



Editor: Sean Curtin

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Since the last issue both Japan and the UK have new Prime Ministers, although some might argue that each country's fortunes in the World Cup had a bigger impact on the national psyche. We reviewed several Japanese language books on now former PM Yukio Hatoyama in issue 22 and hope to soon bring you a review of one of the recently published books on Naoto Kan (菅直人の原点を探る).

This issue's feature reviews focus on the war and its aftermath, a much more turbulent and complex time than the current political upheavals. Sir Hugh Cortazzi looks at a fascinating new book *Demystifying Pearl Harbor – A New Perspective from Japan*. It is an English translation of Takeo Iguchi's acclaimed 2009 book *Kaisen Shinwa* [開戦神話]. Next, we shine a clinical spotlight on Caroline Rose's excellently researched *Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?* Dr. Rose examines the long shadow cast over Sino-Japanese relations by historical disputes about the war and its impact on the postwar era. Akira Sugino, in his first review for us, takes an emotive look at a thought-provoking Japanese language book *I Survived For All That* (それでもぼくは生きぬいた). It comprises a series of memoirs and oral histories given by six former British soldiers who had languished in Japanese POW Camps.

In an in-depth review Kiyoshi Ikemi analyzes the collaborative work *When Rover Met Honda*, which charts the successful 15-year partnership between two car industry giants. The book explores the gripping saga of how Eastern and Western car manufacturing methods were able to harmoniously blend to create a winning formula. It also details how this fruitful venture was prematurely terminated. Susan Meehan looks at the immensely popular *Kamome Diner* (かもめ食堂), an enchanting, captivating and beautifully-acted Japanese-Finnish flick (also see our review in Issue 13).

Adam House gives us his take on *Hyperart: Thomasson*, an alternative book which looks at the surreal in the world of the real. Our final review *Prince and Princess Chichibu* explores the lives of an international imperial couple. English-speaking Prince Chichibu (秩父宮 雍仁) was the second son of the Taishō Emperor and a younger brother of the Shōwa Emperor. Princess Chichibu, who was known as Setsuko Matsudaira before marriage, was born in Walton on Thames, England in 1909. Her father, Tsuneo Matsudaira (松平恒雄), was a top Japanese diplomat, who served as ambassador to the United States (from 1924) and later to Great Britain (from 1928). She had a very international upbringing and during the period her father was US ambassador, she studied at the Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. (1925-1928). The imperial couple's gripping life story captures the dilemmas many faced during the war.

Sean Curtin

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New reviews

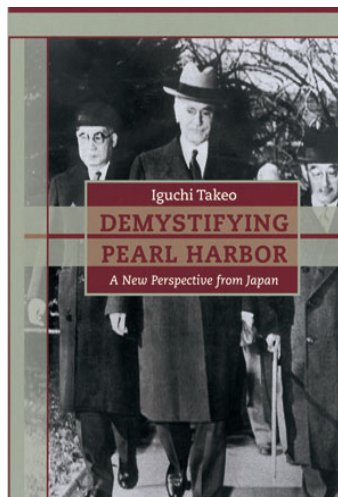
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We are grateful to our regular reviewers:

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| Sir Hugh Cortazzi | Susan Meehan |
| Simon Cotterill | Takahiro Miyao |
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| Fumiko Halloran | Ben-Ami Shillony |
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Demystifying Pearl Harbor A New Perspective from Japan by Takeo Iguchi translated by David Noble

I-House Press, Tokyo, 2010.
343 pages including index and
bibliography,
ISBN: 978-4-903452-19-7

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

"This is an extremely valuable addition to the literature on Japan's Pearl Harbor attack"

declares Professor Akira Iriye of Harvard University in his foreword to this English edition of *Kaisen Shinwa* [開戦神話], published by Chūō Kōen Shinsha in 2008. The author in his preface acknowledges the help of such British scholars as Ian Nish and quotes from Antony Best. It is based on considerable research into the original documents and personal knowledge of some of those involved on the Japanese side.

It is a fascinating account of the events leading up to the Japanese attack on the United States and Britain in December 1941 and is essential reading for anyone interested in the origins of what the Japanese refer to as the Pacific War. The story begins with Iguchi Takeo's boyhood in Washington where his father was Counsellor to the Japanese Embassy at the outset of the war. It recounts the internment of Japanese officials in the United States in conditions, which compared favourably with those applied to American and British diplomats in Japan, and their return to Japan via Lourenço Marques and Japanese occupied Singapore.

The book then discusses the growing tension between Japan and the United States and the Sino-Japanese War. Iguchi declares: "In a nutshell, the foreign policy pursued by Japan in 1940 and 1941 was inconsistent, unsteady, and a bit haphazard (page 51)." Before December 1941 the focus of the Japanese military was on China and the threat from the Soviet Union. The "liberation and independence of Southeast Asia" did not become a Japanese war aim until after Pacific War had begun but was seized on as a propaganda justification for Japanese attacks in Southeast Asia.

