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September 2006 will be remembered as a historic month for Japan with the birth of the first male heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne in 41 years and the election of a new prime minister to replace the flamboyant Junichiro Koizumi. The focus of this issue of Japan Book Review also has a strong historic flavour with an excellent selection of new reviews. War diaries and memoirs form this issue's main theme, with several new books offering deep insights into people's wartime thinking and reasoning while powerfully chronicling the terrible human suffering of ordinary individuals during the period. We also review two books that analyze the propaganda and philosophy that underpinned the wartime military regime. As usually, we also have a stimulating selection of reviews covering a broad spectrum of topics, this time ranging from Japan's rapidly expanding telecommunications sector to noteworthy Samurai battles, plus our new theatre review feature of major Japanese productions staged in the UK. All of this is only a fraction of what you will find available on our website, which contains many more new reviews.

Sean Curtin

New reviews: www.japansociety.org.uk/reviews.html

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Contents

- (1) Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers
- (2) The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda
- (3) Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese
- (4) In the Faraway Mountains and Rivers: More Voices From A Lost Generation of Japanese Students
- (5) Japanese Telecommunications: Market and Policy in Transition
- (6) The Opening of Japan 1853-1855
- (7) Rondon nikki, 1936-7
- (8) Frog in the Well: Portraits of Japan by Watanabe Kazan 1793-1841
- (9) Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power
- (10) Japanese Samurai and battles up to 1603
- (11) The Chichibu Mikado
- (12) The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582-1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys through Portugal, Spain and Italy



Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers,

by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney,

University of Chicago Press, 2006, 246 pages, ISBN 0-226-61950-8 (available via internet from Blackwells in Oxford for £16 plus postage).

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Many myths have grown up about the young Japanese men who were forced to carry out suicidal attacks on allied ships in the final stages of the Pacific War. They were for the most part not volunteers in the real sense of the word. They were ordered to 'volunteer' and knew that they were in any case destined to die. Many of them, as these diaries reveal were sensitive and educated young men, who were among the brightest of their generation. Their diaries and letters make tragic reading.

The nationalists of today, who speak of these youngsters as heroes and quote their sacrifice as beacons for the regeneration of modern Japan, and the Yasukuni shrine and the Yushukan museum, which glory in their deaths, delude themselves and the Japanese people. They died totally

unnecessarily and without delaying Japan's inevitable defeat. They were not as Japanese propagandists would have us believe martyrs for the Emperor and for Japan. Hayashi Tadao, one of those whose writings are quoted in this volume in 1945, foresaw what Japan faced. He wrote a poem which reads as follows:

The End of Imperial Japan

Ruining and crumbling
Decadence
Nothing will be left
The end of all; All will crumble
Japan will meet its finale
That taboo
Catastrophe

It is also a myth that these young men were martyrs to be compared with the suicide bombers who attacked the twin towers and the London underground. They did not become kamikaze out of a religious fervour whether for the Emperor or for Japan. They did not attack civilian targets and were not terrorists.

This book is a reminder not only of the brainwashing of the young carried out by the pre-war Japanese military but also of the brutal treatment of anyone thought to be an intellectual. "Kasuga Takeo never recovered from the innumerable beatings he received on the base. His superiors told him that corporal punishment would instil a 'soldier's fighting spirit' in

him. They were supposed to die. From the time they received their assignment they no longer belonged to the world. They could not return even if they could not locate the enemy. If they came back safely they were liable to be shot." Death as a kamikaze was perhaps more bearable than dying from being beaten or shot by superior officers. It is noteworthy that: "When the operation was instituted in October 1944, not a single officer who had been trained at the military academies volunteered to sortie as a pilot; all knew too well that it was a meaningless mission ending in death."

It is hard to read the accounts of the loneliness and anguish of the final meetings and moments of these young men sentenced to die for an Emperor and a country which did not know or care about this tragic loss of life.

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's selections from the diaries and letters of six of the *tokkotai* pilots, who never came back, give an interesting picture of education in Japan in the years leading up to Japan's defeat in 1945. Despite the efforts to indoctrinate the young, many managed to read widely, and despite the anti-intellectual ethos of the military and the thought police, these young men tried to think for themselves. Understandably they wanted to justify to themselves their deaths.

The book also contains some interesting observations on the way Japan's love of nature was turned into a justification for patriotism. The cherry blossom symbol with its brilliant but short period of flowering and the dissipation of the petals on the winds was turned from a representation of the Buddhist concept of the impermanence of all living things into a justification for a war which might well have ended in the total destruction of Japan, if the inevitability of defeat had not been finally accepted in August 1945.

It is a pity and rather strange that the author of this book does not seem to have read (or if she has she does not say so as the book is not mentioned in the bibliography) the essay on "The Kamikaze fighters" in Ivan Morris's *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* published in 1975. Ivan Morris gives a rather different picture. He asserts that "there seems little doubt that during the early stage of kamikaze operations in the Philippines and Taiwan, the pilots were all volunteers in the full meaning of that word." But the evidence for this statement strikes me as weak. Ivan Morris was a friend of the ultra-nationalist Mishima Yukio, who probably believed Japanese war-time propaganda and who committed suicide in a bizarre ultra-nationalist incident. Morris recorded the ambiguous reaction of the Emperor to hearing that kamikaze aircraft had damaged some American escort carriers: "Was it necessary to go to this extreme? But they have certainly done a good job." Morris concluded that the kamikaze strategy by arousing American fury may well have been a factor behind the decision to launch the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

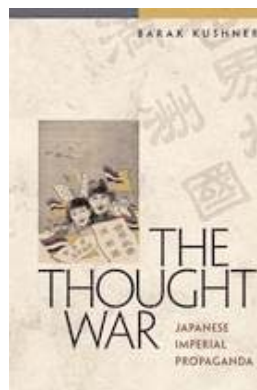
Kamikaze Diaries should be read by Japan's nationalist politicians, but I fear that they would not get the message that the time for the glorification of Japanese war dead is long past. The war dead, civilian as well as military, deserve to be remembered as people whose lives were sacrificed largely as a result of the crimes of Japan's leaders.



Thought Warriors, Diarists, and Fallen Students

(A different version of this article appeared in *Monumenta Nipponica*, summer 2006)

The Pacific War was the most traumatic event in the modern histories of Japan, China, the United States, and many other nations. No wonder that more than sixty years after it ended it still attracts attention and stirs debate. In the various writings about the war, the former black and white stereotypes have given way to more shaded presentations, in which heroes and villains are not always distinguishable. The three interesting books under review here open a window through which we can see how the war was presented and perceived in Japan. Reading them together helps us understand the atmosphere in which the Japanese lived in those turbulent years.



The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda,

by Barak Kushner,

The University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.
ix+242 pages.

Review by Ben-Ami Shillony

Barak Kushner's illuminating book examines Japan's wartime propaganda, as it was formed and manipulated by the government and other agencies working with it. He finds that despite the absence of a single, central organ of information and public guidance, as it existed in Germany, the wartime propaganda of Japan was very successful. Kushner rejects the image of the Japanese people blindly obeying their leaders. As he shows, pronouncements from above met a willingness from below to listen and comply. The people identified with the war aims and were ready to endure hardships. "To westerners the wartime Japanese behaved like docile sheep, blindly worshipping the emperor, soldiers shouting his name on the battlefield with their dying gasp. In contrast to this image held by the west, the Japanese... discriminated. They listened to some propaganda messages, ignored others" (p. 32). Government controls and restrictions existed, but they were effective because they encountered public support. "Censorship and terror alone did not characterize the war years. In actuality the people were not duped, nor were they passive. The masses understood the situation not only because the government explained it, but also because the population itself helped create the propaganda environment" (p. 24).

