

rigid structure of interlocking slabs of wood. Whole logs are trimmed to have a cross-section the shape of an isosceles triangle, which means that the contact surface is some 10cms wide. This gives a solid weatherproof surface as well as an aesthetically pleasing corrugated texture. The building is raised on wooden piles, and the fact that its floor is some nine feet off the ground may have something to do with ensuring the preservation of the treasures that were long housed there. However, the airtight wooden chests they were kept in probably had a greater effect. Although it looks from the outside like one single building, it actually contains three compartments, the North, South, and Central storerooms.

Eggs in two baskets

Since World War II the priceless contents themselves have been moved out of the Shoso-in into two nearby ferroconcrete buildings, a wise move in the sense of not having all one's eggs in one basket. Most historical wooden buildings in Japan are relatively modern replicas of many-times-burnt-down originals; that the Shoso-in and its contents should have won through to the late 20th century only means that it is now pushing its luck. From the fire started by a lightning strike in 1254 (promptly dowsed by neighbors), down through earthquakes and storms, freezing winters and steamy summers, the building and the things it has guarded so well have survived. And what things!

The core of the collection consists of objects donated to Todaiji by the Empress Komyo after the death of her husband, the Emperor Shomu, in 756 A.D. Komyo was the first commoner to become an imperial consort, and she was clearly an intelligent and able woman who shared many of the duties of her husband. There is always a danger of reading one's own cultural values into a quite different lifestyle, but Komyo's action, on the forty-ninth day of her widowhood, in presenting to the temple a large number of valuable objects that had been used regularly by her husband, with the comment that seeing them was a constant and painful reminder of her loss, adds to the impression that this was a remarkably "modern" marriage in its suggestion of a happy relationship combined with a working partnership.

She made several other, similar, donations later. The collection includes articles used at court, poems composed and written by both Shomu and Komyo, musical instruments, weapons, and a whole compendium of medicines—rare imports, some of them—for the monks to dispense free of charge to those who needed them. The document recording

the donation, itself a calligraphy specimen of merit, lists far more objects than have survived to the present day, but still there are over 100 items dating from that time, plus almost 40 medicine samples. Not all the attrition is due to wear and tear. Nearly all the armor and weapons were removed and put to use in a rebellion in 764.

Fortunately, the solidly-built repository with its valuable contents attracted other treasures. First, other items connected with the reign of the Emperor Shomu were transferred to it in about the year 950 from another storehouse that was not wearing so well. These items seem to have been less accurately listed, and to this day it is difficult to assess just what was brought in. The inventories made at various times—even the modern ones—are a researcher's nightmare, especially since the Japanese language has no plural, and numbers were not always included; thus, "Item: knife" comprises 60 knives, "Item: bamboo flower container" covers over 500 of them, while "Item: arrow" takes you well into the thousands.

There is another problem, too: each curator or researcher has his own way of looking at things, and one object may fall into many different classifications. One has only to live in Japan a few months to discover that, even in daily life, the Japanese do not necessarily follow the groupings that the westerner assumes to be universal. On reflection, we can see the sense in selling teapots and cups in shops that sell tea; but *why* do they sell dried seaweed there as well? Likewise, there is a historical reason for liquor shops to have a large SALT sign outside, but it is not a connection that leaps to the non-Japanese mind.

Computers to end problems

So it is with the Shoso-in collection. For instance, it has an important collection of *washi*, Japanese paper, including the earliest extant specimens. No work on *washi* is complete without a reference to the samples here. But some of the most important pieces are documents; moreover, some of the documents are the early catalogues themselves, which are also interesting examples of calligraphy.

Then again, do you classify an object according to its use, or what it is made of, or where it has come from, or who it belonged to? Perhaps, with the advent of the computer that works in Japanese, the end of this confusion is at last in sight. Cross-indexing is within the grasp of the specialized civil servants who, every autumn, spend 40 days checking the inventory and making a selection of items to display in the Nara National Museum for 15 days.