Iguchi does not accept the thesis that American economic sanctions against Japan coupled with American demands for a complete withdrawal of American forces from China and the abrogation of the tripartite pact with Germany and Italy forced Japan into war. But he notes that Tōjō had asserted that if Japan were to withdraw from China, "four years of blood and sacrifice...would be for naught." It would have been practically impossible for the Japanese military to accept withdrawal from China unless they had been forced into this by an effective embargo or by military defeat.

Were the Japanese military then set on war with the United States and Britain? Iguchi quotes the War Diaries of Imperial General Headquarters which indicated in November 1941 that the Army planners "were developing a strategy seeking military supremacy by lightning assaults at multiple points against Anglo-American forces that were neither expecting nor prepared for immediate combat (page 67)." In other words they thought that the only way in which Japan could win a war against the United States and Britain with their greater resources was by a quick and devastating surprise attack and were planning to repeat their strategy in earlier wars such as the Sino-Japanese war of 1894/5 of attacking before declaring war.

Were then the negotiations in Washington between Ambassador Nomura and US Secretary of State Cordell Hull just an elaborate charade designed to deceive the Americans about Japan's real intentions? Iguchi does not think so. There were influential elements in Japan which sought to find a way out of the impasse. Ambassador Nomura was not a party to the strategy of a surprise attack, but "was destined to be used as an unwitting tool in a diplomatic plot (page 105)."

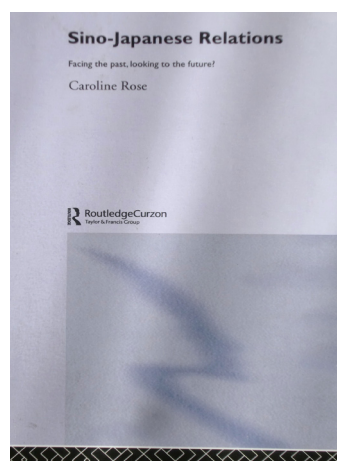
The author does not accept the thesis that there was an American conspiracy to provoke Japan into war. "The American approach was to create a modus Vivendi and the Hull Note of 26 November 1941 was designed to be a proposal for a permanent accord (page 133)." It was not in Iguchi's view a "de facto ultimatum" as some Japanese have argued and intended to be the starting point for negotiations. The author notes in this context that on the day before the Hull note was delivered "the Japanese carrier strike force...was steaming towards Pearl Harbor (page 138)." The momentum for war if not unstoppable was immense.

Iguchi devotes part IV of his book to a discussion of the nature of the final Japanese memorandum and its delayed

transmission. He argues, I think convincingly, that the delay in handing over the Japanese note to the Americans was not due to incompetence on the part of the staff of the Japanese Embassy in Washington, but was due to the deliberate holding up of transmission of the concluding part of the memorandum by the Communications Section of Army General Staff (page 259). The allegations against the Washington Embassy appear to have been made in an attempt to absolve Tōgō Shigenori, the Japanese Foreign Minister, and Gaimusho officials such as Kase Toshikazu for their part in the Japanese deception strategy.

Iguchi discusses and has no difficulty in rejecting the various conspiracy theories. One of the myths is that Roosevelt knew in advance of the attack on Pearl Harbor and allowed it to happen without giving the US Navy warning on the grounds that this would make war between Japan and the US unavoidable. Another is that Churchill was responsible!

Iguchi deals briefly in chapter sixteen with the Japanese attack on British forces and possessions in the East before war was declared. In this case there was no need for delay tactics in transmitting a final memorandum. When Sir Robert Craigie, the British Ambassador to Japan, met the Japanese Foreign Minister early in the morning of 7 December 1941 the Japanese forces had begun their attacks on British forces, but he said nothing of these attacks and the British were not informed that war had begun until later that morning. Japan Society readers will find an interesting account of these events in Chapter 47 of Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits Volume VII to be published in the early autumn of 2010. This is by Douglas Busk, who was head of chancery in the British Embassy in Tokyo at that time, and is entitled a "Disorderly Upside Down Affair."



Sino-Japanese Relations: Facing the Past, Looking to the Future?

By Caroline Rose

Routledge, 2005,

175 pages.

ISBN: 0-415-29722-2

Review by Sean Curtin

As the title suggests, this book explores postwar Sino-Japanese relations through the prism of historical disputes and competing interpretations of Japan's invasion of China (1931-45). It utilizes an impressive array of Chinese and Japanese sources to create a comprehensive and authoritative assessment of the current situation. In recent decades bilateral political ties have been frequently strained over historical spats which in recent years have grown in intensity as the two governments and peoples struggle to find a mutually acceptable narrative of their past. Caroline Rose meticulously charts this process and her wider objective is to examine the progress made on both sides during the nineties towards coming to a better

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common understanding and reconciliation. She aims to build upon the existing literature by considering these themes in an overarching framework of reconciliation.

