



Editor: Sean Curtin

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Our lead review in this issue takes us back to late Victorian London when fascination with Japan was reaching its zenith. In 1885 the seemingly unquenchable demand for knowledge and insights into the mysterious Land of the Rising Sun led to the creation of a mock Japanese village in Knightsbridge populated by Japanese artisans as well as the debut of Gilbert and Sullivan's ever popular comic opera *The Mikado*. In an excellently researched book, Sir Hugh Cortazzi brings back to life the long forgotten Japanese village situated in the heart of Victorian London and examines its connection to the *The Mikado*. Susan Meehan provides our annual review of the highly popular "Premiere Japan at BAFTA" event which features some of the most interesting Japanese movies of the year. In this issue Susan looks at three films, Shindo Kaneto's touching *Teacher and Three Children* (石内尋常高等小学校 花は散れども), Hiroki Ryuichi's sentimental and naturalistic *Your Friends* (きみの友だち) and Kumakiri Kazuyoshi's emotional rollercoaster *Nonko*. Roger Buckley delves into a substantive new work on the Iwakura Embassy to America and Europe which takes off some of the historical gloss surrounding the mission to give us a behind-the-scenes account. Ian Nish takes us into the murky world of Japanese wartime military intelligence with Ken Kotani's ground-breaking study "Japanese Intelligence in World War II." Sir Hugh Cortazzi explores Brian Burke-Gaffney's well researched volume on Nagasaki, where the author has lived for many years. Burke-Gaffney furnishes us with some truly intriguing historical and cultural insights. Fumiko Halloran assesses the intriguing Japanese language book "Okamoto Yukio: Genba Shugi o Tsuranuita Gaikokan" about a former foreign ministry high-flyer who created shockwaves by quitting his job in order to think outside the box and challenge orthodox views.

Sean Curtin

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We are grateful to our regular reviewers:

Sir Hugh Cortazzi	Susan Meehan
Simon Cotterill	Takahiro Miyao
William Farr	Ian Nish
Fumiko Halloran	Ben-Ami Shillony
Mikihiro Maeda	Tomohiko Taniguchi

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Japan in Late Victorian London: The Japanese Native Village in Knightsbridge and The Mikado, 1885

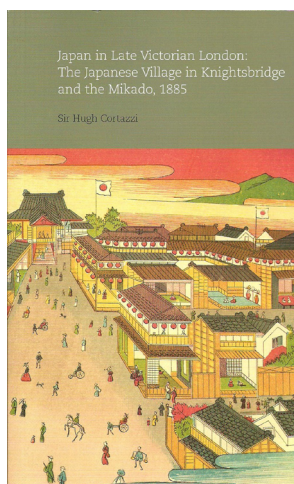
by Sir Hugh Cortazzi

Sainsbury Institute, 2009,
100 pages including 16 plates, 12 illustrations,
bibliography and index.

ISBN: 0-9545921-1-5

£5.00 (details overleaf)

Review by Sean Curtin



The idea that in 1885 there was a Japanese village located in Knightsbridge, the heart of bustling Victorian London, may strike many as being something more suited to a fanciful Doctor Who plot than a genuinely real fact. Thanks to Sir Hugh Cortazzi this long forgotten episode in the nascent years of Anglo-Japanese relations is brought bursting back to life in this excellently researched and beautifully illustrated book. Utilizing a wide variety of sources, he sets the context and describes the process which transformed a corner of Victorian London into "The Japanese Native Village, erected and peopled exclusively by natives of Japan (page 9)." In the 1880s there was an amazing thirst for "things Japanese" as the land of the rising sun represented an exciting and mysterious destination at the far frontiers of European knowledge and imagination. Recreating a Japanese village in fashionable Knightsbridge was just one way to satisfy the intense Japan-mania of the day and it also helps explain why in the same year Gilbert and Sullivan's popular comic opera *The Mikado* was launched on the London stage for its first performances.

The village attracted large crowds and a massive amount of press attention with its replica Japanese houses populated by genuine Japanese men, women and children as well as its “magnificently decorated and illuminated Buddhist temple.” One of the project’s most striking and crowd-pulling features was the presence of a considerable number of Japanese artisans and their families, which greatly enhanced the experience for the Victorian visitor.