Wartime propaganda reached the people in many ways, from high-brow culture to low-brow amusements. Advertisement, in the form of posters, pamphlets, glossy magazines, travel brochures, and slogans, played a significant role in bolstering public morale. Commercial advertisers discovered the business opportunities in working for the government and for the war effort. "Consumer appetites supported the nation's imperial quest by making commerce and war a significant part of popular culture" (p. 68). A special chapter of the book, titled *A Funny Thing Happened to Me on the*

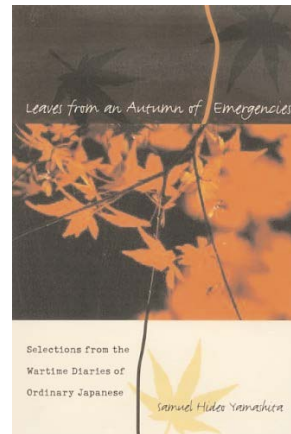
Way to the Front, describes the important role of entertainment in mobilizing the population for war. Comedians, *rakugo* story tellers, and drama troupes performed all the time, not stopping even when the bombs were falling.

Kushner discovers that, contrary to what is usually believed, Japan's wartime propaganda was rational, depicting Japan as a modern state. It was effective because it appealed to reason rather than to mystical nationalism or to the cult of the emperor. It presented Japan as a progressive, scientific and hygienic country, "the harbinger of civilization that Asia should strive to emulate" (p. 11). As such, Japan shouldered the obligation to liberate and lead its less fortunate neighbors. This message had a great appeal to intellectuals, who supported the war as a campaign to liberate Asia. "Members of Japan's cosmopolitan elite did not distance themselves from wartime propaganda; they embraced it and involved themselves in its creation. Intellectuals were not misled; they actively helped convince others because they believed in Japan's war in Asia" (p. 38).

As Kushner points out, Japan's wartime propaganda was part of a long tradition of didactic exhortations from above. This practice was already evident in the Confucian injunctions in the Edo period which called for diligence and filial piety, and in the public admonitions in the Meiji period which advocated modernity and enlightenment. Wartime propaganda employed similar moralistic arguments in its calls for unity and sacrifice. Yet, as Kushner reveals, that practice did not end with Japan's surrender. It continued in the postwar era, when the authorities used similar arguments to persuade the people to accept defeat, to collaborate with the allied occupation, and to embrace monumental reforms. He asks: "How were the Americans able to occupy the country so quickly and with a minimum amount of civic disturbance?" (p. 156); and he answers: "The same Japanese agencies that only weeks earlier had touted their spiritual fortitude to repel the barbarians quickly switched over to mandating new public behavior and ordering Japanese imperial subjects to accept the occupation so that Japan could rise again" (p. 157). Kushner claims that "postwar Japanese reappraisal of western democracy was not spontaneous but emanated from an official policy to reorient society so that the occupation would proceed smoothly and Japan could rebuild" (pp. 172-73). The book's conclusion is that propaganda "helped unite Japan in its bid to modernize in the prewar era, and the importance of such activity did not fade after the surrender. Japan lost the war, but through determination and careful application of propaganda it did not lose the nation" (p. 190).

To what extent were these achievements the result of calculated propaganda and to what extent were they due to mere rational behavior on the part of the Japanese? Kushner admits that the word propaganda has acquired a negative connotation in the west, because of its abuse by the Nazis and the Soviets. But he claims that in Japan, where propaganda possessed deep historical roots, it had a positive significance. But, as he himself admits, definitions are murky, and the Japanese word *senden* can mean both propaganda and advertisement. So why call it propaganda? Wouldn't it be better to call it education? The title of the book, *The Thought War*, suggests that Japan was waging an ideological war, in which propaganda was the weapon. But if the Japanese at that time, as Kushner himself has shown, shared the vision of modernity with the west, and even wished to introduce modernity into other parts of Asia, then why regard it as an ideological war? The term *thought war*, which the government used, might have been just a propaganda catchword. Another question is how to call the period 1931-1945, which is the focus of this book.

Kushner, like some Japanese historians, calls it "Japan's Fifteen Year War" (p. 4), but the period from the Manchurian Incident until Japan's surrender lasted less than fourteen years. In another place he refers to those years as "World War Two" (p. 2), but beginning that war in 1931 stretches its name beyond its normal usage.



Leaves from an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections from the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese,

by Samuel Hideo Yamashita,

The University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, xi+330 pages.

Review by Ben-Ami Shillony

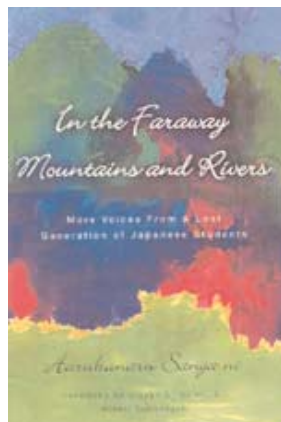
To find out how successful the wartime propaganda was, one may look at what the people of that time confided to their diaries. Samuel Hideo Yamashita, in his moving book, collected eight wartime diaries, which he translated. To present a wide view, he chose diaries of men and women of different ages and occupations, and from different localities. The diarists are: a seventy-five-year-old proprietor of a billiard parlor in Kyoto, a middle-aged doctor's wife from Tokyo, a young woman secretary, a naval pilot who joined the *kamikaze* corps, a straggling soldier on Okinawa, a teenage girl mobilized for work on an air base in Kyushu, an eleven-year-old boy evacuated to Fukushima Prefecture, and a nine-year-old girl evacuated to Toyama Prefecture. Writing diaries was an old Japanese tradition. During the war, diaries of soldiers and pupils were inspected by their officers and teachers. Nevertheless, as Yamashita points out, the writers of these diaries were not afraid to reveal their feelings even when these clashed with the official line. Does that prove the bravery of the diarists? More probably, the wartime regime in Japan was less totalitarian than we assume, and people felt safe to divulge their thoughts in their diaries. A similar frankness in diaries in Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia would have put their writers in front of a firing squad.

As the writers had been subjected for some years to government propaganda, it is interesting to see how they related to the wartime circumstances. The pilot Itabashi Yasuo espoused the official line. As late as January 1945, he wrote, perhaps with an eye to his superiors who would inspect his diary: "...we are not defeated. We're winning. We are definitely winning the war" (p. 66). But the other diarists were more pessimistic. As early as June 1943, Takahashi Aiko, the doctor's wife from Tokyo, wrote: "Our clothes are in tatters, and it's almost as though we've been defeated... what is going on? It is an unimaginable psychological situation for Japanese to be in" (p. 170). A year later, in July 1944, she wrote: "Having heard about our troops' *gyokusai* on Saipan makes us angry. We should have the courage, come hell or high water, to give up the fight" (p. 174). That month, Tamura Tsunejiro, the old businessman from Kyoto, wrote in his diary: "The world has become too repulsive. Enemy aircraft, come quickly and attack! Please end this awful situation" (p. 86). In January 1945, Yoshizawa Hisako, the young secretary from Tokyo, wrote in

her diary: "Most people no longer believe in victory... Even rural folk believe that if we are as deadlocked as this and still fall short of our goals, there's no reason to think we can win" (p.195). Yamashita points out that as the bombing raids intensified, "anxiety and fatigue gave way to depression, outrage, and real terror" (p. 30). He observes: "As the Japanese lost faith in their leaders and their morale sagged, social conflict and tension... surfaced in their diaries" (p.32). This was not exactly the mood that the authorities wished to foster.