In her introductory chapter Rose outlines the underlying historical fault lines at the epicentre of bilateral tension, which persists despite the efforts of both governments to resolve matters. On page 6 she writes, "The history problem centres on an inability to agree on a shared version of history..." This point was most recently illustrated by the disputed 549-page joint history report compiled by Japanese and Chinese academics and released in January 2010. The project was initiated in 2006 by both governments to examine contentious historical issues, but Japanese and Chinese academics still remain apart on issues like the numbers killed in the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, where figures range from 20,000 to more than 300,000. Rose aims to explain why these war-related issues emerged in the 1980s and continued during the 1990s and are still presently problematic as the recent report demonstrates.

In Chapter 1, "Reconciliation and Sino-Japanese relations," Rose provides a theoretical framework to analyze the process of reconciliation and set a context for some of the case studies presented in later chapters. She examines the various approaches in a stimulating and thought-provoking chapter, observing, "reconciliation is a future-oriented, joint endeavour between the victims and perpetrators, but one that is lengthy, complex and prone to failure. There is no single, ideal model for reconciliation, and in some cases reconciliation is impossible to achieve (page 21)." One problem for the two nations was the lack of meaningful dialogue between them until they established diplomatic ties in 1972, a gap of almost three decades over which diverging historical narratives evolved. During this period Japan constructed a "national memory" based on seeing itself as a victim of nuclear attack rather than an aggressor in China. Equally, the ideological constraints imposed by the Chinese Communist Party's iron grip during the same timeframe distorted the Chinese perspective and did not allow victims to express their narratives if they did not conform to the Party's officially sanctioned historical line.

Rose identifies "two cycles of Sino-Japanese reconciliation," the first taking place in the early postwar years and during the Cold War. The initial wave encompassed the establishment of bilateral ties in the 1970s through to the Joint Statement of 1972 and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1978. The second cycle begins in the 1980s and unlike the first includes many non-state actors such as victims groups, NGOs, citizens' groupings, academics etc. Rose states, "The easing of constraints during the 1980s and 1990s facilitated much greater discussion of the past both within and between China and Japan (page 25)." She also highlights the increasing importance in the reconciliation process of transnational groups based in China, Japan, the US, inter alia which are propelling the process forward. While the reconciliation process undoubtedly moves forward, it suffers from continual setbacks often sparked by historical issues, which results in a "one step forward, two steps back" (page 121) trajectory.

In Chapter 2, "Sino-Japanese Reconciliation during the Cold War," Rose plots the initial reconciliation process in greater detail in order to explain why it did not succeed and the problems which subsequently arose in the 1980s and 1990s because of this failure. She looks at the marginalization of Chinese suffering in the Tokyo war trials and how "collective amnesia" evolved in both China and Japan. An in depth postwar overview explains how the two sides re-established ties and seemingly settled the issue of war reparations and apology, but in reality these issues were suppressed and allowed to fester.

In the third chapter a highly detailed account charting Japan's contentious school history textbook issue is provided. During the 1980s and 1990s Japanese neo-nationalists became increasingly prominent, gaining media attention for their revisionist views. In China nationalist forces were also gathering strength, questioning past historical interpretations, and often adopting an anti-Japanese stance. Chinese anger was further ignited by revisionist claims made by prominent politicians which were later printed in a 1995 book (大東亜戦争の総括) that claimed "the Greater East Asia War (GEAW) was one of self-defence and liberation; that the Nanjing Massacre and stories about comfort women were fabrications..." (page 53)." Senior lawmakers in the long governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) also sought to clamp down on "deplorable" texts books which depicted Japan as an aggressor in China and instead encourage a "healthy nationalism" in school children. However, various citizens groups had appeared on the scene by the 1990s to challenge the neo-nationalists. Rose writes, "The revisionist groups involved in the movement to correct what they saw as masochistic tendencies in Japanese history books faced fierce opposition at home..." (page 61)." Unfortunately, the result of these resurgent nationalist lawmakers made Chinese academics conclude that historical revisionism was no longer confined to fringe rightwing elements and had become mainstream, making reconciliation tougher.

Chapter four presents a systematic and through analysis of compensation claims made by Chinese war time victims during the nineties. Rose looks at a representative sample of lawsuits comprising forced labourers, women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military, victims of abandoned chemical weapons and biological warfare. The majority of cases were unsuccessful, with a few notable exceptions. One case that particularly caught my attention was that of Liu Lianren, who had been forcibly moved to Hokkaido to work as a slave labourer in a coal mine. He managed to escape in 1944 and remained uncaptured for 13 years, not realising that the war had ended. He was eventually found living in a cave and summarily deported in 1958 as an illegal immigrant by Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, who with bitter irony had implemented the forced labour policy during the war when he was Commerce and Industry Minister. Liu launched a lawsuit for compensation in the early nineties, but this was rejected. However, after several appeals he eventually won his case in July 2001. Sadly, he had passed away in September 2000 before the final verdict. While the case was hailed as a landmark, the judge made it clear that the compensation

was not for his abduction and forced labour, but for the 13 years he had spent in the Hokkaido mountains as a fugitive. Even though the majority of cases were rejected, Rose sees a positive outcome from these legal actions being the strengthening of ties between Chinese and Japanese citizens groups and a general raising of awareness about issues which had for too long been suppressed in both countries.