Sir Hugh examines his subject from multiple angles, in one section looking at Japanese anxiety in Tokyo about how the Village might affect the image of Japan in Britain. Regarding press coverage he observes, “There was often a condescending tone to their comments, reflecting Victorian feelings of superiority to non-European peoples, and some gave way to the temptation to make fun of the Japanese and their ‘grotesque’ ways. But they were not generally unkind (page 14).”

The author manages to bring the village to life by profiling some of the figures most closely associated with the venture, especially the colourful and oddly named proprietor Tannaker Buhicrosan. In fact, chapter three of the book is devoted to Tannaker and his equally unusually named wife Otakesan Buhicrosan. Tannaker, who liked to be called Frank, appears to be the product of a union between a Dutch national and a Japanese woman from Nagasaki. Tannaker travelled extensively, with Sir Hugh unearthing reports of his visits to Australia and New Zealand and documents about his visits to Germany and extensive tours of England. From the fragments we have he appears to be a self-confident, energetic and highly successful entrepreneur. However, we have a very incomplete picture of him and his wife; Sir Hugh notes, “It is difficult if not impossible to find reliable accounts of them by people – friends or associates – who knew them directly, and so the picture we have of them has to be put together using information from census records, birth, death and marriage certificates and miscellaneous newspaper articles, making it necessarily patchy and sometimes contradictory (page 49).”

The Village was not the only Japan-related attraction to capture the public imagination in 1885, which also saw the popular Mikado hit the London stage. Sir Hugh observes, “The coincidence of the two events (the opening of the Native Village and of The Mikado) inspired reporters of the time to make a connection (page 61).” However, the author demonstrates that the two were not directly related remarking, “The Japanese Village opened in January 1885 only two months before The Mikado opened at the Savoy Theatre in March that year. Gilbert had begun work on the libretto of The Mikado long before that, in May 1884, and had in fact finished Act 1 two months before the Japanese Village opened. The inspiration for the opera is much more likely to have lain in the widespread fascination for things Japanese (page 63).” Nevertheless, there was a fair amount of crossover, London was not such a big city

in Victorian times, and folks from the Japanese village assisted in various aspects of the stage production. Indeed, the programme of The Mikado in 1885 actually carried an acknowledgement of the support received from the Japanese Village, “The Management desires to acknowledge the valuable assistance afforded by the Directors and Native Inhabitants of the Japanese Village, Knightsbridge (page 60).”

1885 spawned two large scale Japan-enthusiasm inspired productions, one is amazingly still popular today, the other, until this illuminating book, long forgotten. The 1880s was a boom time for interest in Japan; in this superbly researched and brilliantly illustrated volume Sir Hugh Cortazzi resurrects the decade’s sense of raw excitement and sheer wonder about Japan. It was this energy and intense curiosity that contributed to the founding of the Japan Society in 1891, an organization which today still enthusiastically promotes and celebrates Anglo-Japanese relations.

Those who would like to buy a copy of the book, can do so by writing to The Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (SISJAC) at the address below, enclosing a cheque for £5.

The Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts & Cultures, 64 The Close, Norwich, NR1 4DH.

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

Teacher and Three Children
(石内尋常高等小学校 花は散れども)
directed by Shindo Kaneto (新藤兼人)

2008, 118 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan

The scene is set in 1920s Ishiuchi (石内尋) in Hiroshima Prefecture and revolves around the sixth form at Ishiuchi Jinjo Primary School who are blessed with the warm-hearted and dedicated Mr Ichikawa as



their teacher. Through him they learn compassion - having scolded Moriyama Sankichi on one occasion for sleeping in class, Mr Ichikawa then begs his forgiveness when Sankichi cheerfully recounts that he has been up all night harvesting rice. Mr Ichikawa also feels for penniless class president, Yamazaki Yoshito who leaves Ishiuchi at the end of the school year when his mother dies. He also shows them the force of love when he marries a fellow teacher, and broadens their minds by taking them on excursions.

30 years on, the ebullient Sankichi organizes a class reunion to celebrate Mr Ichikawa's retirement and 16 gather out of the class of 32. At this point the film turns overly sentimental and self-pitying; the 16 recount what has happened to them in the intervening years and, predictably, most of them tragically lost family in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Fujikawa Midori, now married, confesses the love she has harboured for Yoshito, now struggling as a screenwriter in Tokyo and, once all others have made their ways home, persuades him to spend the night with her in Ishiuchi as her husband is out of town.

