

The Opening of Japan*

Marius B. JANSEN

East Asian Studies, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, USA

(Accepted 10 December 1990)

The dedication of this building for the International Research Center for Japanese Studies marks an important point in the pattern of exchange between Japan and the outside world, and I have chosen to direct these reflections to the dimensions of the opening of Japan. The more obvious ones are extremely familiar to all of us. The most studied, of course, have been the diplomatic and commercial aspects of the opening that followed the arrival of Commodore Perry a century and a half ago.

Our textbooks have long described this process. Modern scholarship has, however, changed some of its outlines. The very use of the word "opening" presumes a society and polity that was fully "closed". We begin to see this somewhat differently today. In the regional context of East Asia what was special was not that Japan was closed but that it was able to enforce its rules thanks to its insular position. Japan indeed had only the most tenuous ties with the West, but neither China nor Korea had proceeded far beyond Japan's grudging acceptance of a limited trade. In intellectual terms, neither China nor Korea experienced the stimulation of outside influence that characterized the *rangakusha* developments of the Edo years. Nor was isolation as such the goal of the early Tokugawa shoguns. The Edo rulers ultimately worked out a system in which domestic control rested on restriction of outside contact, and what contact there was was managed in such a way as to reinforce their legitimation and authority.¹ Over the years, as Japan's supply of precious metals made it desirable to cut back further on the channels for foreign trade, and as the development of domestic technology and crafts made Japan independent of the imports as well, the assumption did develop that exclusion and indeed expulsion had been central to the will of the Tokugawa founder. But at the same time increasing knowledge of the outside world set in motion steps to prepare Japan for possible confrontation with the West if that should be necessary. Those steps proceeded slowly and unsuccessfully, as we know, and Perry's arrival found the government without a consensus for a policy and without the means to carry one out once it was worked out. Yet the Edo government's awareness of what had happened in China, where confrontation had been tried and failed, spared Japan a war with the great powers of the nineteenth century.

Consequently Japan was "opened" on Western terms to exchange with the West. There

* This paper was originally given at the special seminar, as a part of the opening ceremony of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies on 10th December, 1990.

was condescension and humiliation involved here, revealed in the language of the official narrative of Commodore Perry's expedition. Japan, it asserts, is "the youngest sister in the circle of commercial nations; let those who are older kindly take her by the hand, and aid her tottering steps, until she has reached a vigor that will enable her to walk firmly in her own strength. Cautious and kindly treatment now will soon lead to commercial treaties as liberal as can be desired." ²

One recognizes some familiar imagery in these words; Japan is small, it is young, it is inexperienced; but with kindly treatment it may yet reach maturity. Almost exactly a century later Douglas MacArthur, in his report to the American Congress, promoted Japan only from toddler to teenager with respect to open institutions. "The German people", he explained grandly, "were a mature race. But the Japanese Measured by the standards of modern civilization, ...would be like a boy of 12 as compared with our development of 45 years."³ This imagery of youth, at once complimentary and condescending, persisted in nineteenth century discussions of Japan and Japanese culture. Even Lafcadio Hearn, far more sophisticated and complimentary to his adopted country and civilization, saw in Japan a Grecian purity and simplicity, something that had been present at the dawn of civilization and refinement. The Boston romantics who fled from American industrialization to seek peace and solitude in Japanese religion and nature—Bigelow, Lowell, LaFarge, and also Fenollosa—clearly felt themselves transported in time to an earlier age of purity and cleanliness. Japan seemed both timeless and young.

For Japan's leaders the lessons for the new Japan were stern and self-evident. In order to be taken seriously and to throw off the disadvantages of the unequal treaties, Japan would have to emulate the West, and that as rapidly as possible. There was no other path to national strength. The treaties had been forced on Japan; and contrary to initial expectations they could not be thrown off by a new government with intentions of reform. The world order Japan had had to enter claimed universality, but it was in actuality Western.