This year's exhibition is from October 28 to November 11, when the general public will be allowed to walk round the outside of the original wooden *azekura* building. Altogether 87 pieces, falling into 79 categories, will be shown, of which 26 items in 24 categories will be on view for the first time.

This year textile buffs will be especially pleased, for among the items on view for the first time are examples of silk brocade and twill—obis and fragments of larger objects. There are also some scrolls from the Shoso-in and Tonan-in archives. Other "new" items are two shallow flower baskets, and gilt items. Previously shown favorites will appear again, notably a beautiful spherical silver incense-burner with its no-spill brazier mounted on gimbals inside, designed to perfume clothing. This particular treasure had the lower half replaced a century ago, but again and again one has the feeling that the things are new, so excellent is the preservation, especially with the metal and ceramic objects.

These are treasures that wear their age lightly—can they really be 1,200 years old? We are looking at one of the most remarkable collections in the world. The neat, beautiful, and remarkably readable calligraphy of the Emperor and Empress, the clothes and jewelry they wore, the articles they handled, have the power to take us back in a breath of time to a civilized couple who ruled together, and apparently had a good marriage into the bargain. That is something that defies all attempts at classification. Item: happiness?

(Doreen Simmons, *special adviser to the Foreign Press Center in Tokyo*)

Bookshelf

Appointment in Japan

By G. C. Allen

Published by the Athlon Press Ltd.

1983, London

196 pages; £12.50

In mid-September 1922, young George Allen arrived at the port of Kobe after a long sea voyage. Just graduated from the University of Birmingham, Allen came to Japan at the invitation of the government to serve as a lecturer at the Commercial High School in Nagoya. He taught in Nagoya for 2½ years. In the summer and fall of 1936 Allen was again back in Japan, this time to study the Japanese economy. He also came back several times after



World War II, his involvement with Japan spanning a period of 63 years until his death in 1982.

In England, Allen taught first at the University of Birmingham, then at Liverpool University and at University College, London, retiring in 1967. He was an Honorary Fellow of St. Anthony's College, Oxford. Throughout his career, he was one of the leading Western scholars in the field of Japanese economic history. In recognition of his efforts to promote Western understanding of Japan, the government of Japan awarded him the Third Class Order of the Sacred Treasure and the Japan Foundation its Japan Foundation Award in 1980.

This volume is basically a collection of reminiscences, and we are fortunate that Allen was able to finish the text shortly before his death. Special thanks for their unstinting efforts toward this book's publication go to his close friend Professor Margaret Gowing of the University of Oxford and to the alumni of Nagoya Commercial College (now the department of economics of Nagoya University) where Allen taught. I share the author's pleasure that his long years of labor in the vineyard of Japan-UK exchange have been crystallized in this gem of a book. This is a most readable work, containing all those asides and other personal touches which would fall by the wayside in a more academic book, set down accurately and affectionately in light essays.

Upon arriving in Nagoya from Kobe by train, Allen committed what he calls "the first of my long series of social solecisms." A group of people were helping Allen with his luggage and:

I tried to tip a helpful policeman under the impression that he was a railway official. My offering was brushed aside. This mistake was my first introduction to two important features of Japanese society. One was that Japan was one country in the world where tips were not only not expected but were actually refused. The other was that the police of that period, though inclined

to be busy-bodies and sometimes overbearing and harsh, had too much pride to accept presents, in spite of their poverty.

In all of the confusion of arriving at a strange train station in a strange land after a long journey, Allen was still a perceptive observer of his surroundings—and he was able to recall the observation more than half a century later. This is clearly no ordinary intelligence, no ordinary sensitivity. This is all the more impressive when one remembers that Japan at the time was a minor developing country and that England was considered one of the world's leading powers. This passage in the opening pages is typical of the tone Allen maintains in the rest of the work. It sets the reader's expectations for the rest of the book and the book is all the more satisfying for not disappointing these expectations.