There is little jingoism in these diaries and little reverence for the leaders. Tamura wrote in July 1944 that Tojo "has acted like a coward and betrayed our hopes. We believed in him but were misled. With a small fry like him, there won't be military victories or a solution" (p. 86). The emperor is not criticized, but does he evoke veneration either. The soldier Nomura Seiki, stranded on Okinawa, wrote on 10 August 1945: "I have fought not for the emperor but for the homeland... Even now my thoughts about the emperor haven't changed. Nor was this view mine alone" (p. 135). The teenage girl mobilized for work and the two evacuated children show interest in everything that is happening around them. They try their best to fulfill their duties, but they do not sound more militaristic than children in other countries. The nine-year-old Nakane Mihoko wrote in her diary on 8 May 1945: "Today was Imperial Rescript Observance Day. When I went to school in the morning, the beautiful rising-sun flags on each house were fluttering in the morning breeze. There was a ceremony at school... After we returned to our classroom, we wrote letters to sailors... I tried as hard as I could to write letters that would make them happy" (p. 278).

Is there anything uniquely Japanese in these diaries? Perhaps it is the aesthetic approach, reminiscent of the old war ballads, to gruesome war circumstances. Tamura Tsunejiro laments the "autumn of emergencies, when the life or death of the state is at issue" (p. 101). This phrase, which also appears in the diary of the pilot Itabashi Yasuo (p. 66), has provided the poetic title of the book (where it meshes with the beautiful cover design by April Leidig-Higgins of maple leaves in autumn). Can air raids look beautiful to their victims? The secretary Yoshizawa Hisako admires the "glittering, white, and beautiful bodies" of the American bombers, "which seemed to be pulling the moving patterns of flying clouds" (p. 193). She reveals that "when there's an air-raid warning, I feel like singing a song. I thought it was just me, but when I inquired at the company and elsewhere, it seems everyone has these feelings" (p. 196). Maeda Shoko, who saw the *kamikaze* pilots leaving for their missions, recounts how one of them, before takeoff, got upset when he noticed that his suicide plane was dirty. The sortie had to wait until the plane was cleaned (p. 226).



In the Faraway Mountains and Rivers: More Voices From A Lost Generation of Japanese Students,

Translated by Joseph L. Quinn, S.J., and Midori Yamanouchi,

The University of Scranton Press, 2005. xviii+162 pages

Review by Ben-Ami Shillony

It is widely assumed that when a young person chooses to sacrifice his life for a national cause he must have been brainwashed. This assumption was wrong in the case of wartime Japan, as it may be wrong in the case of other countries today. That becomes clear when we read the letters, poems, and diary entries of fallen students and graduates of Tokyo University, carrying the elegiac name *In the Faraway Mountains and Rivers*. It was published in Japan in 1947 under the name *Harukanaru sanga-ni*. Two years later it was followed by the larger anthology *Kike wadatsumi no koe*, which contained poems, letters and diary entries of fallen students from several universities and which became a bestseller. Joseph L. Quinn and Midori Yamanouchi have translated both books into English, but in the opposite order. The latter one was published in 2000 under the name *Listen to the Voices of the Sea*, while the former came out in 2005. Both books were published by the University of Scranton Press.

The student soldiers who speak to us from the pages of this little book do not reiterate the wartime propaganda. They admire European literature and philosophy, are skeptical of the authorities, express criticism of military life, and show concern for their families. They know that their country is in danger and believe that by sacrificing themselves they may save it. Having made that decision they proceed cheerfully with their military tasks. Oi Hidemitsu, who died in China, wrote to his mother in 1940: "It must seem truly astonishing that a person such as myself, who in the past so truly hated and feared anything connected with war, can now concentrate so fully... on learning anything there is to learn about preparing for war" (p. 7). Gaikaku Yasuhiko, who died in Okinawa, wrote in the will which he addressed to his mother: "I had always had the utmost disdain and contempt for the so-called military spirit... with a peaceful heart, I am simply going to disappear from this world" (p. 127). Iwata Yuzuru, who died in Burma, noted in his diary in April 1943: "...it is quite impossible to find words to describe the corruption, under General Tojo, of the military officialdom responsible for pointing out the correct course of action" (p.20). However, Japan was in danger and his duty was to save it: "I shall simply go to war and face death for the sake of my country" (p. 21).

Was the death of the student soldiers nobler than the death of ordinary soldiers? Their university teachers, the compilers of the anthology, and the translators thought that it was. In his memorial address to the fallen students in 1946, which appears at the beginning of the book, Tokyo University President Nanbara Shigeru said: "I know for certain that you are quite different from the ordinary soldiers of limited vision and experience. You were warriors and students at the same time. You did not fight with a dogmatic and fanatic 'unfailing belief in victory.' I know that you hoped for the victory of justice and truth above all... Unfortunately, however, justice and truth were not for us to enjoy" (p. xii). The translator Midori Yamanouchi, in her acknowledgments, recalls how deeply she was moved when she first read the book: "it deepened my sorrow over how those fine, able men from the University of Tokyo had to die in the war that they could not control and did not want" (p. ix). The other translator, Joseph L. Quinn, in his preface admits that although we cannot avoid judging the fallen students as ignorant or misled, "neither can we avoid recognizing a certain magnificence about such willingness to throw away their still very young lives. - However grudgingly, the recognition might just breed some admiration not only for the young men themselves, but also for the culture that produced them" (p. viii).

Is such elitism justified? It is evident that the drafted students and the university graduates were better educated and were more eloquent than ordinary soldiers, but were they also less militaristic and more moral, as the praises for them imply? They served on all fronts and participated in a variety of military and naval operations. Their diaries and letters express idealism and anguish, but (probably because of the censorship) they do not mention the horrors that they were inflicting on others. Did some of them participate in the "rape of Nanking," or in other atrocities? Did they enjoy the services of the "comfort women"? A poem by Fukazawa Tsuneo, who was killed in the Philippines, discloses something. It says: "The comfort ladies, who are playing around and blowing water on the factory workers, are also a thousand ri away from home" (p. 115). If one wonders to whom he was referring, the original Japanese says clearly *ianfu* ("comfort women", i.e. military prostitutes. *Showa senso bungaku zenshu*, vol. 15: *Shisha no koe*. Tokyo: Shueisha, 1965, p. 180).

The genre of letters of fallen students did not originate in Japan. After World War I, an anthology of "war letters" of students who had died in the Great War appeared in Germany (Philipp Witkop, ed., *Kriegsbriefe gefallener Studenten*. Leipzig and Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1918). The book was translated into Japanese by Takahashi Kenji and published by Iwanami. Nakamura Tokoro, a Tokyo University student killed in the Philippines, was reading it shortly before his death in 1944. He was very moved, as he recorded in his diary: "Once again I read *Doitsu senbotsu gakusei no tegami*. The book continues to be rewarding no matter how many times you read it, and it is especially impressive to read here. These writers are sincerity itself, and happy were they who, in a trench and under the light of a candle, read the Bible, read Goethe, cited Hoelderlin's poetry, and longed to listen to Wagner's music" (p. 102). Little did he know that what he was writing at that moment would be included in an anthology of letters and diaries by fallen Japanese students.



J a p a n e s e Telecommunications: Market and Policy in Transition,

by Ruth Taplin, and Masako Wakui
(Eds),

Routledge, 2006, 288 pages, ISBN:
0415368030

Review by Sean Curtin

Anyone who has visited Japan in recent years just cannot fail to notice how advanced Japanese mobile phone technology and services are in comparison to their European counterparts. Not surprisingly, Japan is becoming a global leader in some sectors of this fast-moving field. The amazing nationwide penetration of Japanese broadband to the remotest regions of the country is also another a striking feature. Yet, despite impressive achievements little is actually known outside Japan about these developments or their potential impact of the dynamic global telecommunications sector. To rectify this situation, Ruth Taplin and Masako Wakui have produced a comprehensive and much needed book spotlighting the

Japanese telecommunications industry.