Yoshito visits again five years later, having heard of the death of Midori's husband, stabbed in Osaka. Yoshito meets Midori's five-year old daughter, Yoshiko, and pays a visit to Mr and Mrs Ichikawa who have remained at the forefront of his mind since the reunion. It is Mr Ichikawa who had said that Yoshito is "smart but has no passion" and these words reverberate in the mind of the still struggling writer.

Life continues apace. Mr Ichikawa, left with



irreversible speech difficulty after a stroke is visited again by Yoshito, Midori and Sankichi who cheer him and his wife up with their company and by singing the Ishiuchi Jinjo Primary School song. Mr Ichikawa continues to deteriorate, Yoshito continues to have difficulties with his work and Midori, though pining for him, refuses his marriage proposal; she doesn't want him to leave Tokyo to join her at her restaurant and wants him to continue writing.

A touching film, sometimes maudlin, of life and lives - often unfulfilled or not lived to their full potential.

Your Friends (きみの友だち)

directed by Hiroki Ryuichi (廣木隆一)

2008, 126 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan



Your Friends is a powerfully touching, sentimental and naturalistic film which explores the depths of friendship.

One first encounters Emi and Yuka at school, in the excited lead up to a jump rope contest. Given the job of turning the rope for the contestants as neither can jump, the background to prickly Emi is slowly unraveled.

Emi is intrigued by Yuka, who is often absent from school as a result of a kidney condition which means long stretches away at hospital. One rainy day returning from school, Emi runs over to talk to Yuka only to be struck by a truck and crippled, forever to use a cane.

Interest in Yuka turns to hatred as a result of the accident, but Emi cannot fail to be won over by the sweet and caring Yuka, who remembers her birthday and tells her about the fluffy clouds painted on the walls of the children's ward at hospital.

As the film beautifully evolves, we get glimpses of the few relationships which have defined Emi's life, but the central one is undoubtedly the five year-friendship with Yuka. We learn all this intermittently and as a result of Nakahara, a twenty-something photographer who meets the older Emi, sensitively played by Ishibashi Anna (石橋杏奈), at a school for children with special needs where she volunteers. Compelled by her despite her initial coldness to him, he manages to elicit her confidence and draw her out.

That the bond between Emi and Yuka is enduring and symbolized by Emi's quest to photograph the perfect fluffy cloud for Yuka, is an endearing testament to the strength of friendship.

Nonko (ノン子36歳 - 家事手伝い)

directed by Kumakiri Kazuyoshi (熊切和嘉)

2008, 106 minutes

Review by Susan Meehan



Nonko, wonderfully played by Sakai Maki (坂井真紀), is a 36 year old divorcee who has returned home to her parents' Shinto shrine in a provincial town, embittered at the collapse of her marriage and the end of her film career as a starlet. Nonko mopes around the family home where she is supposed to be the 'home help' and spends most evenings in an alcoholic stupor, fuelled by visits to a bar run by a former classmate whose marriage has also come to an end.

Lethargic, uninspired and bored by life, Nonko encounters the young and naive Fujimaki Masaru who is hoping for a stall space at the upcoming local festival. Despite herself and better instincts, Nonko ends up helping Masaru and facilitates his stay at her home in the run-up to the festival.

The gauche Masaru gives Nonko something to focus her attention on and they gradually become close. This state of affairs is disturbed by the sudden appearance of Udagawa, Nonko's former husband who has come to offer her a job as a film agent. Nonko is a mess, emotionally and physically torn between the apparently innocent Masaru and Udagawa.

On the day of the festival, Udagawa disappoints Nonko once again; he is purely after a loan from her. Nonko's dreams of leaving her parents' home on the strength of the job promised by him are shattered. At the same time, Masaru flips at not being able to set up his stall which sells newly-hatched chicks and embarks on a scary and unsettling Rambo-style rampage.

Nonko whisks him away and they both disappear, their lives in tatters, heading away on a train, hopefully to better things.

