

BOOK REVIEW

By Shozaburo Kimura
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The Other Hundred Years War

Japan's bid for supremacy 1941-2041

By Russell Braddon, Collins, 248 pages, £10.95.

Europeans often say that the Japanese are still fighting World War II.

The Australian-born author of this book was drafted and fought in Malaya during World War II. Taken prisoner by the Japanese, he observed at close hand the character of the Japanese army. He has superimposed his wartime observations on the Japanese victory in the economic war that followed the military one. He has adopted the expression "hundred years war," which the Japanese used in the final phase of World War II, to describe the economic battle. The author recalls Japanese army officers telling him, as they were being led away to a POW camp in 1945, "There's still 96 years to go!"

This book presents a very realistic and contemporary view of the Japanese. It is based not only on the author's own revealing experiences in the war, but on intellectual conversation with economists, scholars, men of culture, and politicians representative of contemporary Japan, including Shichihei Yamamoto, the trans-

lator of the Japanese edition of this book. He also conducted painstaking research on Japan's history from the Triple Intervention of 1895 (Tsarist Russia, France and Germany pressured Japan to give up rights acquired as a result of victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95). He analyzes the Japanese with cool detachment and sounds a warning both to the Japanese and to the Europeans.

The author analyzes why in the early stage of the war his unit was overpowered by the Japanese army. He discovered that, contrary to what he had heard, the Japanese soldiers were not bow-legged barbarians with protruding teeth who were myopic and afraid of darkness and used bows and arrows. Rather, he discovered they were well-trained, agile, courageous, and very cautious. They were capable of organized action even without orders from their superiors. The Japanese army's information collecting capability was outstanding. The author concludes that his unit was defeated because of lack of knowledge and information about the Japanese forces.

In the current "export war," Japan has won a victory far greater than her initial battlefield successes in the war she started in December 1941. What is common to the Japanese of those days and the Japanese of today is the great confidence with which they take risks. The Japanese of today, more than any other people, display the attributes which characterized the English merchant adventurer of the past.

On the other hand, the author contends that just as Westerners should respect the good points of Japanese national traits, so the Japanese should recognize their own shortcomings. If the Japanese should become so conceited as to think that they could manipulate the world economy as they wish, they risk the possibility of suffering a defeat far more disastrous than in the decisive battle off Midway.

To the author, the Japanese are a fascinating race of people. They have tremendous vitality, sense of humor and inner pride. They are polite, methodical, exact and strong-willed.

The author hits the point when he observes that the spirit of the Field Service Code of the old Imperial Army and the Imperial Instructions to Servicemen remain alive in the global strategy of Japanese corporations and in Japanese factories, and that the life of the individual Japanese is governed by numerous obligations and duties.

The author says that Westerners are mistaken to think of the Japanese just as a group of sadists or as 100 million worker bees. He also sounds a warning to the Japanese that they are beginning to be affected by the "victory disease," the overconfidence that comes from thinking of their country as a superpower.

At a time when the development of better Japan-Europe relations is needed, we should read this book with great care. The author's account of his experiences as a prisoner-of-war is particularly vivid and colorful.

TASTE OF TOKYO

Sushi Restaurant "Isokan"

Until recently, *sushi* was one of the foods which only the Japanese enjoyed. It may be thought in other parts of the world that this combination of boiled rice and raw fish dipped in soy sauce is an Oriental dish. *Sushi*, however, is unique to Japan.

Such being the case, this writer hesitated at first to introduce a *sushi* restaurant to foreign readers. However, people of other lands have recently begun to cultivate a taste for this seafood treat. There are 3-4 *sushi* restaurants in Washington, D.C. and *sushi* restaurants in other major Western cities—including New York, Los Angeles, Paris and London—are also well patronized. Moreover, half of their customers are non-Japanese. One of the reasons for the mounting international popularity of *sushi* is that rice and fish have been medically confirmed as



being excellent health foods. All in all, *sushi* has fully earned its credentials as an international delicacy.

Because the most delicious part of the freshest fish is used in the making of it, *sushi* can be a rather extravagant dish. Walking into an unfamiliar *sushi* restaurant in Tokyo is just as dangerous as being drawn into an unfamiliar bar in the city, where the bill makes your eyes pop out

and blows away your intoxication in an instant. It is not rare to be charged more than ¥20,000 per person in a *sushi* restaurant, turning what might otherwise be a delightful eating experience into something considerably less pleasant.

If you are keeping an eye on your pocketbook, I recommend "Isokan," which serves the most delectable *sushi* in Tokyo. At Isokan you can eat your fill for about ¥5,000 a head, choosing from a selection of about 50 kinds and washing it all down with one or two bottles of *sake*.

Unaccountably, Isokan is not widely known among ordinary Japanese. If you introduce this shop to your Japanese acquaintances, I can guarantee you will be showered with gratitude by those who have never before found a place where they can enjoy first-class *sushi* without fear of being gouged. Your stock will go up as a person who really knows Japan.

The restaurant seats 33 persons and is usually crowded with the lucky aficionados who know of its existence. Best telephone ahead for a reservation. It is closed on Mondays. (Yoshimichi Hori)