It's an edited volume that bringing together several renowned Japanese and European specialists in the telecommunications field, who use their insights to put recent Japanese developments in perspective. This timely publication covers most of the major new developments including the amazingly buoyant broadband market, the country's unique satellite systems, its spectrum policy, network policy and the political forces shaping the entire process.

Taplin and Wakui begin the analysis by providing a stimulating overview of the telecommunications sector. After the introduction there are eight individual chapters which cover specific areas in considerable detail. In the first chapter, "Changes in the Interface and Industry Structure," Sumiko Asai looks at the shifts in the regulation and technology of Japanese telecommunications using the concepts of "modularity" and "interface." This is followed by an informative piece by Takanori Ida entitled "The Broadband Market in Japan" in which he explains Japan's meteoric rise to global broadband trend-setter status and how the current situation is likely to develop.

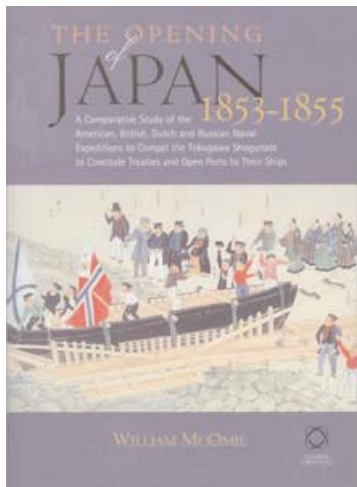
Facts and figures pack chapter three by Jeffrey L. Funk who puts the Japanese mobile phone industry under the global microscope. He makes some interesting observations about the broader implications that deregulation, globalisation, and technological change has made on the sector as well as looking at the wider impact on the Japanese economy. This is followed by "Changing Satellite Systems in Japan within a Global Context" in which Ruth Taplin examines the sometimes unique approach Japan has taken to developing its own satellite systems and how this process contrasts with the approaches of other countries, especially the US and EU.

In Chapter five Hajime Oniki provides a detailed account of the Japanese spectrum allocation system along with its history and background. The next study is an in-depth analysis by Masako Wakui entitled "R&D and Intellectual Property in a Changing Telecommunication Market." He discusses how technological development has been conducted in the sector, how IP has been owned, utilized and the types of changes that have been and are occurring.

The penultimate and final chapters by Kenji Suzuki and Motohiro Tsuchiya respectively cover "Policy network for network policy in Japan" and "The Difficult Role of the Japanese Negotiator in the Access Charge Negotiations with the United States."

While some chapters are fairly specialized, taken as a whole this book is an extremely useful reference work which illuminates an increasingly important part of the Japanese economy and its impact on the global market. It is not only comprehensive, but its Japanese and European contributors cover the topic from a broad spectrum of perspectives, conceptual frameworks and viewpoints. Overall this work makes a major contribution to our understanding of the evolving Japanese telecommunications industry and is certainly worth reading.





The Opening of Japan 1853-1855: A Comprehensive Study of the American, British, Dutch and Russian Naval Expeditions to Compel the Tokugawa Shogunate to Conclude Treaties and Open Ports to Their Ships,

by William McOmie,

Global Oriental, Folkestone, 2006, 505 pages including bibliography and index, £65, ISBN 1-901903-76-1

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

The assertion that Commodore Perry of the US Navy and his 'Black Ships' opened Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century is widely accepted as the historical truth but 'belongs more to the realm of historical myth'(p.xi). Professor McOmie notes that although 'Perry was the first to actually sign a treaty with the Japanese government' 'What Perry did was not so much to open the door, as to unlock the door, and force in a thin wedge to prevent it being bolted again'(page 462). The author reminds us that Japan was never quite as 'closed' as popularly believed and that the 'opening' of Japan continues to this day. The pressures for greater contacts with the outside world than that provided through the Dutch outpost at Deshima in Nagasaki bay had been building up for decades, not least from the Russians and could not be resisted from much longer. Perry just got there first and McOmie's detailed narrative outlines the roles played not only by the Americans but also by British and Dutch and more significantly by the Russians.

Professor McOmie's book, which is meticulously researched, provides a full account of the various expeditions to Japan and of the different sets of negotiations which resulted in the first treaties signed with Japan by the United States, Britain, Russia and the Netherlands in 1854/55. The Japanese did all they could to delay concessions and to play on the mutual suspicions between the foreign powers. As a result the four treaties concluded contained significant differences. In Chapter 13 the author provides an interesting analysis and comparison of the four treaties. None of them were true commercial treaties although the Dutch Treaty of January 1856 was called a Treaty of Commerce. The Treaties which were essentially arrangements for shipping needing to take on supplies in Japan, however, provided the basis on which the 'unequal'

Treaties of 1858 were built. These later treaties opened Japanese ports to trade from 1859 and established the system of extraterritoriality which only ended in 1899 when revised treaties came into force.

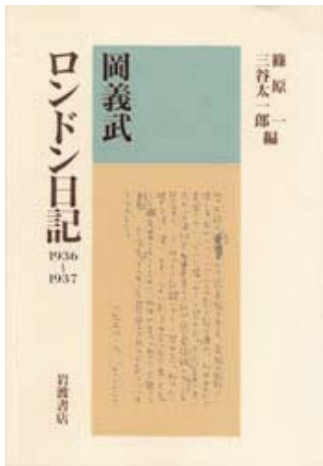
Inevitably Professor McOmie devotes a major part of his book to an account of the US expeditions of 1853 and 1854. He has drawn on a large number of sources and gives a graphic picture of the events and personalities involved. He does not gloss over Commodore Perry's arrogance, his prejudice against the Dutch and his suspicions of the 'duplicitous' Japanese. He notes that Perry in his determination to get a treaty may well have used threats which went beyond his instructions (page 242). Perry may have been right in his insistence on status and protocol when dealing with the officials of the *Bakufu* who were conservative and rigid, but it seems ultra-pompous if not farcical to us today. So too do the intricate arrangements made by the visitors and by the Japanese for exchanges of gifts where the value and nature of the gift had to be carefully graded to accord with the ranks of the recipients and of the givers.

McOmie in his account of the Japanese response to the foreign expeditions stresses the problems caused by interpretation between Japanese and Dutch and then into English. The vocabulary of the interpreters was 'archaic and lacking in political, economic and diplomatic terms' (page 330). This remained a problem in relations with Japan throughout the 1850s and was only gradually overcome in the 1860s as increasing numbers of Japanese took up the study of English and a few foreigners such as Ernest Satow managed to master Japanese.

His account of the British negotiations is largely based on the work done by Professor Beasley. Of greater interest and less well known is his summary of the Dutch negotiations and of the Dutch involvement with the other foreign powers, but the most interesting and significant part of this book is the author's detailed account of the Russian expeditions and negotiations with the Japanese. He also gives a valuable summary of earlier Russian contacts with Japan, going back to the late seventeenth century, drawing on his own work incorporated in his book *Foreign Images of Japan Volume 1 First Century AD - 1841*, Global Oriental, 2005. McOmie has made extensive use of Russian archives, which have not been published in English translations and have therefore not been easily available to American historians. He points out the more conciliatory attitude adopted by Admiral Putiatin, the Russian negotiator, in contrast to that of Commodore Perry, and he notes the friendly treatment accorded by the Japanese authorities after the Russian ship *Diana* foundered as a result of an earthquake and tidal wave at Shimoda in 1854. The Russians in Japan at this time faced particular difficulties because of the Crimean War. This meant that British and French ships sought to intercept them. McOmie gives a fascinating account not only of the way in which the Russian sailors with help from Japanese craftsmen built a schooner at Heda in the Izu peninsular as a partial replacement of the *Diana* but also of their attempts to charter a couple of foreign vessels which called at Shimoda to take members of the *Diana's* crew back to Russia. Some did get back but others were taken prisoner by British ships.