Nagasaki: The British Experience, 1854-1945

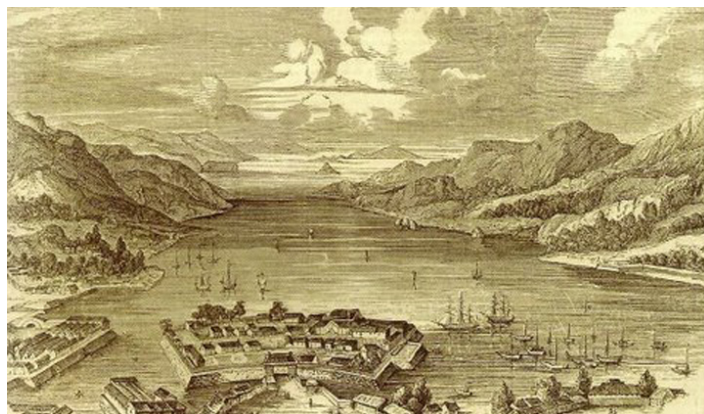
by Brian Burke - Gaffney

Global Oriental, 2009, 288 pages including index, bibliography, notes and 66 illustrations in colour and black and white

Hardcover, £50.00

ISBN 978-1-906876-13-5

Review by Sir Hugh Cortazzi



During the Edo period up to the arrival of Commodore Perry and his 'black ships', Nagasaki was the only port open to trade with China and, through the Dutch colony on the artificial island of Deshima, with Europe. In 1858 it was the first of the Japanese treaty ports to 'welcome' foreign traders. It was soon overtaken as a trading centre by Yokohama and from 1868 by Kobe. Hakodate, the only treaty port in Hokkaido, was more important as a refuge for whalers and for contacts with Russia than for commerce. Nagasaki remained a significant trading port at least until the end of the nineteenth century and became one of Japan's major shipbuilding centres. There was a British consulate in the city between 1859 and 1941 and as the list of British consuls in Nagasaki on pages 248-9 shows, this was not seen by the British authorities as a backwater.

In addition to trade, Nagasaki was one of the main tourist attractions for foreigners in the late Victorian period. It was generally the first port of call in Japan of ships coming from Europe and thus gave the globe trotters their first impressions of Japan. Its climate was better than that of Shanghai and many foreign residents on the China coast would take their holidays in Nagasaki or in one of the hot spring resorts nearby. Nagasaki was also used by foreign navies on the China station and became a major coaling place.

To many foreigners Nagasaki is renowned as the location of Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* and of the novel *Madame Chrysanthememe* by Pierre Loti. Others will immediately recall the name of Thomas Blake Glover whom Alexander McKay, who wrote a biography of Glover, dubbed a Scottish samurai. But these are only three of the many colourful personalities

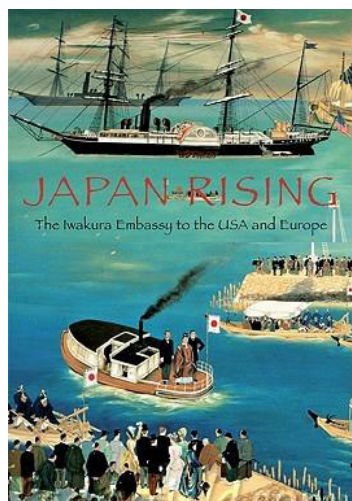
who peopled foreign society in Nagasaki in the years covered by this interesting book. Although this book has the subtitle of 'The British Experience' it also covers the lives of many who were not British including Americans, Germans and French.

Burke-Gaffney has lived for many years in Nagasaki and is the outstanding foreign expert on the city. His book adds significantly to the literature about life in the Japanese Treaty Ports. I hope it will be a forerunner of books devoted to the other treaty ports.

The 66 illustrations, mainly old photographs, add significantly to the value of this book. Inevitably some old photographs are not as clear one would have liked and would have benefitted from higher resolution images and larger size reproductions, but this would have added significantly to the cost. We must be grateful for what we are offered in this book.

Burke-Gaffney has delved far and wide among the archives and has extracted much fascinating information. I rather regret, however, that he did not find space for Lord Elgin's account of his visit to Nagasaki in 1858 on his way to Edo. Nor does he mention some other early British visitors such as Captain Sherard Osborn who made interesting observations about Nagasaki prior to the fall of the Tokugawa. I particularly regret that no mention is made of Rudyard Kipling, who in 1889 was greatly charmed by Nagasaki, but this book is not an encyclopaedia of travel, but rather the portrait of foreign life in a Japanese city, now often only remembered in the West as the site of the second atomic bomb which devastated so much of the city and killed so many people.

