



Lost landscapes

Mike Sullivan watches a special screening of *Eclair: Okashi Hourouki*

Thirty years of change

Sir Hugh Cortazzi explores contemporary challenges

In this issue we remember and mark the second anniversary of Great East Japan Earthquake (東日本大震災) which occurred on Friday 11 March 2011. It was a truly unprecedented catastrophe so traumatic that its consequences are still reverberating through Japanese society. The massive cost in human life and the sheer scale of devastation would be difficult for any society to cope with but Japan must also deal with the additional aftermath of three nuclear meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear plant. The trinity of disasters - earthquake, tsunami and triple nuclear meltdown in one incident spanning a 24 hour period make dealing with it one of the most testing challenges ever to face a country. Sir Hugh Cortazzi looks at *Contemporary Japan: History, Politics and Social Change Since the 1980s* which examines some aspects of the immense challenges which face Japan and how this is currently shaping society. Mike Sullivan

looks at a film festival to mark the anniversary while Lucy Starles covers another Japanese film festival which reminds us that even though Japan faces such daunting challenges life still marches on. We then look at an early national tragedy with global implications in *Maritime Strategy and National Security in Japan and Britain, From the First Alliance to Post -9/11*. On a lighter note Mike Sullivan looks at the mesmerizing performers Siro-A. We would also like to congratulate Mike for winning the prestigious Japan Foreign Trade Council Essay Competition 2012 with his impressive article "Strategies for a Depopulating Japan" *A British Model and a Japanese Legacy*.

Sean Curtin, April 2013

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New reviews

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Contemporary Japan: History, Politics and Social Change Since the 1980s

by Jeff Kingston

Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2013

313 pages

ISBN: 978-1-118-31507-1

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

In this survey of contemporary Japan Professor Kingston looks at the risks and challenges facing Japan in the twenty-first century. He draws particular attention to Japan's 'demographic time bomb' and the malaise and risks encountered by Japanese families.

His analysis of such problem issues as immigration and the environment is carefully presented. His account of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami is a good summary of the facts of this appalling disaster. He looks as objectively as possible at this stage at the nuclear crisis arising from the destruction of the nuclear reactors at Fukushima.

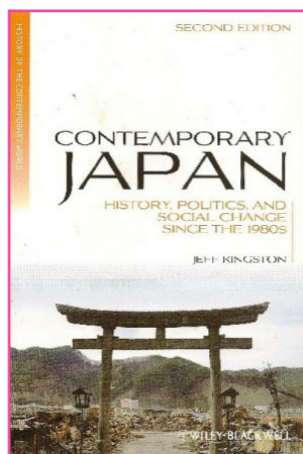
He includes a perceptive chapter on the Imperial Family in which he rightly stresses the need to ensure that the imperial institution continues to be relevant. He is scathing about Imperial Household bureaucrats and their treatment of the Crown Princess. I agree; it took me years of frustration to get these officials to agree to my translating and publishing an English version of the Crown Prince's memoir of his stay in Oxford, which was eventually allowed to appear under the title *The Thames and I* [read our review in Issue 1].

'I would have welcomed more on the problems of persuading young Japanese to question their teachers and elders and on their reluctance to travel and study abroad.'

His chapter on the yakuza and their future makes interesting reading.

His account of contemporary politics contains some good points and is generally perceptive. Unfortunately although this edition was published earlier this year he was unable to deal with the second Abe government and the party of the unreconstructed nationalists Hashimoto Toru and Ishihara Shintaro. An analysis of these developments will have to wait for a third edition.

Kingston's emphasis is more on the political and social issues of contemporary Japan than on the economic challenges. He is right to stress the risks to families and the young arising from the changes in employment practices under which greater flexibility in the labour market has been achieved through a decline in the permanent staff of companies and an increase in the number of temporary staff who are paid less and have fewer rights. He estimates that if the number of subsidized jobs were added to the



number officially unemployed 'Japan's unemployment rate would have been 9.3 per cent rather 5.7 per cent as of mid-2009.' This makes the Japanese unemployment rate comparable to that of some European countries.

