

Recent Books from Japan – February 2009

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Japan's Whaling: The Politics of Culture in Historical Perspective / Hiroyuki Watanabe
Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2009
xvi. 222p,; 22cm
ISBN-13: 9781876843694
\$ 45.00
ID: 105276

Hiroyuki Watanabe investigates how the numerous relationships between people and whales in Japan become reduced to the single relationship of killing whales for their meat. He argues that from the introduction of Norwegian whaling technology at the end of the nineteenth century, through the Russo-Japanese War and Japan's windfall acquisition of the Korea-based Russian whaling fleet, to the end of the Second World War, Japanese whaling was closely bound to Japanese imperialism. He questions the assertion that whaling is 'traditional Japanese culture' and demonstrates how the same whaling discourse that in the past drove some whale species to the brink of extinction, today continues to fuel the rhetoric of the Japanese whaling debate.

Gender Gymnastics: Performing and Consuming Japan's Takarazuka Revue / Leonie R Stickland
Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2008
x. 281p,; 22cm
Includes index, Bibliography
ISBN-13: 9781876843
Japanese Society Series
1. Takarazuka Kagekidan.
2. Sex role – Japan
3. Musicals- Japan
4. Social Structure – Japan
5. Popular cultures – Japan
6. Ethnology – Japan
7. Gender identity – Japan
\$ 42.00
ID: 105275

The artifice of gender performance – sometimes playful, mostly conscientious – has for ninety-four years enthralled and entertained fans of the Takarazuka Revue, Japan's largest all-female musical theatre company. Adored by a predominantly female audience, its dashing male-role players embody an 'ideal masculinity,' reflected and magnified by the overwrought femininity of their female-role counterparts.

Through analysis of the aspirations, endeavours and experiences of Takarazuka's creators, performers and fans, voiced in exclusive interviews, histories and

autobiographies, and informed by the author's years of participant observation, this volume elucidates a plethora of gender issues impacting upon the life-stages of girls and women in Japan.

History Education and International Relations: A Case Study of Diplomatic Disputes over Japanese Textbooks / Mutsumi Hirano
United Kingdom: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009
xiv. 313p,; 23cm
ISBN-13: 9781905246687(HB)
\$ 98.00

This is the first in-depth study to examine the implications of history education in the context of international relations (interstate and transnational), focusing on Japanese textbooks as the principal case study.

The author argues that despite a widespread recognition that our grasp of history has some relevance to our views and attitudes towards foreign countries and peoples, ergo ultimately its impact on national policy, there appears to be little coherent discussion of such a significant topic and its practical applications in the field of International Relations. This study, therefore, develops a conceptual framework and directs attention to the factors which predetermine the perceptions and attitudes of the public and policy-makers and in doing so searches for the roots of their world view.

This book addresses the following issues: Government Influence on the Domestic Educational Environment; The Domestic Environment and its Interaction with the External Environment; History Education in Practice: A case of Japan; The Japanese History Textbook Disputes in the Asian Context (Parts 1 and II); Twenty-five Years On-Cross-border Interactions in Historical Knowledge.

Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism: Shadows of the Past / Brij Tankha (Ed)
United Kingdom: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009
xi. 176p,; 23cm
ISBN-13: 9781905246618(HB)
\$ 98.00

This volume explores four key themes emanating from Okakura Tenshin's philosophy and legacy: Okakura Tenshin and the Ideal of Pan-Asianism (especially Islam and China); Art and Asia, and Ways of Defining Asia (up to the present day).

Okakura Tenshin (1862 -1913), art historian and ideologue driven by a notion of Asia bound by culture, is a significant figure in Japan's modern intellectual history. His writings in both Japanese and English became part of a growing discourse that positioned Japan as the guardian and protector of Asia against the depredations, cultural as much as economic and political, of the West.\

Japan and Russia: Three Centuries of Mutual Images / Yulia Mikhailova & M William Steele (Eds)
United Kingdom: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009
xii. 237p,; 23cm
ISBN-13: 9781905246427(HB)
\$ 109.00

This volume recognizes the growing awareness of the importance of images in international relations, exploring the phenomenon over three centuries as it relates to Russia and Japan.

