
BACKGROUND BOOKS

JAPAN

The complexity of Japan is not easy to encompass in a single broad volume.

Of the writers who have tried such surveys and histories, Edwin O. Reischauer (page 56) must be mentioned, both for **JAPAN: Story of a Nation** (Knopf, 1970, rev. 1974) and his new book **THE JAPANESE** (Harvard, 1977). Frank Gibney, former *Time* and *Newsweek* correspondent in Tokyo, is another. His readable general account of contemporary Japanese society, **JAPAN: The Fragile Superpower** (Norton, 1975), is particularly good on the business world (one chapter is entitled "How To Succeed in Business by Trying").

John Whitney Hall, in **JAPAN: From Prehistory to Modern Times** (Delacorte, 1970, cloth; Delta, 1971, paper), provides brisk coverage in 395 pages of the island culture and involvements with foreigners from pre-ceramic times (100,000 to 200,000 years ago) through the late 1960s. Hall, a Yale medieval historian, tends to favor his period, but since the feudal age in Japan was important and colorful, his emphasis is not misplaced.

Sir George Sansom's **JAPAN: A Short Cultural History** (London: Cresset, 1931; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1943, rev. 1962) remains unsurpassed in its field, although it was first written nearly 50 years ago. It is a showcase for the kind of imaginative writing admired and practiced by this former British diplomat (later director of Columbia's East Asian Institute). A reviewer in the *Western Political Quarterly* called three more extensive studies by Sir George, **A HISTORY OF JAPAN TO 1334**, **A HISTORY OF JAPAN 1334-**

1615, and **A HISTORY OF JAPAN 1615-1687** (Stanford, 1958-63, cloth & paper), "a great, perhaps the greatest, contribution of Western scholarship to the study of the societies of East Asia."

The three Sansom volumes are not concerned with post-17th-century developments. These are well-covered, however, in W. G. Beasley's thorough **THE MODERN HISTORY OF JAPAN** (Praeger, 1970, rev. 1974, cloth & paper).

Two questions that have fascinated all scholars on Japan are: "How was Japan able to become a world power within the short span of a century?" and "Are there any lessons in the Japanese modernizing experience that might assist in the development of other nations?" In 1958, a group of scholars met at the University of Michigan to determine ways to explore further the answers to these and similar questions. The result was a series of seminars over the next six years and a book of essays edited by James Morley, entitled **DILEMMAS OF GROWTH IN PREWAR JAPAN** (Princeton, 1974). The special strength of this collection is that its authors refuse to see development as solely an economic problem; they examine sociocultural forces as well.

Only one scholar has written credibly about the American occupation, which followed the Pacific War. He is Kazuo Kawai, and his book is **JAPAN'S AMERICAN INTERLUDE** (Univ. of Chicago, 1960). The author has lived in both Japan and the United States and shows great ability in interpreting the former to the latter. A bibliographic study by Robert Ward and Frank Shulman, **THE ALLIED OCCUPATION OF**

JAPAN: 1945-1952 (American Library Association, 1974), inventories more than 3,000 books, articles, and documents. The authors only hint at the scope and complexity of the American occupiers' endeavors to remold Japanese society; they make clear the immense amount of investigation that scholars must do before we have even a rudimentary grasp of these crucial years.

Two ways of examining the Japanese body politic are from afar with binoculars or close-up with a stethoscope.

Nobutaka Ike views from afar. His **JAPANESE POLITICS: Patron-Client Democracy** (Knopf, 1972, paper) is a broad sweep in a thin volume designed for the college classroom. But the book is more analytical than descriptive and the analysis is sophisticated. Ike examines various models of democracy. In the Japanese model, he says, the voter trades ballots for specific benefits. Issues and ideology are relatively unimportant. Demands for broadly conceived public policy are negligible. The system is prevented from degenerating into a scramble for pork-barrel benefits by a bureaucracy that has a long tradition of commitment to national goals. Because the bureaucracy is pluralistic rather than monolithic, policy competition is present.

Gerald Curtis wields the stethoscope. For him, "the electoral process is the heart of modern democracies, and the way in which it beats says a great deal about the health of the larger political system." For nine months, Curtis lived in the home (and dogged the footsteps) of Bunsei Sato, a conservative candidate for the lower house of the Diet, and followed him on the hustings. Sato was successful and so was Curtis, who provides a vivid description of a Japanese election campaign. His book, **ELECTION CAMPAIGNING JAPANESE STYLE** (Columbia, 1971), was translated

into Japanese and became a best seller.