Against this background Kingston is not an advocate of greater liberalisation and further labour market reform, but he fails to suggest alternative policies to kick-start growth in the Japanese economy. The expansionist policies of Kuroda, the new governor of the Bank of Japan, were, of course, instituted after this book was published.

I found one reference to the Olympus scandal. It deserves much fuller treatment in any future edition as does the whole topic of corporate governance.

Kingston comments on the issues of the national flag and national anthem and on attempts to instil patriotism and notes that only one Japanese University makes the world list of the top twenty universities. I would have welcomed more on the problems of persuading young Japanese to question their teachers and elders and on their reluctance to travel and study abroad.

These caveats apart Kingston's book seems to me to be a good introduction to contemporary Japan. But I hope that in any future edition he will take a hard look at some sentences in the introduction which left me with the feeling which is, however, belied by the subsequent analysis that he had succumbed to the myth that Japan was victim rather than aggressor in the Pacific War.

On page 5 Kingston writes: 'Given the extent of excesses and atrocities committed by Japan, the US, and its allies.' I realize that some actions by allied service men during the war and after were not in accordance with the Geneva conventions and that in battle things may have happened which should not have been allowed, but I do not accept that such acts, which were not approved by allied governments, were in any way comparable with what the Japanese military did in e.g. Nanking or Singapore or in the construction of the Burma-Siam railway, to say nothing of the surprise attack before war was declared on Pearl Harbor. If Kingston was thinking of the American carpet bombing of Japanese cities and of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki he should bear in mind the casualties which the Americans had suffered in the battle for Okinawa and take note of the responsibility of Japanese leaders for what happened in 1945. Prince Konoe in January 1945 realized that Japan faced defeat but his obstinate and morally blind colleagues refused until it was too late to come to terms with the inevitable.

In the same paragraph Kingston states that during the occupation 'American troops did commit serious crimes against the civilian population, including murder, rape and assault.' He qualifies this by noting that Japanese had feared worse knowing how Japanese forces had behaved in occupied territories. Having served with the British occupation forces in Japan in 1946/47 I am not aware of more than a few serious cases and I wonder if

the incidence of violence against Japanese by Americans was any greater than it would have been in the USA. Certainly our judge advocate general insisted on fair trials of offenders and there was never any attempt to condone or justify violent behaviour.

On page 7, referring to the legal proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE), Kingston asserts that the proceedings were 'deeply flawed.' 'In addition, Allied war crimes went unexamined and unpunished, leading many observers to dismiss the whole spectacle as "victor's justice." ' Certainly there have been many criticisms of the IMTFE, but to dismiss the IMTFE in these words is oversimplifying and pandering to the Japanese nationalists who call for judgements of the tribunal to be abrogated. Moreover to refer to 'allied war crimes' without explanation or specification is surely misleading.

Jeff Kingston is Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the Japan campus in Tokyo of Temple University.

Eclair: Okashi Hourouki [エクレール〜お菓子放浪記]

Directed by Akio Kondo [近藤明男]

2011, 105 minutes

Review by Mike Sullivan

SPOILER ALERT: CONTAINS PLOT SUMMARY

To mark the second anniversary of the Tohoku Earthquake the Japan Foundation screened two different movies; the 2011 movie *Fukushima Hula Girls* and *Eclair: Okashi Hourouki*. Although Eclair is a movie based on the story of a young boy and his survival through the closing months of the Second World War, the Japan Foundation explained that this film was chosen because it 'was shot in the autumn of 2010 in Ishinomaki-city and other places in the Miyagi prefecture. Many of the beautiful locations and historic buildings were swept away by the tsunami.' In Ishinomaki alone over 3,000 lives were lost and over 20,000 homes destroyed. The Japan Foundation representative explained how this movie now represents a record of buildings that no longer exist; the most poignant aspect is that there are extras that lost their lives in the tsunami who can be seen in this movie.