International law sounded fine in principle, but in practice it assumed full comparability in institutional development as the condition of application. This proved a bitter disappointment for scholars who had looked to it for solutions to national handicaps. Fukuzawa Yukichi spoke for most of his countrymen when he abandoned his earlier utopian faith in international law to conclude that it seemed to have no relevance to the international relations of his day. "International law and treaties have high-sounding names, it is true, but they are nothing more than external, nominal forms. In fact international relations are based on nothing more than quarrels over power and profit...A few cannons are worth more than a hundred volumes of international law." "Money and soldiers", he went on, "are not for the protection of existing principles; they are instruments for the creation of principles where none exist."⁴ A decade later the young Tokutomi Sohō was still full of optimism about the course of human history. Adopting the principles of Herbert Spencer, he argued that the world was turning from military to merchant priorities. A few anachronistic holdouts might continue to speak of force and power, but the future lay with higher goals, and the United States best represented them. "There are now no standing armies in America", he pointed out, quoting an American speaker, and that surely set the goal for other peoples to emulate. But a decade later, after the Triple Intervention, Tokutomi too regretted his error, and concluded, as he put it, that "we were not strong enough. What it

came down to was that sincerity and justice did not amount to a thing if you were not strong enough."⁵ And a third Meiji figure, Okakura Tenshin, put his own disillusion in somewhat different words, scornfully commenting that it was only after Japan had shown its ability to practice large-scale violence in the Western manner that it had gained the respect of the West. Each, in other words, accepted, though one deplored, the necessity to accept the primacy of power in order to gain equality with the West.

Necessary or not, there is no question that Japan learned this lesson and learned it rapidly and well. Within a half century of its forced opening by the West it had begun the building of an industrial system, installed the institutions of a modern state, and scored impressive victories over China and Tsarist Russia. Freed of the restrictions of the unequal treaties, allied with Great Britain, master of Taiwan and soon of Korea, Japan was poised to alter permanently the balance of political power, and soon the balance of economic power, in East Asia and the Pacific world. On that dimension the opening of Japan was indeed a change with permanent significance for world history.

There are additional dimensions. In the second place, the opening of Japan was an opening to Asia as well as it was an opening to the West. In the Edo period there were, of course, no state-to-state relations with Asian countries; trade with China was carried on by Chinese traders who came to Nagasaki and by Satsuma, which, by its control of Okinawa, was also able to capitalize on Ryūkyū-China relations to secure access to Chinese goods. At the same time, unfortunately, Okinawan trade with the rest of Asia came to an end. There were also benefits: Okinawan crafts flowered, though at cost to Okinawan maritime activities. Relations with Korea were carried on by the domain of Tsushima with bakufu authorization, but the Korean station at Pusan functioned rather like the Dutch station at Deshima. Efforts to change this were begun in late Tokugawa times by the bakufu, but they proved unsuccessful. As a result the Meiji government inherited that unfinished business when it began to establish its own diplomatic identity as a modern state.

The opening of Japan changed all this. The early Meiji state eagerly took the Western states as its model in dealing with Korea and China. The embassy of Soejima to China in 1873 found him proudly assuming precedence over the rest of the diplomatic community as highest ranking emissary to the Ch'ing court. In the Formosan expedition the Meiji government showed its eagerness to play the role of a modernized, Western-style power. Korean reluctance to accept a new and modernized relationship with Japan brought the two countries to the brink of war. A few years later Chinese mediation made it possible for Japan in its turn to "open" Korea. As a result the Meiji regime was playing a Perry role on its own only a little more than two decades after Perry had finished his work in Japan. Clearly, the prerequisite to undoing the unequal treaties of late Tokugawa years lay in behaving like the West. Foreign Minister Inoue explained to his colleagues in 1887 that Japan would have to build a "Western-style" country on the edge of Asia, and Fukuzawa admonished his readers that Japan should lose no opportunity to separate itself from Asia in Western eyes and indeed treat Asia as the West did. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 saw these tactics prove successful. The Treaty of Shimonoseki brought Japan membership in the Western club of powers by gaining new concessions from China that were automatically extended to all the powers at the very time that Japan itself was achieving

release from the unequal treaties.