Lafcadio Hearn is read even today by Japanese for his insights into and affection for Meiji Japan. There are innumerable details which seem too ordinary to merit recording to the Japanese writer that Hearn records out of fascination with their foreignness. The picture of Japan which Hearn portrays evokes an almost irrepressible nostalgia among modern Japanese who read his work. In setting down his impressions and recollections of Nagoya as it was, Allen has done for Taisho Japan what Hearn had earlier done for Meiji Japan.

Nor are these details any less spellbinding for the foreign reader as Allen describes the typical Japanese house in which he lived, his uneducated-but-streetwise housekeeper, contacts with the local policemen and farmers who lived in his neighborhood, the people who worked in the mainly handicraft industries, the teacher-student relationship which amazed Allen for a closeness unthinkable in England, the festivals, geisha parties, and other fellowship of the community. Exotic as these all appeared to Allen, he describes them with attention to the human aspect, transcending East and West.

The 60 years that this work encompasses were years of decline for England and ascent for Japan as the latter moved from an obscure developing country to a major economic power (even with the disastrous detour of war). It cannot have been easy for an Englishman to have recorded this process calmly and impartially. Nor can it have been particularly pleasant. Yet Allen pulls it off superbly.

The complacency of Westerners, so confident of their inherently superior gifts for technology, must have been a constant irritant to their Japanese business acquaintances... It was remarkable that a people with such strong traditions and such rigid rules

of conduct should so readily turn their minds to consider how others lived and thought... there was also real intellectual curiosity, a readiness to try everything, an eagerness to give hospitality to foreign institutions and devices.

While I fear Allen is being too generous in his assessment, I am grateful that he turned his cool observation and warm affection toward Japan in its emerging years.

He is just as relevant on topical issues such as the "uniqueness" of Japanese-style management and the discussions of "Japanese character" which were the height of fashion. He wrote:

Most Japanese, with experience of life in the West, agree that one of the most marked differences between themselves and Europeans lies in the contrast between our individualism and their preference for acting as part of a group. The contrast has been exaggerated in popular discussion, and I have never been conscious of it when in the society of intimate friends.

I would close by quoting my favorite paragraph from an altogether admirable book:

In the spring of 1979 I had the honour of a short interview with Prime Minister Ohira. In the course of our conversation, he asked: "I believe that Europeans have difficulty in understanding the Japanese, is this so?" When I told him that it was so, he added: "But so do I, so do I." I mentioned this remark to some Japanese friends who were much amused and said: "And we have difficulty understanding him." Perhaps we must all be content to misunderstand one another with good humour.

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Kamus Istilah Industri dan Pertambangan Jepang-Indonesia

*Edited and published by Japan Industrial Technology Association
September 1984, Tokyo
1,100 pages; ¥6,800*

A small volume published recently by Japan Industrial Technology Association, under the auspices of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), has caused a stir among businessmen who say it shows that Japan is doing its part in promoting economic cooperation with developing countries. It is the first



dictionary of mining and manufacturing industry terminology compiled by Japan for use in a Third World nation: *The Japanese-Indonesian Dictionary of Mining and Manufacturing Industry Terminology*.

Japan's economic aid to the Third World is increasing year by year. Official government aid and private industry cooperation together now total \$8.7 billion annually. However, assistance has not always gone smoothly or efficiently. Although Japan has responded to the requests of the developing nations by sending technicians and supplying advanced machinery, insufficient knowledge of technical terms on the part of local

technicians has spawned complaints of poor communication and an inability to master new technology. Yet until recently not a single dictionary existed which could help overcome these difficulties.

Four years ago, MITI had the idea of compiling a specialized dictionary for use in developing countries. Indonesian was selected as the first language. Indonesia is Japan's biggest aid recipient—more than \$700 million annually—and trade relations are very close through Japanese imports of crude oil and natural gas.