In chapter 5, "Settling the past," using her theoretical framework Rose explores from the respective perspectives the difficulties both Beijing and Tokyo have with the apology issue and commemorating the past. One of the main problems from the Chinese perspective is that they feel apologies made by Japanese Prime Ministers often lack sincerity, especially those given by PM Koizumi who normally expressed remorse about the war before or after making a controversial visit to the war-tainted Yasukuni Shrine. In Chinese eyes such actions nullify any apology and are in fact counterproductive. Rose observes, "The main problem surrounding the apparent failure of the Japanese to come to terms with the past is, from the Chinese point of view, the refusal of successive Japanese governments to offer genuine, sincere apologies to the Chinese government and people, backed up by actions to reinforce the apologies (page 100)." From the Japanese perspective, it appears that despite numerous apologies given over the years, Beijing is never satisfied, preferring to play "the history card" for political benefit and "many Japanese feel that no further apologies are necessary (page 125)." On the positive side, the degree and extent of the apologies has markedly improved over the decades with that given by Japan Socialist Party (JSP) Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama in May 1995 normally taken as the benchmark to evaluate subsequent expressions of remorse. Murayama headed an uneasy coalition comprising mainly of the JSP and the LDP, the more neo-nationalist elements of the LDP were deeply unhappy about the level of apology given by Murayama. Once the LDP were rid of the JSP and firmly back in power, there was a marked upsurge in nationalist sentiment which is in part responsible for the Sino-Japanese tensions witnessed from the late 1990s to the present day.

In the concluding chapter Rose looks at the challenges which still continue to plague the relationship and the progress made. Fundamentally, the inability to agree a shared version of their mutual history remains the core issue. It inhibits expressions of remorse and apology being expected while leaving victims and their descendants with a strong sense of injustice. The governments have made great strides in trying to resolve the issue, spurred on by the phenomenal growth in economic ties, but growing nationalist sentiment in both countries makes this an increasingly difficult task.

Nevertheless, there is a strong desire in both countries to try to resolve these issues and crucially with the LDP's five-decade strangle hold on power finally broken in the landslide election of August 2009, there is a much better chance for progress. The current Democratic Party of Japan administration has little of the neo-nationalist LDP baggage and offers a real opportunity for greatly improved bilateral ties. The only danger might be if the LDP were to regain power and give

momentum back to neo-nationalist elements, but this scenario currently seems unlikely. Rose must be commended for producing such a substantive and impressively researched trilingual work which significantly adds to our understanding of Sino-Japanese history-related issues. She concludes her work on a positive note, "Reconciliation between the two countries is undoubtedly making progress, but there is still a long way to go."



I Survived For All That – A Tale of British POWs (それでもぼくは生きぬいた—日本軍の捕虜になったイギリス兵の物語)

By Hiroko Sherwin
(シャーウィン裕子)

Nashinoki-sha, 2009,
244 pages.
ISBN-10: 4816609105

Review by Akira Sugino

At Featherstone, 60 miles north of Wellington, New Zealand, 248 Japanese military POW's were interned in 1943. They had hidden in caves at Guadalcanal for many days without food before they were taken captive by the US forces and handed over to New Zealand. Many of them, therefore, were in poor health and only about 45 of them were made to work. The new Camp Commander, however, ordered 105 men to be put to work. The Japanese NCO refused and sought a meeting with the Camp Commander. The Commander ordered him to be detained for disobedience. The Japanese soldiers surrounded him tightly so as to prevent his seizure. Thereupon the guards opened fire with machine guns, resulting in 48 deaths and 74 injured in a matter of thirty seconds.

Contradicting reports about what happened were presented by both the ICRC local representative and the Swiss Consul-General in Wellington who both visited the scene. The New Zealand Government rejected a Japanese protest, stating that the Japanese prisoners had rioted with stones, tools and other improvised weapons, attacking the guards, who were obliged to restore order.

New Zealand soldiers who were taken captive by the Japanese army in the Second World War numbered only 112, none of whom died during their captivity. It has been generally understood, therefore, that there is little strong animosity against Japan, based on personal war-time memories. A Japanese ex-soldier who happened to be on a visit to New Zealand recently, however, encountered a strong expression of anti-Japanese feeling, when he wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper which featured an article on the Featherstone incident, reflecting the official version of events. He just wanted to point out its factual misrepresentation.

There was a flood of protest against the letter. Without refuting the letter's factual basis, readers widely accused the Japanese of atrocities in their POW camps and massacres at Nanking, and even of enslaving the Koreans under colonial rule.

