when you find a passion and make it your own. S

Bridge to the Gods: Tales from Kyushu. Memoirs of a Life in Far South Japan

by Andrew Thomson

Ryan Publishing (2018)
ISBN-13: 978-1876498764

Review by Trevor Skingle



Whilst Kyushu isn't exactly 'neglected' in terms of the overall coverage of Japan, it may be that for the casual visitor with only a general knowledge of the country it is more widely known for being the place where Europeans first set foot in Japan and the

location of the city of Nagasaki with all of its none too happy associations in both the Japanese and Western mind; and for James Bond enthusiasts, Kyushu is also known as the location of You Only Live Twice's villain's base under Mount Shinmoe-dake volcano (an area unfortunately closed to the public since 2011 due to volcanic activity).

Southernmost of Japan's larger islands Kyushu is somewhat distinct from the other regions which most casual visitors to Japan may have some familiarity with such as Honshu's east central region of Kanto (around and including Greater Tokyo), and the south central region of Kansai (around and including the cities of Osaka and Kyoto). Japan's largest island Honshu is

joined to Kyushu across the Kanmon Straits by a train bridge, the Kanmon road bridge and tunnel, and the Sanyo Shinkansen tunnel. All of them connect Honshu's Shimonoseki (famous for its place in Japanese history as the place where the Minamoto (Genji) finally defeated the Taira (Heike) at the battle of Dan-no-ura) with Kyushu's fairly industrialised northern city of Kitakyushu, so when travelling there by car or train, the passage between Honshu and Kyushu is fairly unremarkable.

To the collection of published, and generally scholarly, books on Kyushu comes this welcome addition of Andrew Thomson's non-academic 2018 memoir, *Bridge to the Gods*. Andrew, son of the Australian professional golfer Peter Thomson and former Australian Federal Government Minister, eventually settled in Kyushu where he set up his own consultancy business and began exploring. This book is a charming account of his personal contemporary life there and his explorations of Kyushu's culture, cuisine, history and attractions.

For those unfamiliar with Japan and, in particular, Kyushu's location, there are a few handy maps. A glossary of Japanese words has been placed unusually, in this case, at the beginning of the book which makes for much easier referencing rather than, as is general, hidden amongst the usual end of book reference and bibliographic pages of which, in this instance, there are surprisingly none.

The account begins, or perhaps 'kicks off' might be a more apt phrase, in Tokyo with Andrew's experience of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake as it affected him and his colleagues in an office in the city. As the book progresses it unveils Kyushu in a way which is very accessible and charmingly personable. With his family connections there (his wife is from Kyushu), this account of Andrew's wide ranging explorations on his Kawasaki 900cc Vulcan Classic motorbike opens up the island, its locations and its culture to the armchair visitor in a way that other more studious books do not.

It's also nice to see photos mixed in with the text in contextually appropriate places helping to place the images in relation to the situation being discussed rather than concentrated collectively in one or two locations elsewhere in the book.

Each chapter is concise yet contains enough explanatory narrative to satisfy without going into so much academic detail to make it less accessible. Often Andrew relates what he has been told or has seen without comment, leaving the reader to ponder on meaning and interpretation which, when

combined with Andrew's personable style, makes for a thoroughly engaging read. The book is full of enough interesting places and curious characters to satisfy, not least of which are his characterful in-laws. Occasionally Andrew ponders a subject and then provides explanations which, based on personal conjecture, ignore the received wisdom of the Japanese. For instance, that sumo may have entered Japan from Mongolia via Kyushu rather than it having been initiated by Nomi no Sukune (an ancestor of the Heian politician Sugawara no Michizane) in 23BC after the defeat and killing of Taima no Kehaya in hand to hand combat at the behest of Emperor Suinin.

Perhaps one of the most interesting chapters, but the one with the most ominous feel, is that about the Yakuza which Kyushu apparently has more of than anywhere else in Japan. Andrew is very explicit, disabusing readers of any notion of the Yakuza being the Japanese equivalent of Robin Hood, about naming names and the criminal acts that they have carried out, and even going so far as to make a brief visit, driving past one of the three Kyushu Yakuza gang's headquarters!