The obverse to the domestic side of the political coin is foreign policy. During the past quarter century most Americans have agreed on the origins of the Pacific War: A small, willful group of military officers first gained control of the Japanese government and then set out to seize East Asia, a pursuit that left the United States no option prior to Pearl Harbor but to react (with oil embargoes, etc.) in its own interests. In 1969, Japanese and American scholars met at Lake Kawaguchi in Japan to see if this explanation was sufficient. Their papers are in **PEARL HARBOR AS HISTORY: Japanese-American Relations, 1931-1941**, edited by Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (Columbia, 1973). The book runs on for 800 pages; new data, insights, and interpretations abound. The scholars did not agree on everything but they did conclude that blame lay with both sides and among a broad range of people as well as institutions, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull and the Japanese imperial staff.

For many years, we have been without a solid book on relations between Japan and the United States. That gap was filled in 1975, when Charles Neu published **THE TROUBLED ENCOUNTER: The United States and Japan** (Wiley, cloth & paper). He attempts to explain the dynamics of policymaking in Tokyo and Washington as well as to analyze the contrasting cultural and intellectual contexts. Neu emphasizes the period from 1890 to 1941. He concludes, "With few exceptions, policy makers in Washington and [U.S.] ambassadors in Tokyo had not been able to move beyond the [narrow] assumptions of their own culture."

I. M. Destler, Priscilla Clapp, Hideo Sato, and Haruhiko Fukui are interested in the politics of U.S.-Japanese

relations since 1945. In their book **MANAGING AN ALLIANCE: The Politics of U.S.-Japanese Relations** (Brookings, 1976, cloth & paper), they concentrate on three negotiations—the revision of the bilateral security treaty in 1960, the reversion of administrative rights over Okinawa to Japan in 1969, and the dispute over quotas for Japanese textile exports to the United States in 1971. In their final chapter they write, “We have found that [senior] U.S. officials recurrently take actions or make statements that damage or complicate U.S.-Japanese relations because their minds and interests are elsewhere.” In short, these writers reach the same conclusion for the postwar period that Charles Neu reached for the prewar period.

Over the past five years, we have been steadily bombarded with books on the Japanese economy. In early 1976, editors Hugh Patrick and Henry Rosovsky delivered the economists' blockbuster, **ASIA'S NEW GIANT: How the Japanese Economy Works** (Brookings, cloth & paper), a solid 943-page analysis of the Japanese economy of the past 20 years (see *WQ*, Autumn 1976, page 134).

Scholars from other disciplines have also offered information and analysis. One is sociologist Robert Cole, who worked in the factories he writes about in **JAPANESE BLUE COLLAR: The Changing Tradition** (Univ. of Calif., 1971, cloth & paper). Cole demolishes the notion that the Japanese worker is

submissive and loyal and points out that the Japanese worker supports the “Marxist” trade unions because their chiefs are the only ones who have the “ideology” to stand up to management.

Another sociologist, R. P. Dore, argues in **BRITISH FACTORY—JAPANESE FACTORY: The Origins of National Diversity in Employment Relations** (Univ. of Calif., 1973, cloth & paper) that Japan has leapfrogged over the other industrial democracies to produce a form of industrial organization more humane and advanced than those of the Western democracies.

Yet another view is offered by anthropologist Thomas Rohlen in **FOR HARMONY AND STRENGTH: Japanese White-Collar Organization in Anthropological Perspective** (Univ. of Calif., 1974). Rohlen's subject is the social structure, culture, and ideology of a medium-size bank in a small Japanese city. In Rohlen's bank, profits are never mentioned publicly; management accepts responsibility for an employee's misconduct even outside the bank; and the president invites the parents of new workers to their “initiation” ceremony and promises the parents, often tearfully, that he will take over the task of educating and caring for their children. Rohlen concludes that the bank “is not regarded . . . as primarily a legal entity or a complex money-making machine, but more as a community of people organized to secure their common livelihood.”

EDITOR'S NOTE. *Japan specialist Nathaniel B. Thayer (page 62) provided the above bibliography and many of the annotations. George Packard, deputy director of the Wilson Center, served as consultant. Mr. Packard was special assistant to Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer, Japan, 1963-65, and is the author of PROTEST IN TOKYO: The Security Treaty Crisis of 1960 (Princeton, 1966).*