The general perception of one country by another – the ‘stereotypical collective mentality’ – is an historic phenomenon that continues to be a fundamental component in international relations at all levels, but especially in the political and business arenas, and remains an ongoing challenge for future generations.

Bringing together international scholars from various disciplines, this innovative study focuses especially on modes of seeing and on the enigma of visual experience. It draws on numerous visual representations from propaganda posters and cartoons to artworks and films and to more recent media, such as television, the internet, pop-culture icons, as well as direct visual encounters.

The volume raises questions of how different cultures observe, understand and represent each other, how and why mutual representations have changes or remained unchanged during the long history of Japanese-Russian interactions, what mental frameworks exist on both sides of the encounter, and how visions of otherness influence the construction of national, cultural and social identities.

Kyushu: Gateway to Japan – A Concise History / Andrew Cobbing
United Kingdom: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009
xxiii. 346p,; 23cm
ISBN-13: 9781905246182(HB)
\$ 98.00

In this first major study of the region in English, the author examines the key themes of Kyushu’s history from earliest times – the cultural interaction with the continental mainland, settlement, location and infrastructure as well as trade and commerce – arguing that it was the principal stepping-stone in terms of Japan’s cultural, social and economic advance through history up to the present day.

Although an integral part of Japan, Kyushu is culturally distinct in that its location on the East China Sea has exposed the region to an unusually high degree of influence from overseas. There was diplomatic exchange between this island and China, for example, even before the political entity of Japan came into existence. Kyushu in fact, has been the setting for many of the major cultural encounters in Japan’s history, from the introduction of Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity to gunpowder, coffee and tea.

The volume includes a colour plate section containing 60 images which support the text and provide the reader/researcher with invaluable pictorial references to Kyushu’s history from earliest times to the present day.

Victorian Women Travellers in Meiji Japan: Discovering a ‘New’ Land / Lorraine Sterry
United Kingdom: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009
vii. 328p,; 23cm
ISBN-13: 9781905246731(HB)
\$ 108.50

This volume complements other published works about travel by nineteenth-century women writers by locating and creating ‘space’ for Japan which is missing within recent critical discourses on travel writing.

It examines the narratives of women writers who travelled to Japan from the mid-1850s onwards, when Japan was first opened to the West, and became a highly desirable travel destination for decades thereafter.

Many women traveled in this period, and although most left no record of their journeys, enough did to form a discrete body of literature spanning more than fifty years – from the end of the feudal Tokugawa era to the rise of Meiji Japan as a world power. Their narratives about Japan occupy a culturally significant place, not only in the genre of Victorian female travel writing, but in Victorian travel writing per se.

Private Yokoi's War and Life on Guam 1944-72 : The Story of the Japanese Imperial Army's Longest WWII Survivor in the field and later life / Omi Hatashin
United Kingdom : Global Oriental, 2009
144p.
978-1-905246-69-4
\$ 54.00

The Orientation of Science and Technology : A Japanese View / Shigeru Nakayama
United Kingdom : Global Oriental, 2009
288p.
978-1-905246-72-4
Collected Papers of Twentieth Century Japanese Writers in Japan : 3
\$ 108.00

Living Japan : Essays on Everyday Life in Contemporary Society / Harumi Kimura
United Kingdom : Global Oriental, 2009
240p.
978-1-905246-86-1
\$ 72.00

Edited and introduced by the distinguished best-selling author Harumi Kimura (winner of the Ohya non-fiction prize for her book "Letters from Twilight London"), the book's objective is to make 'Japan' more accessible to the non-specialist general reader and provide a counter-balance to Western media images and reporting as well as conventional academic theory and observation about modern Japanese society. By definition, it also offers an invaluable primary source for scholarly reference