Compared to this and the 'not-for-the-faint-hearted' account of a bare handed wild boar hunt, most of the other chapters, whilst just as interesting, are less disquieting. Andrew's explorations range across other varied topics such as outdoor baths or rotenburo, Japanese Christianity, the first tea and rice in Japan, horse meat cuisine, the kamikaze pilots, the search for the island where James Bond disguised himself as a Japanese fisherman and for the woman who played the character Kissy Suzuki in the James Bond film *You Only Live Twice*; the connection with Saigo Takamori, as well as Andrew's involvement with the care of his increasingly ailing in-laws and preparations for the arrival of North Korean missiles, are also explored, all whilst navigating frustratingly obfuscating yet pleasantly polite conversations with the locals.

As each chapter doesn't go into too much detail the book acts as more of an introduction to the many attractions that Kyushu has to offer, enough to dip your toe and whet your appetite. Andrew's charming writing style is eminently accessible and makes for an addictive read. However, the book isn't cheap and at around £30 for the paperback and around £40 for the hardback it is unlikely to be a spur-of-the-moment purchase. However, for those with an interest in or planning on exploring an area of Japan least visited by foreigners it is certainly a worthwhile investment. §

Scored in Silence

directed and performed by Chisato Minamimura
Ovalhouse – South London's Theatre (20-21 July
2019)

Review by Alice Baldock

How should we tell stories that matter?

It is a question I'm forced to ask after leaving the Ovalhouse, out of its cool interior and onto the burning asphalt, the weather a mixture of hazy sunlight and hot blasts of wind. The inside of a performance space can be a way to take you in, strip away all the tints on our knowing, and teach us something new. Moving from that self-contained space and back into our tinted world, I was left asking if this was a way we can teach and remember.

Because *Scored in Silence* was a mixture of performance, lecture, history lesson, and an experiment with new technology. The audience – strictly limited to 40 people – are sat down and then given an induction into the various straps and wires attached to each chair. The audience glance at each other nervously, a little as if they were about to strap into a flight. It is called 40 Woojer © vibration technology, a belt that vibrates synchronically with the movements, and with certain sounds, made by Artistic Director and Performer Chisato Minamimura. It adds depth to the piece, marrying movement, sound, and vibration together to truly jolt and shock and surprise, but it also makes the piece incredibly accessible, so that those that cannot hear can also feel the emphasis of certain points of the piece.

This technology augments *Scored in Silence*, an original telling of the bombing of Hiroshima that disengages from the trans-historical and makes this event more human, more tangible. There is an obvious personal plea behind why Minamimura has chosen this topic. Her frequent reminders that 'people like me' suffered in a specific way, a way that has been overlooked for decades. Her constant ties between these past sufferers and her present, moving body remind us that these historical actors are not merely ghosts. They once were embodied too, and they once suffered in a very human way. Minamimura talks of the atomic bombing using tiny anecdotes, kaleidoscoping together to produce a story refracted through many perspectives. At times, these stories were told by Minamimura's movement, or a mixture of movement and sign language. At others, there were holograms projected an image of a victim, speaking for themselves. The use of holograms, and the clipped, accent-devoid male voice speaking over the performance, took the feeling from being on a flight to a space flight – a jump



Image by Mark Pickthall

into the future, even as we were, collectively, looking back. The videos and images were an inspired way to add specific detail to dance, a performance-type which sometimes needs transcription or description for audiences to make sense of it.

Despite this, Minamimura's movements were strong enough to have conveyed meaning on their own. Her body, mostly hidden beneath something loose-fitting and white, functioned to convey information. Her movements echoed this, each one strong and precise, often amplifying the sign language she was speaking with whilst she danced. Her timing was impeccable, something that would have been no mean feat when having to match it to the audience's vibrating belts. She danced half-lit, casting 4 evenly sized shadows up towards the ceiling. Even her shadows appeared well thought-through.

What the movements, lighting, and sound combined to do was to talk about forgotten experiences, shedding light on a part of history – the deaf experience of the Hiroshima bombing – has yet been able to tell. The only qualm I had here is that it is almost impossible to talk or dance about such a fragile piece of history without allowing your own viewpoint to drive it. Another audience member pointed out to me – something that I'd overlooked whilst absorbed in the performance – that it isn't enough to start with Hiroshima, that perhaps there could have been some more consideration around why it was dropped.

Nonetheless, the fact that dance and movement can be used to fill in a gap in our history gives us another reason that the arts continue to be relevant: they can help us tell important stories. This way of communicating – forcing the audience's attention to focus on what is in front of them, flushing all of one's senses with that information – is a way to make storytelling, not only of pure fiction but also of history – more compelling. This is a new way of remembering, and a way to remember buried pasts. §