Ironically, however, this Western-style approach to Asia lived in tension with the hope that Japan might somehow also play an Asian role, as leader of the countries that had experienced, as Japan had experienced, the condescension and injustice of the unequal treaty system. There was some reason to think that this might be possible. Asian reformers were full of admiration for the achievements of the Meiji state. Korean reformers like Kim Ok-kyun and Chinese leaders like K'ang Yu-wei saw much to learn in the Meiji example. K'ang, indeed, based his efforts to educate the Kuang-hsü emperor on his ability to explain what had happened in Japan. And even greater opportunities lay ahead. By the end of the nineteenth century a movement of Chinese students to Japan, where they hoped to learn the secrets of successful state building, gave Meiji Japan an unprecedented opportunity to influence a generation of future leaders of China. The Chinese Revolution of 1911 was to a large degree made and organized in Japan, and Sun Yat-sen and his followers believed almost to the end that Japan would cooperate in the regeneration of China.⁶

As we all know, it proved impossible for Japan to have it both ways. It was not feasible to join the ranks of the exploiters and lead the resistance of the exploited at the same time. Actions of Japan as imperialist state contradicted the stance of Japan's Asianist reformers. Yet we easily forget how great that influence was, despite all the handicaps that strong-arm politics posed for it. For one thing, Japan's military academies educated and influenced Chinese leaders long after the intellectual climate in China had shifted away from admiration of Japan. So too with Korea: study in Japan, where things were freer than in colonial Korea, provided an opportunity that might have prepared a generation of young Koreans for friendship if Japanese policies had been different.

In our own day Japan has been able to realize some of this Asian role despite the scars of war and the vast disproportion of wealth that divides Japan from its Asian neighbors. The Japanese model of government-business cooperation, what Chalmers Johnson calls the "capitalist developmental state",⁷ has found apt students in Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The number of exchange students from Asia in Japan has increased dramatically. Recently I saw the results of a study of popular culture in Hong Kong that showed a remarkable Japanese influence there. The government of Malaysia urges its citizens to "look East" to Japan in its desire to combine traditional values with modern technology. Clearly the opening of Japan has included an opening of Japan to Asia. In Meiji and Taishō times that opportunity was lost because of military and political opportunism on the part of Japan's leaders. In the second half of Shōwa it has also been threatened at times by opportunism on the part of Japan's enterprise leaders' singleminded concentration on the extraction of natural resources, but the opportunity remains real and it remains important.

The next dimension of the opening of Japan is the opening to participation in political life for ordinary Japanese. After centuries of warrior rule during which participation in public affairs was restricted to those of samurai birth, the nineteenth century brought the opportunity of participation to the commoners. During the Edo years, their participation had been limited to protest against what seemed violations of accepted practice. Additional taxes, heartless indifference to the hardship of bad crop years, and unusual self indulgence on the part of the authorities could all be targets of *ikki* or *uchikowashi*. That was

participation of a sort, no doubt, but it was difficult and dangerous and its goals were the negation or change of government practice.

To be sure, there were also some precedents for participation before the Meiji change. Many domain lords instituted petition and suggestion boxes which were open to the opinions of commoners. In eighteenth century Tosa, one brave retainer even petitioned his daimyo to argue the case for an elective assembly that would select men of ability regardless of status or rank. And throughout the early nineteenth century there was an increasing amount of talk about the value of establishing the principle of rule for those with ability. Villagers demanded more of a say in the election of their village officials. Professor William Kelley's fine study of dissent on the Shōnai plain⁸ presents us with a number of engaging pictures of village leaders, commoners whose confidence in their ability to remonstrate with their authorities is scarcely inferior to that of New England Yankee farmers at village town meetings. This same rather jaunty confidence characterized political attitudes of the first Meiji decade. The old hierarchy had come crashing down, and a new one had not yet formed. The wonderful materials contained in the multi-volume set recently edited by Professors Irokawa and Gabe, *Meiji kempakusho shūsei*,⁹ show this brash spirit live on in the hundreds of ordinary Japanese who felt qualified to address their leaders with sweeping ideas for what should be done.