As such it was a very solemn audience that appreciated this opportunity to watch this movie, and in addition, the story itself is very heart wrenching and more than a few people wept some tears.

The film is based on the autobiographical book written by Shigeru Nishimura [西村滋] in 1975, [雨にも負けて風にも負けて], that tells the story of an orphaned boy sent to a reformatory school, after which he is adopted and meets many new people. As the war draws to a close he begins to

lose all those that he cared about and is left leading a gang of orphaned children struggling to survive in Postwar Japan. One of the main themes of the movie is the concept of the Eclair, a sweet pastry he has never tried, and a song about two girls buying sweets in Paris, "Okashi to Musume," taught to him by a young female teacher. Throughout his story he stays in contact with the teacher until he believes that she died in Hiroshima.

Akio Nishimura (Hajime Yoshii ~吉井一肇) is starving on the streets and steals some sweets, he is caught by a police officer, but the kind officer (Kan Mikami ~三上寛) merely talks to the boy and offers him some food. One of the enduring aspects of this movie is that no matter how tough things are, or how desperate people become, there is always someone who offers him kindness and help, and this helps Akio retain an unconditional love and respect for those people. However, he is sent to the reformatory along with two other boys and it is at the school that Akio encounters a sadistic teacher intent on physical punishment, and a young female teacher, Yoko (Saori Koide ~小出早織) who in contrast bestows great kindness on Akio.

One day Akio hears Yoko singing *Okashi to Musume*, absolutely enthralled he insists on Yoko singing it again, and she in kind makes him learn the song. For Akio living in a world where starvation is common, and sweets or pastries virtually non-existent, the song represents a path to happiness as he can imagine the joy of eating delicious food like an éclair. Surviving through miseries such as the death of a friend and Yoko's departure to Hokkaido to care for her mother, Akio is adopted by an elderly woman living alone, he works at a local cinema and he enjoys a happy life as he can meet the police officer and his wife, the cinema employees are kind to him and as per his own nature he loves his new 'mother' unconditionally, unaware that she is only interested in the money that he can earn for her.

Eventually he discovers that Yoko plans to marry and move to Hiroshima, thus breaking her promise to come back, and after he injures himself and discovers that his new mother plans to replace him with a new orphan with more earning power, Akio runs away and ends up joining a theatre troupe. He once again discovers some measure of happiness working for the theatre troupe and he is able to travel the countryside and visit places like Ishinomaki, however as the months go by the war also comes to a close and starts to affect everyone and everything around Akio. One of the actors is hiding from the draft, and when a second actor receives his draft letter and commits suicide, the first actor has to flee as well because the police will come to investigate. With the two main actors gone the troupe has to disband and Akio returns to Tokyo. He luckily misses the bombing raids and comes back to a Tokyo in ruins, his friends the police officer and the cinema workers have died and he finds a newspaper detailing the new weapon dropped on Hiroshima.

In the aftermath of the end of the war Akio is leading a gang of orphans in a fight for survival on the streets of Tokyo, unbeknownst to him Yoko survived Hiroshima and is looking for Akio in Tokyo. As she wanders the streets and time goes by she starts to lose hope of finding him until it is revealed to her

by Akio's previous 'mother' that she has seen Akio leading a gang of children. On the day that Yoko visits that part of Tokyo looking for him there is a singing contest taking place and Akio is urged on by his gang to take part and win the first prize of rice.

Yoko looks for Akio while the songs of the contestants is played through speakers in the streets she walks through, however, she can't find him and exhausted she sits on a bench. It is while she is sitting there that she starts to listen to one of the songs being sung by a young boy, she realizes that the song is "Okashi to Musume." Akio is the clear winner of the contest as he sings beautifully and the whole audience joins him in his joyful imagination of living in a world where even children can happily eat sweets. They call on him to sing it again and it is as he sings it a second time that a young woman starts to approach him from the audience and as he sings the final line his eyes find his beloved teacher standing before him.