This book is essential reading for all students of the history of Japan's foreign relations and copies should be in all relevant libraries.





Rondon nikki, 1936-7 [London Diary 1936-7],

by Oka Yoshitake, and
Edited by Shinohara Hajime
and Mitani Taiichiro
(Japanese),

Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1997,
359 pages, ISBN 4-00-022357-7

Review by Ian Nish

Readers may like to receive a brief notice (rather belatedly, I fear) of an interesting and insightful work. It is the London Diary of the Japanese academic, Oka Yoshitake (1902-1990) who became after the war one of the most eminent professors of Japanese political history at the University of Tokyo. As an assistant at that university, he spent the years 1936-7 on sabbatical in Britain, based in London. He wrote substantial diary entries daily and these were dutifully assembled by two of his successors after his death.

He arrived in London by the Hakusan-maru in May 1936 with an encouraging message from Minobe Tatsukichi. As a graduate student he appears to have spent his time between Student Movement House, the Public Record Office, the London School of Economics and the Albert Hall (because he had a deep interest in western music). As a political scientist he were immersed in the study of fascism, National Socialism and communism and moved in circles close to the Fabian movement. He could not fail to be fascinated by the abdication of King Edward VIII, the political crisis that ensued and the general vitality of political life. He moved beyond Britain and examined the progress of an independent Ireland.

The volume ends with an article written by Professor Oka in 1938 about students at the LSE and analyses by the two editors of the effects of this overseas immersion on Oka's political philosophy. He left Europe before the crisis erupted in East Asia in July; but he was much affected by the sinister movements in continental Europe. So far as Britain was concerned, he seems to have had a benign respect for the country but he makes some judicious criticisms of its policies. It is salutary for a Briton to read these contemporary reflections by a Japanese intellectual, which were probably never intended for publication.

Frog in the Well: Portraits of Japan by Watanabe Kazan 1793-1841,

by Donald Keene,

Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, 290pp including
endnotes, bibliography, index, and 38 colour illustrations,
ISBN 0-231-13826-1, £16

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Watanabe Kazan is nowhere near as well known in western countries as his contemporary Hokusai, whose works had such a huge influence on western art. But Watanabe Kazan, as

Keene's new biography demonstrates, deserves to be studied not only as an artist who produced works of the highest quality but also as a samurai who was both a student of Confucianism and of *Rangaku* (Dutch i.e. foreign learning) and who warned the *bakufu* of the dangers it faced from abroad.

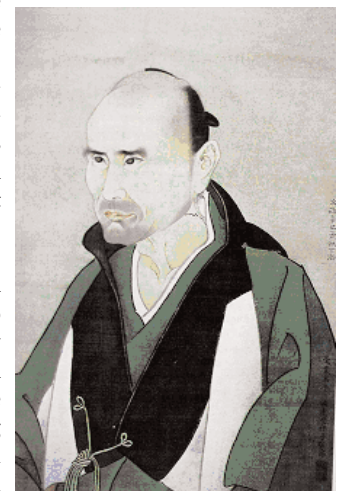
Donald Keene has produced a fascinating and readable study of a remarkable figure of the late Tokugawa era. As we would expect from someone of Keene's outstanding scholarship the book is based on thorough research.

Watanabe Kazan was a samurai from the Tahara domain who spent much of his life in Edo. He might have become a Confucian scholar if he had not had to earn money to relieve his family's poverty. He accordingly took up painting to earn a living. He wanted to know more about the world outside Japan and studied books which had been translated from the Dutch. This led him in due course to write *Shinkiron* (Exercising Restraint over Auguries) in which he praised elements of western regimes and pointed out that the British could, for instance, argue that ships might need help in emergencies. He stigmatised the attitude of the Japanese authorities as being like that of "the frog in the well" (*seia*) who could not see what was going on around them. It was this sort of criticism of the government which led eventually to his imprisonment and finally to his suicide when he feared that his criticisms of the government might lead to trouble for his feudal lord. Kazan remained faithful to the end to the samurai traditions in which he had grown up despite his interest in foreign learning.

Keene draws an interesting picture of Japan during Kazan's life and of the intellectual currents of the time. One of the most enjoyable chapters deals with Kazan's travels in Japan; in this he brings to life many scenes which help the reader to appreciate what life was like in those days.

Above all, however, Kazan's fame rests on his abilities as a painter. He belonged to what has been termed the literati school (*Bunjinga*). The Bunjin were "gentlemen of culture and leisure who were devoted to all aspects of Chinese culture." Some of his landscapes in this style are fine works of art. Among these I particularly liked *Tiger in a Storm* from 1838 (page 140). Kazan also produced genre paintings which stand comparison with works by Hokusai. Among the series of paintings in Kazan's *Isso Byakutai* I was impressed by the realism and humour of one showing a *terakoya* (temple school) (pp56/57) where "three pupils sit in front of their teacher and intone something from the Chinese classics while all the other boys are fighting, screaming, and doing everything but practising the calligraphy lesson on the desks before them." But Kazan stands out as a portrait painter.

Portrait painting in Japan before Kazan had tended to be stylised and individuality at best glossed over. Kazan brought a new realism to the art. One of his most striking portraits is that of Sato Issai (1821) (page 61), produced before Kazan had studied



Portrait of Sato Issai (1821)

western painting techniques in so far as information about them was available to him.

Keene also introduces many other effective portraits including a fine one of Takami Senseki (page 119) in the Tokyo National Museum which has been designated a National Treasure.

Anyone interested in the history of the Tokugawa era and of Japanese art will find this book fascinating.



Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power,

By David Williams,

RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2004. xxvi, 238 pages, ISBN 0-203-38715-5

Review by Ben-Ami Shillony

(This review originally appeared in the summer 2006 issue of The Journal of Japanese Studies)

David Williams may be right. We should reexamine, as some of us have already done, the image of Japan in the Second World War. The conventional picture of a fascist and aggressive state is only partially correct. The other side of the coin is the idealistic streak that accompanied Japanese conquests, according to which Japan was liberating Asia from western imperialism. This alleged goal was dismissed by post-war historians as propaganda, but many Japanese at the time believed in it. Moreover, that propaganda, which camouflaged aggressive intentions, was not different from the wartime declarations of the allied powers, which asserted that they were liberating Asia while they were trying to regain their prewar colonial possessions.

The book focuses on the Kyoto-school philosophers, who were disciples of the "father of Japanese philosophy" Nishida Kitaro at Kyoto University. They included Tanabe Hajime, Koyama Iwao, Suzuki Shigetaka, Kosaka Masaaki, and Nishitani Keiji. In a series of symposia in the monthly magazine *Chuo Koron* in the years 1941-1942, they hailed the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere as a historical achievement, in which Asia had been transformed from an object of western greed into a subject of its own will. After the war, these philosophers were condemned and discredited. Ienaga Saburo called them shallow opportunists¹. Tetsuo Najita and H.D. Harootunian described them as definers of the philosophic contours of Japanese fascism².