Japan Rising: The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe



compiled by
Kunitake Kume,
edited by **Chushichi
Tsuzuki and R. Jules
Young; with an
introduction by Ian
Nish**

**Cambridge University
Press, 2009, 528 pages
Paperback, £17.00**

ISBN-13: 978-0521735162

Review by Roger Buckley

The grandest of grand tours made it back home without losing anyone en route. Despite rain in Manchester, snow in the Rockies, donkey rides in Egypt and hellish music in Shanghai the inspection team lived to tell the tale.

Yet this was no all-expenses-paid, fun trip for casual tourists. From late December 1871 until September 1873 a huge collection of Japanese politicians, officials and students under the charge of Foreign Minister Prince Tomomi Iwakura set out to examine everything and everybody across the globe.

The results of their survey of constitutions, counting houses and customs make for fascinating reading. If you want to know what an earlier Japan, just beginning to find its feet in the wider world of high imperialism, thought of the streets of Naples ("tunnel-like") or the behaviour of Hungarians ("semi-civilized") or the contrasts between Americans ("open initially") and Brits ("they gradually thaw"), this is an ideal starting point.

Professors Tsuzuki and Young have shrunk the five volumes of the English translation originally put out by Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) member Sumio Saito's "The Japan Documents Enterprise" in 2000 into a more manageable 528 pages. The result sparkles with astute commentary, cross-cultural comparisons and views of both the post-Civil War U.S. (then comprising 37 states) and Europe that may not rank with de Tocqueville but remain of considerable value today.

Pride of place should go to Kunitake Kume, the young author of the undertaking. It was his task to look, record and then write up the Iwakura mission's findings for a domestic audience. He obviously approached his orders with due diligence and loads of diplomatic tact – the reader never hears of anyone missing their train or nodding off during the interminable banquets and speeches that followed everywhere from the initial landing in San Francisco to the final days in Shanghai. Ambassador Iwakura's opinions remain unstated throughout in what is very much a group report. It's always a case of "we toured the palace," "we were skeptical," and "we were even given pickled herrings to eat, which were disgusting."

Kume's work provides a historical sketch of each country visited. This is then followed by notes on VIPs met, factories visited, parades watched and an analysis of the political, religious and industrial structures of the countries encountered. It is a careful, if often too generous, interpretation of the West and its Asian territories with the aim of better understanding the nations that had forced the unequal treaties on Japan in the early 1850s.

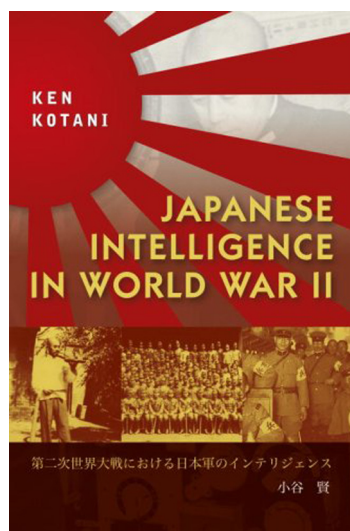
The mission saw at first hand the strengths and weaknesses of its counterparts abroad. Obviously, as Kume insists on emphasizing, the study tour did not always have time to dig under the surface, but the envoys do return home with an experience that can only be described as enlightening.

They are able to meet prime ministers, presidents and princes, take the pulse of the great powers and draw parallels between Japan's predicament and those of emerging states in Europe.

Perhaps the two most revealing meditations take place in London and Berlin. When visiting the collections within the British Museum, Kume senses the gradual evolution of civilizations and feels that “we move forward by degrees. This is what is called ‘progress.’” He then criticizes his own country for having little comparable to what he has just seen displayed and adds that “to excuse ourselves by saying that we are of a different habit of mind is not an honest argument.”

A more practical lesson follows in March 1873 when the envoys have dinner with Bismarck in Berlin. The great man lectures them on his version of international relations, warning Japan to be wary of the British and French. Drawing on the experiences of Prussia when it also was “weak and poor,” he urges his audience to learn from Prussia in its quest for sovereign rights. Bismarck ends his pitch with a plea for German-Japanese friendship and warns the mission never to “relax your vigilance.”

Anyone curious about late-19th-century Boston or Amsterdam or Rome as seen through the eyes of an astute observer will enjoy *Japan Rising*. The fact though that its conscientious author lived on until 1931 is a reminder of how things would change. In the decades after the Iwakura mission, Japan too would soon join the ranks of the imperialist powers and bid to create its own new world order.