Kaidan Horror Classics [妖しき文豪怪談]

The Whistler [葉桜と魔笛], directed by Shinya Tsukamoto; *The Nose* [鼻], directed by Sang-il Lee; and *The Days After* [後の日], directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda

2013, 121 minutes

Review by Lucy Searles

This year, to mark its tenth anniversary, The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme is showing a huge range of films by contemporary Japanese filmmakers that all fit within the genre of *jidai geki* (period dramas -時代劇). These are films that cast a nostalgic eye back on previous eras or events through a variety of genres and mediums in an attempt to give a broad and vibrant picture of Japan's past. In keeping with this idea is the set of three films the *Kaidan Horror Classics*. All three of the films are based on famous literary tales or the works of well-respected Japanese authors, giving the films a wonderfully unique vision – modern reinventions of classic tales. While the classification of the films as 'horror' is perhaps misleading, all three films feature a link to the spiritual, religious and the supernatural with very little of the features that many would associate with modern Japanese horror films.

The first film shown is *The Whistler* based on the story *The Cherry Tree and The Whistler* [葉桜と魔笛] by Dazai Osamu [太宰治] published in 1939. The film, adapted by director Shinya Tsukamoto [塚本晋也] and starring Aoba Kawai [河井青葉], is about Yuko who spends her time looking after her terminally ill younger sister. Upon discovering mysterious letters addressed to her sister Yuko sets out to discover the identity of the sender. The

film mixes haunting visions with beautiful scenery and frantic music, building up a tension throughout the film and with a few genuinely terrifying moments, it works well. While it may have been the weakest of the three, particularly in terms of cinematography the film is still an interesting examination of family life and relationships in Showa-era Japan.

