

*Pacific Affairs*

comprehensible had material been presented in table format rather than as numerical information embedded in the text. In addition, a more complete glossary of Japanese terms would be helpful.

In general terms the book is written in a readable style, although the attempt to cover such a broad topic and long period in so few pages does at times give the impression that one is being presented with a succession of vignettes, rather than a fuller picture of events as they unfolded. Perhaps this is an unavoidable difficulty in an overview of this type.

In short, despite its drawbacks, this book would be a reasonable introductory reading for students of Japanese history, politics, economics, or society, but it is likely to be of limited value for detailed research in these areas. Teachers of courses in modern Japanese history might well commend it to students in conjunction with other, more thorough, treatments of specific areas and issues.

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*A HIDDEN FIRE: Russian and Japanese Cultural Encounters 1868-1926.*  
*Edited by J. Thomas Rimer. Stanford (California): Stanford University Press.*  
*1995. xix, 289 pp. (Pictures.) US\$45.00, cloth, ISBN 0-8047-2513-6.*

THIS BOOK is an attempt to produce an integrated work from a set of papers presented in 1991 at a conference held in Sapporo which focused upon the relationship between Russia and Japan during the Meiji and Taisho periods as revealed by the fine arts. The editor wisely commissioned additional essays from three scholars to place the conference essays into historical and theoretical contexts. This volume shares the characteristic of other published conference reports in that the essays range from those which manage to span the differences of discipline and theoretical orientation to speak comfortably, confidently, convincingly, and competently about the conference themes to those with a very narrow focus. However, what makes this a difficult book to review is not the intellectual unevenness of its constituent elements but, rather, the poor quality of its physical production.

The problem is that from page 228 to page 258 there are eighteen blank pages. It is possible that three of these are intentionally blank, but the rest supposedly carried significant text. What is particularly annoying is that the articles most affected are those which were specially commissioned to integrate the other essays. The middle and end of Blair A. Ruble's essay on the significance of the United States is missing, as is the beginning and end of the chapter by Nakamura Yoshikazu titled "Culture and Nationality." I should have liked to have read all of both these essays. Furthermore, the "Notes" to several chapters are missing. Officials at Stanford University Press should reissue the work and replace defective copies now in circulation.

What of the essays themselves? There are some recurrent themes in the essays on literature, drama, and the graphic arts which suggest that (1) while there is some connection between the arts and governmental action, the two realms are essentially independent of each other; (2) it is not possible to understand the relationship between Russia and Japan without reference to a third socio-cultural unit such as Western Europe or the United States of America, and (3) the appreciation of the arts cross-culturally by the general public (and sometimes by the artists themselves) is seldom predicated on an understanding of the significance of the works in their native contexts. What is missing from these assertions is a theoretical framework which explains the observed phenomena. There is only fleeting reference to some of the relevant literature in the fields of criticism, history, psychology, philosophy, sociology, or anthropology. All of these fields have significant things to say about why the arts do, or do not, successfully transcend socio-cultural boundaries.

The contributors raise some interesting problems with respect to the dynamics of cultural exchange, and they present data that is inherently interesting. Nonetheless, this is a disappointing book in that contradictions are not resolved and it lacks a theoretical framework to understand the data which are presented.

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THE WAY OF THE HEAVENLY SWORD: The Japanese Army in the 1920's. *By Leonard A. Humphreys. Stanford (California): Stanford University Press. 1995. xiv, 254 pp. (Pictures.) US\$35.00, cloth. ISBN-0-8047-2375-3.*

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS, important events develop. The seemingly innocuous meetings of three elite young staff officers in a German café to discuss ways of making advancement in the military more egalitarian set the stage for the development of one of Japan's most powerful pre-World War II military organizations, the Futabakai, and "the unfortunate political-military situation of the 1930's and 1940's" (p. 175). Such a relationship may seem remarkable, but in this book, Leonard A. Humphreys skillfully contextualizes these meetings and their eventual influence on Japan's social consciousness within the domestic and international affairs of the era (e.g., the Great Kanto Earthquake, the Great Depression, etc.).

Of the many factors that precipitated Japan's turn-of-the-century imperialistic push (e.g., equality with Western powers, economic motivation in the form of raw materials, etc.), perhaps the most important was its sense of insecurity in a world where traditional social systems were changing at a frenzied pace. Such insecurity helped to define the country's sense of nationalism due to its unceasing desire to be recognized as a "first class nation." Humphreys contends the influence that Japan's military elite had on the country's political consciousness grew as a result of the political in-