Japanese Intelligence in World War II

by Ken Kotani

Osprey, 2009, 224 pages, including notes, bibliography and index, Hardcover £18.99

ISBN 13: 978 1 84603 425 1

Review by Ian Nish

Dr Kotani's ground-breaking study brings to an English-speaking audience the findings of his earlier book, "Nihon gun no Intelligence,"

which was published in 2007. The subject of military intelligence has been sadly neglected by scholars in Japan until recent years because so much of the source material was systematically destroyed at the end of the war. But the author, through his connection with the National Institute of Defence Studies, Tokyo, where he works, has had access to "one of the largest military archives in Japan" from which he uses much new material in this volume.

The book begins with a valuable review of the existing literature published on this important subject that mainly consists of memoirs and unit histories. He then devotes

individual chapters to the early actions of the Japanese army and navy, discussing signals intelligence and code-breaking, human intelligence, counter-intelligence and the types of foreign assistance on which they drew in order to develop their expertise. Both services seem to have given a low priority to intelligence. Each had its intelligence successes (e.g. in code-breaking) but also its serious shortcomings in dealing with Japan's main enemies of the 1930s, the Soviet Union and China. As the ambitions of the army grew in Asia, it set up in 1939 the elite Nakano School in order to provide a rigorous and many-sided training to a cadre of specialists. They were taught languages and the more recondite arts of lock-picking, ninja martial arts and ideology. Unlike most soldiers who were taught to die rather than surrender, Nakano graduates were instructed to survive at all costs. They proved particularly effective in exploiting ethnic situations on the ground in colonial territories and played a large part in South Seas (Nanyo) operations. Thus, Dr Kotani believes that "the defeat of Britain at Singapore was inevitable [because the Japanese army] had closely investigated the military affairs and topographical data there in advance (page 55)."

It is over the central handling of intelligence that Kotani has the most salient criticisms to make. Surprisingly there were in 1941 when their remit was extended to the United States and Britain as few as 60 staff forming the core of Japan's central intelligence services which were by global standards seriously understaffed. Moreover, priority at the top was given to operations rather than intelligence staff with the result that intelligence specialists were frequently moved on and inadequately promoted. There was a tendency for them to be lower-ranking and lacking in influence. By comparison with USA and Britain, there was a lack of centralized authority coordinating the information that was gathered and discussing its implications. To add to the problem, the army and navy generally failed to share their information and (in the case of the battle of Midway, for example) were economical with the truth in communication with one another.

Passing to the war period, the author rates the intelligence services highly in dealing with the operations at Pearl Harbour and Palembang. He provides case studies of how intelligence was employed in Japan's advance into Northern and Southern Indochina. In these as elsewhere, he quotes from many Japanese and non-Japanese sources and offers new insights based on Japanese sources together with his use of archives from other countries. This leads to Kotani's overall conclusion that, while Japanese units could use intelligence competently at the tactical level, consideration among decision-makers at the strategic level was relatively poor. The information gathered and sent on to Tokyo was competent enough but tended to be politicized or distorted in order to conform to military-naval operational thinking and prejudices. Thus, "it is true that IJA and IJN were defeated in the "intelligence war" by the Allied forces. Yet it was

not Intelligence Departments, but the war planners in Operations Departments who decided strategy...and chose Intelligence reports in an arbitrary and impromptu manner for their own strategic goals.' [p. 163] Another important aspect of Japan's wartime decision-making was that Japan's civilian leaders were afraid of the army's ability to decode government signals traffic going abroad and felt constrained in reaching compromises with foreign diplomats without clearing the ground with the army in advance. It is a moot point how far this affected foreign policy-making.

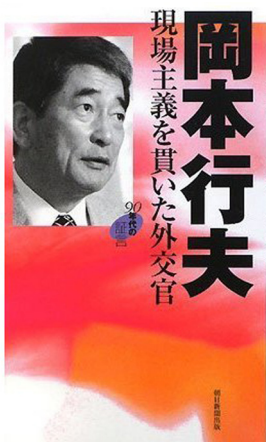
But puzzles remain. It is odd that in a country where bureaucracy and the corporate sector are inclined to base their decisions on elaborate consultative procedures (sometimes called ringisei), information gleaned from Intelligence sources should be under-rated in the military-naval sector. Was there something about Bushido or (what Kotani calls) the 'spiritualism' of the Japanese army which led it to take a dismissive view of Intelligence's role in modern warfare and ignore the broader political picture? Dr Kotani has steered clear of these wider psychological questions; but his short and enlightening study is comprehensive, nonetheless. He takes the study of Japanese military Intelligence to a new level which will interest both the specialist and the general reader.