The *jiyū minken* movement carried this a step further to produce organized groups prepared to offer suggestions for the new national charter that had been promised. Here again, the efforts of the group of Japanese historians who identify themselves as practitioners of *minshūshi* have provided us with striking evidence of ordinary Japanese who were prepared to regard the Meiji Restoration as a Meiji Revolution in which their opinions and desires would finally be addressed. The accounts of large-scale meetings in which speakers and listeners were prepared to defy the warnings of the ever suspicious police leave little doubt that the Meiji change opened Japan to the Japanese as well as to the outer world.¹⁰

In that connection, we meet today a week after the one hundredth anniversary, on December first, of the inauguration of parliamentary government under the Meiji constitution. How fitting that it should follow hard on the *sokuirei*, in which the new emperor has pledged his fidelity to the constitution. The Meiji constitution itself was a document of its time and place, to be sure, and it left much to be desired with respect to personal liberty and popular representation. Yet with the disastrous exception of the war years its operation changed subtly and consistently, each time granting a little more to a constantly growing electorate. It continued in operation, however attenuated the legislature's powers, during the darkest days of war and violence. It is well to remember that this continuous experience of representative institutions puts Japan quite by itself among non-Western nations, and that indeed few Western countries have experienced that much institutional stability in modern times.

In an important sense, in other words, the opening of Japan represented an opening for the Japanese people. At the same time one must in honesty express surprise that the imaginative, fearless villagers of the early Meiji days, people who were not afraid to claim their rights and challenge their superiors, gave way to the cautious and status-conscious Japanese of the Shōwa era. In the days immediately after conclusion of the Pacific War it

seemed to many that a new era of idealism and optimism was at hand again, but more recently our polls and media suggest a new cynicism about politics. Has, then, a new hierarchy perhaps come into place again, so that there is less willingness to believe (to paraphrase President Kennedy's inaugural) that one Japanese can make a difference and every Japanese should try? Perhaps. But as historians we surely know that moods and emotions change with time, that cycles of great change require periods of absorption and accommodation afterwards, and that gains once made are never fully set aside.

But it is the International Research Center for Japanese Studies that brings us here today, and it is to cultural concerns that I wish next to turn. The opening of Japan was also an opening of the Japanese cultural tradition to the non-Japanese world. In practice, though, this meant to the Western world, for other world centers of culture—those in India and in China—have not until very recently shown much interest in the Japanese cultural tradition. China has in fact begun to establish the framework for a serious academic study of Japan only in our day. Thousands of Chinese students came to Japan in earlier days, but with a very few exceptions (like Chou Tso-jen, the brother of Lu Hsün) they came to study modernization, and not Japan.¹¹

Japan was also remarkably slow to figure in the consciousness of Western thinkers and students. In the Western world, the missionary contact of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had great importance for the study of China, but much less for the study of Japan. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for this. One remembers that in China the Jesuits and their successors found it possible to make headway only by posing as scholars, and to do that successfully they had to make a very deep study of Chinese civilization. Those of their number who experienced success did so by becoming mandarins able to mix with mandarins. The mission to Japan, on the other hand, worked out very differently. Real mission work, in the sense of conversions, proved possible on a scale unknown in China. There was no possibility for missionaries to become members of a scholar-elite; indeed, Japan in the sixteenth century did not really possess such a group. It was enough to win favor with the political leaders—Oda Nobunaga, Ōtomo Sōrin, and their fellows—for the work of the sacred propaganda to begin.

Consequently, while the China missionaries found it necessary to show their mastery of the many aspects of Western learning, in Japan this was not the case. The Jesuit *Visitor* Alexander Valignano in 1583 advised his colleagues that because European "books contain many things which the Japanese should not by any means find out...it would seem meet and necessary to compose for the Japanese special books in all the sciences...it is not necessary for them to know any of these things, because knowledge would cause them much damage and no profit."¹² Despite the depth of learning that many Jesuit fathers accumulated and despite the quality of some of the products of the Jesuit press in Nagasaki, little of this led to serious study of Japanese culture in Europe after the expulsion of the Iberians in the seventeenth century. It was very different with the missionaries in China. Granted, their stay there was almost a century longer; but what made the difference was probably the fact that in steeping themselves in Chinese culture they had prepared themselves for interpreting that culture to Europe. The eighteenth century physiocrats applied that culture to their own political agenda in Europe, and one of the unforeseen products was the development of the school of Sinology at the University of Paris. Though taught, and considered, as a form of