Williams admits that the Kyoto-school philosophers were nationalists, but claims that they were neither fascists nor ultra-nationalists. Like their counterparts in the west, they were patriots who defended their country's cause. They were honest intellectuals and their defense of the war was "coherent, rational and credible." (p. 17). They wanted Japan to expand, in order to "exercise a prudent and progressive leadership role

in East Asia." (p. 153). They believed that Japan would respect the sovereignty of the peoples that it had liberated. The author quotes Tanabe's essay in which he wrote that the Co-Proprosperity Sphere should be based on the equality of its member states. The Kyoto-school philosophers did not limit themselves to the political sphere. They believed that the war would produce a spiritual revolution, which they called "the overcoming of modernity" (*kindai no chokoku*). By this term, which was the title of their symposia, they meant the replacement of modern materialistic civilization, based on individualism and avarice, by a spiritual culture based on the moral values of the east and the scientific achievements of the west.

There was a similarity between the Kyoto school philosophers who supported the war and Martin Heidegger in Germany who supported the Nazi regime. Williams defends both cases and rejects the accusations that Heidegger and the Kyoto school philosophers were fascists. He describes Heidegger, who assumed the rectorship of a German university when Jewish professors were being dismissed, as "the greatest philosopher of our time" (p. 129). He quotes Heidegger's claim that the murder of the Jews by the Nazis was not basically different from the murder of East German civilians by Soviet troops at the end of the war (p. 123). According to Williams, no one has the right to condemn these scholars: "... who would play God here? Who has the right to judge Heidegger, or, for that matter, to censure Nishida, Tanabe and Nishitani? Who wears the white gloves?" (p. 163).

Had Williams stopped here, advising us to listen carefully to the philosophic voices in Japan which defended the Pacific War, the book might have contributed to a more balanced understanding of that period. But he goes much further, destroying what he himself has constructed. Having convinced us to discard the orthodox black and white view of the war, in which the United States was right and Japan was wrong, he produces his own black and white picture, in which Japan was right and the United States was wrong. The objective historian, who wanted to understand both sides, reverts to the extreme opposite of justifying one party, Japan, and condemning the other one, the United States. This fantastic phenomenon, of a left-wing American historian justifying Japan's position in the Pacific War, derives from the new left ideology which centers today on anti-Americanism. According to that ideology, the United States has been the permanent villain of modern history. Taking that dialectic one step further, all those who fought America, from imperial Japan to fundamentalist al-Qaeda, were right.

The front page of the book describes Williams as "one of Europe's leading thinkers on modern Japan." He received his doctorate from Oxford, taught at Sheffield and Cardiff, and worked for twelve years as an editorial writer for the *Japan Times*. In the Acknowledgments, the author presents his ideological credentials, defining himself as "an American *tenko-ka*", who has made the "unanticipated journey from right to left", finding himself "within shouting distance" from Noam Chomsky (p.xx). As befitting a neophyte, he embraces his new convictions with enthusiasm and carries them to extremes.

Williams loathes the United States. He asserts that America "butchered its way across an entire continent in an orgy of ethnic cleansing" (p. 139). Having accomplished that, it embarked on the subjugation of the rest of the world. He sees a direct connection between the attack on Pearl Harbor and the attack of '9/11'. In the introduction ("The book in brief"), he explains: "The reaction of the administration of George W. Bush to the events of 11 September 2001 destroyed the last of my child-

hood illusions about the use and abuse of American power in the modern world. One insight seems irresistible: "The road to '9/11' began with the Pacific War" (p. xvi). Both cases were right forms of "resistance to American imperial hegemony" (p. 10). In Pearl Harbor, "one billion colored people struck back" at America (p. 80). In '9/11,' Asia responded once again to American aggression against the non-European world. The wars in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, were stages in "America's blood-dimmed crusade for global mastery" (pp. 3-6).

The evil White Republic, as Williams calls the United States, instead of understanding the message of Pearl Harbor, reverted to its cruel practices: "from the fall of Saipan in July 1944 to the atomic incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki... [it] descended into democratic barbarism by sustaining a one-sided racial massacre on a huge scale" (p. 138). Williams admits that Japan too committed war crimes, but asserts that "nothing the Japanese did to America justified this one-sided massacre of hundreds of thousands of civilians" (pp. 16-17). Defending Japan in the war makes him regard favorably Japan's occupation practices. He condemns the massacre in Nanjing, but puts it in the same category as the bombings of Dresden and Hiroshima (p. 15). He praises the Japanese colonial administration in Taiwan and the Pacific islands (pp. 174-175), and says that even in China "it was in the interest of the Chinese government to provoke Japan into further aggression" (p. 39).

Williams has a problem with Tojo. As a left-wing historian, he cannot extol him too much, but as a supporter of the war he has to regard him as a hero. The result is a strange ambivalence. He condemns the "militarist clique that surrounded Tojo" and praises the Kyoto-school philosophers as "enlightened heroes of the Japanese wartime resistance" (pp. 20-21, 69-70), because they supported the navy's machinations against Tojo. But, he admits that Tojo "prepared the way, on more than one front, for the decline and fall of Roosevelt's White Republic" (p. 173). Moreover, he regards Tojo as the avenger of the American Indians: "After three centuries of almost unbroken aggression against the non-White world, White Americans had finally met a non-European foe capable of serious resistance. In the Japanese, the American Indian had found their [sic] unlikely avengers. Sitting Bull would have saluted Tojo's boldness" (p. 174). So, out of an ideological hatred of the United States, this left-wing American historian sounds exactly like the militarist leaders of wartime Japan. He is justifying the war in terms that even a right-wing Japanese historian would not dare to use today.

Williams rebukes the Asia specialists in the west, who provide the "scholarly servicing of America's global hegemony" (p. 33). Contrary to the claims of revisionist historians, that scholarly writings have been too lenient towards Japan, he accuses the Japanologists of being too critical. He complains: "Japan studies displays [sic] a rooted hostility to Japan... with the exception of Middle East Studies, no branch of area research displays more resentment towards its object than does Japanology" (p. 168). Unlike the other revisionists, he views present-day Japan favorably, as "a restraint on the arbitrary exercise of American power" and as a "building block... in the new post-White order that is the planet's destiny" (p. 171). According to Williams, the threat to peace in Asia does not come from Japanese nationalism and "the symbolic visits by Japanese prime ministers to Yasukuni Shrine", but from the American doctrine of pre-emptive strikes (p. 35).

The author is engaged in a dual battle. On the one hand, he blasts the liberal historians, followers of Edwin O. Reischauer, who represent "the Pacific War orthodoxy" and "allied war propaganda". On the other hand, he attacks the "neo-Marxists", followers of E.H. Norman, who ignore the centrality of race. Not surprisingly, the historian whom he admires is Ernest Nolte, who has taught him how to become a "deep revisionist". That is how he writes about Nolte: "We have talked only once... but it was one of the most stimulating encounters of my entire life as a writer and a thinker... He encouraged me to become my own kind of revisionist, and I salute him" (pp. xix-xx).

Williams is obsessed with race. Like the Nazis, he regards modern history as a struggle between races, but contrary to them he sees the white race as the villain and the colored races as the heroes. He denies that the Kyoto school philosophers were racists on the German model, but he hails them as warriors in the racial struggle of the non-white peoples against white hegemony. They appear, like the author, as racists in the good (i.e. anti-white) sense of the word. Williams is optimistic about the outcome of the racial struggle. Pearl Harbor and '9/11' have inflicted enormous blows on the white race, from which it will not recover. Within the United States as well as in the world at large, white people are becoming a minority and the colored races are taking over. "White West hegemony, the racial imbalance that has defined our global society for half a millennium, seems almost certain to pass away" (p. 91).