Okamoto Yukio: Genba Shugi o Tsuranuita Gaikokan [岡本行夫 現場主義を貫いた外交官] (Okamoto Yukio: A Diplomat Always in the Field)

by lokibe [五百旗頭真], Motoshige Ito [伊藤元重] and Katsuyuki Yakushiji [薬師寺克行]

Asahi Shimbun Publishing, 2008, 347 pages,
Paperback, 2,000 yen
ISBN-13: 978-4022504791

Review by Fumiko Halloran



Yukio Okamoto quit the foreign ministry when he was director (kacho) of the first department on North America, a position coveted by ambitious officials. As he was only 45 years old, this shocked not only his colleagues but his superiors who tried to keep him. His departure was reported by major newspapers, which was rare for an individual resignation in government.

In this book, which is based on a series of interviews, Okamoto explains his state of mind. Shortly after the end of the Gulf War in 1991, he was afraid of becoming a bureaucrat whose instinct would be caution, not making mistakes, and not risking his career on challenging causes. He denies having any problems with the ministry, asserting that he maintained

contact with his former colleagues after leaving.

Okamoto then established Okamoto & Associates in Tokyo, a small think tank. It began to attract clients and soon Seirouku Kajimoto, chief cabinet secretary of Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, asked Okamoto for help after a girl was raped by American soldiers in Okinawa in 1996. Okamoto established a special government task force to help Okinawan communities that had various issues with U.S. bases. Since then, Okamoto has often been involved in Japan's diplomacy while remaining a private citizen. Earlier, in the foreign ministry, he had been involved in US-Japan security issues during the Cold War and the Gulf War. As a private citizen, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi appointed Okamoto as a counselor to the cabinet to deal with the post 9-11 crisis and to help shape Japan's response to the Iraq war.

This book would be useful to researchers on Japan's foreign policy, for two reasons. The first is Okamoto's detailed description of what Japan did in several international crises. For example, he discloses hitherto unknown logistical contributions by Japan in the Gulf War when the international community had criticized Japan for inaction. Okamoto was in charge of compiling a list of supplies for the international coalition forces, coordinating with several ministries to secure the supplies and arranging for transporting them to Iraq. In addition to giving 1.5 trillion yen in financial assistance, Japan donated 80 billion yen worth of materials including 800 Toyota Land Cruisers and Mitsubishi Pajero, trucks, forklifts, seawater purifying facilities, computers and construction materials.

General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the Coalition Forces in the Middle East, praised Japan's effort in his memoir, although bashing of Japan with newspaper headlines such as "Too late, too little" continued. Okamoto regrets that Japan lost in the communications war because of the reluctance of the Japanese government to inform the US government and public about its contributions. The Japanese government was reluctant because it was concerned about the political backlash in Japan from those who opposed Japanese involvement in the war. Okamoto discovered Washington was little aware of the scope of Japanese involvement. He points out, however, that the fundamental problem was the lack of leadership by Japanese government headed by Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, who failed to disclose Japan's position, policy, and action.

Secondly, Okamoto explains the working of the Japanese bureaucracy in shaping foreign policy. He cites turf battles, the influence of political issues on foreign policy, and how individuals can guide foreign policy to certain goals.

Japan's role in the US-Soviet INF (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces) negotiation was little known until Okamoto explained it in this book. The negotiation started in 1981 after the Soviets deployed SS-20 missiles aimed at Western Europe. Reflecting close relations between President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, the US dispatched a special envoy to brief the Japanese

government each time the US-Soviet negotiations proceeded to the next level. In 1986, Nakasone received a personal letter from Reagan saying the US planned to propose that Russia withdraw all SS-20s from west of the Ural Mountains and reduce by 50% the SS-20s aimed at Asia. In exchange, the US would withdraw GLCMs (Ground Launched Cruise Missiles) and Pershing II missiles from West Germany. The next day, a special envoy from the president flew to Tokyo to brief the foreign ministry.

Japanese officials saw potential problems for Japan; 177 SS-20s positioned east of the Ural Mountains aimed at Asia had been left out of the proposal. Thus, while the proposal would ease the worries of NATO, the SS-20s aimed at Asia would trigger discord in US-Japan relations, generate unease in the Japanese public, and might breed distrust of the US-Japan alliance.