The former Japanese soldier was shocked at the violent reaction and regretted that he had stoked anti-Japanese feeling by his careless rejoinder. He was relieved to read several days later a letter from a grandson of a guard at the Featherstone camp, recalling that his grandfather was long unable to get over his nightmarish memories, and proposing not to take issue over the matter anymore.

Cicatrix manet.* One may apparently recover from a bad experience, but the scar remains for a long time. It may never heal.

This book (in Japanese), "I Survived For All That — A Tale of British POWs" by Hiroko Sherwin, is based on memoirs and oral histories by six former British soldiers who had languished in Japanese POW Camps in the Second World War. Admittedly memoirs and oral histories will not be entirely free from errors of memory and bias of self-justification. But the soldiers' memories remain surprisingly vivid as much as bitter. The authenticity of their accounts is fully supported by documentary evidence in the form of numerous war-time diaries and memoranda donated to the Imperial War Museum library. Moreover their harrowing stories are carefully placed in a balanced perspective with hindsight and wisdom, by giving prominence to the fact that they had also encountered good-intentioned Japanese, even though their sufferings must have been overwhelming. Notwithstanding the indescribably hard experience they were forced to undergo in their camps, they had never lost vigour to live through either by sheer dint of will-power or by engaging themselves in activities for self-advancement under extreme circumstances. It should be noted that even those who had thus survived had to suffer, almost without exception, deep trauma caused by bitter memories for many years after returning home.

It was in October 1945, five months after the war in Europe had seen its end, that the returning soldiers from the Far East were reunited with their families. People back home also had long endured hardship in their daily wartime life and would not bend an ear to what the demobilized soldiers wanted to tell about their experience in their camps. They did not return as victorious war heroes either. Thus they willy-nilly withdrew into their shell, and would not tell their whole stories till much later. Though perhaps for different motives, it was much the same with the Japanese soldiers who had been repatriated many more months later in the following year. They were sent back home utterly disgraced, without fanfare.

What is galling for the British ex-soldiers appears to be the fact that little is known in Japan about war-time histories, notably about the inhuman treatment meted out to them by the Japanese army. A number of memoirs by British soldiers, "The Burma-Siam Railway" by Robert Hardie, "The Railway

Man" by Eric Lomax and "Through the Valley of the Kwai" by Ernest Gordon, to name but a few, have been translated and published in Japan. A considerable amount of scholarly research has also been done by Japanese researchers on the subject, whose results are now well documented. Nonetheless, Japanese soldiers themselves are understandably very reticent about their experiences, in spite of the fact that many wartime memoirs have recently been written and published.

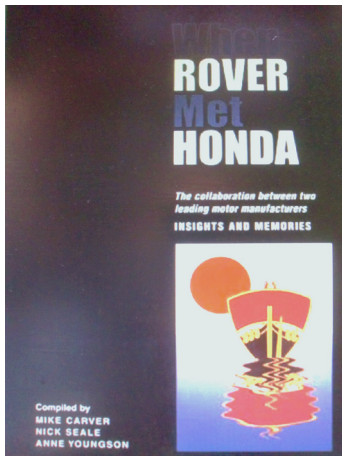
Regarding this particular problem of POWs, a slim volume "Building the Burma-Thailand Railway 1942—43" by Kazuo Tamayama is probably the only English publication from the Japanese side which puts together short contributions by Japanese ex-soldiers of the Railway Regiments which took on the job of its construction, utilizing the workforce of POWs and Asian labourers. Official records are also scanty. The Japanese Imperial Army was disbanded by the occupation forces, and nine long years had to elapse before the current Self-Defense Forces were established. It was much later that any meaningful work to preserve war-time records was undertaken, by which time much had been lost or stowed away.

Eric Lomax wrote, after describing how he had consented the hard way to meet his former Japanese captor for the sake of reconciliation, "Sometime the hating has to stop." Another British ex-POW said, "I have neither forgotten nor forgiven. But I have stopped hating. I like the modern Japanese and am happy to treat them as my friends." He drew a distinction between the older Japanese who had a hand in the war and the new generation who didn't. It would not have been an easy thing for them to do. Those who had perished in their camps, and their surviving families for that matter, will have had no chance to do so, even if they so wanted.

The hand of reconciliation can only be extended by the sufferers, and the Japanese have only to grasp it. What the Japanese can do and must do on their part is to learn the history and face up to the facts, however unbearable. Life is lived forwards, but can only be understood backwards. This is a moral burden in the form of a historical legacy that the young generation has equally to bear. For that purpose, this book will be a useful addition to anyone's library, especially for Japanese people.

* Cicatrix manet – Latin meaning "The scar remains."

Akira Sugino (杉野明) is a former Japanese diplomat, who held many posts during his career including Ambassador to Chile as well as a Minister at the Japanese Embassy in London. As a young diplomat he read history at Cambridge. He is the author of Singapore Prisoner of War Camp – Sixty years on - war era testimony (ガポール捕虜収容所 — 戦後60年 — 時代の証言), 2005.