Work progressed under the leadership of Sadanori Ito, professor emeritus at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and Seiichi Ishizaka, former director-general of MITI's Agency of Industrial Science and Technology. Also helping were the staff of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Indonesia's Bandung Engineering University. The budget was only ¥14 million, a negligible amount as economic cooperation goes, and the work was hard going. The choice of Indonesian words was complicated by changing requests from the Indonesian side, while the search for Indonesian equivalents of Japanese words often ran up against a stone wall. Four years later, though, it was finally complete.

The 1,100-page dictionary contains 15,500 specialized terms relating to elec-

tricity, machinery, construction, civil engineering, chemistry, mining, and other industrial fields. The first half is Japanese-Indonesian, with the Japanese words on the left, followed by their English and Indonesian equivalents. In the second half, Indonesian is on the left, followed by English and Japanese. An English index at the back of the book permits it to be used with English-language technical materials and for discussions.

MITI donated the first edition of 5,000 copies to Indonesia and Japanese manufacturers, trading companies and economic cooperation organizations. The ministry hopes the book will help make economic cooperation more efficient and productive.

Of course, it is important that Japan, ranking 11th among the 17 industrialized nations in its ratio of ODA to GNP, continues to increase its economic cooperation. Yet it is equally important to improve the quality of cooperation through better communication with the developing world. Unobtrusive efforts such as this ground-breaking dictionary are of great significance in today's international environment.

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Taste of Tokyo

Turkish Kebab

A few months back I made a flying tour of the U.S., the Netherlands and Istanbul. Wherever I went, friends and acquaintances who knew I was writing this column kindly introduced me to famous restaurants. I enjoyed the double pleasure of satisfying my gourmet inclinations and gathering material for future articles.

Of all the restaurants I ate at on this trip, there were two which I absolutely must recommend. One was "Le Vert de Galant" near the McGraw-Hill Building in New York. The name was most fitting for New York, but even more important, it met my criterion on all counts of taste, price and atmosphere.

The other was "La Villette" in Rotterdam. Befitting its reputation as one of the city's top French restaurants, it was an elegant establishment serving splendid dishes. The lobster was particularly fine. A full

course dinner was less than US\$50, much cheaper than a meal of similar class in Tokyo.

The most superb eating experience I had on the trip, however, was not in the U.S. or the Netherlands but in the last city I visited: Istanbul. Istanbul offers tourists such wonderful delights as the dazzling treasures of the Topkapi Palace Museum, the view of the Bosphorus, the distant sight of the hospital on the Asian side of the strait where Florence Nightingale worked during the Crimean War, and the remains of the triple fortress walls that protected the city in the Middle Ages. But above all it offers the taste of Turkish cuisine, it was, in a word, superb.

Turkish cuisine is generally ranked among the three best in the world. It in-

herits the tradition of lamb dishes from the ancient nomadic tribes that roamed Central Asia and has added to it the culinary art of olive and tomato learned from the Greeks. The Turks have refined this into a combination that retains the pure qualities and rustic taste of its ingredients.

Mr. T. Harada, C. Itoh & Co.'s branch manager in Istanbul, took me to the restaurants "Hanedan" in the city and "Gelik" near the airport, facing the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara respectively. Typical lamb dishes were *sis kebab* (shish kebab = pieces of lamb meat cooked on skewers), *döner kebab* (roast lamb) and *sebze kebab* (lamb and vegetable stew). The taste was unequalled. And with Turkish and *raki* wine, the cost—hang on to your hats—was a mere US\$6.00.

I came back to Japan wondering why there are no restaurants in downtown Tokyo offering such Turkish delights. So many Japanese know the Turkish song "Uskudar" that if such a restaurant opened, I guarantee it would promptly be overflowing with customers. Not only the Japanese but also foreign residents would flock to it.

(Yoshimichi Hori, editor-in-chief)



CORRECTION: "Regional Governments Woo Investors" in the September/October Journal incorrectly identified the Industrial Bank of Japan as a source of low-interest governmental loans for industrial siting in Japan. Such loans are available from the Japan Development Bank. The Journal regrets this error and any inconvenience it may have caused.