classical or dead learning, that Sinology acquainted even the most casually involved with the antiquity and learning of the Confucian classics. There was nothing comparable in the case of Japan. Montesquieu cited Japan's as an instance of a harsh and authoritarian government but little more. The classics of the Japanese tradition had to wait until the late nineteenth century, years after the opening, before amateur scholars, many of them British diplomats, made them available to Western readers. So it was really the opening of Japan to Western commerce that opened Japanese culture to Western readers and intellectuals.

It is less noted, but equally remarkable, that it was the second opening of Japan, in the days after the Pacific War, that opened Japanese culture to Western students and made it part of the vocabulary of Western learning. Without in any way deprecating the achievements of the great pioneers of earlier days, it can be argued that it was the war—time generation—figures like Donald Keene, W. G. Beasley, John Hall and others too numerous to mention—who first fully engaged the Japanese academy in fruitful interchange and brought concern with Japanese culture into the mainstream of Western university and intellectual life.

It is in some respects ironic that the very speed of Japan's response to its opening to Western culture slowed the West's awareness of the riches of Japanese culture. Particularly in the early years of the Meiji era, there was an uncritical acceptance and use of Western categories and standards that left little room for emphasis on or preservation of what was Japanese. Perhaps we exaggerate this today, since we see much of it through the eyes of shocked Westerners like Fenollosa who persuaded themselves that they were saving something that would otherwise have been lost. Surely they helped to save it. But deeper streams of national consciousness and taste would surely have survived even without their help. The destruction of cultural treasures in the campaign against Buddhism does not, it is true, make for pleasant reading today. But after all as much and more was lost to flames in the bloody suppression of sectarians by Nobunaga and his generation, and we find few laments at that time for the survival of Japanese culture and civilization.

But in Meiji Japan there was a tendency to revise priorities and values, and with it came a degree of derogation of Sino-Japanese culture. The orthography and language were early targets. Maejima Hisoka, for instance, deplored the fact that Japanese education left students so far behind their Western counterparts (what a remarkable contrast to what we read today!) and argued that the fault lay with the use of Chinese characters. "These inconvenient and useless ideographs are part of the indiscriminate importing of the culture of China", he argued; consequently "The knowledge of the Japanese people has been held back to a fearful degree, thereby preventing the country from becoming strong".¹³ In later years Mori Arinori and Saionji Kinmochi, as Ministers of Education, would echo some of these sentiments. It was inevitable that China, the source of so much of the old, would bear the blame for what was wrong, and that a reorientation to the West should bring derogation of the past. "We have no history", an earnest young man told a startled Dr. Baelz, "our history begins today."¹⁴ Let this stand as the extreme in a tide that began with the need for *rangakusha* like Sugita Gempaku to defend themselves against critics who argued that there was little to be learned in the West. Sugita's response, you will recall, was that China itself was only one small country in the Eastern Sea.¹⁵ We must remember, though, that Dr. Baelz' young man was hardly representative of the Japanese in charge of the Meiji state.

Kido Takayoshi, spending every spare moment in antique shops and cherishing his favorite Chikuden scroll, was certainly not about to discard the culture to which he had been born. And, Fenollosa or not, a series of ordinances designed to protect treasures of Japanese art by registering them began as early as 1871, with revisions in 1880, 1881, and 1897.