The presentation of the Pacific War as a race war is not convincing. As John Dower has pointed out³, there were racist elements in the wartime propaganda on both sides, but the war was not about race. Unlike the Nazis, the militarist leaders of Japan did not justify the war in racial terms. Williams admits (p. 159-160) that the Kyoto-school philosophers did not use the term race (*jinshu*), and preferred instead the term nation (*minzoku*). But he makes the strange claim that when they spoke about overcoming modernity, they "really" meant the overcoming of whiteness (p. 18). In his diatribe against Harootunian and the neo-marxists, Williams accuses them of seeing "fascists under every futon" (p. 55). However, he himself sees American racists under every bed.

Contrary to the author's claim, none of the major wars of modern times was a race war. The Russo-Japanese War, in spite of the author's assertion, was not a racial struggle. Japan was then an ally of Great Britain and its aim was to join the western colonial powers and not to liberate its Asian brethren. The First World War, the Second World War, and the Cold War had all white and non-white nations on both sides. To call the Korean, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars race wars is to overlook their ideological and geopolitical significance. One can oppose the foreign policy of the United States, or for that matter of any other country, without regarding it as racist. The coming racial revolution, which Williams predicts and hails, may not occur, as race seems to be losing its significance. We may continue to befriend and fight each other for a long time without doing it on racial lines.

1. *Ienaga Saburo, The Pacific War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 122-123.*

2. *Peter Duus, ed., The Cambridge History of Japan, vol. 6: The Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 741-743.*

3. *John Dower, War without Mercy (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).*

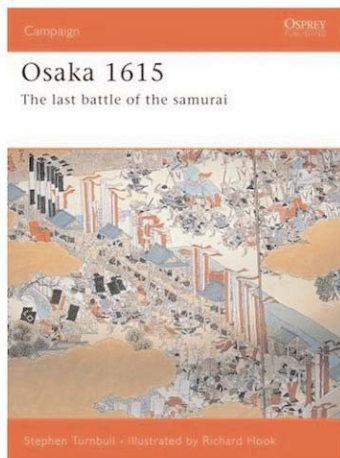
Japanese Samurai and battles up to 1603, a series of recent books, published by Osprey publishing company, all in soft back and copiously illustrated.

Prices vary; obtainable through the internet at a discount.

Reviews by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Members of the Society may be interested in the following publications from Osprey by Stephen Turnbull:

- Japanese Fortified Temples and Monasteries AD 710-1602, 2005*
- Japanese Warrior Monks AD 949-1603, 2003*
- Japanese Castles 1540-1640, 2003*
- War in Japan 1467-1515, 2002*
- Kawanakajima 1553-64, Samurai power struggle, 2003*
- Nagashino 1575, Slaughter at the barricades, 2000*
- Samurai Commanders (1) 940-1576, 2005*
- Samurai Commanders (2) 1577-1638, 2005*
- Osaka 1615, The last battle of the samurai, 2006*
- Ninja AD 1460-1650, 2003*
- Ashigaru 1467-1649, 2001*
- Samurai Heraldry, 2002*
- And by Anthony Bryant:
 - Sekigahara 1600, the final struggle for power, 1995*



Foreign students of Japanese history tend to concentrate on modern Japan after the 'opening of Japan' in the middle of the nineteenth century or on the Tokugawa or Edo period or the first contact with western countries in the sixteenth century. Students of Japanese literature, if they are attracted to heroic stories, will tend to concentrate on the battles which were commemorated in the *Heike Monogatari* or the *Taiheiki* and which occurred before the *Sengoku* (country at war period) in the sixteenth century.

Yet some of the battles about which Stephen Turnbull has written in these works have become a part of Japanese folklore. Kawanakajima for instance was a series of battles between the two famous warriors Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin who were dominating and ruthless military leaders in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Of the battle of Nagashino in 1575 Turnbull writes: It "holds a unique place in Japanese history. The siege which preceded

it is regarded as one of the three classic sieges of Japan, but it was the skilful manner in which Oda Nobunaga secured his victory which has earned Nagashino such a reputation."

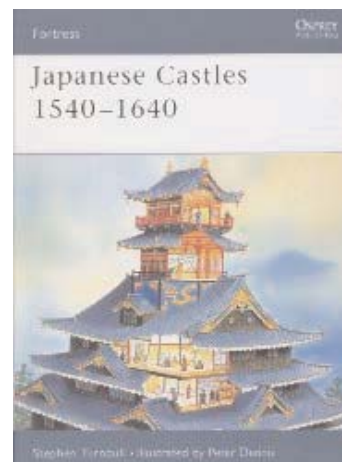
Every student of Japanese history will be conscious of the importance of the battle of Sekigahara and most will be aware that it was the defection of a significant part of Tokugawa Ieyasu's opponents which helped him to victory but Anthony Bryant's account of the battle explains that there was much more to this battle than treachery. His description of the fighting will interest military historians.



The two books devoted to samurai commanders are useful compendia of biographical information. The books on Japanese fortified temples and monasteries and on Japanese castles provide interesting information about defensive architecture. The book on Japanese warrior monks covers not only their beliefs but also their life, weapons and training. The *Ninja* have always fascinated visitors to Japan and Turnbull's account of these elusive warriors provides a graphic account of how they acted and appeared. The *Ashigaru* were the samurai's foot-soldiers and Turnbull describes their weapons, life and training. *Samurai Heraldry* provides a useful guide to the banners and standards of the samurai armies.

I found the black and white illustrations and photographs illuminating, but thought the colour paintings at best crude.

Stephen Turnbull has made quite a corner for himself in writing about the samurai, their life and weapons. Altogether this is a collection of booklets which will be valuable to the student of Japanese military history.





The Chichibu Mikado,

Conductor and translator Toru Sasakibara, director Kyoko Fujishiro,

Original script and music by W.S. Gilbert & A. Sullivan, performed by the Tokyo Theatre Company as part of the 2006 International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival, 1 August 2006 (one performance only) at Buxton Opera House

Review by Sean Curtin

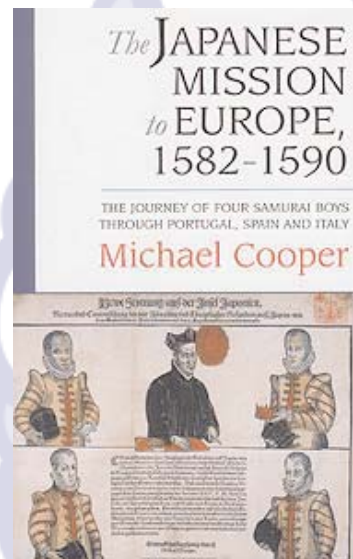
For the first time ever a Japanese theatre company came to the UK to perform the Mikado in Japanese to an enthusiastic British audience. The lively and brilliantly colourful production was part of the 2006 International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, Derby. It perfectly blended Japanese and British elements to create an astonishingly successful hybrid which was true to the original, while incorporating some crowd-pleasing Japanese innovations. The standard musical numbers remained essentially the same except for two insertions of Japanese taiko drum pieces between the overture and the curtain rise and another for the well-received ballet scene towards the end of Act II.

Despite the fact that the audience was a largely non-Japanese speaking British one, they appeared to really enjoy the show. Most were Gilbert & Sullivan aficionados, so were familiar with the English lyrics and seemed to relish the opportunity of listening to them in a foreign tongue. Occasionally, the Japanese company broke into English at the points in the script where the characters discuss the difficulties of the English and Japanese languages. These scenes got lots of laughs, while the innovative ballet scene and taiko drum accompaniments were the highlights for many.