When Honda Met Rover

edited by Mike Carver,
Nicholas Seale and
Anne Youngson

CSY Publishing, 2008, 177
pages, ISBN-10: 0956034306

Review by Kiyoshi Ikemi

Although it has now become nothing particularly unusual for two automobile manufacturers to cooperate

with each other for mutual benefit, the collaboration undertaken by Honda of Japan and Rover of Britain late in the last century was unique even by today's standards. As reviewed and analyzed in the book "When Rover Met Honda," their collaboration started out with a modest project of Rover producing cars under license from Honda, and the two companies moved "step by step," rather than setting out an ambitious, long-term target from the outset; it expanded to joint development of an entirely new model, to joint production, to joint purchasing of materials and components, and finally to cross-shareholding. After 15 successful years, however, the collaboration came to a sudden end for reasons totally beyond the control of either party.

East Meets West

Perhaps more importantly, this was the first case in the world's automotive history in which a company of the East had joined hands with a company of the West. As the book's principal author Mike Carver states in the Preface, this book challenges the assertion by British poet Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), who said, "Oh, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great judgment seat." Toward the end of the book, Carver says: "The book describes some of the ways in which Rover and Honda cast considerable doubt on whether Kipling's words applied to the modern world. Now plans in the East for the use [by Chinese carmakers] of what were once names of Rover vehicles show that Kipling's views on East and West are well out of date." If the Honda-Rover collaboration was unique, the way this book is composed is also somewhat unconventional. Essentially, it is a collection of articles contributed by a number of former executives of the two companies who were directly responsible for the much diversified aspects of the collaboration. As Carver states, "Only the people working on the collaborative projects can properly reveal what was involved and what working with the other company was like. The book... is not intended to be a complete academic-type examination of the Rover-Honda collaboration." The book starts out by reviewing the events leading up to Rover approaching Honda in 1978 after failing to find a partner in the European or American motor industry. "In summary," Carver says, "Rover went to Honda... to ask for help (although the request was not couched in quite such suppliant terms) in developing new car models." Honda responded by offering Rover the right to produce a Honda-designed model under license and sell it under the

Rover name. Carver recalls that in the course of negotiations, the two companies were able to overcome cultural differences, which he says "are exaggerated, especially in business relations. There is great attention given to such things as business cards, bowing and gifts – all superficial and covered by polite and sensible social behaviour. Companies in the same business will have a common understanding of the business that overrides all such superficialities." This does not mean, however, that the two sides were free from misunderstandings or suspicions. Carver states that in an early stage of negotiations, some senior Rover executives started suspecting that Rover was being forced to pay Honda excessively for the use of the design and for the components and capital equipment to be supplied from Honda because the basis for the mutually agreed prices "had to be taken on trust." He goes on to say such "trust was not in great supply in British and American companies when doing deals – a pity; the East has much to teach us on this." After overcoming these and other problems, Rover and Honda finalized the wording of the license production agreement in September 1979. Although Honda was ready to execute it, Rover, which was owned by the National Enterprise Board, had to wait for the British government's approval of funding. With then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher "no lover of Rover" in Carver's words, the approval did not come until December 23. Rover's chief executive Sir Michael Edwardes flew to Tokyo on Christmas Day for the official signing of the first agreement with Honda President Kiyoshi Kawashima on December 27.

Read the rest of this fascinating in-depth review on our website:

<http://www.japansociety.org.uk/resources/the-japan-society-review/japan-book-review-back-issues>

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Kamome Diner (かもめ食堂/Ruokala Lokki)

directed by Naoko
Oigami

2006, 102 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan

After a serving of 'Kamome Diner' I emerged from the cinema feeling altogether uplifted and nourished as if by a good helping of comfort food, akin to someone in a 'Ready-Brek' advertisement.

The captivating and beautifully-acted film centres on thirty-something Sachie, who has left Japan for Helsinki; there she has opened a plainly but attractively furnished diner offering simple Japanese fare. Though no one sets

foot in the diner, there is no lack of interest in the exotic owner and the film gently makes fun of perceptions of the Japanese – three Finnish women regularly peer in the diner and rush off alarmed each time Sachie looks at them with a welcoming smile. They wonder whether this diminutive foreigner is indeed a child or an adult but are reluctant to check for themselves.

Tommi (Jarkko Niemi), a young Japanophile who speaks a smattering of Japanese and wears Japan-themed t-shirts ends up being Sachie's first customer and regular and as such gets free cups of coffee thereafter. On one occasion he asks Sachie for the lyrics to the 'Gatchaman' (Japanese animated programme) song, which for the first time makes her really think about Japan.

That very day Sachie comes across the unusual looking Midori (Hairi Katagiri) reading 'Moomin Summer Madness' in a bookshop café. Much to Sachie's delight, Midori scribbles down the Gatchaman lyrics for her and ends up staying at Sachie's home while helping out at the diner for free.