It is particularly the Japanese response to the Japanese cultural tradition that interests me today. The young Meiji people who came to maturity in a period of cultural reorientation and flux were likely to begin with the view that Japan had to remake itself completely.¹⁶ Dr. Baelz' interlocutor is an extreme case, but surely the young Tokutomi, sure that he had found the path to the future in the writings of Herbert Spencer, shared much of this, however impressive his grasp of classical Chinese allusions and quotations remains today. There was an understandable desire to seize a framework of analysis into which the Japanese past could be folded. For Tokutomi and many others it was Spencer. For the young historian Taguchi Ukichi it was the dynamism of economic liberalism and free enterprise; for later historians it would be the sweeping synthesis of Marx; for still others, modernization theory. And for the main tradition of academic historians it was the school of Leopold Ranke. As Leonard Blussé points out, it was Ranke's student Ludwig Reiss, who taught at the Imperial University for fifteen years, who gave meaning to Ranke's assertion that foreign relations were primary in the development of the modern state¹⁷—however inappropriate this might seem to the history of a Japan that had kept foreign affairs at arms' length in Tokugawa days. The result was naturally a preoccupation with *sakoku* almost to the exclusion of other concerns. The massive documentation contained in the *Dai Nihon shiryō* and the close focus on foreign relations of a distinguished group of historians indicated a set of priorities as well as an interpretation. From this the road to Watsuji Tetsurō's famous little book which makes isolation the single most important aspect of the Japanese experience was clear.

This emphasis, in other words, had its origins in the determination to build a new tradition and turn a new leaf. If opening and international engagement were to become the norm, then the absence of such things in the past became its central characteristic. The new Japan was what would define the old Japan. In order to depart from tradition, one must first define what it is that one is leaving.

So it is that some of the most interesting aspects of the opening of Japan were the cultural problems that grew out of the decision to modernize. The decision to work toward the creation of a new culture and tradition required re-thinking and re-ordering the old. It is a process that went on in all branches of thought and culture. Japanese literary men in the Meiji period, from Tsubouchi Shōyō to Natsume Sōseki, were determined to build a new literary tradition that would be comparable to that of the West, one that would earn Western respect. Inevitably this brought with it questions about the old tradition that had not been asked in the same form: what were its most important and enduring monuments? Which works should be considered its canon? What were its chief characteristics? Motoori Norinaga, in his studies of *Genji* and the *Manyōshū*, had come close to some of these questions in groping for what it was that set Japanese off from Chinese literature in spirit and in truthfulness, but not with the intention of departing from both to build anew. The new re-ordering in Meiji times took the form of cultural statesmanship, as when questions were asked whether the *Genji* was indeed an appropriate cornerstone for the new and

serious world of state competition. It was equally true in the world of art. If art capable of understanding and appreciation by the outside world was to be emphasized, what should be the standards and the monuments? And so also in music; at the same time that new modes and instruments were being introduced, steps were taken to shore up, classify, and structure a tradition that was still alive and rather fluid. *Gagaku*, for instance, was to some degree mummified in order to preserve it.

In this sense, then, "opening" Japan meant "closing" traditional Japan, in the sense that the old culture would not be added to. Of course the classics had long been the subject of study; but the distinction I am trying to draw is the psychological difference between such study in pre-opening Japan and study in Japan after the opening opened one door and closed another. It is striking, for instance, to have a scholar like Haga Yaichi find it "lamentable that we must revere a work written about a decadent society (i.e. the *Genji*) as if it were the highest achievement of our national literature."¹⁸ I think this is different from earlier, Buddhist disapproval of Murasaki's work. It is closer to that element in the Meiji reform that simultaneously did away with the samurai class while trying to create a nation of commoner-samurai in spirit, family structure, and values. In setting something up as a "classic" we always freeze and close it; when it is done for reasons of cultural policy as well, we risk archaizing it altogether.

Step One of the cultural opening-closing, then, closed and to some degree changed what was being preserved. But Step Two was made possible by a remarkable generation of gifted writers and artists who in effect created their own classics. I think here of the generation of Sōseki, Kafū, Tōson; of the creators of Nihonga painting; the first to be recognized as "modern". Now Japan and Japanese culture were becoming immeasurably richer for the opening; in part because of the broader riches that could be absorbed into the newly developing Japanese cultural tradition, but chiefly because of the quality of product that was brought forth by a generation that had become Westernized without becoming Western.