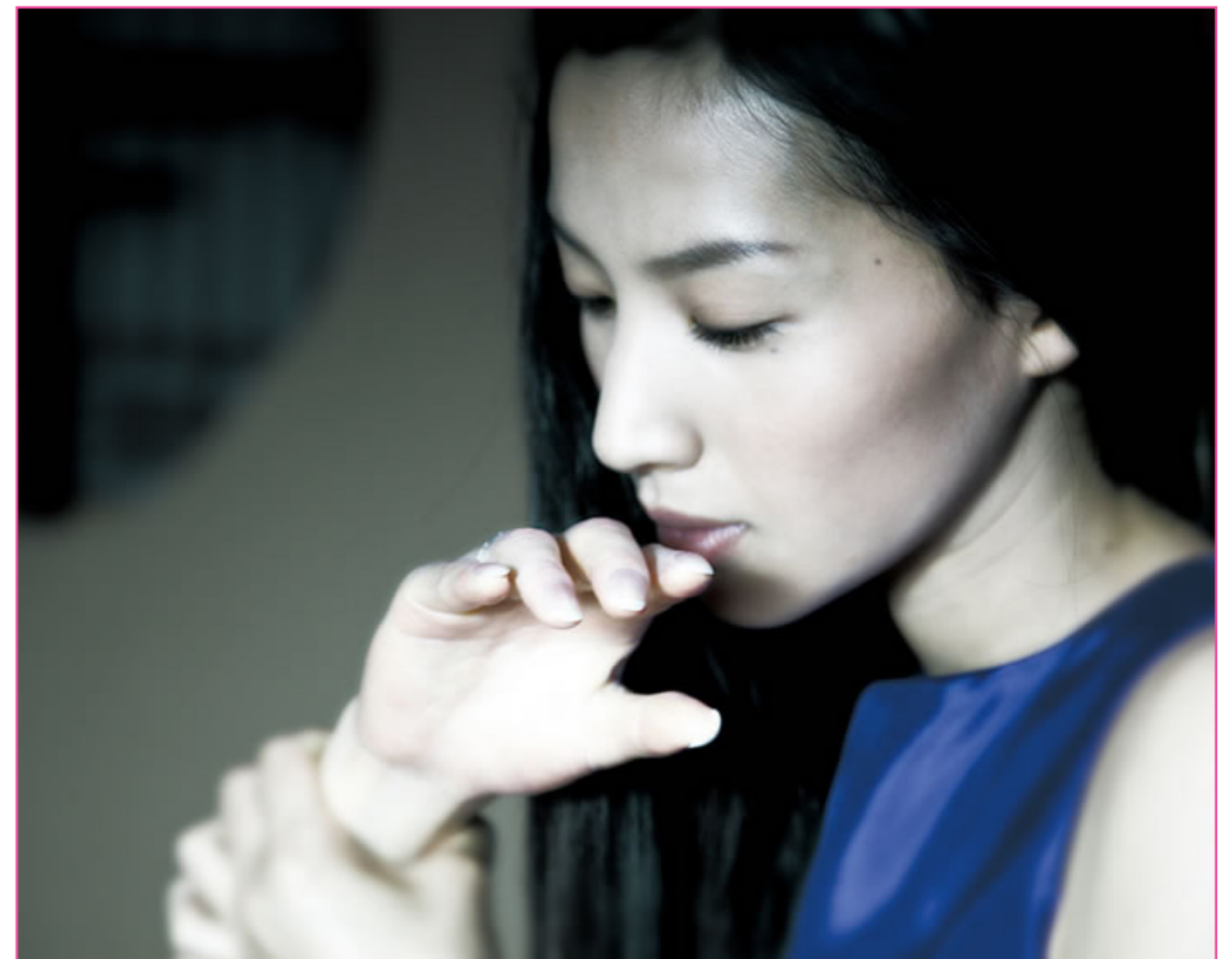
The second film shown is perhaps the most moving of the three, *The Nose* [鼻] is based on the story of the same name by Akutagawa Ryunosuke [芥川龍之介], who wrote many stories based on Japanese folklore and Buddhist tales. Directed by Sang-il Lee [李相日] and starring Yutaka Matsushige [松重豊] as a Buddhist monk named Zenichi, who attempts to save a child from the river only to push the child away when he sees the monstrous nose the monk had been hiding.

The film follows the guilt raked monk and his growing paranoia and fear as well as the villagers who live around him. With beautifully shot images of the lush green countryside and the dark shadowy huts of the village the film does not shy away from depicting the squalor and poverty of medieval, rural Japan. The film stands out from the other two, not only because of the medieval time setting which is in contrast to the Showa period films that frame it, but also because the film questions what it is to be 'normal' and examines alienation and self consciousness – a message that transcends time periods and can affect everyone.

The final film shown in the collection is the graceful *The Days After* [後の日 also sometimes translated as *Latter Days*] that is adapted from a number of fantasy stories from the writer Murou Saisei [室生犀星] and directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda [是枝裕和]. The film centers around a young couple that have lost their child, only for him to appear in front of them once again. Is it a reincarnation or a ghost? The film focuses on the peaceful days of the reunited family and the fathers efforts to work out where the child has come from. The film is beautifully shot, with spectacular sequences that perfectly capture the feelings of loss that are explored in the story. A particularly beautiful scene is the moment in which the father tries to seek out where this child has come from, running over a bridge in the twilight and stopping a man with a light to ask if he has seen the child. The whole scene is shot entirely in the reflection of the water, in nothing but shadows, the light from the lamp glowing in the ripples.

While all three films are very different, they do all share a similar vision of the past. The spirituality and mysticism in all three films create a feeling of the past as another world far removed from modern life while showing that the same feelings of loss, loneliness and alienation are the same no matter when they are felt or how the situations change.

