

## The Pacific Century — America and Asia in a Changing World

By Frank Gibney

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For years now, we have been hearing that the 21st century will be the Century of Asia, and it is this assumption that Frank Gibney examines in his timely work. While America may be somewhat reluctant to get very deeply involved in Asia, given its painful experiences in the Korean War and even more in Vietnam, Asia is too important to ignore, and this volume should serve as a useful reference for American policy-makers.

Gibney is well-known as a journalist with wide experience in Japan. Having come to Japan in 1945 with the Occupation forces, he was back again in 1949–1950 to cover East Asia for *Time* and then again in 1966–1976 as an editor for *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and as a businessman. Drawing on his experience and insights, he has written a wide-ranging text on Asia's 150-year relations with the West (especially with the United States). While the prewar historical sections are informative, the sections about postwar historical developments that Gibney himself witnessed and the Asian leaders that he knew make especially interesting reading.

Produced in conjunction with the television program of the same name, this book has a panoramic scope and is richly illustrated with historical maps, photographs and other visual effects to make it easy reading. In addition, the author has no ideological axes to grind. Instead, he gives a straight recital of the historical facts. While readers seeking polemics may be dissatisfied with this "just the facts" approach, I personally appreciated the lack of ideological bias.

Because I myself am most interested in Japan's relations with the West (especially the United States), I would like to concentrate my comments on Gibney's treatment of this subject.

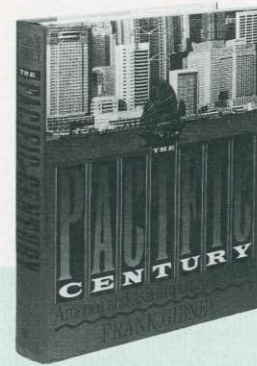
Gibney has a high regard for the Meiji Restoration, defining it as a revolution, and ranks it with the American, French, and Soviet revolutions in historical impact. He sees the influence not as merely limited to Japan but even in the recent economic developments in the "Four Dragons" of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In Gibney's words, the Meiji Restoration was "Asia's response to the West."

Consistent with the importance he attaches to the Meiji Restoration, Gibney gives an in-depth portrait of Yoshida Shoin, a royalist and anti-foreigners advocate, who influenced the revolutionists. It was in Hagi that Yoshida established his Shoka Sonjuku ("the Village Academy under the Pines") and taught his eager pupils. Although the Restoration was effected by lower-ranking samurai from Satsuma (now Kagoshima Prefecture), Choshu (now Yamaguchi Prefecture) and Tosa (now Kochi Prefecture), it was Yoshida's disciples—Choshu men such as Ito Hirobumi, Yamagata Aritomo and Kido Takayoshi—who led the way.

Another seminal figure who gets well-deserved attention in *The Pacific Century* is Fukuzawa Yukichi—a man who introduced Western liberal thinking to Japan and who did so much to promote the flowering of Meiji culture with such influential writings as *Conditions in the West*, *Outline of Civilization* and *The Advancement of Learning*.

Towering figures in Japanese modern history, Yoshida and Fukuzawa were both involved with the United States at different times and in different contexts. In 1854, Yoshida had rowed out to Perry's ship anchoring off Shimoda—this was Perry's second visit to Japan—and had asked to be taken to America. (He was refused.) Fukuzawa had better luck, setting sail in 1860 aboard the *Kanrin-maru* as part of the Tokugawa shogunate's first mission to the United States. Fukuzawa also visited Europe in 1862 and 1867. Much of Fukuzawa's writing was based on his experiences overseas, and, like many other intellectuals of his day, he argued that Japan must shake off its Asian heritage and become a Western nation.

The United States was a major influ-



ence in the early Meiji years. Of the several hundred students that the Meiji government sent abroad in 1871, over half went to study in the United States. In the same year, the Meiji statesman Iwakura Tomomi led a study mission to the United States. Mori Arinori (later to be minister of education) was dispatched to Washington as a diplomat at 25. He was a powerful advocate of rapid modernization—so much so that one of his friends referred to him as "a Westerner born in Japan"—and he is well-known for having advocated such radical positions as the abolition of the Japanese language and the adoption of English and heavy intermarriage (between Japanese men and foreign women) to breed a new race. Kido Takayoshi was particularly attracted to American education. In fact, Japanese textbooks for the first decade after the Meiji Restoration were largely translated from American texts. In 1872, Rutgers Professor David Murray was invited to Japan to supervise the new national school system.

The Meiji Constitution promulgated in 1889 was patterned after the Bismarckian model, Ito Hirobumi having squelched the study of American political ideas when he declared American thinking "too liberal"—the German model having been thought to contain the right blend of democracy, welfare and authoritarianism.

Yet that was not the end of Japan's constitutional story, for after the war, the MacArthur Occupation rejected the Shidehara Cabinet's constitutional revisions as mere window dressing and saw to it that American ideas dominated the revision process. Gibney's section on the drafting and adoption of the postwar Constitution is most interesting.

As Gibney tells it, Japan's postwar Constitution was drafted by Colonel Charles L. Kades and his group working under orders from Major General Courtney Whitney, chief of the Government Section. Article 9 on the renunciation of war, a subject of intense interest in Japan, is explained as having been

inserted at the Occupation's insistence.