Western understanding of the Japanese tradition began to take form just at the time that Japanese scholars were beginning to work these things out. To some degree the two influenced each other. The stern standards of the Meiji cultural statesmen were Confucian, to be sure, but they also resonated with the expectations of the Victorian age. The cavalier judgments of Aston's little history of Japanese literature stand out today for their arbitrary arrogance, but one can imagine in the background some ex-samurai, educated in Confucian values, with an anxious eye to foreign opinion. Similarly, I do not find it surprising that the nineteenth century amateur Japanologists, many of them in British consular and diplomatic service, chose to render the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* into English at a time when Meiji cultural policy was still intent on the values and virtue of *fukko*—the return to antiquity.

It is somewhat remarkable, from today's perspective at least, that elements of the *fūryū* tradition, so central to Japanese aesthetic imagination, had to wait so long for transmission to the Western world. Granted, the supply of translator-scholars was very small. The first translation of the *Genji* was attempted by a government figure, Suematsu Kenchō, who translated it during his student days in England at Cambridge and managed a publication in 1882 (for which he also found a German translator in 1911). Suematsu's version kept

moral considerations in mind, reassuring his readers with a footnote that Fujitsubo's affair with Genji was to bring punishment in the next world.¹⁹ It would be the mid-1920's before Arthur Waley would begin to issue his translation, now coming close to the whole, while Suematsu had provided only the first seventeen chapters. Suematsu's concerns were those of a young bureaucrat who had worked with Yamagata Aritomo, while Waley's spectacles had been made in Bloomsbury London.

But it remains true that the West's real opening to Japanese culture—certainly America's real opening—came in the years after the Pacific War when for the first time a significant number of trained specialists appeared, students first introduced to Japanese language during military service and university-trained in the years after 1945. These scholars proceeded to provide new and far more inclusive versions of Japanese classics, and prepared the way for critical studies by a successor generation educated in the new vocabulary of literary criticism. Thus Edward Seidensticker prepared a new *Genji*, and now critical appreciations by Shirane and Field are at hand with others on the way. Donald Phillip brought out a new *Kojiki*, and Ian Levy's *Man'yōshū* translation makes its beauty accessible to readers who know nothing of Japan. Robert Brower and Earl Miner put studies of court poetry on a new level, and their work, together with new translations of *Kokinshū*, made it available for studies of poetics. All this in addition to the sensitive translations of Sōseki and other modern writers that McClellan, Hibbett, Seidensticker and Keene have provided. With major monuments available in translation in English and other major Western languages, a new kind of study became possible. The Japanese cultural tradition can now be apprehended in a way that was not possible before: Japan has been opened, to the world and to Japanese, to a new degree.

The distinction between “tradition” and “modernity” of which I spoke, one that mattered so in Meiji days, in turn loses much of its meaning as the twentieth century nears its end. From our new perspective continuities outweigh discontinuities, and the transformation of which contemporaries were so conscious seems more like a transition. Political opening and intellectual change within Japan have freed writing from the uncomfortable necessity of bridging present-day reality with an imagined antiquity; the Meiji attempt to restore antiquity is now itself a part of history, and no longer operates to separate us from reality. In the Western world, constraints of time and place that were imposed by the application of Western standards and values also fall away. In literature the very vocabulary of measurement and judgment imposed by terms like “novel”, “plot”, and “theme” becomes challenged as some kind of intellectual colonialism. Japanese culture, now liberated from the West, is able to make its full contribution to the civilization of the modern world.

What goes for literature is no less true of history. The terms of reference in which the Meiji writers looked for a framework into which they could fit their history were heavy with Western associations. Feudal, manorial, fascist, capitalist; translated terms like emperor, throne, divinity, all brought with them non-Japanese baggage that was uncritically accepted as universal. Let us continue to relate and to compare, and avoid the pitfalls of national uniqueness, but let us also be careful to define and to restrict our usage, lest our efforts to open Japan's historical tradition to inspection risk closing it to understanding.

