

Nippon: New Superpower

By William Horsley & Roger Buckley

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Before reviewing this book, I would like to commend the two authors; Peter Pagnamenta, executive producer of the BBC's TV series *Nippon* and the man who godfathered the book; and the BBC staff and everyone else who cooperated with this undertaking, Japanese and non-Japanese alike. Conducting firsthand interviews with people from all walks of life, people of all ages, and people with widely different political leanings and collecting all of the primary sources that have informed this work was a vast project indeed, and they are to be congratulated on having completed the task so admirably.

At the same time, I must also express my respect for the painstaking approach that the authors took to Japan. As detailed in the preface, theirs was an effort to write about Japan in all its principal dimensions: social, economic, political and cultural. After all of this was done, they have concluded, correctly I believe, that Japan's peculiar way of ordering its affairs stems not simply from a desire for economic efficiency or social harmony but grows instead out of Japan's own sense of history and tradition and has been shaped in large part by the very favorable international environment that has prevailed since the end of World War II.

The authors are not out to highlight enigmas in the distinctive features that characterize Japanese, or any other, society. Nor are they out to provide grist for criticism of Japan or the deployment of new policies toward Japan. Rather, they provide a common basis for discussing the same Japanese problems that Japanese journalists, scholars and other experts are constantly seeking to resolve.

Starting with Chapter 1's depiction of Japan's wartime defeat and the American Occupation, the book takes the reader through eight chapters covering the road to economic prosperity and rehabilitation within the international community,

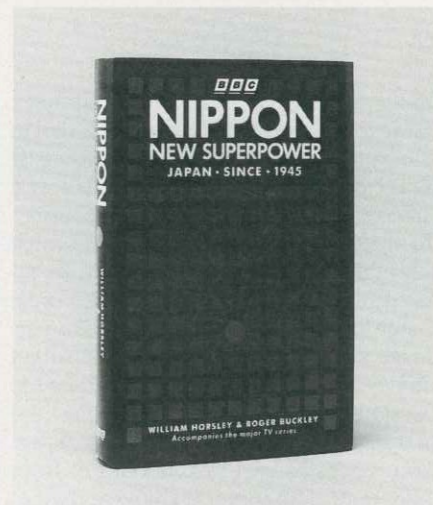
the brave new world of the 1960s, the shocking and scandalous 1970s, the effort to overtake the West in the 1980s, the Nakasone years, the end of the Showa era and the beginning of a new era. It is an impressive history of postwar Japan.

A wide variety of Japanese appear in this historical chronicle, from politicians and diplomats to economists and novelists to the ordinary man and woman in the street; and the narrative is replete with penetrating commentary on the main debates and opinions that have informed Japanese academia, the leading literary and film works, religious movements and much more. The authors have compiled an astonishing wealth of testimony, and everything rings true to the Japanese mind, even though it is being viewed through Western eyes.

Each chapter traces, explains and assesses the interweave of complexities that shape modern Japan, and I believe that the authors are objective and rational in their assessments. This is true, for example, in their discussion of how the shared premises and personal differences between General MacArthur and Prime Minister Yoshida influenced U.S. occupation policy, and in their analysis of how Japan rejoined the world community while retaining its old bureaucratic structure. Although technology and education deserve much of the credit for Japan's recovery, the authors also make a convincing case for crediting both the outstanding postwar recovery plans that were drawn up even before the war ended and the fact that, ironically, the United States found itself in favor of Japan's industrial revival.

On the Tokyo Olympics, the building of the Shinkansen express rail lines and the 1960 battle over the ratification of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, the authors provide their own detailed narrative and quote the eminent author Kenzaburo Oe to the effect that these celebrated events characterizing the 1960s were "to create a new, special sense of identity and impose it on Japanese people."

Despite the environmental and pollution problems, the 1970s were a time of arrival for Japan, including the restoration of diplomatic relations with China and



Okinawa's reversion to Japan. Although these good times were soured by the oil crises and political scandal, Japan moved in the 1980s to overtake the West in any number of areas.

Chapter 6 is titled "Breaking the Taboos: The Nakasone Years" and quotes former U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger to the effect that Japanese society is "more like a family than a state" and his characterization that "Only amateurs would seek to pressure an individual Japanese minister. Even when he yields out of politeness, he cannot carry out his promise." It is this implicit criticism of Japan that is at the root of so much of the current friction. Over 30 pages are devoted to a Nakasone personal history in an effort to explain his character and beliefs, yet in the end, as the authors admit, Nakasone was unable to alleviate, much less resolve, the friction. This work brings together far more of the outstanding literature than any other work I know, and I would like to commend it once again for its even-handed treatment of the material.