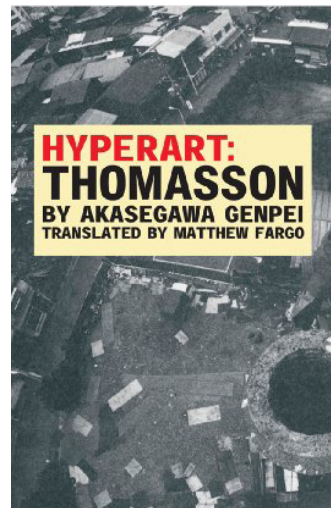
Midori, randomly holidaying in Finland, is a kooky straight-talking individual. Out of gratitude to Sachie for her hospitality and friendship, she thinks of ways of attracting more customers to the eatery through advertising it to Japanese tourists or pandering to the Finnish palate through adding reindeer and herring 'onigiri' (rice balls) to the menu. Sachie, however, is adamant that her simple menu will eventually win over local Finns and doesn't want to pander to customers in any way. She is confident that the simple plum, seaweed and salmon onigiri or Japanese 'soul food' will naturally attract a Finnish clientele.

This does happen eventually, helped along the way by the introduction of cinnamon rolls which end up drawing in locals, including the three peering Finnish ladies. The diner becomes the toast of the town as customers start eating the onigiri and pork cutlets in equal measure.

The sense of community that Sachie creates is palpable; she also ends up 'adopting' middle-aged Masako (Masako Motai). Masako, interested in visiting the country which she has got to know through Finnish TV's quirky endurance and air guitar competitions (a funny reversal as it is usually Japanese TV oddities which claim all the attention), and relieved of looking after her parents after more than twenty years, ends up slightly aimlessly in Helsinki.

The film is a tribute to female solidarity, acceptance and quiriness. Funny and beautifully filmed - the shots of photogenic Helsinki are mesmerising and the scenes capturing the trickling sound of coffee filtering and onigiri being prepared in the diner are captivating – a real feast and tonic for all the senses, leaving one with a craving for more.

Editor's note: This extremely popular movie has also been reviewed by Fumiko Halloran in Issue 13 (Vol. 3 No. 1). She takes a different, but equally affectionate, angle.



Hyperart: Thomasson by Genpei Akasegawa, translated by Matt Fargo

Kaya Press, 2010,
352 pages.
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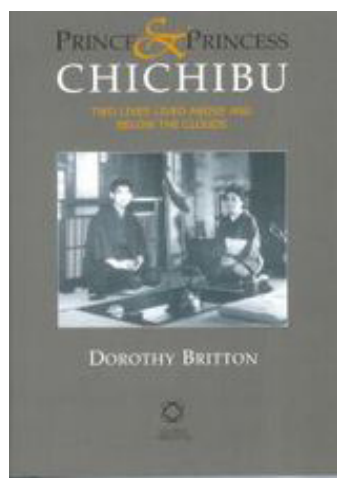
Review by Adam House

Walking back from a lunch break, Genpei Akasegawa and two friends had walked passed what has now come to be known in the world of Hyperart as, 'The Yotsuya Staircase', unconsciously walking up one side, walking along the small platform and then walking down the opposite side. A small flight of stairs, seven in all on each side, with a wooden banister, much the same as many other stairs, although when looking at it, something was amiss, usually the platform would lead to a door, but here there was no door, looking at them, they seemed to be a completely useless flight of stairs. Perhaps at some distant point in the past there had been a door at the top but now no longer there, it had rendered the stair's use obsolete. On closer inspection they came to see that a section of rail from the banister had actually broken off and been replaced by a new piece of wood. They surmised that not only was it functioning as a staircase that actually led to nowhere and was also being preserved and maintained as such. So begins Genpei Akasegawa's book which originally appeared as columns in photography magazines from the mid-eighties. It was published in Japan by Chikuma Shobo Publishing back in 1987.

Realizing that he was moving on from l'art pour l'art, to le stairs pour le stairs maybe, Akasegawa termed this art 'Hyperart', and debating it over with his students they decided they needed a more precise name for their discoveries, and they came up with the name Thomasson. Gary Thomasson, a baseball player who had then been recently signed by the Yomiuri Giants, encapsulated everything that the art signified. Since starting his career with the Giants he had failed to make contact bat with ball, although being paid a mint he served no great purpose. So the momentum for the hunt of Thomassons begins and they discover the 'defunct ticket window of Ekoda' (sealed with plywood), 'the pointless gate at Ochanomizu', (looks like a gate but is completely sealed with concrete), mysterious eaves that jut out of walls protecting vanished mail boxes of long ago. Many examples prove to be puzzling to solve, like a floating doorway appearing in a wall that belongs to the basement of a house? The photograph used as the book's cover comes from a reader's report in Urawa. Noticing a wall of a drycleaner's that appeared to have a blip in the middle, closer inspection revealed that it was in actual fact a doorknob for a door that had been sealed over. The reader concludes his report, "what's more, the doorknob actually turned."