It seems to me that we stand today at a new stage in the opening of Japan to the study of its culture and tradition. And that is why the opening of this International Research

Center for Japanese Studies is such good news for all of us. Its setting, its facilities, and its members promise to provide the kind of setting in which the best kind of scholarship can be carried on. It must be a scholarship that is international and that is free of Western and of Japanese nationalist assumptions. It must be open. In that way the opening of Japan will find its true significance and make its real contribution.

Notes

- 1 Toby, Ronald P., *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- 2 Hawks, Francis L., *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to The China Seas and Japan, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854, Under the Command of Commodore M.C.Perry, United States Navy* (Washington: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1856), Vol. I, p. 390. Despite the title page assurance that this was "compiled from the original notes and journals of Commodore Perry and his officers" and Samuel Eliot Morison's invocation of Hawks' assertion that "Every Work of the work was read to the Commodore in manuscript, and received his correction", ("*Old Bruin*": *Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry*": Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1967, p. 420). however, one must in justice to Perry note that some of Hawks' more striking examples of condescension ("The Japanese are, undoubtedly, like the Chinese, a very imitative, adaptive, and compliant people, and in these characteristics may be discovered a promise of the comparatively easy introduction of foreign customs and habits, if not of the nobler principles and better life of a higher civilization"-Vol. I, p.359) cannot be traced to Perry's *Journal (The Personal Journal of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, ed. Roger Pineau: Washington, Smithsonian Press, 1968)*, which does not use the phrase above where Hawks places it, abounds with terms like "this most singular people", and speaks with respect of "our good friends the commissioners" and "Japanese diplomats". pp.176, 200, and 211. Hawks, Vol. II. also provides a Perry discourse on "Future Commercial Relations" which predicts that "it may be safely predicted that many years will not elapse before this magnificent country will be numbered among the most important of the eastern nations." p.186. The (Rev.) Hawks may have contributed more than he claimed.
- 3 Cited in Dower, John W., *War Without Mercy* (New York, Pantheon, 1986), p.303.
- 4 Albert M. Craig, "Fukuzawa Yukichi: The Philosophical Foundations of Meiji Nationalism", in Robert E. Ward, ed., *Political Development in Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p.128. and Carmen Blacker, p.129.
- 5 Tokutomi Sohō, *The Future Japan* (tr. Vinh Sinh; University of Alberta Press, 1989, p.88, and John D. Pierson, *Tokutomi Sohō 1863-1957* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p.239.
- 6 Jansen, Marius B., *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954); Sakata Yoshio and Yoshida Mitsukuni, eds., *Sekaiishi no naka no Meiji Ishin* (Kyoto, 1972); Peng Tse-chou, *Chūgoku no kindaiika to Meiji Ishin* (Kyoto, 1976).
- 7 *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).
- 8 William W. Kelley, *Deference and Defiance in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- 9 Irokawa Daikichi and Gabe Masao, *Meiji kempakusho shūsei* (Tokyo, Chikuma shobō. 8 vols., 1980s).
- 10 Irokawa Daikichi, *The Culture of the Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- 11 Sanetō Keishū, *Chūgokujin Nihon ryūgakushi* (Tokyo, 1960).
- 12 George Eliason, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).
- 13 Janet Hunter, "Language reform in Meiji Japan", in Sue Henny and Jean-Pierre Lehmann, *Themes and Theories in modern Japanese history* (London: Athlone, 1988), p.109.
- 14 *Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor: Erwin Baelz* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), p.17.

- 15 "Kyōi no go", in Haga Tōru, ed, *Nihon no meicho*, Vol.22, *Sugita Gempaku, Hiraga Gennai, Shiba Kōkan* (Tokyo, Chūō-kōronsha, 1971).
- 16 See, on this point, Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity 1885-1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969).
- 17 "Japanese Historiography and European Sources", in P. C. Emmer and H. L. Wesseling, *Reappraisals in Overseas History* (Leiden University Press, 1979).
- 18 I owe this reference to my colleague Richard Okada.
- 19 Marian Ury, "The Imaginary Kingdom and the Translator's Art: Notes on Re-reading Waley's *Genji*", *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2:2, Summer 1976.