Opposite page: Stills from *The Nose* and *The Arm*



Maritime Strategy and National Security in Japan and Britain, From the First Alliance to Post-9/11

Edited by Alessio Patalano

Global Oriental, Leiden and Boston, 2012

255 pages

ISBN: 978-1-906876-27-2

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

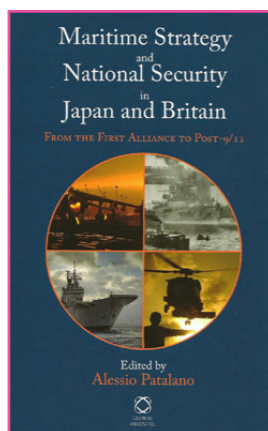
This book arises from a conference held in London in 2009 organized by the Department of War Studies at King's College, London and the Japanese Embassy. 'This project [readers are told] represents the summation of the intellectual contributions of leading scholars in the field of British and Japanese military history and strategy.' Part one, headed *Strategic partnership and military rivalry across the oceans* covers the years between the re-opening of Japan in the nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Part two deals with *Strategic priorities from the cold war to Iraq*. Part three looks at *Maritime strategy in an interdependent world*.

The editor in his introduction says that 'In reviewing the Japanese and British experiences, the book seeks to identify areas of common security and operational interest that could help develop stronger military ties and reduce the impact of the limitations of national resources.' These areas are unfortunately not clearly indicated.

As is inevitable in a multi-authored work the approaches of the various contributors vary. The scope of the book is wide and the themes do not lend themselves to clear-cut conclusions. A good deal is made of the fact that both Britain and Japan are 'island nations' with important trading relations, but the differences between the two nations both in geographical and historical contexts are significant.

The facts covered in the first historical section will be familiar to those who have studied the history of relations between Britain and Japan up to the end of the war. The British exercise of naval power in the Far East in the 1850s and 1860s was an object lesson for Japan and provided the spur for the Japanese Navy to model itself on the Royal Navy. The balance of power shifted in the twentieth century and the British came to see Japan as a rival rather than as a friend. Britain was declining and Japan rising. The fall of Singapore in 1942 marked the nadir of British power in the Far East.

Part two begins with a discussion of Japan's post-war defence policy. The emphasis from the start was on the defence of the Japanese archipelago, but following the fall of communist regimes in Europe Japan was forced



to turn its attention to participation in international peace activities. The development of Japanese policy was slow and tortuous. Japan faced constitutional and legal issues as well as deep-seated pacifist attitudes at home which inhibited more effective actions. The Japanese response to the first Iraq war was seen as belated and although Japanese financial assistance was in the end considerable it earned limited goodwill. Japanese defence forces can now take part in 'expeditionary missions' but 'there are still significant gaps in the relevant Japanese operational doctrine (page 155).'

Part three begins with further discussion of the political and 'normative' constraints to Japan's national security. Japanese ships can now provide protection for Japanese vessels from Somali piracy, but Japanese rules of engagement remain more restrictive than those of other countries. Japanese defence policies have some way to go before they can be seen as those of a 'normal' power.

It is unfortunate that this book was put together before the implications for Japanese defence policy of the growth in Chinese naval strength, including the commissioning of China's first aircraft carrier, could be properly considered. The Senkaku islands in the South China Sea which are the subject of dispute between Japan and China are not even listed in the index.

This review is written for members of the Japan Society rather than for the defence community as a whole. It does not, therefore, deal with the various discussions in this book on British defence policy and strategic objectives.

SIRO-A

Leicester Square Theatre, Friday 1 February – Monday 22 April 2013

Review by Mike Sullivan

SIRO-A are a six member group originally from Sendai who have been based at Leicester Square theatre since the 1st of February and will finish on the 22nd of April. They first started performing in 2005 and since then they have won the 2011 'Spirit of the Fringe' award at the Edinburgh Festival 2011. Their unusual performance can only be described as an amazing blend of dance, music and technology, as the boundaries between different genres become increasingly blurred. SIRO-A are at the forefront of a new wave of performers.