Soon with numerous reports of sightings and photographs being sent in by magazine readers, some from as far as Paris and China, it became clear that Thomassons were not only a Japanese phenomenon, but could be found wherever humans create buildings. Collecting together paintings, models and photographs, Akasegawa hosted the world's first exhibition of Thomasson artefacts which he called "A Neighbourhood in Agony," and interest was such that bus tours were organized around Tokyo to visit the various Thomasson locations. Although told in a *compère* like prose, the book explores the unconscious side of architecture, which in turn has created some truly inspiring curious objects which question what we think of as art and what constitutes architecture. Probing into these architectural oddities, Akasegawa observes that "The city itself was just an instance, a fleeting phenomena." These pieces seem to appear to us, like they've floated up from an archaeological dig.

Translated by Matt Fargo, who provides a summary of his thoughts about translating the book, Reiko Tomii also provides an in-depth essay on Akasegawa Genpei, who under the pen name Katsuhiko Otsuji won the Akutagawa Prize for fiction in 1981. Akasegawa is also a key figure in the modern Japanese art world since the sixties, being involved with the art groups Hi Red Center and Neo Dada. The book is full of many photographs and if you have seen a Thomasson, the book also provides report sheets to fill in, to see more go to <http://thomasson.kaya.com>.



Prince and Princess Chichibu, Two Lives Lived Above and Below the Clouds

by Dorothy Britton

Global Oriental 2010,
223 incl. Index
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Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

In 1996 Dorothy Britton's translation of part of Princess Chichibu's memoir was

published under the title *The Silver Drum* which was a sweet box given to the Princess by the Empress Dowager, the wife of the Taisho Emperor. She has now translated the whole of the memoir including various poems by the Princess.

She has also added a new chapter at the beginning entitled "The Prince: A Vindication." In this Dorothy Britton declares: "Masayasu Hosaka's biography, published in 2000, makes clear once and for all that Prince Chichibu, Japan's popular 'Sports Prince,' was not an eminence grise behind the famous '2/26 Incident.'" She notes that the Prince who was serving with the army in Aomori at the time of the incident told his fellow officers that "the regrettable action was completely opposed to His Majesty's wishes; and ordered them not to align themselves with the rebels under

any circumstances, and to refrain from doing anything rash." But Prince Chichibu was surely unwise when according to General Honjo, aide de camp to the Emperor in 1933, he vehemently advocated to the Emperor "the necessity of direct Imperial rule even if it meant suspending the constitution in order to improve the lot of the masses." The Emperor disagreed. "Prince Chichibu apparently hectoring the Emperor a second time ... [and] is said to have had a bit of a temper and tended to forcefully 'thunder' his opinions when he felt strongly about anything." It is a pity that the Prince's stay in Britain in 1926 was so short. He had been entered at Magdalen, Oxford, but had barely taken up residence when he was recalled to Japan on the death of his father the Taisho Emperor. Nevertheless he retained an affection for Britain and recalled his time in Britain with nostalgia.

The Princess's personal memoir, sensitively translated by Dorothy Britton, with its account of the Japanese court will make readers sympathise with both the ordeals of Empress Michiko and Princess Masako when they joined the Imperial family. Princess Chichibu was most reluctant to accept the proposal that she should marry the young prince and in her reluctance she was supported by her parents, but the pressure from the Empress Dowager forced her acceptance. Once she became a princess she was not allowed before the war to do anything for herself, but she had to follow all the antiquated protocol. She recalls with embarrassment some of her 'blunders' arising from her ignorance of absurd rules: "The first one was when we returned to Tokyo after the enthronement ceremonies [for the Showa Emperor] and visited the Tama Imperial mausoleum with Their Majesties. I should have ascertained carefully beforehand how many times I was expected to bow, but the prince had assured me that all I needed to do was to copy him, which I did – only to hear someone's discreet chiding voice behind me, 'Since Your Highness is on the distaff side, you should have turned once more, stopped, and bowed. Remember to do so next time.' I was cut to the quick. Moreover, I had no idea what was meant by 'the distaff side.' Later, back in my own room I remember how downcast and dejected I felt."

Later in the war years at Gotemba, where the Prince who was suffering from tuberculosis had gone in the hope of a cure, Princess Chichibu apart from ministering to the Prince, developed her gardening skills in growing vegetables and farming. She had had to come down below 'the clouds.'

This charming memoir makes it clear why Princess Chichibu became the British Royal Family's favourite member of the Japanese Imperial family. Prince Charles apparently always called her his Japanese grandmother.

This memoir is also a reminder of the unreality of much of the life of members of the imperial and royal families. In Japan existence 'above the clouds' is complicated by the old myths about the divine origins of the imperial family. In Japan the Emperor whom we should really call Tenno has never in recent centuries been an autocrat but there are still apparently some people in Japan who believe in his divine origin.