Without detracting from my overall praise of the book, there are a number of issues that I cannot pass by without comment. First are the forces that motivated Japan's postwar recovery. Although the authors attribute this recovery to a Yoshida Doctrine of capitalist economics, social stability, anti-communist ideology and close friendship with the United States, I doubt if this so-called Yoshida Doctrine was really fundamental. Instead, I believe that the spiritual drive behind Japan's postwar recovery came from a

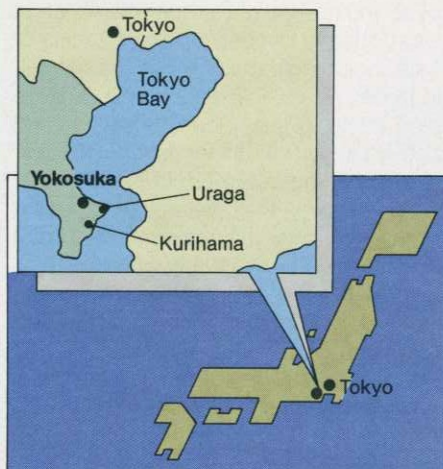
Miura Peninsula: A Place in History

In July 1853 four American "black ships," led by Commodore Matthew Perry of the U.S. East Indian Naval Forces, appeared in the waters off Yokosuka Bay to knock—a little forcefully, maybe—on the door of Japan, which had been closed for more than two centuries.

Nearly 140 years later, in October 1990, the aircraft carrier *Midway* and other battleships of the U.S. 7th Fleet sailed out of their home port of Yokosuka with high-tech weaponry and elite troops bound for the Persian Gulf.

Physical conditions and geographical location are perhaps the main factors that determine an area's fate, historical role and economic foundations, and Yokosuka just happened to be located at the entrance to Edo Bay (now Tokyo Bay), behind which stood the nation's capital (Edo, now Tokyo). So whatever the will of its inhabitants, Yokosuka was destined to play an important role in Japan's modern history, and particularly in its relations with America.

The city of Yokosuka lies on Miura Peninsula at the entrance to Tokyo Bay, a small area of land jutting out as if to block access to the bay. The east coast of the peninsula, especially the part extending from Yokosuka to the tip, faces the west coast of the larger Boso Peninsula across the bay. The narrow navi-



A monument built in 1901 commemorating the landing of Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853.

gable passage running between these peninsulas, called the Uraga Channel, presents large vessels entering and leaving Tokyo Bay with one of the most congested and difficult routes to navigate in Japan.

Surrounded on three sides by the sea, Miura Peninsula is blessed with a warm climate. The existence of many ancient shell mounds proves that people inhabited the area from prehistoric times. During the Edo period (1603–1868), when the whole peninsula fell under the direct administration of the Tokugawa shogunate in Edo, Yokosuka was the site of Uraga magistrate's office and a guardhouse that inspected shipping cargo and passengers bound for and from the capital. With the arrival of Perry's ships, this modest little peninsula was shunted into the forefront of modern Japanese history.

Opening of Japan's modern age

The starting point for a trip from Tokyo to Miura Peninsula is Shinagawa station on the Japan Railways Yamanote loop line in Tokyo. From here, you reach Yokosuka, home of the U.S. 7th Fleet and a Japanese Self-Defense Forces base, in about 70 minutes by the JR Yokosuka line and in about 50 minutes by special express on the Keikyu Railways.

The history of Yokosuka as a naval port began with the opening of Japan's mod-

Small Nation Doctrine as enunciated by Professor Masao Maruyama and other intellectuals who advocated democracy and freedom and who argued that Japan should seek to be an economic rather than a military power. It was this doctrine that won the support of the people and fueled the postwar recovery.

The second point that I would take issue with is their depiction of Japan as a planned economy. While not denying that there have been a number of economic plans in postwar Japan, from the initial plan for postwar recovery through the income-doubling plan of the 1960s, and that these plans have at times had a decidedly Soviet-like air about them, these plans were not born because, as the authors suggest, of an incestuous relationship between the business leaders and the bureaucrats, and nor were the plans' drafting and implementation left entirely to MITI's discretion. These economic plans were formulated to move Japan from its centrally administered wartime economy back to a free-market capitalistic economy, and the whole point of MITI's administrative guidance, despite all that has been said about it, has been to contribute to the development of the private-sector market economy.

In the same vein, my third quibble is with the authors' praise of Nakasone as a champion of market-opening measures. While it is true that Nakasone was a very vocal advocate of market-opening, the need was already clear to economists and other opinion leaders well before the April 1986 Maekawa Report.

Finally, my fourth difference with the authors is over their assertion in Chapter 8 ("Japan's World Utopians and Realists") that the Japanese are utopians and that Japan's social engineers are busy trying to turn their dream of a perfect society into reality. This is either undeservedly high praise or bitter sarcasm. Japanese are not seeking Japan's World. All they are asking is to be permitted a part of the decision-sharing as well as the burden-sharing.

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