The small theatre in Leicester Square filled up surprisingly fast as the audience sat down in expectation of seeing something very different to other mainstream theatres, as we waited we were entertained by one of the cast



members using a camera on the audience members and putting funny images over the screen image. The following hour passed by far too quickly as these well practised performers flawlessly pulled off a show which is amusing and brilliant. Dancing is given a new perspective as although the dancing itself is very good, the mixture with technology is astounding as it is perfectly timed with special effects. A notable example is the Peacock Dance which incorporates once dancer with multiple colour projections of his same movements on the screen behind him. A personal favourite is a dance performance by two of the cast members using suits covered in lights.

Throughout the show there are touches of comedy, such as cast member Abe Toshinori's personal history being presented via the medium of photos which quickly tell us everything about him and the use of shadow puppetry to show a cast member having trouble with a misbehaving ball with an unpleasant end for the cast member. The use of shadow puppetry is prevalent in the show in order to allow multiple things to happen at the same time, as demonstrated in one section where one cast member is able to create an amazing visual display of his shadows doing several things and creating music at the same time.

SIRO-A has proven to be very popular, and seeing parts of their performance on the internet does not do justice to experiencing the actual thing or seeing it for yourself. It is a visual splendour complimented by technological prowess and musical talent.



A History of Japanese Political Thought, 1600-1901

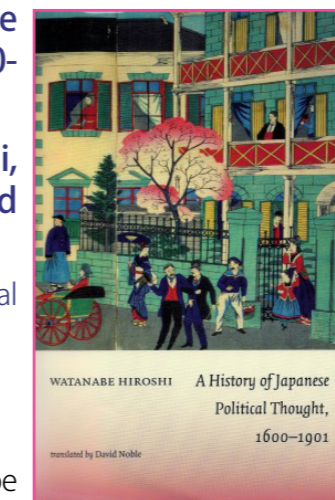
by Watanabe Hiroshi, translated by David Noble

I-House Press, International House of Japan, 2012

543 pages

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Professor Hiroshi Watanabe is professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo and a specialist in the history



of Japanese and Asian political thought. Students of Japanese history, philosophy and politics will find this book of outstanding value. It is clear, well-constructed and informative. The translation by David Noble reads well; indeed it rarely seems like a translation.

Professor Watanabe begins with a summary of Confucian thought and much of the book is devoted to an analysis of the various interpretations of Confucian precepts made by Japanese scholars in the Edo period including Hakuseki Arai [新井白石], Sorai Ogyū [荻生徂徠] and Shōeki Andō [安藤昌益].

Confucianism was not a religion, but was regarded as the official philosophy of the ruling elite. Confucian teaching, however, did not always conform to the realities of Tokugawa rule. The Confucian concept of meritocracy which lay behind the Chinese selection of bureaucrats through competitive examinations was at odds with the Tokugawa system

where 'the army was the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy, the army.' The army consisted of the samurai who were an hereditary elite whose 'stock in trade was the violence, maiming, and slaughter demanded by warfare.' [pp 27-28] 'The looting and pillage . . . often associated with the warrior class' were hard to reconcile with the benevolence (jin -仁) of Confucianism. The 'way of the warrior' (bushi -武士道) as it developed in the peace enacted by the Tokugawa, which was 'based on a very personal sense of honor and shame' was 'reduced to little more than sham and playacting' [p.38].

Tokugawa rule was accepted for over 250 years if only because peace and civil order were preserved and there was no recurrence of the decades of terror that had prevailed before Tokugawa hegemony was achieved. But if the Tokugawa had received 'the mandate of heaven' should this mandate be preserved for ever? The Confucian precept of dynastic overthrow or hōbaku seemed sound to Ieyasu who usurped power, but 'began to seem disruptive and traitorous in a world at peace' [p.99]. Confucian precepts could thus be used against the maintenance of Tokugawa rule.