Four officials at the foreign ministry mapped Japan's effort to make sure that Soviet intermediate nuclear missiles aimed at Asia would be either withdrawn or neutralized; Yukio Sato, director of the Ministry Secretariat (later ambassador to the United Nations), Ryozo Kato, director of the treaty bureau (later to be ambassador to US), Yuji Miyamoto, director of the disarmament bureau (later ambassador to China), and Okamoto himself, director of US-Japan security treaty. Their strategy was to respond to the US proposal immediately, to argue with the US not from the standpoint of US-Japan relations but from the potential conflict in a debate on the nuclear balance in Asia. Such tensions would backfire against the US in the Pacific security strategy. Thus, they wanted not just to oppose the proposal but to suggest an alternative.

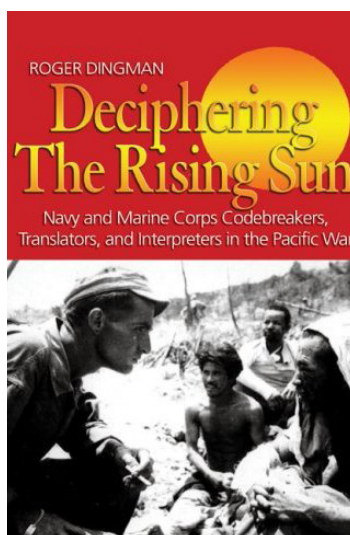
Checking all Soviet missile bases, the four concluded that it would be best if the SS-20s aimed at Asia were to be gathered at a Soviet base in Barnaul, in south-western Siberia, which was equidistant between European borders and the Sea of Okhotsk. This equidistance would neutralize the political effect of the SS-20s by making it ambiguous whether they were aimed at Europe or Asia. This proposal was included in the draft of Nakasone's personal reply to Reagan. Okamoto flew to Washington and Miyamoto flew to Europe to deliver Japan's proposal. Japan's proposal was well received and presented as a Defense Department proposal to the White House. In 1987, Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, agreed that the Soviets would withdraw all SS-20s from the European and Asian front, which was more than Japan had hoped. Okamoto considers the success of the INF negotiation and Japan's contribution to have been the result of the trust between Reagan and Nakasone, which trickled down to personnel on both sides. The absence of trade disputes that could complicate the picture and a quick response by the Japanese foreign ministry, which cut across bureaucratic obstacles, were also responsible.

Okamoto talks passionately about his involvement in the issue of Okinawa and US bases. In 1996, he was appointed special assistant to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on Okinawa issues. Until he left that position in 1998, he visited

Okinawa fifty-five times, building networks with Okinawan leaders, discussing US military bases, and promoting the local economy. He proposed holding the G8 summit meeting in Okinawa; it took place in 2000, hosted by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori.

Okamoto's views on Americans are complicated; while he values close US-Japan relations as the foundation of Japan's security, he doesn't always agree with the US government. One notable example is his criticism of the Bush administration for going to war in Iraq, a view published in a Japanese newspaper. Once the US launched the war effort, however, Okamoto believed in fully cooperating with the US. He feared a backlash against Japan, as happened in the Gulf War. One month before the war began in March, 2003, Okamoto was in Washington discussing Japan's role in the war. Before that, he told Prime Minister Koizumi that American forces would capture Baghdad but the real problem would be guerrilla war and terrorist attacks that would mire America in a muddy swamp. Nonetheless, Koizumi issued a strong statement supporting the war effort. Within a couple of weeks, Koizumi appointed Okamoto as a special assistant and he became engaged in post-war reconstruction in Iraq.

Okamoto frankly talks about opposition to his visible role without an official position. As a former government official, Okamoto knows how to navigate within the bureaucracy. Even so, he was often frustrated by turf-conscious former colleagues, by legal and administrative obstacles, and conflicting interests in government and private sectors. He criticizes the insularity of Japan's political leaders and bureaucrats, arguing that the status quo means backpedalling in a rapidly changing global community. Looking at world history, he asserts that many nations have dominated the international scene for a short time and then disappeared. Japan's influence is clearly declining, he says, and we may be witnessing the beginning of the nation's fall.



Next Issue:

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

by Roger Dingman

In the next issue of the Japan Society Review we will be looking at Roger Dingman's book,

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