MacArthur, of course, is another major figure in Japanese history, and Gibney neither lauds nor condemns, sticking instead to his straight narrative style. While Gibney notes that MacArthur was criticized for his dictatorial style, aloofness, ignorance about Japan and nepotism, he also notes that this was the kind of man Japan needed at that time. "As a young Japanese of that day recalled: 'MacArthur was like a force of nature. He was like the river that flows or the wind that blows. ... Very few people thought of him as the enemy. It was as if a new emperor had arrived.'"

Gibney is also very good on the Dodge Plan adopted to deal with postwar inflation, the background to the income-doubling plan adopted by Ikeda Hayato and his administration, and other recent developments crucial to Japan's economic success. At the same time, he discounts the idea that Confucianism is antithetical to capitalism and instead suggests that "Confucian capitalism" may have much to do with Asia's dynamic economic development.

Time after time, he comes back to the idea that it is impossible to understand America's relations with Asia—present or future—without also understanding their past. When he finally steps out of his historian's role, it is to argue that Asians are attracted to America for its cultural and technological innovativeness, for its high educational standards and institutional openness to Asian students, for the freedom and openness of its informal society, and for the many Asians who have made America their home—and that America should take advantage of this appeal in forging an Asian identity.

Along with arguing that America needs an industrial policy for the 21st century by highly evaluating the government's policies in Theodore Roosevelt's and Franklin Roosevelt's administrations, Gibney says that America can learn a lot from Asia. This book tells us that, for better or worse, America has had and is bound to continue having a major impact on Asia.

Yosuke Uehara  
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## Tokyo's Lesson in Nature

People on both short visits and long stays in a foreign land turn to a variety of attractions for pleasure: magnificent natural scenery, famous historical sights, grandiose monuments, the dynamic cityscape, museums full of cultural assets, the folk in the streets, the exotic cuisine.

But the enjoyability of a sojourn does not depend on these highlights alone. Nature lovers not only get excited at seeing birds, trees and flowers that are completely different from those at home but also gain an indescribable feeling of joy at spotting the very same birds, trees and flowers in a faraway place.

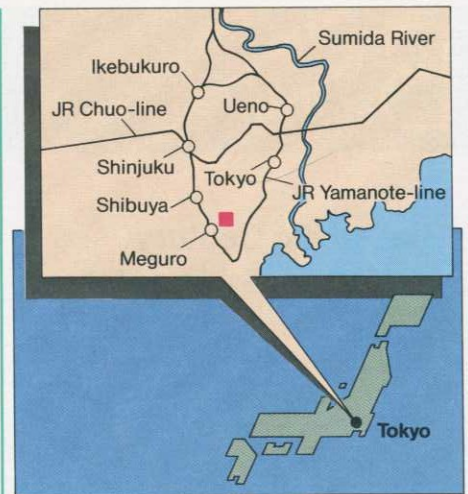
For foreigners in Tokyo, a city that seems to be approaching the limits of urbanization, there is a place that provides just this kind of respite: the garden of the Institute for Nature Study of the National Science Museum in Shirokanedai. This garden lies well off the beaten track, yet it is a real oasis of greenery situated near the heart of boisterous, high-rise central Tokyo.

Just eight minutes on foot from Meguro Station on the JR Yamanote loop line, the garden retains the primeval, natural beauty of Musashino, the plain covered with patches of forest that used to exist on the western side of present-day Tokyo. It is a carefully preserved spot, designated by the government as a cultural asset, or in official parlance as a "living monument and historical relic."

Covering only 20 hectares, the garden is much smaller than similar facilities in foreign countries. Yet it is a delight to find nature so well preserved in a place like this in Tokyo, where the natural environment is rapidly disappearing. One cannot ask for too much, after all.

On paying the admission fee, visitors receive a small badge to wear in the garden and hand back when they leave. These badges are used to control the number of visitors in the garden at any one time.

Though the entrance is small, the garden balloons out in a shape rather like Santa Claus's sack to take in such sections as an arboretum, a roadside plants



garden, a waterbirds marsh, an aquatic plants garden, a Musashino plants garden, and a gourd pond. The wild flowers that used to make Musashino so colorful—though they lack the showiness of horticultural plants—are a delight to see from spring to fall; the trees, from putting out their leaves in the spring to displaying spectacular hues in the fall, change constantly with the seasons; and the birds, both resident and migratory, provide rustic background music with their cheerful chirping at all seasons.

The growth of this forest has been left to the transition of nature, so gradual changes take place every few decades in the types of tree and the appearance of the woods. The giants of the forest at the moment are about 200 huge chinquapin trees, said to have been planted about five or six centuries ago by a powerful family that built a mansion on the site and surrounded it with earthwork, on which they put up the trees. In recent years a lot of them have withered and perished—a phenomenon probably not unrelated to acid rain and air pollution.

In 1664 the site became the residence of a *daimyo* lord named Matsudaira Yorishige, and landscape and herb gardens were built here; from 1872 to 1913 it was used as a gunpowder warehouse by the army and navy ministries; from 1917 to 1947 it was an imperial estate, called Shirokane Goryochi, which meant that the natural state was well preserved; and in 1949 it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, which opened it to the public in its present form as the Institute for Nature Study.

The good thing about this garden is that, to preserve its natural state, the number of visitors allowed in at any one time is limited to between 300 and 350 people.