Confucianism was not the only philosophy which potentially undermined the shogunate. The researches and teaching of Mabuchi Kamo [賀茂真淵] and above all of Norinaga Motoori [本居宣長] on Japan's ancient texts also challenged Confucian philosophy and undermined the basis of Tokugawa rule. Norinaga thought that 'the ancient way' signified 'the great and honourable

customs of our august land' before they were polluted by the importation of teachings from the Asian continent [p.238]. Norinaga believed that 'the emperor rules not by virtue, but by heredity. Therefore, his sovereignty is absolute' [p.245].

Another force for change was the perception which developed in the Edo period of Japan as an entity or country. As Japan became more prosperous under the pax Tokugawa, travel increased and there was increased demand for maps not only of Japan but of the rest of the world. Rangaku (Dutch studies) led to more information becoming available about the world outside Japan. By the middle of the nineteenth century it was apparent to many in Japan that the land of the rising sun could no longer remain isolated from the rest of the world. The idea that Japan was opened in one fell swoop by the force of Perry's Black ships is a oversimplified myth. The time was ripe for change.

Watanabe has much else of interest to say about the Edo era and its codes and beliefs. His chapter sixteen on 'Sexuality and the social order' underlines the differences between China and Japan in relation to the role of women. Men and women mixed much more freely in Japan. Women 'were expected to join men in performing quite arduous outdoor labor' and women could and did participate in commerce [p.296]. Virginity was not a prerequisite for marriage. Women were expected to exercise their charms whether they were wives or courtesans or as Watanabe puts it 'Ordinary women were courtesans in plain dress, courtesans were gaudier and more gorgeous wives' [p.304]. The section of this chapter on homosexuality ends with this comment: 'Homosexuality was an emblem of the misogyny arising out of the solidarity and machismo of the warrior class, as well as a symbolic expression of warrior rule in the realm of gender relations' [p. 309].

Coming to the Meiji period Watanabe notes that 'It was commonly (though tacitly) understood that restoring imperial rule did not actually mean reinstating personal rule by the emperor.' He also points out that the Meiji leaders were frequently inconsistent in their beliefs and actions, 'Many underwent multiple conversions' [p.355], but this should not be held against them. Pragmatism was justified. He stresses that the Meiji state was not 'a simple fusion of Western institutions of representative government with the 'traditional' Japanese emperor system.' Indeed 'the emperor system was modelled in certain respects on the monarchies of the contemporary West' [p.389].

In the context of the Meiji Revolution (he prefers this to Meiji Restoration) he discusses in some detail the writing on political issues of Yukichi Fukuzawa who saw freedom as 'liberation from a hereditary caste system.' For Fukuzawa 'the purpose of government is to guarantee order and advance the welfare and happiness of the people.' Watanabe comments that Fukuzawa's political philosophy at times 'seemed a cynical pragmatism, at others lukewarm compromise, at others an effectively

restrained idealism.'

Watanabe's book explodes various historical myths and contains much food for thought. I commend it to all students of Japanese history and politics.

Mike Sullivan wins the prestigious JFTC Essay Competition 2012



JFTC Essay Competition 2012 winner: 'Strategies for a Depopulating Japan' A British Model and a Japanese Legacy by Mike Sullivan

We are proud to announce that Japan Society Review writer Mike Sullivan has won the prestigious Japan Foreign Trade Council Essay Competition 2012 with his article 'Strategies for a Depopulating Japan' A British Model and a Japanese Legacy. Mike was flown to Tokyo in January for the award ceremony, where he received the Grand Prize of 1,000,000 yen for his work. There were 216 essays submitted from 50 different nationalities for this year's competition, but despite very stiff competition Mike came out on top.

Mike commented, 'It was an honour to be the grand prize winner and to be flown to Tokyo. I enjoyed my trip and it was a great experience to be part of a prestigious award ceremony.'