Toru Sasakibara, a veteran director, energetically conducted and was also the translator of the lyrics into Japanese. Watching the lively performance you never would have imagined that Gilbert & Sullivan's world famous Mikado was actually banned in Japan shortly after its 1885 premier. It was considered too disrespectful towards the Emperor to be performed in Japan and Japanese elites who saw it in European capitals were highly critical of the Chinese sounding names of the lead characters and farcical depictions of Japan which seemed to

confirm their view that Westerners could not distinguish between Japan and China. In fact, the light opera caused a number of headaches over the years for Anglo-Japanese relations. British diplomats did their best to ensure it was either not performed in Japan or if it was that only a revised production staged with all references to the Emperor deleted. When Prince Fushimi visited London in 1907, all performances in the city were temporarily suspended. It was not until after WWII that it was performed properly in Japan and even then it received a very cold reception from Japanese audiences.

The Mikado is set in the Japanese town of Titipu, which is believed to be modern day Chichibu, a mountain city about 75 kilometers northwest of Tokyo. It was the Titipu- Chichibu link that was the driving force for the real emergence of the musical in Japan. Once Chichibu locals realized that their hometown was immortalized in the internationally famous operetta, the urge to highlight this claim to fame became too irresistible. After several years of effort, in March 2001 the citizens of Chichibu succeeded in staging the opera's first Japanese language performance to a mainstream audience. It was a runaway success and since then it has been restaged not only in Chichibu, but several other venues including Ikebukuro in Tokyo. Its export to the UK has also been warmly welcomed. The only real criticism of the UK production is that this amazingly enjoyable and fantastically colourful spectacle was only staged for one single performance.



The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582-1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys through Portugal, Spain and Italy,

by Michael Cooper, Global Oriental, 2005,

ISBN 1-901903-38-9, 262 pages (plus xix, black and white plates, notes, bibliography and index).

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Dr Michael Cooper, the former editor of Monumenta Nipponica, has contributed significantly to our knowledge of the Jesuit mission to Japan and its members in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He is a Japanese, Latin and Portuguese scholar. This book which is based on extensive and painstaking research is an absorbing account of the first Japanese visitors to Europe.

They did not constitute a proper diplomatic mission as they did not represent the Japanese government and did not conduct any negotiations, but the mission or legation, as Dr Cooper calls it, was an important development not only for the Catholic Church in Japan but also for European perceptions of Japan.

The mission was planned by Alessandro Valignano, the forceful Jesuit Visitor (inspector), who arrived in Japan in 1579. He believed that "there was a pressing need not only to make Japan better known in Europe but also to make Europe better known and appreciated in Japan (page 9)." He also hoped that as a result of direct contact with young Japanese Christians the Jesuits in Japan would be assured of regular supplies of funds from Europe. Sadly, as Michael Cooper explains, these aims were only very partially achieved.

Three Christian daimyo (of Bungo, Arima and Omura) were asked to send representatives, but the choice of delegates had to be rushed as the Portuguese ship sailing from Nagasaki left in the spring and could not be delayed. Because of the slowness of communications in Japan, the choice was also limited to young men living near Nagasaki. Bungo was represented by Mancio (Ito) and the other two fiefs by Michael (Chijiwa). They were accompanied by two companions Martin (Hara) and Julian (Nakaura). All four were young teenagers who had been brought up in the Christian faith. Their guide and mentor was Diogo de Mesquita, a young Jesuit who had only been six years with the Jesuits in Japan.

Valignano, who accompanied the party as far as India, had hoped to go with them to Europe but was ordered to remain in India. The journey to Europe in the late seventeenth century was long, dangerous and hard. The Portuguese carracks were clumsy and unstable. There were no reliable charts and while navigators were able to make a fair calculation of latitude they were unable to determine longitude at all accurately.

The small ship, in which they travelled, left Nagasaki on 20 February 1582. They did not return until 21 July 1590 over 8 years later, but only spent one year and eight months in Europe. It is hard for us who are used to travelling by air to Japan in about twelve hours to understand how their journey to Europe in the late sixteenth century took two and a half years. The return trip took four years including four and a half months in Mozambique and two years waiting for a ship in Macao. At sea and in port the four boys were kept at their studies and their devotions. They were given very favourable treatment everywhere but their life must have been tedious and uncomfortable as well as frightening as a result of storms and other natural hazards and disease. Michael Cooper draws a vivid picture of these voyages.

Much of the narrative is devoted to an account of the boys' European tour from Portugal through Spain to Italy and back. Valignano had wanted the tour to be conducted in a low key, but this proved impossible to sustain. The boys were received everywhere by high church dignitaries including Cardinals and Archbishops. In Madrid they had audiences with King Philip II and were given a guided tour of the newly built Escorial. The King even made the unprecedented gesture of coming personally to wish them a good journey to Rome.

In Pisa, on the way to Rome, the Archduchess of Tuscany insisted on dancing with Mancio, but the boys rarely had a chance to relax. In Rome they were warmly received by the dying Pope Gregory XIII, and by his successor Pope Sixtus V

whose coronation they attended. They went on to visit most of the leading cities in Northern Italy where they often stayed in palaces and were greeted with pageants and banquets. They received lavish gifts which they were unable to reciprocate adequately and were royally entertained to banquets.

The boys seem to have behaved with decorum and piety throughout. Sadly the records and the portraits, including sketches by Tintoretto in Venice, reveal nothing of the real personalities behind the masks. The reader longs to know what their real impressions were of the cathedrals, gorgeous costumes and pomp which greeted them. Were they bored by all long masses and ceremonies and longing for a frolic or were they serious youngsters without much imagination and sense of humour who had little difficulty in repressing their youthful passions? We shall never know.

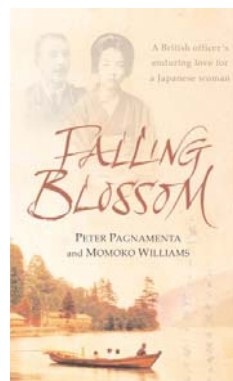
By the time they eventually returned to Japan, the boys had grown up into young men. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had become suspicious of the Christians and begun to persecute them, and whose attitude towards the Jesuits had been one of the reasons for the delay in their voyage home from Macao to Nagasaki, was persuaded to receive Valignano and the boys. Valignano's appointment as Ambassador from the Portuguese Viceroy in India provided the necessary opening. Hideyoshi duly welcomed the returnees who played western music to him and answered questions about their experiences. But Valignano's hopes that the visit would lead to a better understanding in Japan of Europe and of the Catholic Church were disappointed.

The mission had brought back a printing press from Europe but no attempt was made to produce and circulate any account by mission members of their experiences. The promises of funding for the Jesuits in Japan were rarely fulfilled.

In an interesting appendix, Dr Cooper explains what happened to the members of the mission. Michael ceased to be a Catholic, married and had four sons. The other three were all eventually ordained priests, but had to wait a long time for ordination because of the Jesuit reluctance to ordain Japanese. Mancio died in Nagasaki in 1612. Martin joined other priests in Macao following the expulsion edict of 1614 and died there in 1639. Julian was eventually martyred in Nagasaki in 1633.

Anyone interested in the period which the late Professor Boxer, perhaps misleadingly, called Japan's Christian Century, will find this a fascinating read. The pictures of travel at that period over the seas and in Europe are particularly vivid.

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Falling Blossom: A British Officer's Enduring Love for a Japanese Woman,

by Peter Pagnamenta and Momoko Williams,

Century, (Random House Group)
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314, including notes and acknowledgements.

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi