

LEARNING FROM
SHŌGUN

JAPANESE HISTORY
AND WESTERN FANTASY

EDITOR HENRY SMITH



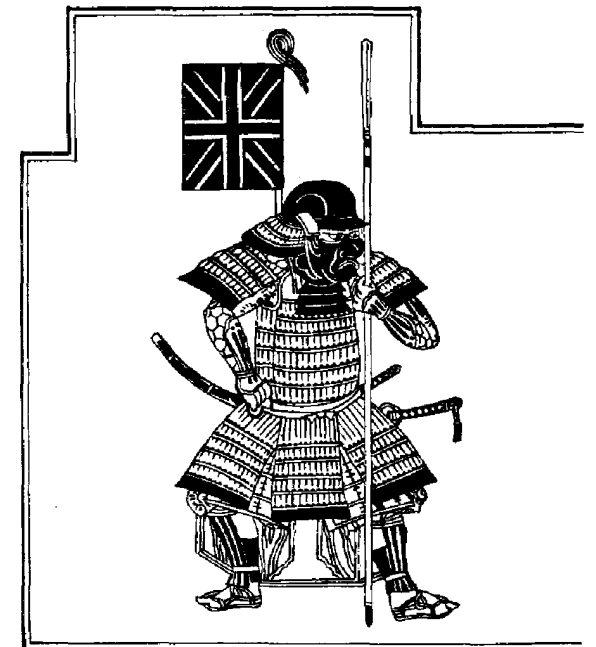
THE PROGRAM IN ASIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

**Learning
from
*Shōgun***

Japanese
History
and
Western
Fantasy

Edited by Henry
Smith

Program in Asian Studies
University of California,
Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara,
California 93106



Designed by Marc Treib

Copyright © 1980 by Henry D. Smith II
for the authors

Distributed by the Japan Society,
333 East 47th Street, New York,
N.Y. 10017

Illustrations of samurai armor are
from Murai Masahiro, *Tanki yōryaku*
(A compendium for the mounted
warrior), rev. ed., 1837, woodblock
edition in the Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York

This publication has been supported by
grants from:

Consulate General of Japan, Los
Angeles

Japan-United States
Friendship Commission

Northeast Asia Council,
Association for Asian Studies

USC-UCLA Joint East Asia
Studies Center

Southern California Conference on
International Studies

Contents

Contributors vi

Maps viii

Preface xi

Part I: The Fantasy

1 James Clavell and the Legend of the British Samurai 1
Henry Smith

2 Japan, Jawpen, and the Attractions of an Opposite 20
David Plath

3 *Shōgun* as an Introduction to Cross-Cultural Learning 27
Elgin Heinz

Part II: The History

4 Blackthorne's England 35
Sandra Piercy

5 Trade and Diplomacy in the Era of *Shōgun* 43
Ronald Toby

6 The Struggle for the Shogunate 52
Henry Smith

7 Hosokawa Gracia: A Model for Mariko 62
Chieko Mulhern

Part III: The Meeting of Cultures

8 Death and *Karma* in the World of *Shōgun* 71
William LaFleur

9 Learning Japanese with Blackthorne 79
Susan Matisoff

10 The Paradoxes of the Japanese Samurai 86
Henry Smith

11 Consorts and Courtesans: The Women of *Shōgun* 99
Henry Smith

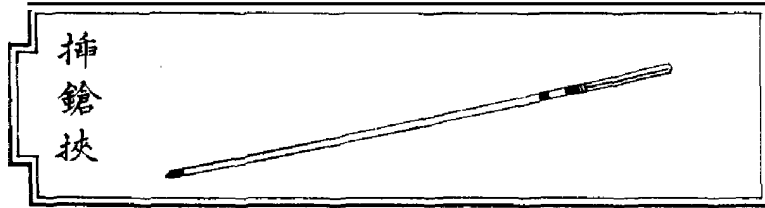
12 Raw Fish and a Hot Bath: Dilemmas of Daily Life 113
Henry Smith

Who's Who in *Shōgun* 127

Glossary 135

For Further Reading 150

Postscript: The TV Transformation 161



Elgin Heinz is a consultant on the preparation of educational materials about Asia. He is a former teacher of Asian studies at the high school level, and was a member of a team which wrote *Opening Doors: Contemporary Japan* (The Asia Society, New York, 1979).

William LaFleur teaches Buddhism and Japanese thought in the Department of Oriental Languages at UCLA. *Mirror for the Moon* (New Directions) is his translation of poems by Saigyō, a monk of twelfth-century Japan. He is currently working on a book entitled *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan*.

Susan Matisoff is an associate professor in the Department of Asian Languages at Stanford University, where she has taught since 1972. She is the author of *The Legend of Semimaru, Blind Musician of Japan*, and her research centers on the Muromachi through Tokugawa periods with a particular interest in drama, oral and folk literature, and popular culture.

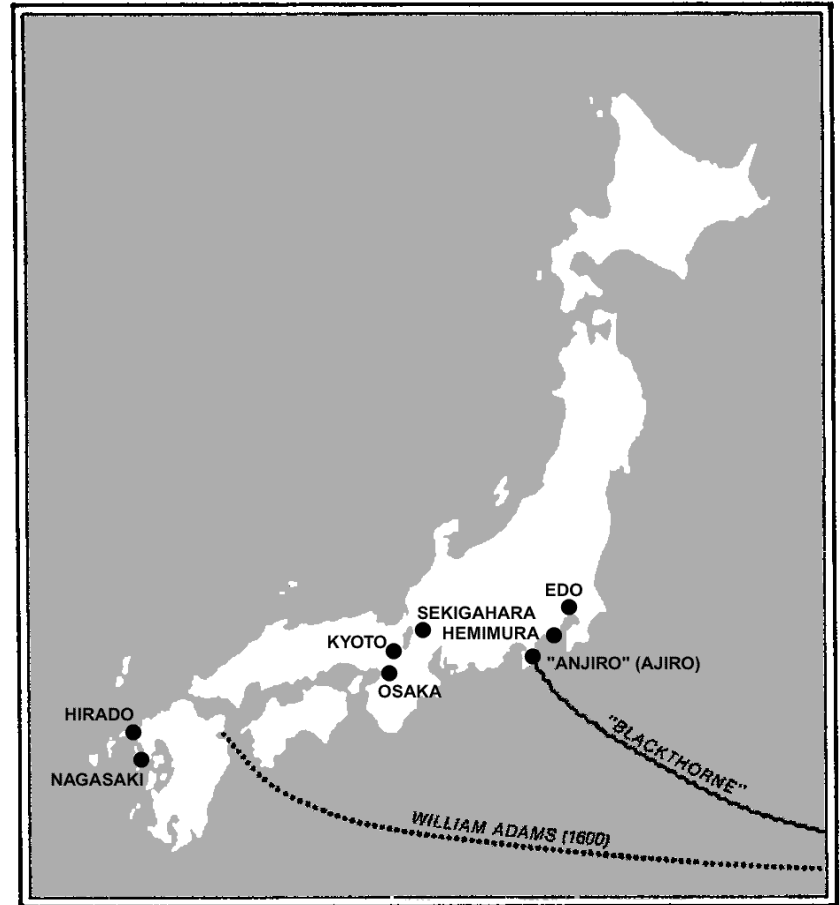
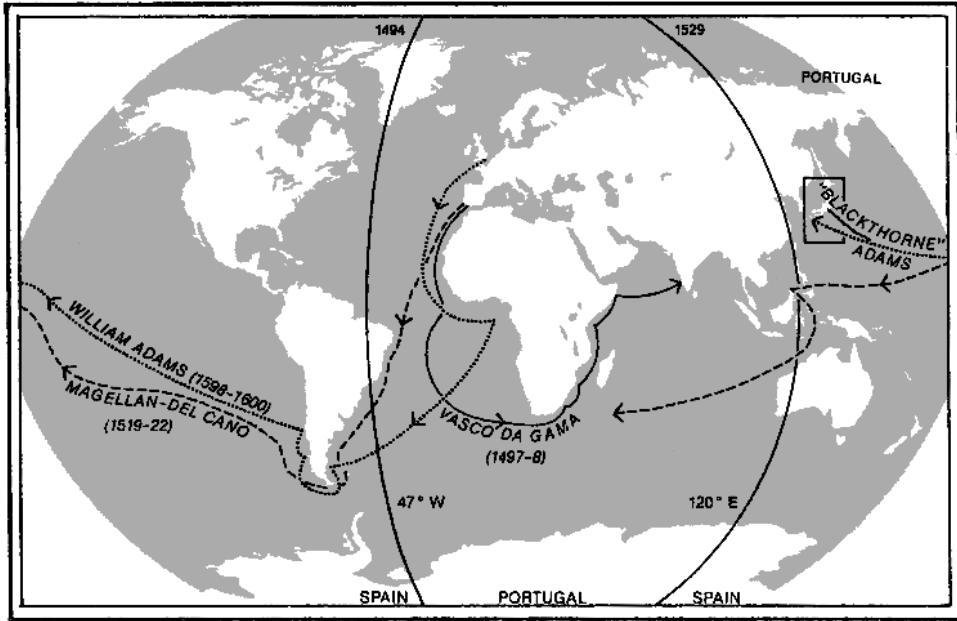
Chieko Mulhern is associate professor of Japanese language and literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of *Kōda Rohan*, a literary biography of a modern Japanese writer, and of "Cinderella and the Jesuits: An Otogizoshi Cycle as Christian Literature" (*Monumenta Nipponica*, Winter 1979). She is currently editing a volume entitled *Female Heroes of Japan*.

Sandra Piercy is a graduate student in English history of the Tudor-Stuart period at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her dissertation, "The Cradle of Salvation: Domestic Theology in Early Stuart England," is in progress. She is also co-editor of *King, Saints, and Parliaments: A Sourcebook for Western Civilization, 1050-1715*.

David Plath is professor of anthropology and Asian studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. For two decades he has been studying modern Japanese lifeways, and his latest book on the subject is *Long Engagements: Maturity in Modern Japan*, issued by Stanford University Press in 1980.

Henry Smith teaches Japanese history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His current interest is the history of urban culture in Japan, and he has recently written "Tokyo and London: Comparative Conceptions of the City" (in Albert Craig, ed., *Japan: A Comparative View*). He is currently preparing a book entitled *Views of Edo: Transformations in the Japanese Visual World, 1700-1900*.

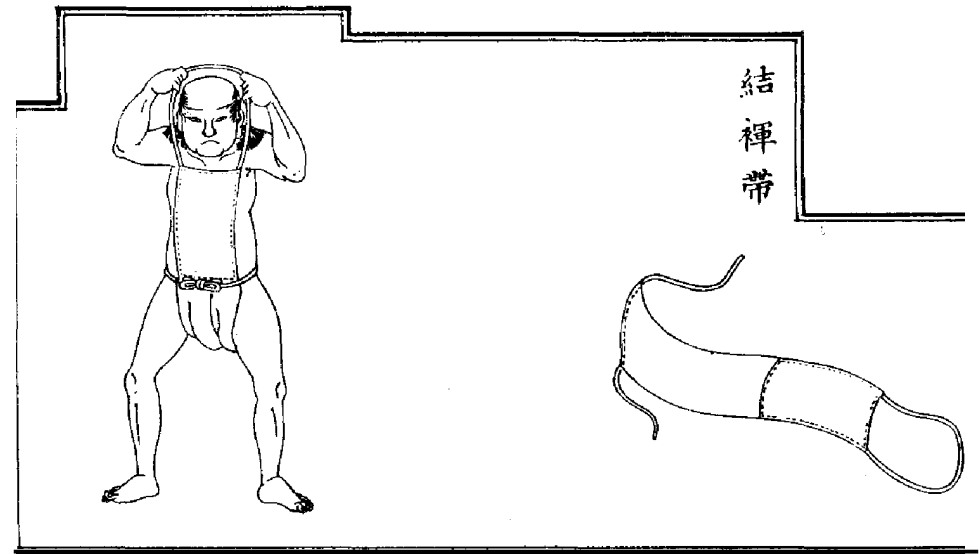
Ronald Toby is assistant professor of history and Asian studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he teaches Japanese history. Part of his current research on the interaction between domestic politics and foreign relations in the Tokugawa period has been published as "Reopening the Question of *Sakoku*; Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1977).



“History is today and tomorrow. You know, if you don’t read history, you’re a bloody idiot.”

James Clavell in conversation
May 16, 1980

Preface



This book is intended for those who have read James Clavell’s *Shōgun* and who are curious about its educational significance as “A Novel of Japan.” Although *Shōgun*, with its generous serving of sex, violence, and intrigue, is in the mainstream of current popular entertainment, it is set apart by a certain instructional tone. For one thing, *Shōgun* provides a wealth of factual information about Japanese history and culture, information which is probably new to the majority of its readers. But *Shōgun* is informative in a prescriptive sense as well, since the gradual acceptance of Japanese culture by the hero Blackthorne bears the clear implication that the West has something to learn from Japan.

We hope that the following essays will be of special interest to those who, like ourselves, are professional teachers of Japanese history and culture. It was largely the influence of our students that led us to consider *Shōgun* for its educational uses. My own experience is perhaps typical: uneasy over the depiction of the Japanese samurai as sadistic and uncaring of life, I was initially unable to read past the first two hundred pages of *Shōgun*. Only when pressed by inquisitive students did I read the entire novel and come to understand that the initial image of the Japanese as “barbarians” was a foil for the hero’s eventual understanding that Japan is not only civilized, but maybe even more civilized than the West. In short, the

central theme of the novel itself turned out to be exactly our business: learning about Japan.

For educators, it is useful to understand *Shōgun* if only because so many people have read it. Based on our own experience, anywhere from one-fifth to one-half of all students who currently enroll in college-level courses about Japan have already read *Shōgun*, and not a few of these have become interested in Japan because of it. With over six million copies of *Shōgun* in print (and more sure to follow after the television series), it would appear that the American consciousness of Japan has grown by a quantum leap because of this one book. In sheer quantity, *Shōgun* has probably conveyed more information about Japan to more people than all the combined writings of scholars, journalists, and novelists since the Pacific War. At the very least, an understanding of *Shōgun* may help those of us involved in education about Japan to better understand our audience.

In the subtitle “Japanese History and Western Fantasy,” we are drawing attention to two different aspects of “learning from *Shōgun*.” Our approach to fantasy in *Shōgun* is essentially anthropological, viewing the novel as a contemporary American phenomenon; in Chapters 2 and 3, David Plath and Elgin Heinz explore some of the theoretical issues involved. We emphasize that we intend nothing derogatory in our use of the word “fantasy.” After all, a fertile imagination is an indispensable component of the historical mind, whether that of a novelist like James Clavell or that of academic scholars like ourselves: how else can we gain real understanding of people in different times, or of different cultures? The real task is to recognize, analyze, and reflect upon our imaginative projections into the past.

With Chapter 4, the emphasis shifts from the anthropological to the historical, and to the specific problem of learning about Japan (and, for comparison, England) in the year 1600. This places us squarely in an era of Japanese history unsurpassed for sheer human drama. The period of *Shōgun* is rich in all the staples of history in the old-fashioned, popular sense: constant warfare, delicate diplomacy, colorful characters, political intrigue, and religious fervor. Of particular importance for comparative purposes is the extensively documented contact between Japan and the West in those years. In detailing the correlation between the fictional world of *Shōgun* and the historical reality of the time (to the limited extent that we understand it), we have not intended to criticize James Clavell but rather to lead interested readers into an historical “reality” which can be every bit as fascinating as “fiction.”

For those of us who are historians, the concern has been to emphasize the importance of *change* in the era of *Shōgun*. In doing

so, we have tried to extend the *point* in time depicted in the novel into a *line* of historical process extending over the century 1550-1650, and often beyond. This period of history is of great importance in terms of institutional and cultural innovations, many of which paved the way to the long Tokugawa peace and to what in the twentieth century is generally understood as Japanese “tradition.” Whether tea ceremony, Confucianism, castle towns, screen paintings, geisha, Zen gardens, or many other key features of the *ancien régime*, each emerged out of the era of *Shōgun*. So for the professional as much as for the popular historian, the period of *Shōgun* is of great interest, and focuses our attention on the fundamental question of how historical change takes place, and why.

I would like to put forth a personal suggestion that the idea of “learning from *Shōgun*” may be relevant not only for a general audience but for the world of scholarship as well. Many academic scholars of Japan will have much the same reaction to the title *Learning from Shōgun* as professional architects had to *Learning from Las Vegas* (by Robert Venturi and others, 1973), a sense of surprise—and even indignation—at the thought of “learning” from popular culture. The point, of course, is that architects should learn from Las Vegas, and historians from *Shōgun*, not because they are ‘popular, but because popular culture helps professionals reflect on their basic priorities—not unlike the way in which Blackthorne, in learning from Japan, clarified *his* own values. For Venturi and his colleagues, the extravagant use of decorative signing along the Las Vegas strip suggested the importance of communication and symbolism in architecture and served as a critique of the overemphasis on purity and formalism among modernist architects. In much the same way, I wonder if the effectiveness of *Shōgun* in opening up the world of traditional Japan does not suggest something about the advantages of dealing with matters of immediate human experience in the writing of history.

Just as James Clavell tries to “make things real” in his attention to personal emotions and the details of daily life, should not we as historians take a more sensuous approach to “ideas” and “institutions,” treating them less as disembodied abstractions and more as correlatives of concrete human existence? The lament of French historian Lucien Febvre in 1941, while perhaps no longer so true of Western historiography, would certainly still apply to the case of Japan: “We have no history of Love. We have no history of Death. We have no history of Pity nor of Cruelty, we have no history of Joy.” We also have as yet very little history of such basic matters as sex, dress, disease, and food in Japan—all items of interest to the readers of *Shōgun*. By drawing our attention to human life as it was experienced from day to day, *Shōgun* suggests new areas for

historical inquiry. In a related way, this immensely influential novel about Japan should encourage academic specialists to rethink some basic issues of communication: Who is our audience? What are we trying to say? And how are we trying to say it?

Finally, we should mention that we have not attempted any explicit approach to *Shōgun* as literature, since we were interested primarily in what the novel had to suggest about cross-cultural learning and historical change. We certainly recognize, however, that *Shōgun* is a work of fiction, and those tempted to be disparaging might refresh themselves with a reading of Prince Genji's famous defense of the art of fiction in *The Tale of Genji* (c. A.D. 1000):

If it weren't for old romances like this, how on earth would you get through these long tedious days when time moves so slowly? And besides, I realize that many of these works, full of fabrications though they are, do succeed in evoking the emotion of things in a most realistic way. One event follows plausibly on another, and in the end we cannot help being moved by the story, even though we know what foolishness it all really is. Thus, when we read about the ordeals of some delightful princess in a romance, we may find ourselves actually entering into the poor girl's feelings. (Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince*, p. 315)

We have also tried to bear in mind Genji's further observation that the author of fiction "certainly does not write about specific people, recording all the actual circumstances of their lives. Rather it is a matter of his being so moved by things, good or bad, which he has heard and seen happening to men and women that he cannot keep it to himself but wants to commit it to writing and make it known to other people."

Finally, we promised James Clavell that he could have the last word: when our conversation with him in May 1980 turned to the question of how he could so vividly portray what happened in Japan in the year 1600, he said, "You can say whatever you like, but in the end you should say: he must have *been* there!"

Although this book was written in anticipation of the television adaptation of *Shōgun* scheduled for September 1980, we have addressed ourselves to the novel alone. Even though we were able to see a film script of the TV series through the courtesy of Paramount Studios, we were not able to preview the film series itself. In any event, it has been our feeling that only the novel is appropriate for learning purposes, since it is (to use one of James Clavell's favorite words) "finite": it is cheap, portable, and easily available. Most of what we say about the novel will apply to the film; we have made note of obvious exceptions.

We have spelled all Japanese words according to modern romanization, which is sometimes different from (and often less historically accurate than) some of the older forms that appear in *Shōgun* (such as Yedo for Edo [the modern Tokyo], or Kwanto for Kanto). As Susan Matisoff points out in Chapter 9, the long mark over certain Japanese vowels (calling for a longer duration, not a change in sound) is an important part of the spelling, and we have included it except for such familiar place names as Kyoto and Osaka (properly Kyōto and Ōsaka) and except for those words which have passed into the English language (such as 'daimyo' and 'shogun', which appear in roman letters rather than italics). An exception to the exception is the title *Shōgun* itself, which, following the cover design of the novel, we have treated as a Japanese word, maintaining the long mark. Japanese names appear, as in *Shōgun*, in Japanese order, with the family name first. All page references to *Shōgun* appear in italics and correspond to the Dell paperback edition. Most quotations from James Clavell are from a conversation with the authors in May 1980; a few are from NBC press releases, June 1980.

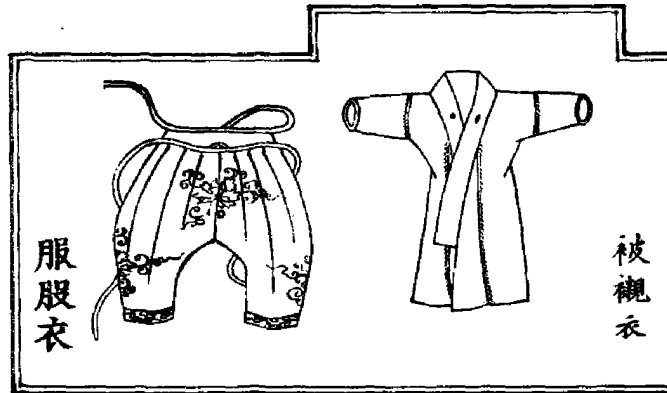
This book would not have been possible without the generous support of the organizations listed opposite the title page. The editor is grateful to Shelley Brody for editorial help and to Mary Dumont for research assistance. Frank Gibney of the Pacific Basin Institute in Santa Barbara has offered encouragement and administrative support. Peter Grilli, director of education for the Japan Society of New York, has been of continuing assistance throughout the project; we are particularly indebted to the Japan Society for undertaking the distribution of this book. Finally, I owe a note of personal thanks to the forty-odd students of History 187A, "The Era of *Shōgun*" in Spring 1980 at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Their enthusiastic and challenging response did much to convince me that both student and scholar can indeed learn a great deal from *Shōgun*,

Our last and most important acknowledgment is to James Clavell himself, who was gracious enough to meet with five of the authors on May 16, 1980 (appropriately enough, the 360th anniversary of the death of William Adams) and to talk about his views on Japanese culture and his intentions in writing the novel. We hope that we have respected his claim that "I am a storyteller, not an historian," although one of the lessons of *Shōgun* is that perhaps historians and storytellers need not be such different breeds as they appear to be today.

Henry Smith
Santa Barbara, California
August 1980

1 James Clavell and the Legend of the British Samurai

Henry Smith



... Then one afternoon in London he picked up one of his daughter Holly's schoolbooks and he came upon an intriguing bit of history. "It said, 'In 1600, an Englishman went to Japan and became a samurai,'" Clavell recalls. "I knew nothing about Japanese history, so I thought I'd better start reading." NBC press release, May 1980

And so James Clavell began reading, widely, and then writing. Four years and half a million words later, *Shōgun* was published, in the spring of 1975, and it has since become a remarkably durable best seller. Although Clavell did not realize it when he stumbled across the story of William Adams in his daughter's schoolbook (nor, indeed, does he seem very conscious of it even now) he was following in the footsteps of at least five earlier Anglo-Saxon novelists who were inspired by the story of "an Englishman who went to Japan in the year 1600 and became a samurai," Clavell's standard one-line characterization of *Shōgun*. Until Clavell's, none of the novels based on the tale of Will Adams appear to have enjoyed any great success, although one of them (Blaker's *The Needlewatcher*) is now back in print. But an understanding of the sources and symbols of the Will Adams story, which in its frequent

romantic retelling constitutes a full-blown modern legend, leads to a better appreciation of the historical place of *Shōgun*.

The Historical William Adams

Three historical coincidences serve to explain the enduring appeal of the story of William Adams. First, he was undeniably the “first Englishman in Japan,” indeed probably the first Englishman to settle in Asia, a fact of considerable importance in the context of the history of the British Empire, of which Adams tends to become a sort of symbolic founding father. This has led to his frequent commemoration within the narrow context of modern Anglo-Japanese diplomatic and cultural relations, but also more broadly as a symbol of the enduring self-ascribed values of the Anglo-Saxon in Asia: manliness, fair-mindedness, a sense of adventure, bravery, and a dedication to the principles of free enterprise and free trade.

Secondly, one is struck by the coincidence of the *timing* of Adams’ arrival in Japan, in the spring of 1600, a momentous year in the course of Japanese history. For it was six months later, at the Battle of Sekigahara, that Tokugawa Ieyasu established a decisive hegemony over all Japan and began the process of solidifying the regime which he and his thirteen successors as shogun would perpetuate for over two and a half centuries. It almost seems as though fate were at work to join the destinies of the symbolic progenitor of a great Asian colonial empire and the actual progenitor of one of Asia’s most durable national regimes.

The final coincidence is that what we know about the real William Adams is *just enough* in terms of the possibilities for imaginative historical fiction. It is actually quite coincidental that we know anything much about Adams at all, since almost all the information comes from six letters which he wrote back to England and which miraculously survived among the records of the British East India Company. Scattered other bits of information are available from the correspondence and diaries of other Englishmen in Japan in the years 1613-20, and a few more details from Japanese records, but all add up to more of an outline for a character than a full historical personality.

Of Adams’ four surviving letters, the first two are the most important, one dated October 1611 and addressed “TO MY VNKNOWNE FRINDS AND COUNTRI-MEN,” and the other an undated fragment of a letter to his wife. The two letters differ conspicuously in a number of details (suggesting that they were written at quite different times, the one to his wife presumably earlier) but they both essentially tell of his voyage to Japan, of his first reception there, and, in the 1611 letter, a few details of his fate after the

three initial meetings with Tokugawa Ieyasu. Although written in a formal and reportorial style (the letter to his wife is notably lacking in any note of real personal feeling), the letters of William Adams are fascinating reading. In the 1611 letter, Adams introduces himself, not without a hint of pride:

... I am a Kentish man, borne in a towne called *Gillingham*, two English miles from *Rochester*, one mile from *Chattam*, where the Kings ships doe lye: from the age of twelue yeares olde, I was brought vp in *Limehouse* neere *London*, being Apprentice twelue yeares to Master *Nicholas Diggines*; and my selfe haue serued for Master and Pilott in her Maiesties ships; and about eleuen or twelue years haue serued the Worshipfull Companie of the Barbarie Marchants, vntill the Indish traffick from *Holland* began, in which Indish traffick I was desirous to make a littel experience of the small knowledg which God had geuen me. So, in the yeare of our Lord 1598, I was hired for Pilot Maior of a flecte of five sayle, which was made readie by the [Dutch] Indish Companie ...

And to this about all that might be added is that Nicholas Diggins (whom James Clavell transformed into Alban Caradoc) was a well-known shipbuilder of his day, that Adams is known to have sailed against the Spanish Armada, and that he left a wife and two children in England. From the symmetrical division of his life into three twelve-year terms, we see that he was about age thirty-six on arriving in Japan.

In both letters, Adams then recounts the hazardous journey of the Dutch fleet which left Rotterdam in June 1598 in an effort to reach the West Indies via the Straits of Magellan and challenge the Portuguese trading empire there. Following a difficult winter in the Straits, the fleet moved on into the Pacific in late August of 1599 and was there separated by storms. The *De Liefde*, of which Adams was pilot, proceeded alone up the coast of Chile, surviving various encounters with suspicious Indians and hostile Spaniards. Finally in late November, they rendezvoused with the one other ship of the fleet which had survived the storms, the flagship *Hoop*. They then decided to make for Japan, according to Adams, on the grounds that its northerly latitude would make it a more promising market for their cargo than the Indies, which “were hot countreyes, where woollen cloth would not be much accepted.”

About two months later, halfway across the Pacific, in February 1600, the *De Liefde* was separated in another storm from its remaining partner, of which no more was heard. They doggedly continued on their journey to Japan, supplies dwindling and sickness spreading, finally sighting land in mid-April (the exact date differing in the two letters) off the province of Bungo in northeast Kyushu. By this time, only twenty-four men of an original crew of over a hundred were alive, and of these only seven were able to walk—three

more were to die a day later, and another three shortly after. The curious Japanese who met them “offered us no hurt, but stole all things they could steale.” The real threat came about a week later, when “there came a Portugall Iesuite, with other Portugals, who reported of vs, that we were pirats, and were not in the way of marchandizing.”

But somehow Adams managed to survive not only the slander of the Portuguese, but also the treachery of two members of his crew, and soon found himself being transported to Osaka to meet with the “king”—who turned out to be Tokugawa Ieyasu. Adams was chosen as natural leader of the group because of his ability to speak Portuguese and because Captain Jacob Quaeckernaek was too sick to move.

Adams met with Ieyasu in Osaka on three occasions in May and June of 1600, and his descriptions of these interviews provide the most fascinating and historically exciting vignettes of the entire William Adams story. In Adams’ own words to his wife:

Comming before the king, he viewed me well, and seemed to be wonderfull faourable. He made many signes vnto me, some of which I vnderstood, and some I did not. In the end, there came one that could speake Portuges. [This person may in fact have been Joao Rodrigues, the model for Father Alvito in *Shōgun*.] By him, the king demanded of me, of what land I was, and what mooued vs to come to his land, being so farre off. I shewed vnto him the name of our countrey, and that our land had long sought out the East Indies, and desired friendship with all kinds and potentates in way of marchandize, hauing in our land diuerse commodities, which these lands had not Then he asked whether our countrey had warres? I answered him yea, with the Spaniards and Portugals, beeing in peace with all other nations. Further, he asked me, in what I did beleeeue? I said, in God, that made heauen and earth. He asked me diuerse other questions of things of religion, and many other things: As what way we came to the country. Hauing a chart of the whole world, I shewed him, through the *Strait of Magellan*. At which he wondred, and thought me to lie. Thus, from one thing to another, I abode with him till mid-night.

From this point, our detailed knowledge of William Adams becomes progressively sparser, and the opportunity for romancers to embroider becomes correspondingly greater. His wife’s letter goes only as far as a second interview with Ieyasu. The other letter briefly mentions a third interview, then says that he was sent to Edo by sea, probably sometime in July. Adams’ narrative at this point abruptly switches to a time frame of years rather than weeks, and about all we know of him, through this account and through other bits of information, is essentially the following:

- that he became a fairly trusted adviser of Tokugawa Ieyasu on matters of commercial policy with the Protestant nations.

- that Ieyasu awarded him an estate in the village of Hemimura (part of the modern naval port of Yokosuka), valued at about 250 *koku* (a unit measuring the income of land in rice, about five bushels) and with some hundred peasants under his jurisdiction.
- that he was known by the Japanese as “Anjin-sama,” or “The Pilot”; he came eventually to be known by the surname Miura, the peninsula south of Edo where his estate was located.
- that he either purchased or was given a house in downtown Edo, in an area which became known as “Anjin Street” sometime after his death, remaining so until the 1930s.
- that he built two English-style ships at the request of Ieyasu, one of 80 tons and one of 120 tons (slightly less than the 150-ton *De Liefde*), the latter of which eventually passed into Spanish hands and plied regularly between Acapulco and Manila.
- that he was active in setting up and working for the English trading station in Hirado (on Kyushu) from 1613 until his death in 1620.
- that he married a Japanese woman, apparently the daughter of a prominent Edo inn-keeper named Magome Kageyu, and that they had two children, Joseph and Susan—although none of the descendants has ever been traced.
- that he died in Hirado May 16, 1620, and by his will provided both for his Japanese family and for his wife and daughter whom he had left behind in England.

Some Questions About William Adams

From these various facts, we can see that William Adams did indeed lead a fascinating career, and that he was in a position of considerable importance to the Tokugawa shogunate—although it appears that he fell into increasing disfavor after the death of Ieyasu in 1615. But there remains a great deal we do not know about Adams, offering much latitude for fertile imaginations. Let us see what the record does offer, however, about four particularly interesting issues:

1. *What sort of a man was he?* From the tone of his letters and from reports of his English contemporaries, it would appear that Adams was a self-sufficient and standoffish man in personality, quite formal in his relations with others. His letters suggest he was nothing less than a devout Christian. He was originally hostile to the Jesuits for their opposition to him, but later had friendly dealings with them. In terms of his basic instincts, he was first and foremost a man of commerce, eager to help develop trading relations between Japan and the Protestant nations.

2. *Did he become thoroughly acculturated to Japanese life?* While Adams' letters give no indication of any special infatuation with Japanese customs, he does provide this one revealing estimation of Japanese culture:

The people of this Hand of *Japon* are good of nature, curteous about measure, and valiant in warre: their iustice is seuerely excecuted without any partialitie vpon transgressors of the law. They are gouerned in great ciuilitie. I meane, not a land better gouerned in the world by ciuill policie. The people be verie superstitious in their religion, and are of diuers opinions.

He clearly respected the Japanese, an attitude that caused considerable friction between Adams and Captain John Saris, who arrived in Japan in 1613 to open an English trading station. Saris noted, to his annoyance, that Adams persisted in giving "admirable and affectionated commendatytions" of Japan, so that "It is generally thought emongest vs that he is a naturalised Japanner." More specifically, Adams refused to stay in Saris' English-style quarters in Hirado, preferring the residence of a local Japanese magistrate. We also have testimony that Adams wore Japanese dress, and of course he became fluent in the Japanese language.

3. *Did he strongly influence Tokugawa Ieyasu?* It is here that the enthusiasm of later panegyrists and novelists—including, of course, James Clavell—has outstripped the sketchy available evidence. Adams was indeed an adviser to Ieyasu, and apparently a trusted one, but one must remember that Ieyasu had many professional advisers, including a number of foreigners. Indeed, one of Adams' shipmates, the Dutchman Jan Joosten van Lodensteijn (c. 1560-1623), also became a confidant of the shogun, and was likewise given a house in Edo—in a distinctly better part of town than Adams, along what came to be called, after its Dutch resident, the "Yayosu Quay" (and today "Yaesu-cho"). It is highly unlikely that the relationship between Adams and Ieyasu was ever one of great intimacy. Still, who knows . . . ?

4. *Did he become a samurai?* If by "samurai" we mean a *bushi*, a member of the warrior class, then the answer must certainly be *no*, Adams never became a samurai. It is true that he was provided an estate by Ieyasu, for whom he thereby became a retainer. It is also true, according to the account of the chief of the English trading station, that he left two swords—the customary mark of samurai status—to his son Joseph at his death. Yet in no surviving records has any hint of military interest or prowess been ascribed to Adams. He remained a dedicated man of commerce—a calling which was anathema to the *bushi* class.

Adams' status can be more persuasively explained as akin to doctors, scholars, priests, artists, and others of essentially professional

or advisory function. Such men were basically anomalies within the official Tokugawa four-class hierarchy of samurai-peasant-artisan-merchant. They were known generically as *hogaimono*, "those outside of the [normal] way," a term applied primarily to priests, who had presumably renounced the ordinary world, but extended to other anomalous categories. Their privileges were also non-standard: doctors, for example, were permitted to wear two swords, but in no sense were they considered samurai. When employed by the shogunate such men often had far easier access to the shogun than even high-ranking daimyo, precisely because of their advisory function. So it was surely into this anomalous class that Adams would have fit: it is almost inconceivable that any Japanese would have considered him a samurai. At best he was an "honorary samurai." As for the status of *hatamoto*, which was a specific rank among the retainers of the shogun, there is no documentary record for Adams, although a fief of 250 *koku* might barely have qualified him for such status. Again, he was probably considered simply the anomaly that in fact he was, a well-paid foreign expert not unlike the "yatoi" of Meiji Japan (described in H. J. Jones' recent book *Live Machines*).

The Romance of "Will" Adams

In all records from his lifetime, Adams was never known as anything but "William" (although his family name does vary, from Adams to Addames to Addams, all common in an era of unstandardized spelling). It remained for an obscure writer of adventure stories for youth, William Dalton (1821-75), to provide the familiarizing touch of "Will" in what was to be the first of six novels over the next century based on Adams' story: *Will Adams, The First Englishman in Japan: A Romantic Biography*, published in London in 1861.

In the almost two and a half centuries between his death and Dalton's "romantic" revival, Adams had not been completely forgotten by his countrymen, for his all-important letters were published twice. The first was in Samuel Purchas' remarkable early seventeenth-century compendium of accounts of Elizabethan overseas adventurers, known by its full grandiose title as *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes; Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others* (London, 1625). Here, a scant five years after Adams' death, four of his letters were preserved for posterity, and he was enshrined as one of the adventurous "pilgrims" of England's great age of seaborne expansion. Nothing was heard of Adams for over two centuries until Thomas Rundall reprinted the letters (with some corrections of Purchas' versions) in 1850, together with some early

travel descriptions of Japan, in a publication of the Hakluyt Society (a group dedicated to commemorating English exploration) entitled *Memorials of the Empire of Japan in the XVI and XVII Centuries*. It was this volume which caught the eye of William Dalton and provided him the material for his romance. (It is also the Rundall edition of Adams' letters, reprinted in 1963, that is the most accessible version today.)

The first revealing thing about Dalton's novel is its dedication to James Bruce, Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, a distinguished English diplomat who a scant two years earlier, in August 1858, had concluded a commercial treaty between Japan and England—one of the group of five treaties forced on Japan by the Western powers after the “opening” of the country by America's Commodore Perry in 1853-54. It was only natural that William Adams should be revived in this context, since he, after all, had been instrumental in negotiating the *first* commercial agreement between Japan and England in 1613.

Of course the position of England in East Asia was now vastly more powerful than in the era of the real William Adams. In the early seventeenth century, English trading efforts had been wholly at the mercy of Japanese authorities and greatly hampered by rivalry from the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, England had established a wholly new and heavily one-sided system of commercial power in East Asia. This became known after the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 as the “unequal treaty system” and was designed largely for the advantage and profit of the emerging European imperialist powers in Asia. But Dalton could still call on the spirit of William Adams as the first English trader in Japan, and in this way the first step was made in forging the latent symbolism of Will Adams as a pioneer of modern British imperialism in Asia.

What of the content of Dalton's novel? The arrival in Japan follows the lines of Adams' letters, but the cultural encounter with Japan remains pretty much a case of the white hero versus the colored heathens: Dalton's Will is not even persuaded of the pleasures of the Japanese bath, which in all later novels was to be the opening wedge in Japan's progress to “civilized” status in the hero's mind. Will's angry exit from the bath is also pretty much his exit from the novel, and for the bulk of the book Dalton chronicles the entirely imaginary adventures of his Dutch shipmate Melchior von Santvoort (a real historical character, of whom however almost nothing is known). Melchior's primary exploit involves his connections with the Japanese Christian community, centered around the “Queen of Tango,” who is none other than Hosokawa Gracia, the eventual model for *Shōgun's* Mariko. Melchior is presented as a valiant

Christian hero in a land of hostile heathen, and he finally aids the Catholic community in its escape from the Battle of Osaka. We are finally brought back to Will Adams only near the end of the novel, by which time he has been made a “lord” and taken a Japanese wife—but with little account for his obvious change of heart.

If nothing else, Dalton's novel serves to emphasize how very little was understood about Japan in the West during the first years after Perry's arrival. Dalton himself had of course never visited Japan, of which he wrote as though it were any of a number of exotic lands to which his Anglo-Saxon adventurers flocked in over a dozen such novels, including *Lost Among the Wild Men: Being Incidents in the Life of An Old Salt* (1868), and *The Power Money; or, The Adventures of Two Boy Heroes in the Island of Madagascar* (1874). In all, Dalton's novels comprise a marvelous example of fantasizing about the British in Asia. The key thing about Dalton's Japan is that it is irretrievably exotic, largely by virtue of being non-Christian. All is topsy-turvy in this early version of *Jawpen* (see Chapter 2 below). Dalton takes on with little change many of the attitudes of the early Jesuits themselves, but now in a common front of Protestant and Catholic against a Japan which is somehow, ironically, even more distant from the European conscience than it had been over two centuries before.

Will Adams and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance

In the decades immediately after Dalton's book, Japan moved quickly to modernize and Westernize, making the country far less exotic than it had been before—and, in many cases, far less exotic than an emerging group of Western aficionados of Japanese tradition would have preferred. Although the dominant image of Japan in this period became that of a country adept at mimicking the West, a small but distinct counter-image was already emerging—that of Japan and its “tradition” as the potential *teacher* of the West (as outlined in a timely article by Robert Rosenstone in the *American Historical Review*, June 1980). At any rate, knowledge about Japan in the West grew by leaps and bounds in the late nineteenth century, and the one-sided image of Will Adams as the lone emissary of civilization, as cast by Dalton, became less and less credible.

The next chapter in the modern mythology of Will Adams was to be written not by novelists, but by the British merchants and diplomats of the Meiji period (1868-1912). It all began in 1872, when James Walter, a British merchant in Yokohama, rediscovered the presumed tombs of Adams and his wife at Hemimura in a state of extreme neglect and launched a modest movement to restore the burial site. This became a viable project, however, only in the years

immediately following the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, a pivotal event in the modern diplomacy of East Asia by which Japan achieved the diplomatic equality and military security which had been her major national goals ever since the imposition of the unequal treaty system in the 1850s.

It should be no surprise that “Will” Adams, by now well-known as the “first Englishman in Japan,” was summoned forth as the symbolic progenitor of the twentieth-century alliance of Japan and England. This status was eloquently conferred in a revealing speech at the Japan Society of London in February 1904 (published in the Society’s *Transactions and Proceedings*, vol. 6) by Arthur Diosy. Entitled “In Memory of Will Adams,” the talk introduces Adams as a man who “lived in Japan for twenty years, attaining to a position of great influence and dignity, and died in the land where he had so well represented the best qualities of his race.” After a detailed account of Adams through his letters, Diosy sums up the man as:

... a good Briton, and very probably a great Briton; a man who never did aught in Japan to disgrace his country’s flag; a man who, on the contrary, taught the Japanese much that was new and useful—a man who taught them how to build ships in the European way, and indeed may well be said to have founded that glorious Japanese Navy which has just given us again proof of its excellence. It is, perhaps, not too great a stretch of imagination to picture the spirit of Will Adams looking down [from his grave] on the Bay of Yokosuka, the Chatham of Japan, on the splendid battleships and cruisers that lie there flying the flag of the Rising Sun.

The naval “proof” which Diosy mentions is none other than the surprise Japanese attack on Port Arthur which began the Russo-Japanese War, victory in which was the final step in establishing Japan as a full-fledged member of the imperialist club of nations. Note that in Diosy’s account Will Adams takes on two basic roles. First, in a spirit akin to Dalton’s hero, he is a worthy representative of the “qualities of his race”—no hint is made of his possible acculturation to Japanese ways. Second, he is a *teacher* of Japan in the area of technology, and, in particular, he is apotheosized as “the father of the Japanese Navy.” Historically, this is pretty far-fetched, but the symbolism was appropriate in the year 1904. Such doctoring of the Will Adams story fits nicely with another image common in those years, the idea of Japan as “The Britain of the East.” In other words, the common military and diplomatic interests of Japan and England take precedence over any lingering cultural differences. This symbolic position of Adams as forefather of modern British diplomacy in East Asia has been confirmed periodically in the twentieth century by the raising of

monuments, first a cenotaph at Hemimura in 1917, then an obelisk in his native Gillingham in 1934, and in 1947 a marker in Itō, where Adams built the two ships for Ieyasu.

Enter the British Samurai

Just at the time that official diplomatic ties between Japan and England were souring in the 1930s because of Japan’s continental expansion, further development of the Will Adams legend was salvaged by novelists, first in Richard Blaker’s *The Needlewatcher* (London, 1932, now available in a 1973 Tuttle reprint with an added subtitle, “The Will Adams Story, British Samurai”), and then in James Scherer’s *Pilot and Shōgun* (Tokyo, 1935).

Of the two, Blaker’s recreation is by far the more detailed and conscientious. Indeed, *The Needlewatcher* (that is, a pilot, the “needle” being that of a compass) is clearly the most distinguished in literary merit of all the Will Adams novels. Richard Blaker (1893-1940) was a talented and respected English writer, born in India the son of a high colonial official. Wounded in World War I, he went on to write *Medal Without Bar* (1930), a much-praised novel based on his wartime experience. His version of the Will Adams story is without doubt the *least* romantic of the lot; indeed he contributed more to the de-mythification of Adams than to his continuing glorification, producing a carefully historical work of fiction. *Pilot and Shōgun* is more a pastiche of incidents than a novel, put together in a light-hearted manner. James Scherer (1870-1944) first went to Japan around the turn of the century as a missionary-teacher, and later became a distinguished American educator, serving at Cal Tech in Pasadena from 1908 to 1926. He retained a lifelong interest in Japan, and his retelling of the Will Adams story was one of his many books on Japan.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of both Blaker’s and Scherer’s novels is the emphasis on the cultural confrontation of Will Adams with Japan, and in both he is clearly described as metamorphosing into a full-fledged samurai, something quite different from the lofty “lord” which Dalton envisioned. It is from this time that the concept of the “British samurai” begins to take root, an idea which would see its fullest development in *Shōgun*.

One would have thought that Blaker and Scherer would have exhausted the market for the Will Adams story but, if so, not for long, considering the dampening effect of the Pacific War. The next version was a curious book by an American writer, Robert Lund, entitled *Daishi-san* (New York, 1960). In an author’s note, Lund provides a revealing explanation of the appeal of the Will Adams story: “In Will Adams’ life and times I felt a close parallel with our own life and times. I tried to keep the story simple, seeking

to show the value of tolerance and understanding, and the necessity for people of different cultures to learn to live with each other.” Here we first encounter a distinct note of cross-cultural idealism in retelling the Will Adams story—a note which, again, Clavell was to develop even further. Note, however, that in the very title of *Daishi-san*—“Great Teacher,” a title which Lund has bestowed on his fictional Will Adams (although in actual Japanese practice it was a term reserved for high Buddhist priests, and posthumously at that!)—we see the recurrence of the theme that Adams is more teacher than learner. In *Daishi-san*, he is not only a teacher of technology (particularly ship-building), but also of culture, when he ends up teaching the second Tokugawa shogun a few words of English!

Will’s Sexual Awakening

We can already see how most of the elements of Will Adams that would coalesce as Blackthorne were already present in earlier novels about the pilot. But perhaps the most revealing precedent is that offered by the last Will Adams novel prior to *Shōgun*, Christopher Nicole’s *Lord of the Golden Fan*, which was published in London in 1973, only two years before *Shōgun* (and ironically bearing a plug for Clavell on the cover of the American paperback edition by Bantam: “Not since *Taipan* has there been a novel of such tempestuous excitement . . .”). Nicole is an Englishman raised in Guyana, a colonial background shared by Blaker and, at least spiritually, by Clavell: the appeal of Will Adams to Englishmen far from home seems particularly strong. A prodigious writer of thrillers, Nicole also writes historical novels, all, with the exception of *Lord of the Golden Fan*, set in the West Indies.

Lord of the Golden Fan depicts Will Adams as a man in search of liberation from a variety of sexual hang-ups that we would popularly call “Victorian”—no matter that the Elizabethans probably weren’t so hung up about sex (see Chapter 4). The book opens with Will desperately frustrated on his wedding night by a wife who is convinced that “to be naked is to be lewd,” and that a wife’s sexual duty is “to receive, not to give.” Chapter Two leads us through a homosexual encounter with none other than Christopher (“call me Kitty”) Marlowe, and then, hang-ups unresolved, on to Japan.

It is unnecessary to detail the long chain of systematically varied sexual adventures which Nicole’s Will Adams experiences in Japan—ultimately to find some sort of satisfaction in his strong-willed and obediently passionate Japanese wife (a long-time staple of Western fiction on Japan). *Lord of the Golden Fan*, while of no compelling literary quality, is provocative light pornographic reading and of definite interest to the cultural historian as a well-developed

statement about Japan as a mirror, if not an antidote, for twentieth-century Western preoccupations about sex, in particular nudity, homosexuality, and the problem of mutual dominance in sexual partnerships.

But Will’s pilgrimage of self-discovery in Japan as he is converted into a loyal retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu (the “Lord of the Golden Fan” of the title) is more than merely sexual: he is also awakened to new levels of meaning in the same issue of life versus death that would preoccupy Blackthorne. Particularly revealing is Adams’ response late in the novel to a question from his old Dutch shipmate Melchior as to whether he plans to stay in “this barbarous country”:

“Barbarous, dear friend, certainly. But it is also *true*. Here at least there is honour, unto death, and duty, unto death, and beauty, unto death. There is savageness, to be sure, but it is a simple human savageness. It lacks the sophisticated hypocrisy of Europe.” (p. 421)

In these lines, a further transformation of the Will Adams legend is already underway, from a man who is primarily a teacher and an Englishman to a man who is primarily a learner and very confused about whether he is an Englishman—or a samurai. It remained for James Clavell to develop this theme to popular perfection.

James Clavell As Will Adams

Although James Clavell is the sixth novelist to take up the Will Adams story, he is only dimly conscious of the fact—and not particularly interested. He says (and there is absolutely no reason to doubt him) that he never read any of the earlier Will Adams novels, and that in fact he “deliberately avoided them.” This absence of any direct continuity makes all the more interesting the many parallels of theme between his recreation of the story and those of his predecessors. One must remember of course that Clavell did read very widely among *non-fictional* accounts of Adams, many of which were written in celebration of the symbol as much as the man and hence have strongly mythical elements (“first Englishman in Japan,” “British samurai,” “father of the Japanese navy,” and so forth).

But *Shōgun* is of interest also because it is *unique*, drawing on the Will Adams legend and yet creating a totally new version of it in accord with Clavell’s own background, with his instincts as a storyteller, and with the particular message which he wishes to preach to his late twentieth-century popular audience. To begin with the background: he was born in 1924 the son of Sir Richard Charles Clavell, an officer in the Royal Navy, and is intensely proud of a lineage of British military officers “stretching back to Walterus de

Claville, armor-bearer to William the Conqueror.” In particular, he feels himself to be bound by blood to the British naval tradition. While he had no first-hand experience in Asia as a child (although he was born in Australia, his family shortly returned to England), his father frequently told him tales of the English in Asia, including the story of his grandfather, who served with a force of English naval observers during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5.

Clavell is also proud of his linkage, through the military, with the traditions of the British Empire. Only half in jest, he explains that,

My forebears are all military, so I was brought up to be one of these people who ruled the empire. You know, two or three people used to go out and they used to rule the natives. And they used to dress in dinner jacket in the sweltering jungle. When the natives came and killed them, they said, “That’s a terribly bad show, old boy.” And then the British, wisely, would send a battleship and knock off the leader, and say, “Now, look, *please* behave yourselves, because we *really* are better than you, and we really know how to look after you better.”

So it is easy to see how closely Clavell could identify with William Adams, who was at once Elizabethan maritime adventurer, dedicated advocate of free trade, pioneer of English imperialism in the Orient, and a man who, a native of Chatham and a sailor under Drake, was involved in the very founding of the British naval tradition.

Even more central to the conception of *Shōgun* was Clavell’s first extended encounter with Asia, as a prisoner of the Japanese in Changi Jail on Singapore. While reluctant to dwell on the details of the experience, Clavell time and again comes back to its importance in molding his attitudes: “Everything goes back to Changi; it is Genesis.” In a literal sense, his prison experience provided the genesis of his career as a novelist, *King Rat* (1962), which “is of course an autobiography; that’s what happened to me in 1945, as near as I could remember it fifteen years afterwards.” Prior to *King Rat*, Clavell had been primarily a screenwriter, first in England and then from 1953 in America, and he says it was the Hollywood screenwriters’ strike in 1960 which enabled him to write a novel. “*King Rat* sort of spilled out, like a dam bursting, because I hadn’t told anybody about anything to do with those days.” *King Rat* won critical acclaim, and Clavell’s career as a novelist was launched.

As any reader of the trials of “Peter Marlowe” in *King Rat* will grasp, Clavell’s experiences at Changi were harrowing. It was also his first contact with the Japanese and their attitudes:

Well, I learned fairly young about the Japanese and their attitudes toward life. I was barely eighteen, I was a teenager, right? We were surrounded by

death and destruction, people died like flies. So I have different attitudes towards things.

Clavell is of course often asked how, after three years of often brutal treatment by the Japanese, he could spend four years of his life writing a generally sympathetic novel about his captors; his response: “I just admire the Japanese. It’s possible to end up admiring an enemy. The relationship of conqueror and conquered can be an intriguing one; it doesn’t necessarily lead to hate.”

His prison experience heightened Clavell’s sense of identification with Will Adams: “It occurred to me that he was a man rather like myself, in an alien land.” Adams, like Clavell, first encountered the Japanese as their prisoner, in fear for his life. If Part I of *Shōgun* (and the first three-hour segment of the TV miniseries) seems disturbingly like a catalog of stereotypes of Japanese violence and barbarity from the Pacific War, one must remember that Clavell has real personal memories of undeniable Japanese inhumanity. It is, of course, necessary for the discerning reader also to appreciate the differences: it is highly unlikely, for example, that the Japanese would ever treat helpless castaways on their own shores with the sadistic tortures that Yabu devises in *Shōgun*; Changi, one must remember, was an alien land for the Japanese as well, under circumstances of total war.

Even more important than this initial identification of Clavell with Will Adams—now Adams as “Blackthorne”—is the eventual process of *conversion* which is so central a theme to *Shōgun*. Just as Clavell came in time to admire his captors and to understand that their way of viewing things was not only different but perhaps in ways *better* than that of the West, so the legend of Will Adams as “British samurai” offered the plot outline and psychology of a similar process of conversion. It was a remarkable mesh of the story of a historical figure with a novelist’s own personal experiences, yearnings, and fantasies: in becoming Blackthorne, Will Adams was also to become James Clavell himself.

But before his encounter with Will Adams, Clavell was first to write *Taipan* (1966), a novel loosely based on the historical activities of Western traders in the new English colony of Hong Kong in 1841. As Clavell tells the story, he was inspired by the success of James Michener’s *Hawaii* (1959), and “there’s nothing like attaching to success, so I thought: Michener’s *Hawaii*—but on Hong Kong.” The resulting *Taipan* owed less to Michener than to a distinctive formula worked out by Clavell, consisting of a historical setting and lots of fictional characters, a short story-time spread out over a large number of pages, a heavy quota of bloody action and intricate intrigue, and a slangy, easy-to-read style. It was a

formula that would be repeated in *Shōgun*, but with the addition of the all-important themes of cultural conflict and value transformation.

The obvious bridge from *King Rat* to *Taipan* to *Shōgun* was the theme of Englishmen in East Asia, a theme which has led Clavell to characterize all of his novels, past and projected, as an interlocking “Asian Saga.” He is now completing *Noble House*, set in Hong Kong in the 1960s, “which essentially brings *Taipan* up to date.” After that, back to Japan and ahead to the 1970s, in a novel entitled *Nippon*. And then back again to China—now entitled simply *China*—and still ahead in time: “It may even be science Fiction.” But the unifying theme of “Asian Saga” will remain simply “the story of the Anglo-Saxon in Asia, from the first man, which is obviously Will Adams. And *that* is what I am trying to do.”

The Appeal of *Shōgun*

While none of the earlier novels about Will Adams appear to have enjoyed any great success, *Shōgun* has become one of the most widely-read popular novels in recent American history. What are the reasons for Clavell’s phenomenal success? Exactly what did he do to the Will Adams story that no one else had done? The easy answer, of course, is that he merely sensationalized the story in ways that are obvious from the notices of reviewers: “Seldom does a novel appear so packed with melodramatic action, so gaudy and flamboyant with blood and sin, treachery and conspiracy, sex and murder;” another calls it a novel of “relentless lopped heads, severed torsos, assassins, intrigue, war, tragic love, over-refined sex, excrement, torture, high honor, ritual suicide, hot baths and breathless haikus.” (For these and other reviews, see the cover of *Shōgun* and *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, vol. 6, p. 114.)

But beyond the undeniable sensationalism—indeed, in spite of it—one can say a variety of more interesting things about Clavell’s achievement in *Shōgun*. Purely at the level of technique, one must give Clavell credit for his ability as a storyteller. He is able, through a prodigious imagination, to hold the reader’s attention with only occasional lapses: most who have read the novel testify to total absorption over a relatively short period of time, to a sense of being totally swept up into the world of Clavell’s fantasy. One important secret to this ability to “capture” a reader is the author’s adherence to a story time which is not radically different from actual reading time. Only about five months in story time elapse in the twelve hundred pages of *Shōgun*, not much longer than the length of a summer vacation, for which the book seems made to order.

The effect of this truncated story time is not only to heighten the almost cinema-like sense of action (it is crucial to remember that

Clavell was a screenwriter before he was a novelist), but also to reduce the real story of “Will” Adams’ experiences in Japan from a number of years to a number of weeks. Perhaps this is tailored to the American preference in the late 1970s for quick conversions, but it is remarkable that it only takes Blackthorne a couple of months to reach the stage of “*wa*” necessary to attempt ritual suicide. Everything is quickened, compressed, and intensified in Clavell’s treatment of the Will Adams legend, in contrast to the longer and more painful process of acculturation depicted in earlier novels.

Clavell was also the first author of a Will Adams novel to change the names of all the characters. Some have criticized him for this (see, for example, Sheila Johnson’s review in the *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Summer 1976), arguing that most historical novelists retain the real names of the historical models. Clavell, however, clearly wished for greater license: “I thought, to be honest, that I didn’t want to be restricted by historical personality.” On more practical grounds, he argues that the vast majority of American popular readers would never have heard of the historical Japanese characters anyway, so he might as well take advantage of the opportunity to create names which in spelling and pronunciation would be more accessible to his audience: Toranaga instead of Tokugawa, for example, or Zataki for Satake. Whatever the motivation, the changing of the names of the obvious historical models gave Clavell a license for fantasy which he exercised freely.

Clavell of course also changed many details of the story of William Adams: he arrives at Izu, for example, in the imaginary village of “Anjiro” (derived, however, from Ajiro, an actual fishing village on the Izu peninsula: “I read it off a map”), rather than on the coast of Kyushu. There are only a dozen survivors on the *Erasmus* versus two dozen on the *De Liefde* (although the pedantic will note that *Erasmus* was in fact the previous name of the *De Liefde*, and that a carving of the famed Dutch humanist remained on its stern decoration, preserved to this day in the Tokyo National Museum).

But these are small differences: on the whole Clavell follows closely the story of Adams’ arrival in Japan. It is in a different area that Clavell makes the most dazzling innovation: he arranges a love affair between Blackthorne and the wife of one of the most powerful daimyo in Japan! This astonishing linking of the entirely separate legends of Hosokawa Gracia (see Chapter 7) and Will Adams is at once the most historically implausible and most original contribution of Clavell’s. In a sense, this represents the Americanization of Will Adams, who in previous re-creations always, as a good Englishman, knew his place and was content to consort with women

of roughly his own status: maids, prostitutes, and merchants' daughters. But in *Shōgun*, he is not only able to approach, but even to seduce, one of the grandest ladies of the land. If Mariko sometimes seems more like a JAL stewardess than a daimyo wife, it is only a reflection of the diminished class consciousness which Clavell has brought to the Will Adams legend.

James Clavell also went well beyond the conventional limits of the Will Adams legend in his elaborate depiction of the internecine politics among Japanese warlords in 1600. The very title *Shōgun* is a sign of the heavy emphasis on Toranaga and his struggle for power, which competes with the Blackthorne-Mariko affair as the central theme of the novel. Earlier Will Adams novels rarely strayed into the complexities of Japanese domestic politics except as a foil for the adventures of the English hero, whereas Clavell shows daimyo rivalry as a theme of major interest in itself. While the depiction of the struggle for the shogunate has been substantially fictionalized (see Chapter 6), it nevertheless indicates a strong interest in Japanese history on its own terms. In this sense, *Shōgun* is a less ethnocentric version of the Will Adams legend than its predecessors—although the essentially ethnocentric character of the Will Adams legend itself of course remains. (It should be noted that the TV miniseries version of *Shōgun* greatly abbreviated the story of the struggle for the shogunate, focusing largely on the Blackthorne-Mariko love affair and hence in a sense reverting to the format in which Japanese politics is simply the background for the cultural encounters of the Western hero.)

But what finally sets *Shōgun* most clearly apart from its predecessors is its instructional quality. At a purely descriptive level, *Shōgun* is a virtual encyclopedia of Japanese history and culture: somewhere among those half-million words, one can find a brief description of virtually everything one wanted to know about Japan, typically presented through the good offices of our tour guide Mariko. In a sense, *Shōgun* is a painless introduction to Japan, and the large number of passengers who may be seen engrossed in the novel on any tourist flight to Tokyo suggests that it is indeed a kind of travel literature. Although he denies any such intention, it seems likely that at least subconsciously Clavell was introducing his readers to Japan today as much as to Japan in 1600, a feature of the book that helps explain some of the anachronisms.

But the instructional quality of *Shōgun* is at the same time as much prescriptive as descriptive, since Clavell offers a critique of Western views on such essential matters as death and sex by presenting the Japanese attitudes as superior (see Chapters 2, 8, 11). In earlier Will Adams novels, Japanese culture was depicted as at best a *mirror* for the West, whereas in *Shōgun* it is elevated almost to the

status of a *model*. This theme would seem to reflect America's growing sense of inferiority vis-à-vis Japan in recent decades, particularly in matters of economic productivity and social order. *Shōgun* in a sense is a popular-culture version of Harvard sociologist Ezra Vogel's controversial *Japan as Number One* (1979), which proposes that America has much to learn from Japan in terms of social, political, and economic institutions. Many critics have warned that cross-cultural borrowing is not as simple and mechanical as Vogel implies, and the same caveats of course hold doubly true for *Shōgun*, in which Japan's superiority is extended to matters of fundamental spiritual values.

In the end, we see that James Clavell has performed three types of operations on the Will Adams legend. First, he has *synthesized* most of the earlier themes by weaving them all into the story of "Blackthorne": the latent symbolism of the "first Englishman in Japan" is strong, the role of self-confident teacher of naval technology (if not actually the "father of the Japanese navy") is what in the end saves Blackthorne from his grief over Mariko's death, and the transcultural ideal of the "British samurai" is of course central. But Clavell has also *expanded* the Will Adams story by the incorporation of the Hosokawa Gracia legend and the complex story of the internal Japanese struggle for power. By changing the names and providing many imaginary characters, Clavell has written a less strictly "historical" novel than his predecessors, yet at the same time he has incorporated far more history.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Clavell has also *contracted* things in various ways. The Will Adams story is compressed into a bare six months. Cultural information is provided from periods after the year 1600, in what is better viewed as compression than anachronism. And perhaps most importantly, the cultural learning of the hero is condensed into the message of simplicity itself: in Japan, Mariko tells us over and over again, everything is so *simple*, whether it is a matter of food, death, sex, language, or whatever. However much we might all realize that things are probably not quite so simple in the real Japan, the lure remains, and in the end *Shōgun's* most original contribution to the legend of the British samurai is the fantasy that maybe, after all, we really can "just change our concept of the world."

2 Japan, Jawpen, and the Attractions of an Opposite

David Plath



Everybody needs a good cultural opposite. We learn by making comparisons, and the royal road to understanding our own way of life takes us to where we can begin to see it as others do. Often enough we use a different “them” to define different parts of what is “us”: we contrast our cooking with French cuisine, for example, or our notions of the mystical with those of South Asians. But again and again as we scan the rainbow of life-styles around the world, our eyes are likely to fix upon one that attracts us by its special color. Western eyes have been drawn in that way to Japanese culture for many generations, so that *Shōgun* touches a soft spot in our curiosity.

We can enjoy *Shōgun* simply as an adventure story. But this one is peculiar, an adventure yarn with a subtitle: “A Novel of Japan.” Yet this is deceptive. *Shōgun* actually takes us beyond Japan into an entirely different country. There we find a culture that resembles sixteenth-century Japan—but with all the pieces rearranged. I call that place “Jawpen”—this place of which so many Westerners have *jawed* and *penned*. Jawpen is one of our cultural opposites, transposed into the twilight zone of myth and epic. It is made up of traditional Japanese parts, but it was invented and assembled here in the West for domestic consumption. In Jawpen the whole world

is askew, the cultural geometry of life 180° out of phase with what we had thought normal.

The zone of myth is not the place for facts but for beliefs. We get confused about this because we like to call something a myth as a way of branding it a phony idea that fools other people but not us. But myths are the root ideas of any culture. As culture-bound animals, we need myths to live by, whether or not we can prove to anybody’s satisfaction that they are true. We learn them so early, and so thoroughly, that most of the time we are not even aware of them—we don’t need to think about them any more than we need to be aware of the rules of grammar before we speak. An attractive cultural opposite forces us to consider these root beliefs that we had been taking for granted. As he learns the way of life in Jawpen, pilot Blackthorne is of course put to tests of bravery and physical stamina; an adventure tale can’t move forward without them. But his toughest tests are of moral courage: he has to wrestle with his own deepest myths of life.

Curiosity and a hunger for challenges seem to be built into human nature. And I have a hunch that in their heart of hearts many people who travel from the West to Japan today would like to imagine that they are pilot Blackthorne storming into Jawpen. Even now in this age of earth-watching satellites, we still seem to hold, in some corner of our Western minds, the idea that the islands of Japan lie temptingly close to the twilight zone of myth.

Perhaps that idea got its start from early European maps that showed “The Japans” as the most far-out set of islands in the Far East. Whatever the source, the idea was still dominant a century after Blackthorne in the classic *Gulliver’s Travels* of his countryman Jonathan Swift. Part Three of the book is Gulliver’s voyage “To Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib, and Japan.” The idea surfaces even today: a few months ago I heard a U.S. manufacturer of metal kazoos, in a radio interview, say that his product “is sold all over the world—including Japan.” As if somehow Japan remains in a different category from the rest of the world.

I’ve seen the disappointment on the faces of travellers arriving in Japan these days. Tokyo, they discover, looks pretty much like any other industrial mega-city. “The Japanese,” they complain, “have sold out their tradition for a mess of transistors.” These travellers may rush off to a remote mountain village where (according to the guidebooks) they still can find fragments of Jawpen (The “Real” Japan). But the weed of doubt has taken root. For if Japan is not, after all, the cultural opposite that the travellers had expected, then what had they been seeking? Was there once a “real” Jawpen—is *Shōgun* historically true? For if Jawpen happened once, maybe it

can happen again. Not that we can turn back the pages of history. It is rather that the basic principles of Jawpenese society, its life-giving myths, are not just a fantasy but are within the realm of human possibility. A better civilization could be built around them in the future.

If a cultural opposite is to keep on attracting us, it has to remain distant. When people begin to behave pretty much like neighbors, then we may find them easier to understand (whether or not we *like* them)—but their way of life is not much good as food for thought. In *Shōgun* the author is careful to remind us from time to time that behavior really does run in reverse in Japan. He reports, for example, that “Blackthorne ordered a servant to saddle his horse and mounted awkwardly from the right side, as was custom in Japan and China” (p. 720). Earlier, on page 191, Rodrigues summarized the situation for Blackthorne by saying that “Japan’s an upside-down world.”

The image of Japan as topsy-turvydom in fact was first widely purveyed by the European visitors in the era of *Shōgun*. A prime example is a tract by Jesuit chronicler Luis Frois, *Contradictions and Differences of Custom Between the People of Europe and This Province of Japan* (1585), an entertaining (and often perceptive) catalog of all the particulars in which Japan is a civilization in reverse, ranging from religious forms (“Our churches are high and narrow; the Japanese temples are broad and low”) to matters of intimate hygiene (“We pick our noses with our thumb or index fingers; the Japanese use their little finger”). The theme of reversal was promptly revived in the mid-nineteenth century when contact with Japan was resumed. The leading British diplomat of the time, for example, explains that “Japan is essentially a country of paradoxes and anomalies, where all, even familiar things, put on new faces, and are curiously reversed. Except that they do not walk on their heads instead of their feet, there are few things in which they do not seem, by some occult law, to have been impelled in a perfectly opposite direction and a reversed order.” (Sir Rutherford Alcock, *The Capital of the Tycoon* [1863], I, 357).

We shouldn’t swallow such statements whole, of course. In dozens of little particulars, life in Jawpen does not look at all left-handed. But in the case of Clavell, it is not a matter of some “occult law”: he is exaggerating for a purpose. Like an anthropologist—or a Utopian novelist—he accents what is different about the society he is describing in order to define and even question our own myths. Clavell may claim to be “just” a storyteller, but *Shōgun* is a story wrapped around a sermon.

That sermon would be a lot more difficult to deliver if the story were set in today’s Japan. People who write tourist guides to Japan

still like to include a section on Topsy-Turvy Land. A Japanese carpenter, for example, uses saws and planes that cut when you draw them toward you—where ours cut when you push away. But the reversals seem to become fewer day to day; the Japanese even mount their horses from the left nowadays, as astute observers of the TV version of *Shōgun* may notice.

It’s not easy even to imagine that there could be a radically different civilization tucked away someplace on our planet now. It’s been a long time since anybody discovered an unknown island or found a lost valley. The twentieth-century Utopian novelist may still try to persuade us that a more perfect society still could exist in a remote locale—in a valley in Tibet (Shangri-la, in James Hilton’s *Lost Horizon*) or an island in Indonesia (Pala, in Aldous Huxley’s *Island*). But even these imaginary cultural opposites have to cope with our same world of big technology, big science, and big government. In *Island*, for example, an aggressive nearby nation sends its troops to demolish Pala and force the people there to join the march of Progress. So if John Blackthorne were alive today and went looking for Jawpen he would get nowhere on the *Erasmus*: he would have to pilot the starship *Enterprise* across oceans of outer space and crash-land on a distant galaxy.

That was not always the case. Once upon a time it was truly possible to set sail across a salt-water sea and land in the territory of your cultural opposite. There was a moment in the tumble of world events when people from Westernmost Europe and Easternmost Asia saw each other for the very first time. And it was as if—as time is measured in history—the range of human types had mushroomed; All around the globe it suddenly seemed that mankind was more marvelously diverse than anyone had dreamed possible.

It’s not easy to reconstruct that feeling today. The range of human types on earth now is pretty well documented, even if some of the types remain a bit puzzling to us. If we want to put ourselves into the mind-set of a Blackthorne or a Toranaga we have to imagine answering the doorbell and there being greeted by a BEM. BEMs are the bug-eyed monsters that populate science fiction. We enjoy meeting them when it’s safe, in the pages of a book or on the screen in *Star Wars*. But what if one of them actually walked into your house, and could talk, and had some quite human qualities and quirks? Would you want one to marry your sister?

So John Blackthorne shivers when he first encounters the Jawpenese. They in turn shudder at him, for he is the BEM in their houses. (In traditional Japanese folktales the BEM-like demons had blue eyes, large noses, and red faces: an uncanny resemblance to Anglo-Saxons. So much for the Hollywood fantasy that people in many parts of the world fell prostrate before the first white man

they saw because they thought he was one of their gods come back to life.)

Blackthorne is, indeed, the great WASP explorer, tough, clever, full of get-up-and-go. The personification of aggressive European expansion, he has come to The Japans for trade and material treasure, a knight of early capitalism. But we soon find out that he is a true knight after all, a man tender-hearted as well as tough. He has a streak of poetry in him, a romantic side, a spiritual hunger. And that spiritual hunger has not been adequately nourished in Europe. Certainly not by what the Christian church has to offer. Blackthorne despises the clergy two times over: once for getting to the Far East before he did and a second time on general principle. He himself is a skeptic, the cool-thinking master of modern technology and science. He is capable of being skeptical even about the myths that are the base of his own way of life.

Blackthorne arrives in Jawpen with a kind of “reading readiness.” Shown the book of life from his cultural opposite, he soon is studying its pages on his own, eager to decipher them. For he realizes that this upside-down world is not just a fun house. Yes, at times he does act like a kid at an amusement park: sampling new foods, hot baths, and massages, playing house with Mariko. But in Jawpen Blackthorne is no longer certain that he knows which values of life are “backward” after all. He has to accept the fact that in this country *he* is the BEM: a backward European male.

If he is going to overcome his developmental disadvantages and be mainstreamed into local society, then he must take its myths deep into the core of his being. To accomplish that, he must be de-programmed by ordeal, for only then can he be born again as a samurai and finally reach the goal that author Clavell sent him to find: an understanding of the error in Western ways. As Blackthorne explains to his hostesses, “We’re taught to be ashamed of our bodies and pillowing and nakedness and . . . and all sorts of stupidities. It’s only being here that’s made me realize it. Now that I’m a little civilized I know better” (p. 696).

Blackthorne doesn’t have much trouble when it comes to making sense of the larger operations of Jawpenese society. True, the natives have to coach him with regard to peculiarities in the political system and its daimyo rivalries. But the daimyo are men on the make who behave about the same as calculating princes and bishops and power brokers that Blackthorne has known in other parts of the world. What he can’t so readily grasp is the moral geometry, the myths that motivate people in their ordinary everyday relations with one another. Here, too, Rodrigues summarizes the situation for him: “All Jappos are different from us—they don’t feel pain or cold like us—but samurai are even worse. They fear nothing, least

of all death.” And in addition, “Jesu Madonna, the women are something else, though, a different species, Ingeles, nothing on earth like them” (p. 140)

But learning to live by an opposite moral geometry is not something you can do in the classroom, or by quiet study. The natives of Jawpen seem amazingly eager to serve as Blackthorne’s tutors, and are forever giving him lessons. But like any child he has to learn some of the hardest lessons by experience. The hardest lessons, expectably enough, have to do with myths about love, death, and loyalty—central issues for any philosophy.

Consider two instances. In Blackthorne’s philosophy, God and mankind are fundamentally different orders of being. Every person owes his or her first loyalty to God; all persons, under God, are equal in that they all deserve God’s mercy and mankind’s charity. Toranaga laughs at this Christian conscience that wants to treat all souls as equal, that refuses to discriminate among persons. And Mariko adds that until Blackthorne can shuck off this conscience he will be “defenseless as a doll” (p. 576) in Jawpen. For in this country there is no gulf between God and mankind, and all people are not to be treated the same. You owe loyalty to your lord and your family; other people can fend for themselves. Only those few who are personally tied to you can be trusted. The rest of mankind needs to be approached like a pit of vipers, and trust here is childish. To John Blackthorne the idea that a man should offer a god-like loyalty to another man is blasphemy. He can accept it only after he first has desecrated his Christian values by attempting to take his own life—symbolically, that is, burying his Christian conscience.

On the other hand, Blackthorne takes much more easily to the idea that sex can be guilt-free. In his philosophy there was a chasm between body and soul, the soul belonging to God and the flesh being a burden that one endures but does not try to enjoy. But in Jawpen no wall separates soul from body, and there is no virtue to be gained from abstaining from physical pleasures. Indeed, people who are close to one another should help their partners into joy. This is almost an obligation between pillow partners. Blackthorne has to mull over this idea for a while, but soon he is taking it up with gusto: one would think that he had just invented the wheel.

As I add up the cultural lessons that John Blackthorne learns in Jawpen, he begins to look less and less like an Elizabethan who went to the other side of the world in 1600, and more and more like an American who fell into a time-reverse warp about the year 1970. He is solidly within the great parade of rugged WASP adventure heroes, from the knights of Camelot to Captain Kirk of *Star Trek*. But he probably is the only man in that whole parade who shuffles

along being uncertain about his cultural roots, and who is ready to trade them in for a new issue.

Blackthorne pilots us into an attractive civilization but one that is more attractive to us than it would be, I suspect, to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. We are the ones who are troubled about living by myths that seem not to help us face death with composure, that make too much mystery out of human sexuality, that set us too far apart from nature, that do not ease our feeling of being dwarfed by towering and inscrutable technologies and bureaucracies. When we are in Jawpen we seem to have gotten to a place where there are better answers to these problems. And perhaps in time we can continue the journey beyond Jawpen. Perhaps Blackthorne or one of his descendants will pilot us back across the Pacific and land us in Amourica, the land we want God to bless so that we can love.

3 *Shōgun* as an Introduction to Cross-Cultural Learning

Elgin Heinz



God help me, I'm so mixed up. Part Eastern now, mostly Western. I've got to act like them and think like them to stay alive. And much of what they believe is so much better than our way that it's tempting to want to become one of them totally, and yet. . . home is there, across the sea, where my ancestors were birthed, where my family lives, Felicity and Tudor and Elizabeth. Neh?

Shōgun, pp. 718-9

The common recognition that societies, like individuals, both teach and learn from each other is a recent one. Indeed, it has been suggested that perhaps the most important fact about the twentieth century is that, for the first time in history, people of the world have had to take seriously one another's actions and beliefs. Such recent phenomena as gas lines and flotillas of refugees have dramatically brought this lesson home to Americans, a people who have traditionally taken pride in being self-sufficient shapers of world events, not passive respondents to circumstances beyond our control. In contrast, Japan has long since realized the reality of interdependence and the value of lessons learned from others.

James Clavell's *Shōgun* illustrates the teaching/learning process that has taken place at the individual and, to a degree, at the societal

level when two cultural traditions have been thrust together by the forces of history. It does so in a spell-binding, personal way by making issues of cross-cultural contact and conflict come alive as no textbook could do.

The lesson of knowing the self and one's cultural "baggage" only when confronted with a different way of perceiving the world is also compellingly brought home by *Shōgun*. This further underlines the value of having students read the novel and watch the TV dramatization. Despite historical anachronisms and inaccuracies, Blackthorne's world is a fascinating telescope through which students may see themselves as well as the Age of Discovery, when the global world first came into clear focus.

History or Romance?

Shōgun is historically informative. It is set in 1600, when European voyages of discovery had recently determined the size of the earth and the locations of major land masses. England and Holland were competing with Portugal and Spain for colonial empires. William Adams, an English pilot, and a few of the *De Liefde*'s crew had survived a stormy landing on the southwestern coast of Japan after threading the Straits of Magellan and crossing the Pacific.

In 1600, Japan was a seething cauldron of intrigue and civil war—nothing new, but Tokugawa Ieyasu was completing the task of constructing a stable dictatorship that would provide internal peace and isolation from external influences for the next two centuries. *Shōgun*, in a six-month slice of the action, shows the kind of plotting and fighting that was typical, even though some of the events were shifted and characters changed for dramatic effect. But, explicitly labelled as fiction, it takes no more liberties with the facts than the TV "docudramas" of the last few years that claim to be true accounts of their subjects.

Shōgun also is a romance, a version of the classical cross-cultural encounter in which passion defies cultural norms only to end, inevitably, in tragedy. Lower-middle-class Adams is transformed into Blackthorne, heroic amalgam of John Wayne and John Carter, Warlord of Mars, who changes the course of history and mourns the death of his even more heroic lover, Mariko, wife of a great and cruel samurai. But in the end he has his grief assuaged by the award of noble rank, two beautiful women to replace Mariko, and a great estate. Mariko, exquisitely beautiful and intelligent, and, despite her conversion to Catholicism, totally dedicated to her samurai responsibilities, embodies the values of Japanese feudal aristocracy as Blackthorne epitomizes those of middle-class England.

Because of its romantic elements, some academic historians dismiss *Shōgun* as false both to the real circumstances in Japan and to the character of William Adams. Clavell does not bother to refute them. He subtitled his book "A Novel of Japan" and invented new names for those characters that can be identified with historical figures. Thus, he felt justified in making them behave according to the logic of his theme instead of according to the frequently tedious and sometimes mystifying accounts of written chronicles. Would anyone deny that the struggle for power is clarified by telescoping several interacting governing bodies into a single Council of Regents?

Other historians, more lenient, note that many of the novel's apparent anachronisms are acceptable, given its pivotal time frame. Enormous changes took place in Japan within a single lifetime centered around the year 1600. Who can tell precisely when a particular phenomenon began or ended? An English historian, Hugh Ross Williamson, writing on the whole problem of taking liberties with the "facts" of history, argues plausibly that all of academic history is a "combination of myth, propaganda, and guesswork Even when the writer has grasped the fact that history is the interaction of character and not the invention and propagation of myths, . . . he cannot invent speeches and thoughts for his people; he can only record what he can prove." The historical novelist, on the other hand, like the great Greek dramatists, working with known outcomes, can interpret the facts so that "an aspect of truth emerges which should compel the audience's belief" (*Historical Whodunits* [1956], pp. 12-22).

The reader can use Williamson's provocative views and the test of *Shōgun* to approach theories of history as well as to argue whether Clavell has produced a work of historical fiction that compels the reader's belief or a costume romance that seduces the uninformed reader while infuriating the scholar.

What differentiates *Shōgun* from other costume romances is a set of philosophical convictions and life-style preferences for which the story is the vehicle (for example, the constant references to "karma"). In this sense, *Shōgun* can be compared with Utopian novels that use a remote place and time or elements of fantasy to express the author's arguments. In this it resembles, for example, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, both of which use a mixture of fact, fantasy, utopianism, and symbolism specifically designed to promote the writer's particular value system in a setting that will give it greater impact than if it were presented directly on its own merits. The reader is made a participant in the value judgments by identification with the characters and their actions.

All three writers built their imaginary cultures on real foundations—Swift and Heinlein on the England and United States of their own times and Clavell on seventeenth-century Japan, so that, often, only artful selection of unexaggerated facts is needed to make the reader infer the intended point. Immersed in these believable details, the observer is led to recognize the deficiencies of his own culture and to appreciate the values of the alien one in which he must try to survive. Clavell, as a romancer with a cause, takes feudal Japanese society and distills the whole complex of two centuries of Tokugawa culture into stereotypes of personal honor and the complementarity of life and death. To his credit, he does it well. Mishima Yukio, the great novelist who was “Japan’s last samurai” and who ritualistically disemboweled himself in 1970 after failing to revive the samurai spirit in an appeal to the army, would have appreciated the value system by which *Shōgun*’s characters lived. It is this skill that makes many American academic specialists on Japan feel nervous. Nō reader of *Gulliver’s Travels* is likely to think of Lilliput as an actual place, however remote. And, on the other hand, any reader of *Stranger in a Strange Land* can apply the corrective of his own experience and observation to Heinlein’s characterization of today’s American society. But who among us has had experience with the real Japan of 1600? Scholars can cite stereotypes and anachronisms in *Shōgun* but, on any given detail, would have to admit that their general knowledge does not rule out the possibility of some specific action by a particular individual.

Cultural Comparisons

Shōgun, as a Utopian novel with a following large enough to justify making it into a TV series, encourages classroom comparison with other books that, in criticizing our current social behavior, have amassed cult-like followings of devotees to various Utopian systems. Students can be invited to name other examples of utopianism, found today in what is usually classified as science fiction. They can speculate on the particular appeal that makes some people try to model their life-styles and value systems on those exemplified. In the social studies classroom, these books can be extraordinarily useful—they are entertaining and thought-provoking introductions to sociology, cultural anthropology, historical cause and effect, use of and adaptation to natural environments, value examination and identification, and (though in disrepute because of unskilled use) values clarification.

In addition to its ideological message, *Shōgun* provides a three-way comparison of seventeenth-century England, seventeenth-century Japan, and our present-day local culture. In it, students may find that similarities outweigh the startling differences. Clavell

challenges readers to examine their own cultural assumptions in the mirror of Blackthorne’s reactions to Japanese behavior (or, more accurately, Clavell’s version of Japanese behavior). Blackthorne learned to accept Japanese values for the Japanese, if not always for himself. Can we? Should we? Here is material for really significant classroom exploration. It is never the “facts” of history that are the reason for social studies education; it is the way in which students learn to use data to make decisions and value judgments that will guide their attitudes and behavior.

With the drawing of comparisons, the whole subject of stereotypes becomes a problem that must be examined, particularly because *Shōgun* has been condemned as an enormous pastiche of best-seller stereotypes. What is a stereotype? It is simply a generalization that, through carelessness or ignorance—or, occasionally, malice—has been pushed too far, has become the polarized symbol for items, or ideas, or people that, when we examine them, show distinct differences among themselves. It is useful to recognize and reject stereotypes but folly not to use generalizations. If we had to treat each situation in life as a set of independent variables, we would be paralyzed by the need to attend to an infinity of insignificant details. We must generalize, but we must learn to do it not by polarizing, but by grouping whatever or whomever we are dealing with on a continuum. If we polarize Japanese as small, then, by comparison, we polarize ourselves as large—a manifest absurdity when we compare a Japanese *sumo* wrestler with an American jockey. If we put Japanese and Americans on a size continuum, we see substantial overlap, with less differentiation every year.

Applying a continuum to *Shōgun*, we can find endless Western parallels, correspondences, overlaps, and duplications. Loyalty and honor are concepts that have meaning in both cultures. Differences are never in kind, only in degree. We can accept Clavell’s descriptions of certain kinds of behavior as a deliberate placement nearer one end of the continuum than it would normally occupy because we can recognize that it is done for dramatic effect—for example, the treatment of seppuku.

This, however, does not answer a larger question that is increasingly troublesome to social scientists, particularly cultural anthropologists. Are there *real* cultural characteristics that differentiate peoples from each other? Or do we ascribe “national character” on the basis of superficial but highly visible customs—highly visible only because they differ from our equally superficial customs? At this point, perhaps it is enough to recognize that we inevitably wear the tinted glasses of our own culture. We must make conscious efforts not to polarize, and to recognize that positions on the continuum are constantly changing.

Clavell, like most competent novelists, does not kill his philosophical theme by overexposure. He supports it by using life-style comparisons. One that runs throughout the book and film is the exposure of Blackthorne to Japanese customs and attitudes, with his gradual conversion to the former but only partial comprehension of the latter. This is a subject of fascinating potential in the classroom, for, with Blackthorne's Europe and seventeenth-century Japan equally remote, students can, by comparing them, begin to become conscious of their own value systems without feeling threatened by a need for self-exposure. One example of confrontation is that between Mariko, who speaks as often for Clavell as for Japan, and Rodrigues, the Portuguese pilot, on the subject of who's a barbarian (pp. 435-6).

Another, more complex, confrontation is between Mariko and Blackthorne on male-female roles, money, and family honor (pp. 367-71). Honor and its inseparable corollary, duty, are implicit or explicit (usually explicit) in nearly every scene of *Shōgun*. One thread of this complex strand is the character of the widow, Fujiko, compelled by Toranaga to be Blackthorne's consort (pp. 471-3). She displays complete control of her personal feelings in assuming the distasteful duty of managing his household, compensating for his wildly unpredictable behavior, and guarding his honor (pp. 497-8, 500-503, 1178-80). Even after Toranaga gives her permission to commit an honorable suicide and join her husband, she performs the final duty of arranging the most advantageous terms for Blackthorne's estate and personal welfare after her demise (pp. 1190-91).

Continuity and Change

A comparison of seventeenth-century attitudes with modern ones leads to our last and most challenging question: how valid are Clavell's characterizations today? To what extent does seventeenth-century Japan persist into the twentieth century? If it seems to, is it a vestige of tradition, of habit not yet discarded, or a real continuation? Is it a reconstruction by modern Japanese for their present-day purposes? Or is it simply illusion, our own failure to change our habitual, ethnocentric views? In short, is *Shōgun*, as some Americans have used it, a guidebook for travellers to Japan?

In *Shōgun*, Fujiko is a tragic figure of feminine fortitude, a paragon of wifely virtues—and, it appears, an exemplar of ideals that still persist in Japanese society. Japanese soap operas show her modern counterpart waiting up patiently for her husband to come home late from the office party so she can put him tenderly to bed. Statistical surveys show the husband automatically turning over his weekly paycheck to her with the expectation that she will manage

all the household expenses, pay the fees of special schools for their children, and provide him with an allowance that will permit him to drink in proper style with his office colleagues. And yet there are signs of change: instances are appearing of women who refuse to be tea-pourers when hired as secretaries or who even put their own careers ahead of marriage.

In *For Harmony and Strength* (1974), anthropologist Thomas Rohlen details the organization, lifelong commitment, and mutual responsibilities in a Japanese bank. Similarities to samurai loyalties are plain, as are the rigors of training. What is not clear is whether these are unbroken continuations from the Tokugawa era or modern reconstructions by managers who see the advantages of a loyal and dedicated work force. Although the latter is more probable, the existence of the phenomenon can be used to support the case of those who want to use *Shōgun* as a guide to modern Japan—but only until they notice that lifetime loyalty now is being eroded as Japanese companies begin to raid each other for managerial talent.

Continuity and change are the two ends of a continuum. *Shōgun* gives us a dramatic introduction to the eternal-values pole, a picture that so reinforces our own romantic ethnocentrism that we may not want to admit that it is a polar view—until, with *Shōgun* in hand, we walk from the plane into one of the world's busiest airports, ride traffic-choked miles into Tokyo, have a quick hamburger at McDonald's, and check into the skyscraper hotel where all signs are in Japanese and English, indistinguishable from a hotel in Los Angeles where all the signs are in English and Japanese.

Which is really Japan? Both, of course. And everything in between. As with the simple continuum of size, the complex continuum of cultural behavior is the same as the American—we, too, have company loyalty and women who manage the family household, myths of chivalry (did you ever see a Western movie in which the sheriff shot the villain from ambush?), and philosophical composure in the face of death. But, there *are* differences in location on the continuum—and the locations are constantly changing. As this is being written, more Japanese than Americans, when asked to express an opinion, would begin an answer with "We" instead of "I"—but "we" no longer necessarily includes all Japanese. Modernization, affluence, and leisure have multiplied choices. One's work is no longer necessarily one's total field of interest.

In 1975, a group of Japanese college students, all of whom had visited the United States, were asked how they defined "self"—a conceptual problem that confronts Blackthorne time after time in *Shōgun*. After some discussion, they agreed that "in America 'I' am always 'I,' no matter what the circumstances. In Japan, there is no absolute or constant 'I'; who or what 'I' am depends on and

varies with the situation. When I am with a superior, I am in a different relationship than when I am with a peer, and my attitude and language vary accordingly. Instead of thinking first of myself, I must think first of the *situation* and the others in it to know how to adjust and behave.” Their answer could almost be one of Mariko’s mini-lectures to Blackthorne. But do Americans really ignore the situations they are in? Note that here, too, is a continuum!

4 Blackthorne’s England

Sandra Piercy



Shōgun is the story of an Englishman, John Blackthorne, who sailed to Japan seeking wealth and glory. Blackthorne emerged from Elizabethan England, a state in the midst of a period of expansion fueled by a fervent Protestant faith. Even for those who did not hold strong religious beliefs, Protestantism was identified with English prosperity and independence, and there were an increasing number of those who, having grown up under Elizabeth, had a profound commitment to the Protestant faith.

Many Englishmen interpreted the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588—a battle in which Blackthorne took part—as a sign that God’s blessing was on their enterprises. This resulted in an outpouring of national confidence and pride, and nowhere was this greater than in the commercial classes to which Blackthorne belonged. The English and their fellow Protestants, the Dutch, who were engaged in their own struggle against Spain, shared the sense of a great crusade against their national and religious enemies. The desire to fight for their religion was blended with the desire to break the Catholic hold on rich trading routes and colonies. It was this impulse that sent Blackthorne and those like him across the sea to lands where no Englishman had gone before.

English Society

When Blackthorne arrived in Japan in 1600, he would have found a society in many ways similar to his own. Both England and Japan had agricultural economies and social hierarchies based on control of the land, but social and political developments in England were a few generations in advance of those in Japan. A century earlier, England had been ripped by warring noble factions each seeking the crown or at least control of the reigning monarch—much like Japan in the sixteenth century. But unlike Japan, where the emperor remained an impotent figurehead, the English monarchy reigned supreme, and won the cooperation of the landed classes.

Blackthorne would have instantly recognized the status groups in Japanese society. He would have found a large peasant class ruled by a privileged aristocracy comparable to the peers and gentry back in England. The English gentry shared many characteristics with the Japanese samurai. They prided themselves on high ideals of honor and service to the crown, a survival from the feudal age. The predominantly military role of the peers and gentry had changed by this time, but gentlemen were still expected to practice the arts of war and alone were considered honorable enough to bear arms and use swords.

The leading characteristic of a gentleman was that he was rich enough not to have to work with his hands, but otherwise this class was not rigidly defined. It included all university graduates, army officers, and professional men such as doctors, lawyers, and clergymen. As in Japan, those whose wealth was based on commerce were regarded as less honorable, although wealthy merchants could buy land and set up as country squires.

There were still large tracts of waste and forest in England. Agriculture there was much less intensive than in Japan, and, where the Japanese had no space to permit the grazing of animals, English farmers engaged in animal husbandry, especially the cultivation of sheep for wool. English peasants worked the land owned by gentlemen as tenant farmers. They lived in small villages which were, apart from families, the most important units in English society. Village order was maintained by the gentry, and peace in the countryside was only occasionally marred by outbreaks of violence. Clavell's depiction of Blackthorne's astonishment at the Japanese peasants' lack of weapons (*p. 29*) gives the mistaken impression that English peasants carried them. Long years of domestic peace under Elizabeth made it unnecessary for peasants to go armed, and even when they needed weapons they relied on agricultural tools rather than swords or muskets.

Blackthorne as a Townsman

Blackthorne hailed from the densely populated and economically advanced area around London. His home, Chatham, was one of the many seafaring towns on the Thames estuary. It was a bustling, prosperous region where the most radical form of Protestantism had a firm hold. It would thus be likely that Blackthorne's wife, Felicity, who is described as "devout and filled with fear of the Lord" (*p. 697*), was a Puritan.

Although Clavell leaves Blackthorne's social and economic status undefined, some determination of his place in society can be made. The trade of pilot was neither prestigious nor lucrative. Despite his skill in his craft, Blackthorne would not have achieved recognition or acceptance among the gentry. He was not a peasant, but he was not much better than one. His grandiose conception of his role at sea (*p. 11*) would not correspond to his relatively humble place in society. Blackthorne was definitely not a gentleman in the class usage of that term. His claim to be a knight's heir (*p. 111*) is obviously a bluff designed to increase his status with the Japanese. His dreams of being knighted by Elizabeth (*p. 357*) are illusory, too: he was too petty a bourgeois for such an honor. He does not own land, has not been to a university, and is evidently not well-off financially. The description of his house is an indication of his low social status: it has but three rooms, no chimneys, little furniture, and rushes on the floor (*p. 696-7*). His family tolerated an unusual amount of grime in their home (*p. 697*). It sounds as though Felicity was a poor housekeeper.

If commerce did not command honor it did command respect. The wealthiest of the merchants were great men indeed, and younger sons of the gentry often entered the great merchant associations. Blackthorne's career is far less grand. He followed the usual course of entering a trade or craft as an apprentice (*p. 16*) for the typical term of seven years. If he were lucky, the apprentice would be taught to read, write, and do simple sums. The most fortunate of them would, like Blackthorne, end up marrying his master's daughter and being taken into the business.

Considering his low status, Blackthorne's education is very unusual, especially his fluency in Latin. By this period Latin was no longer, as Clavell claims (*p. 264*), the only language of learning. Nevertheless, it is very likely that a pilot would know the languages used by England's trading partners. Blackthorne grew up in Antwerp, where he could have easily picked up Dutch and Spanish, and Portuguese would have been extremely valuable on his many voyages. Most English townsmen were literate, and a comparatively

high degree of literacy existed even in the countryside close to London.

Blackthorne would have found Japanese cities completely new and different. England had nothing, not even London, to compare to the great castle towns then taking shape in Japan. Blackthorne would have certainly been overwhelmed by the sheer size of Osaka, whose population in 1600 was well in excess of London's estimated 200,000. Many English cities had originally been built with military considerations in mind, but defensive functions had by 1600 been replaced by commercial ones.

In contrast to the carefully planned castle towns of Japan, such as Ieyasu's capital of Edo, London grew haphazardly, and neither the Queen nor the peerage had the resources or the sustained desire to regulate urban population or land use. The city itself had grown rapidly in the Tudor era, and the result was filth and overcrowding. Most of the buildings were rickety structures built of wood and thatch. Fires were as disastrous in English towns as in Japanese, but there was no organized way of fighting them. Like other European cities, London featured open sewers and cesspools. The custom in most English towns was for people to dump refuse of all sorts into the street to await weekly collection.

English Family Life

Families were a microcosm of the larger hierarchical society. The English father's authority over his wife and children was very great—but seemingly less than in Japan, where inheritances could be taken away at the arbitrary whim of the patriarch, at least in the samurai class. Parental authority was strongest in England where there was an inheritance involved, so that younger sons of the gentry, for instance, depended on the good will of their fathers to set them up in honorable livelihoods, and daughters needed good dowries if they were to marry well.

The general rule was for each conjugal unit to have its own household. The classic problem of the mother-in-law which Clavell depicts so graphically for Japan (*p.* 655) was rare in Western Europe, where most could not marry until they were in the financial position to set up households of their own, usually in their middle or late twenties. While this is the usual practice today, in the 1600s such a pattern was apparently unique to Western Europe. Blackthorne claims (*p.* 534) that Englishwomen married at fifteen or sixteen, but in fact not even the gentry married so early. While instances of child marriage did exist, they were rare and met with great disapproval. Felicity's marriage at age seventeen makes sense only in view of the fact that she was an orphan—her father having been killed that year in the battle of the Armada.

The position of women in early modern Europe was not high. They had few legal rights, and their property was totally under the control of fathers, brothers, or husbands. Women were not well-educated or taught any skills beyond housekeeping and needlecraft. Gentlewomen could read and write, but usually not very well. Blackthorne would not have been surprised by the broad household financial responsibilities attributed to the samurai women (*p.* 262). Even the highest ladies in England had the duty of looking after their households. Felicity must have done this often as her husband was away so frequently, and Blackthorne would have been quite comfortable turning over management of his household to his consort Fujiko.

There seems to have been no notion of birth control in Elizabethan England, and women were at the mercy of their natural fertility, though conception could be hindered by lactation or ill-health. Methods of abortion such as those ascribed to Kiku and Gyoko (*p.* 935) were unknown in England. Methods of prenatal care and midwifery were primitive. Childbirth was always dangerous, and many women and their babies died. Infant mortality was high, estimated to have been as great as fifty percent before age five. But those who did live could survive to an advanced age. Blackthorne's grandmother was seventy-five, which would have been considered venerable but not astonishing.

Romantic love flourished among all classes in Elizabethan England. Research on Elizabethan sexual mores has just begun, but some information has already emerged. The Elizabethans enjoyed sex, and even the devoutly religious regarded it as an essential and pleasurable part of marriage. It is surprising to find Blackthorne so prudish on this subject. The Elizabethans, while hardly as refined as Clavell's samurai about bedroom matters, were quite frank about sex, and some segments of the population, for instance seafarers such as Blackthorne, were notoriously bawdy.

If sex within marriage was seen as a positive good, sex outside marriage was strictly prohibited by religious and social authorities. The church emphasized chastity and restraint not so much because sex was sinful, but because in the absence of birth control sex outside marriage produced bastards. Premarital pregnancy was disgraceful in the eyes of most people only if the girl did not eventually marry her lover. Society was outraged if such women did not marry, mostly because it was likely that they and their children would become a charge on the parish poor rate.

Adultery occurred with the same dismal regularity as it does today. The church did its best to weaken the double standard, but women were nearly always held more guilty than men. In Europe, unlike *Shōgun's* Japan ("How sensible divorce seemed here,"

p. 657), a marriage was regarded as a union sanctified by God, and consequently divorce was nearly impossible. The lower classes took refuge in desertion and bigamy. Unhappily married upper-class women devoted themselves to their children and religion while their husbands took mistresses. Most “kept” women were serving maids, rewarded with little gifts of clothes, money, or trinkets. Rich city men would keep courtesans in high style, but prostitution was not organized at all, even in London. Blackthorne would have been amazed by the training and status of a woman like Kiku and the system that supported her. Most of the prostitutes he would have known were poor country wenches looking to pick up a few extra shillings.

It is difficult to determine whether Blackthorne’s attitude toward homosexuality was typical. It probably was not, but his extreme hostility (*p.330*) can perhaps be explained by an early experience on shipboard when he was nearly raped (*p. 334*). Homosexuality was certainly regarded by the Church of England as an unnatural and therefore sinful act. But the common reaction among ordinary people seems to have been ridicule rather than horror. Homosexual acts were crimes punishable by death, yet most were reluctant to turn others in, and the authorities rarely imposed the full penalty of the law.

Diet and Health

Apart from sex, the English probably liked eating and drinking best. The diet of all Europeans was nutritionally unbalanced, but the English diet was the worst. The lower classes ate wheat bread, some cheese, meat when they could afford it, a few vegetables in the spring and summer, and, of course, beer. Fruit was expensive and rare. Both the English and the Dutch ate a wide variety of fish, but, as Blackthorne and his crew demonstrate in their rejection of Japanese fare (*p. 44*), they liked red meat much better—usually mutton or pork. During the winter it would be salt meat, since nothing fresh could be stored and there was no fodder to keep livestock alive to be butchered. Alcohol in some form was the major beverage. In England wine was drunk only by the rich, but all ages and classes enjoyed beer and ale and drank a staggering amount of it. Because of the high consumption of meat and beer and the scarcity of fresh foods, bladder and kidney problems were widespread. Nearly everyone had vitamin deficiencies and little resistance to infection. Skin ailments were commonplace, and scurvy was not confined to shipboard.

The English generally had a higher degree of cleanliness than Clavell gives them credit for. Soap was a big commodity in England and someone must have been using it, mostly for washing clothes.

But keeping one’s body clean in Elizabethan England did present problems. Because of the cold climate and the difficulty of heating water, people bathed infrequently. But Blackthorne’s Granny Jacoba, who insists that a bath at birth and once again when laid out for burial is enough (*p. 273*), is not representative. Baths were not considered dangerous in themselves but because some rather foul diseases could result from entering contaminated water. Blackthorne resisted his first Japanese bath because of his fear of the flux (that is, dysentery), which could be caught from bad water. But babies were bathed regularly and sometimes the sick were bathed as a cure. Even though the lower classes did not have the facilities for bathing, the gentry valued good hygiene.

The superior cleanliness of the bodies and clothes of the upper classes was one of the things that set them apart. The peasants wore wool or leather, which could not be washed easily, and, since they had few changes of clothes, the same outfit would serve for months without being washed. The satin, velvet, and fur outer garments of richer people would not wash either, but underneath they wore linen underclothes which were changed often and which they took care to keep clean.

In spite of their best efforts, however, not even the upper classes could escape infestations of lice and fleas, which came not from dirt but from animals: livestock, pets, rats, and even servants. Everyone had them. They did not know that this was one way that disease could spread. People believed that contagion was caused by noxious vapors from the earth, hence Blackthorne’s care in closing the portholes of Rodrigues’ sickroom to avoid “bad air” (*p. 187*).

Western medicine was hardly past the witch doctor phase, but Blackthorne slandered doctors when he said they were dirty and uncouth (*p. 322*). Doctors merely prescribed treatment and the tasks of surgery and pharmacy were performed by specialized craftsmen, the barber-surgeon and the apothecary. It is likely that Blackthorne himself never saw a physician, since their services were beyond most people’s means. Blackthorne was really referring to barber-surgeons, who were trained and licensed to pull teeth, set bones, and perform simple operations such as cutting for bladder stones. For these operations there was no anesthetic besides alcohol, so the barber-surgeon had to be strong rather than genteel. Current medical theory stated that health existed only when the four humours of the body, representing qualities of heat, cold, and moisture, were in balance. Excessive heat meant an excess of the hot humour, blood; hence the enthusiasm of Blackthorne and his crew for bleeding at the first sign of a fever. Purges and enemas were also common remedies to restore the balance of the humours (*p.322*).

The English World View

The great majority of the people had no way to explain natural phenomena scientifically. The English believed devoutly in the supernatural and tended to see sickness, death, storms, famine, and accidents as the result of direct intervention by God in their lives. The attitude of the English toward such phenomena as earthquakes would have been very like that of the Japanese peasant who called a big earthquake a sign from the gods (p. 469). Blackthorne, instead of just shrugging and saying “*karma*,” would surely have seen the earthquake as a judgment on the village for permitting the death of an innocent old man. The characteristic European outlook appears when the crew of the *Erasmus* draw lots. They say, “Let God decide” (p. 81).

Country folk also believed in nature spirits somewhat like the Japanese *kami* (p. 652). Blackthorne would recognize the Japanese relationship to these spirits, since it was so like the English. They told each other stories about fairies and pixies who could do people harm if they were angered, and who needed to be placated with simple rites and charms. People also used charms to make their crops grow better and to increase the fertility of their animals and spouses. Young people desired love potions. Victims of crime wanted to divine who the guilty party was or to take revenge.

The Europeans of this era held the idea of a “great chain of being” in which everything in the universe, from angels to stones, had its proper place in the scheme of things. This hierarchy was created by God, and disruption of it was held sinful. Thus, the respect of peasants for their betters and of the gentry for the crown was founded not only on economic or political power, but also on the belief that God had ordained the political and social structure.

One gets a sense of resignation in some areas of Elizabethan life. The people of sixteenth-century England accepted chronic illness and discomfort as a natural part of their existence. Food, clothing, and shelter were often inadequate in England’s cold, damp climate. Death was ever-present. Disease was rampant, accidents and serious injury frequent. There was little empathy among the English for the physical suffering of others. People had a taste for public whippings, brandings, and other violent punishments. The English did not say “*Karma, neh?*” but they could have, leading one to suspect that in this, as well as in other areas, Japanese and English attitudes were closer than *Shōgun* would have us believe.

5 Trade and Diplomacy in the Era of *Shōgun*

Ronald Toby



At the heart of *Shōgun* lies the rich novelistic opportunity offered by the arrival of the first Englishman in Japan at the historical moment of 1600: Japan was at the peak of the most expansive, outgoing period of its pre-modern history. Open to trade, and eager for it, Japan was excluded by Chinese law from direct access to the markets of China. Japanese merchants and seafarers had responded in the late sixteenth century by moving further outward to trade, advancing into Southeast Asia in search of Chinese goods.

Only sixty years before “John Blackthorne” arrived, Japan had been reached by the farthest extension of the European Age of Discovery, first by Portuguese traders and then by Jesuit missionaries, who came east from Africa and India. They were later joined by Spanish traders and missionaries coming west from Mexico and then north from the Philippines. Blackthorne, a northern European and a Protestant, thus landed in a country where Iberian Catholics and Japanese were in the midst of a century of vigorous economic, cultural and religious competition. As a result of a half-century of Jesuit proselytization, the Iberians of the Counter-Reformation were deeply entrenched, with several hundred thousand converts to Catholicism and a critical role in Japan’s external trade to support their position.

Japanese Traders in East Asia

China had been the focus of all Japanese foreign relations—diplomatic, cultural, and even economic—for centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans in East Asian waters in the sixteenth century. China, with vast material resources and generally more advanced culture and technology, was Japan's major source for silks, medicines, books, fragrances, and spices—many of the same “exotic” goods that drove Europeans such as Blackthorne to seek passage to the Indies.

But in the year 1600, China had been relatively passive in maritime trade for some time. Until 1567 Chinese were forbidden to voyage abroad in search of commerce, and even after that they were specifically prohibited from travelling to Japan, viewed with good reason by the Chinese as the home of pirates and marauders. Instead, the Ming dynasty relied on the attraction of Chinese culture and the appeal of Chinese goods to bring foreigners to China. Ideologically, the Ming rulers were not eager for trade, being more interested in serving as the centerpiece in a morally conceived world order. So foreigners, if they wished to trade, had to come to China as “tributaries,” explicitly recognizing the superiority of the “Central Kingdom,” as the Chinese termed their land.

Many East Asian countries, notably Korea and Vietnam, had accepted this China-centered vision of the world, but Japan presented special problems. Japanese mythology claimed that the Japanese imperial family, and indeed the Japanese islands themselves, were descended from the gods. Japan was therefore, as Mariko instructs us (*p.* 436), the “Land of the Gods,” the “Divine Country.” This ideology made it difficult for any national Japanese government to enter into official diplomatic relations with any Chinese dynasty without exposing itself to charges of treason against the emperor. Nevertheless, such relations had in fact existed during the rule of the later Ashikaga shoguns, from 1432 until 1547, during which eleven official missions were dispatched to the Ming court. In return, the Japanese were given “tallies,” licenses to trade in China. This “tally trade” was entirely one-way, since Chinese ships were still not allowed to leave their own country. Within Japan, control over the tally trade gradually passed from the shogunate into the hands of Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, and local daimyo of Western Japan, finally coming to an end in 1547.

But this did not stop Japanese from continuing to try. Now they simply turned to forms of piracy, raiding coastal market towns in China and preying on coastwise shipping. Many of these pirates, known as *wakō* (see *Shōgun*, *p.* 666), were manned by Chinese seeking to circumvent Ming laws against maritime trade, but they

seriously disrupted the China coast, and further alienated China from Japan. The Ming government, with its anti-maritime orientation, was ineffectual in suppressing the piracy. And since there was no effective central authority in Japan either, these Japanese freebooters ranged freely along the China coast and into the Indies in search of trade or plunder.

It was in this volatile atmosphere in the mid-sixteenth century that the Europeans first appeared in East Asian waters. This helps to explain why Father Sebastio's charges of piracy against Blackthorne (*pp.* 57-58)—charges which the Jesuits and Portuguese actually made against William Adams on his arrival in Japan (see Chapter 1)—would have found such a ready audience in both Omi and Toranaga.

Japan's alienation from continental East Asia, which began with the end of the tally trade and the resurgence of the *wakō*, became almost total in 1592, when Hideyoshi (the Taikō) dispatched nearly 160,000 Japanese troops to subjugate Korea, as the first step in his planned conquest of China. He had quelled western Japan only a few years earlier in 1587, and the Kanto in 1590, so he was now in a position to bring the *wakō* under central control for the first time. No truly convincing explanation has yet been given for this invasion. Some have written it off as the action of a megalomaniac, and the Taikō did indeed speak of his dreams of sitting on the throne of China (as in *Shōgun*, *p.* 1039). It has also been suggested that, since the Taikō had managed to bring an end to the century of civil war by his victory over the Hojo (the “Beppu” of *Shōgun*), he was now seeking a way to dissipate the energies of the large warrior class outside Japan, rather than allowing them to erupt in a civil war that might topple his regime. But whatever Hideyoshi's motivation, geography, logistics, and the combined Korean and Chinese armies ensured the failure of the Korean invasion. Even the large contingents of Japanese musket troops were not a sufficient advantage. In the end the Japanese armies, fighting on hostile territory with overextended supply lines running across dangerous seas, were being badly beaten when Hideyoshi died in 1598. The Council of Regents claimed to be acting on his dying wishes when they ordered the troops home in the fall of the year, and Japan's first historical foreign war came to a close.

Direct access to China was now quite out of the question. This gave the Portuguese, based in Macao on the coast of South China since the 1550s, an even more important role in Japan's foreign trade. But contrary to the picture painted in *Shōgun*, they did not have a monopoly, for Japanese traders had also ventured into the waters of Southeast Asia. By 1570 a small Japanese community had been established on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, boasting

a population by 1595 of as many as one thousand. Similar Japanese communities appeared in other locations in Southeast Asia. Japanese ships, with crews and traders sometimes numbering as many as three hundred, traded there with Chinese merchants, who after 1567 were allowed to voyage anywhere but Japan. So the Japanese did have large ocean-going vessels in the era of *Shōgun*, and they engaged in a far-flung network of trade, even though they could not trade directly with China.

The Europeans' Arrival in Japan

The first European contact with Japan, in the 1540s, preceded Blackthorne's arrival by nearly sixty years, but the forces that brought them to Japan were over a century older than that. Starting around 1415 Portuguese mariners had pressed down the west coast of Africa, and Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope to reach India in 1498. In large part, they were trying to outflank the Arab/Levantine/Italian monopoly on "Oriental" silks and spices coming into Europe by seeking new routes to the Indies and "Cathay" (China). Although Marco Polo had alerted Europe to the existence of "Zipangu" in the thirteenth century, Japan remained a peripheral interest. In 1542 or 1543, a Portuguese ship, driven north by a storm, accidentally landed in southwestern Japan. The three Portuguese aboard were the first Europeans to set foot there, and with them came firearms. A few years later in 1549, Francisco (later St. Francis) Xavier landed in Satsuma, also in the southwest; and introduced the other great European export of the sixteenth century: Christianity.

At the same time that the Portuguese were moving around Africa into the Indian Ocean, Christian Spain, in what may be called a continuation of the Crusades, was fighting to expel the Muslims from the Iberian peninsula, a campaign which was completed by 1492. In the burst of energy that followed, Spanish expeditions discovered the Americas (1492) and thence a westward route to Asia via the straits that came to bear the name of the expedition's captain, Magellan, reaching the Philippines and Moluccas in 1522. Thus the two Iberian peoples, expanding in opposite directions, met in the waters of Southeast Asia at the opening of the sixteenth century, in the very spot where the Japanese commercial expansion of the later part of the century would be focused. Papal mediation attempted to keep these two competing young empires from open conflict, starting with the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), assigning each a separate sphere of colonization and evangelization, much as Blackthorne outlined to Toranaga (*pp.* 259-276).

Quite another sort of crusade also motivated European expansion after 1517 when the Protestant Reformation split Europe into

hostile religious camps, largely along north-south lines. This challenge raised a new wave of zeal in the Catholic Church, and a new priestly order emerged to lead the charge: Ignatius Loyola, Francisco Xavier, and a few others founded the Society of Jesus in 1540 to be the "army of the Church militant." Founded along strongly centralized, tightly disciplined lines, the Jesuit order has been described as "a sort of ecclesiastical Green Berets." Forming a partnership with Portuguese commercial expansion, it was the Jesuits who led the proselytizing assault on Japan.

The Society of Jesus was from its inception elitist and intellectual. These qualities were to serve the Order well in Japan, for its priests were far more adaptable than their predominantly Spanish colleagues in the mendicant Franciscan and Dominican orders. Thus, for example, it was acceptable to the Jesuits to compromise on matters of dress, going in the garb of Buddhist priests so as to fit in with Japanese custom and taste.

The Jesuits also had among their number novices and priests who were willing and able to learn the Japanese language. Priests like Joao Rodrigues, the model for Father Alvito, could preach in Japanese without relying on interpreters, as Xavier had been forced to do. Not content with European priests preaching to the Japanese, either directly or through interpreters, the Order early established institutions to train Japanese catechists, starting with a novitiate founded in 1580. Such institutions trained numerous young Japanese converts to enter the Order, teaching them Latin and basic doctrine.

But the initial enthusiasm of Xavier and some of his early successors for the Japanese had been partially displaced by a suspicion of their alleged "duplicity," and the curriculum at the training institutes came to be tailored to those assumptions. Japanese students were thus restricted to the "safe" parts of Catholic theology: Aquinas, for example, to say nothing of the pagan philosophers, was not in the course of study. Although two Japanese were eventually ordained as priests, most found their advancement blocked. Many resented the suspicion with which they were regarded, and some rebelled in apostasy. Brother Joseph of *Shōgun* was driven to apostasy and reversion to his identity as Uruga Tadamasu (*pp.* 751-753) by the same issues that angered actual Japanese catechists of the time, and we may well imagine a conversation between a rank-and-file priest and Luis Cerqueira, the bishop of Funai, very like the one between Fathers Alvito and dell'Aqua (*p.* 756).

Still, by 1582, there may have been 150,000 converts in Japan, and 220,000 by 1609—although some Jesuit accounts claim as many as 750,000. The rising success of the Jesuit mission was not without opposition, however, from the established religions. Jesuit

success was greatest in Kyushu, where they succeeded in converting several daimyo, one of whom, Ōmura Sumitada, ceded the port town of Nagasaki to the Jesuits in 1580. When Hideyoshi subjugated Kyushu in 1587 and saw at first hand the extent of these successes, he issued an order expelling the Jesuits from the realm. "Because Japan is the land of the Gods," he decreed, "it is not proper for the Christian countries to propagate their pernicious doctrines" in Japan. At the same time, he confiscated the city of Nagasaki from the Jesuits. The order was not actually carried out, but it was a harbinger of the strong latent hostility to the Christian advance in Japan. Japanese suspicion was much exacerbated by the arrival in 1592-3 of the Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans, whose acrimonious religious disputes with the Jesuits undercut some of the unified appeal of Christianity. This suspicion gave way to outright hostility in the first serious incident of persecution in February 1597, when twenty-six Christians—including Spanish Franciscans and Japanese Jesuits and laymen—were crucified in Nagasaki (as recounted in *Shōgun* by Friar Domingo, pp. 238-9).

Trade versus Christianity

While it was the prospect of Christian converts that had originally lured the Portuguese to Japan, it became the opportunity for vast trading profits that in fact kept the ships plying the waters from Nagasaki to Macao and back, encouraging what historian Charles Boxer has termed "an unholy alliance of God and Mammon." Chinese silks were, as *Shōgun* suggests, the major Japanese import item in the sixteenth century, and they continued to be throughout the seventeenth. Most of the silk was imported in the form of raw silk thread, to be woven into kimono cloth in Japan. Portuguese traders' profits on this silk were about seventy to eighty percent in ordinary years and in the best years topped one hundred percent. Gold was also a major item brought from China by the Portuguese, who took advantage of national differences between relative valuations of precious metals to make immense profits exchanging Japanese silver for Chinese gold.

Although merchants were involved in the trade of all countries, the Japanese side was increasingly dominated by daimyo, and ultimately by Hideyoshi after he confiscated Nagasaki in 1587. On the Portuguese side, the Jesuit mission was actively involved in the Macao-Nagasaki trade, both as bankers and agents for Japanese, and on their own account (pp. 200-201). The participation of an arm of the Church in banking and commerce on so blatant a scale made these activities a matter of controversy, even among the senior Jesuits in Japan. It was a particularly thorny issue, since official Jesuit participation tempted individual members of the

Order to play the market for personal advantage as well. But the Society's role in trade was a crucial source of income for its missionary activities, as suggested in *Shōgun* by the conversation between Father dell'Aqua and Captain-General Ferreira (p. 406). So when King Felipe III of Portugal banned Jesuit participation in the trade in 1607, he had to replace the lost income with a royal subsidy of 2,000 cruzados per year.

The enthusiasm of the Japanese for silk was substantial and accounts for its importance in the overseas trade, but silk was neither the only fiber the Japanese used, nor was it the cornerstone of the economy, as Clavell sometimes implies. In fact, one reason Hideyoshi, Ieyasu, and many lesser daimyo sought to purchase silk may have been that it was a storable form of wealth, as well as a profitable commodity to trade. It was not as safe as gold, which would not burn, but neither could silk rot, like rice.

The arrival in Japan in 1600 of William Adams—Blackthorne's model—came at a critical moment in the development of this foreign trade. Frequent contact between the Spanish Philippines and Japan in the late 1590s had raised the prospect of competitors to the Portuguese and hence possible benefit to Japan's trading position. Despite the martyrdom of 1597, Hideyoshi responded favorably to the Philippine embassy later that year, and especially to the great black elephant they brought him as a present. Hideyoshi was particularly interested in improving his own situation in trade vis-à-vis the daimyo of Kyushu, the center for the Portuguese trading operation in Japan. Favorable treatment of the Spanish from the Philippines might well bring foreign trade directly to the Kyoto-Osaka area, further enriching the Taikō's coffers.

Shortly after Hideyoshi's death in 1598, Tokugawa Ieyasu took steps to encourage such a trade relationship with the Philippines, being interested in enriching himself at the expense of the heir Hideyori in Osaka. When the Franciscan friar Jeronimo de Jesus smuggled himself back into Japan in 1598, less than two years after he had survived the Nagasaki martyrdom, Ieyasu not only received the friar in audience—to the dismay of the Jesuits—but also suggested that Spanish galleons bound from Luzon to Mexico use Uruga, in Ieyasu's own Kanto domain, as a port. He also requested that the Spaniards lend him some mining technicians and mariners—he could not foresee the arrival of William Adams—to train his people in these strategic skills. To cap the offering, he permitted the Franciscans to open a church in his capital city of Edo.

Tokugawa Ieyasu was thus every bit as eager for foreign trade as Clavell's Toranaga, and any tolerance of Christian missionary work in his domain was a tool to achieve that end. The arrival of William Adams in a Dutch ship in the spring of 1600 offered Ieyasu

new ways to advance his trading interests without going through the missionaries, for neither the Englishman nor any of his Dutch companions seemed interested in spreading their religion in Japan. They were interested only in trade, Ieyasu's main interest as well. Shortly after the wreck of the *De Liefde* ("Erasmus"), Ieyasu received Adams in Osaka, much as described in *Shōgun*, and questioned him closely about trade, nautical technology, and international affairs. Adams became instrumental in establishing English and Dutch trade in Kyushu under Ieyasu's protection after 1609. Numerous Chinese traders were also active in Kyushu, in violation of the Ming ban on trade with Japan, and trade had been reestablished with Korea and with the kingdom of Okinawa by the mid-1610s. So there was no further need for Ieyasu to tolerate Catholic missionary activity, which he considered subversive and acceptable only as a necessary evil for trade. So, within months of the arrival of English traders in 1614, Ieyasu proclaimed the expulsion of all foreign priests and missionaries. This edict, unlike Hideyoshi's order of 1587, was enforced, and the age of Christian persecution in Japan began in earnest. Many Japanese Christians were forced into exile in Manila, Macao, or elsewhere.

The Restriction of Foreign Trade

From this time onward, the freedom of Europeans in Japan was progressively restricted, until, by 1641, the only ones left were the Dutch, who were restricted to a trading post on the small man-made island of Dejima in Nagasaki Harbor. Chinese merchants were also restricted to Nagasaki, which became the principal port for Japan's foreign trade until the nineteenth century. The English had decided to close their operations in Japan at the end of 1623, over 5,000 pounds in the red. The following year the bakufu ended relations with the Spanish in Manila because of mounting (and entirely justified) fears that Spanish ships were smuggling missionaries into Japan. Fear of Christian infiltration also led to the prohibition of Japanese travelling abroad, a ban which was nearly total after 1635; only a few Japanese were especially licensed to go to Korea and to the kingdom of Okinawa for trade.

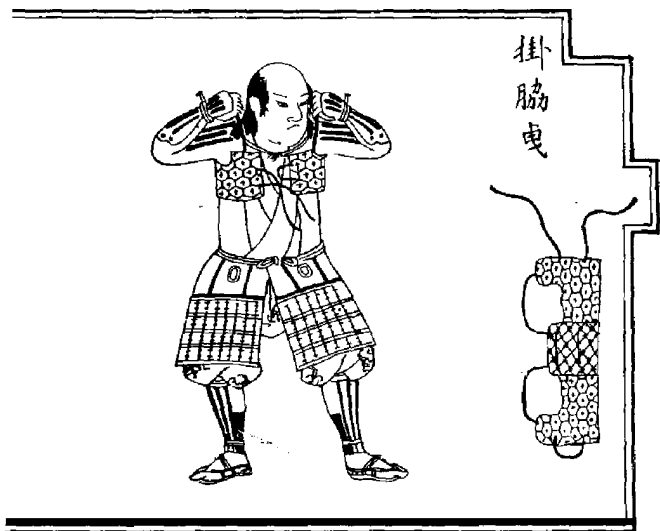
A mounting campaign of persecution followed the expulsion of the missionaries in 1614 and almost completely stamped out Christianity in Japan by 1640. The count of martyrs to the faith between 1549 and 1639 lies somewhere between 2,100 and 4,045. But these figures do not include those who died in the great Shimabara Rebellion of 1637-38, in which some 37,000 peasants are said to have died. Some of them were rebelling against excessive taxation and oppressive rule, and some were Christians, but in the eyes of the shogunal government this was a Christian uprising. It was certainly

the final blow to any hopes of commerce with the Catholic countries. A year after the fall of Shimabara, the Portuguese too were expelled from Japan, leaving only the Dutch as a link between Japan and Europe.

The untrammelled foreign voyaging of the sixteenth century, the unrestricted involvement of provincial daimyo in foreign trade, and the widespread access of foreign traders and missionaries to Japan which characterized the country on the eve of the age of *Shōgun* were all very much the results of Japanese disunity. With no effective central authority, there could be little chance to control anyone's activities in international affairs. But with the advance of central control, from Oda Nobunaga ("Goroda") to Hideyoshi, and thence to the Tokugawas, central power once more became a reality in Japan, and it was the most effective national power Japan had seen in over half a millennium. To be a truly effective government, the Tokugawas had to bring foreign affairs as much under their control as domestic affairs, and in that endeavor the ideal of one-port foreign trade had to become a reality. This did not mean that the Tokugawas were opposed to trade: they simply sought to bring all aspects of national life, including trade, under their control.

6 The Struggle for the Shogunate

Henry Smith



On all sides they are pulled asunder by wars, torment each other with continuous carnage: tremble constantly at some pernicious conspiracy arising: promiscuously defraud and deceive each other in turn, with artifice, fraud, and stratagem everywhere dominant: the servitor does not keep faith with his master: men's facts and treaties are violated: in such fashion that there is perceived among them no sense of duty, and of compassion none, nor of charity.

*Alessandro Valignano, Catechismus Christianae Fidei, 1586
(quoted in Elison, Deus Destroyed, p. 41)*

If one places any trust in this opinion of Jesuit Visitor-General Valignano—the model for Carlo dell'Aqua in *Shōgun*—then James Clavell was scarcely deviating from historical reality in his heavy reliance on the theme of *duplicity* to build the plot and create the driving suspense of his novel. While this undeniably perpetuates the Western stereotype of the Japanese (and other Asians) as “inscrutable,” one must realize that the stereotype itself was in full flower in the era of *Shōgun*. Consider the advice of the pilot Rodrigues to Blackthorne: “Never forget Japmen're six-faced and have three hearts. It's a saying they have, that a man has a false heart in his mouth for all the world to see, another in his breast to show his

very special friends and his family, and the real one, the true one, which is never known to anyone except himself alone” (p. 193). Although here voiced by a Portuguese pilot, these words, with only minor changes in phrasing, come directly from the historical writings of Joao Rodrigues, the model for Father Alvito, who goes on to elaborate:

But they do not use this double dealing to cheat people in business matters, as do the Chinese in their transactions and thieving, for in this respect the Japanese are most exact; but they reserve their treachery for affairs of diplomacy and war in order not to be deceived themselves. And in particular when they wish to kill a person by treachery, they put on a great pretence by entertaining him with every sign of love and joy—and then in the middle of it all, off comes his head. (Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, p. 45)

One might wonder, of course, whether there is anything uniquely Japanese in duplicity—and its corollary: a demand for fierce loyalty—or whether any country which has been in a state of off-and-on internecine war for over a century would not reveal similar traits. But there is little doubt that both treachery and loyalty were the central themes of sixteenth-century Japanese politics, and Clavell can scarcely be accused of exaggerating them, particularly if we are to believe the accounts of contemporary Western observers like Valignano and Rodrigues,

From Chaos to Order

But the theme of duplicity must not obscure another characteristic of Japan in the era of *Shōgun*, one also frequently stressed by foreign observers: the prevalence of law and order among the populace at large. William Adams himself, for example, observed that Japanese “justice is seuerely excecuted without any partialitie vpon transgressors of the law. They are gouerned in great ciuilitie. I meane, not a land better gouerned in the world by ciuill policie.” Details in *Shōgun* confirm this depiction through a somewhat exaggerated emphasis on the tyrannical power of the samurai class. The tone is set early in the novel when Kashigi Omi lops off the head of an Anjiro villager who fails to show proper respect. It is in fact true that samurai had the right to do so, as codified in the “Legacy” of Tokugawa Ieyasu himself: “If fellows of the lower orders go beyond what is proper toward samurai, there is no objection to cutting such a one down.” So behavior like Otni's was certainly possible and doubtless happened from time to time. What must be added, however, is that a samurai had to have a very good reason for such an action and would immediately be required to produce full justification to his lord. It is not as though samurai marched

about slicing up commoners on a whim, as Clavell not infrequently suggests: indeed, unjustified samurai killing of commoners was viewed as an even greater threat to the social order than the killing of fellow samurai, particularly under Tokugawa rule when samurai were viewed as models of proper behavior for the population at large.

But the line between lawless and lawful behavior was by no means always clear. It must be stressed that the era of *Shōgun* represents a crucial *transition* from the utter chaos of the mid-sixteenth century to the amazingly stable and well-ordered regime of the Tokugawa shogunate a century later. It is precisely this process of transition that helps us better understand the seemingly contradictory mixture of a country which is alternately described as in total political chaos and at the same time as a paragon of law and order. The very fact of continued civil war led to the evolution of increasingly effective techniques of civil control in order to mobilize and supply the large armies required by sixteenth-century developments. We can also detect clear class distinction between chaos and order: it was primarily among the tiny daimyo elite that duplicity was such a norm, and among commoners that strict order was increasingly in demand. In a sense this split presaged the actual political structure of the Tokugawa shogunate: a rather loose system of military checks and balances at the national level, but a tightly repressive civil regime within each autonomous domain.

The Road to Unification

Whatever institutional and technological developments accelerated the unification of Japan in the late sixteenth century, no one would deny the personal importance of the three successive warrior lords who masterminded the process. It was an era of heroes, rare in a nation in which political leaders have on the whole preferred to wield their power either behind the scenes or as part of a group effort; James Clavell is in the right spirit when he calls it “an era when giants walked the earth.”

First of the giants was Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), a small lord from central Honshu who in the 1560s began a process of regional conquest that finally led to the capture of Kyoto in 1568 and the replacement of the current Ashikaga shogun with a new one of his own choosing. In *Shōgun*, Clavell renames Nobunaga “Goroda,” which, while unusual (if not impossible) for a Japanese family name, conveys in its menacing combination of consonants a good sense of the character of the historical Nobunaga, the man whom English historian George Sansom tagged “a cruel and callous brute.” It was Nobunaga, for example, who prescribed for a warrior-monk with the misfortune to have fired on him (and

missed) the punishment of being buried to the neck and gradually mutilated with a bamboo saw by passersby—until death after three days. Clavell, by means of his handy technique of “just taking it from where it was and putting it somewhere else,” metes out this punishment to Ishido at the end of the novel. (The historical Ishida Mitsunari was simply beheaded: such a gruesome penalty would probably never have been imposed on a daimyo, no matter how treacherous.)

So also Clavell’s choice of the name “Nakamura” for the second of the great unifiers Toyotomi Hideyoshi is in a way very appropriate, since Nakamura is an ordinary name in contemporary Japan and conveys a sense of the humble origins of the man who came to be known by his highest title of “Taikō” (a rank within the ancient bureaucratic system awarded to a retired regent for the emperor). In actual fact, Hideyoshi was born without any family name at all, for until the nineteenth century very few commoners in Japan were permitted surnames, and he arrived at the name “Toyotomi” only after experimenting with several others. Hideyoshi took over the mantle of power by avenging Nobunaga’s assassination in 1582, and in the period until his own death sixteen years later he clearly demonstrated his genius for both military strategy and civil administration. Only in the realm of foreign policy, in the ill-fated Korean expeditions, did he clearly fail. While Hideyoshi’s complex personality has never made him a popular favorite in Japan—although his rags-to-riches success story enjoyed a certain vogue before World War II—most serious historians would be willing to make him a leading candidate for James Murdoch’s label of “the greatest man Japan has ever seen” (*A History of Japan*, II, 386). The details of his career may be found in a number of standard histories; suffice it to say that the details about the Taikō offered in *Shōgun* are generally in accord with accepted historical fact.

Hideyoshi’s death in the autumn of 1598 created the highly unstable political situation which provides the stage for the drama of 1600—both in *Shōgun* and in reality. Since Hideyori (“Yaemon” in the novel), the Taikō’s heir by his consort Lady Yodo (“Lady Ochiba”), was only a child of five at the time, a council of five “Regents” (in Japanese, *tairō*, literally “great elder”) had been set up to govern until he came of age.

It would be well to emphasize the highly complex situation with regard to political legitimacy in Japan at this stage in history, the background for which Clavell provides the reader in one of his “instructive” passages (*pp.* 72-74). Just substitute Taira for “Takashima,” Minamoto for “Minowara,” and Fujiwara for “Fujimoto” (with the crucial provision that the Fujiwara were a courtier, *not* a samurai, family), and one has a pretty good

summary of the actual historical situation. The only exaggeration which Clavell makes here (and for good literary effect) is the volatility of the position of “shogun,” the title first assumed by Minamoto Yoritomo in 1190. He gives the impression of one shogun after another being toppled while only the position of emperor remained “inviolable and unbroken.” But in point of historical fact, only two lineages of shoguns, both at least officially unbroken, preceded the Tokugawas. Indeed, the position of shogun came in time to be much like that of the emperor himself: a figurehead who was simply manipulated by the real holders of power. So, in itself, the title of “shogun” was not necessarily “the ultimate rank that a mortal could achieve” (p. 72), and, in assuming the position in 1603, Ieyasu had to take special care to assure that for him and his line it would not again become an empty title.

This pattern of the “devolution” of political power, leaving figureheads of legitimacy at the top and the real wielders of power in lesser positions, has long been stressed by scholars of Japanese institutions. It was understandably one of the most confusing things about the political scene for the Westerners who visited Japan in this era. William Adams, for example, in describing his interview with Ieyasu in Osaka, refers to the daimyo as “Emperor” and was probably unaware of the powerless figure in Kyoto who was the “real” emperor.

The Events of (he Year 1600

In *Shōgun*, the author takes the general political situation of 1600 as the basis for his plot, although he makes no attempt at any very precise correspondences. Of all the various daimyo that appear in the course of *Shōgun*, only the scheming “Ishido” has a clear model. This is Ishida Mitsunari, who was indeed an inveterate plotter and implacable enemy of Tokugawa Ieyasu and was ultimately defeated in the Battle of Sekigahara in the fall of 1600. The historical Ishida was not one of the five Regents, but rather a member of a separate and lower-ranking five-man board known as the “Commissioners” (in Japanese, *bugyō*), which was in charge of day-to-day administrative matters and which left issues of high policy to the Regents.

Clavell uses the institution of the Council of Regents as an effective plot device in *Shōgun*, but in the actual historical events of 1600 the Regents were no longer functioning as an effective body. The year and a half between Hideyoshi’s death and the arrival of William Adams in April of 1600 had seen a series of political plots and counterplots which if anything were more dramatic and fantastic than any devised by Clavell, who indeed simply transposes some of their details to the summer of 1600. In summer 1599, for example,

Ishida, after botching a scheme to assassinate Ieyasu, incurred the wrath of some rival daimyo on a visit to Osaka Castle and was forced to escape in a lady’s palanquin and dress—the ruse which Clavell provides for Ieyasu himself in *Shōgun*!

By the spring of 1600, the unity of the Regents had been shattered both by their mutual hostilities and by the scheming of Ishida. Ieyasu increasingly took authority into his own hands, reverting to two techniques that Hideyoshi had expressly prohibited among the Regents: the arranging of political marriages and the taking of hostages. (For example, the heir of Hosokawa Tadaoki—“Saruji” in Clavell’s novel—was not in Osaka in 1600, but was rather being held hostage in Ieyasu’s capital of Edo.) The denouement began when another of the Regents, Uesugi Kagekatsu, returned to his fief to the far north and began openly fomenting revolt against Ieyasu. This forced Ieyasu to leave Osaka and move to Edo to defend his lands against Uesugi. Well knowing that he was freeing (in actual fact, forcing) Ishida to plot against him in his absence, Ieyasu feigned indifference and made a leisurely trip north, conspicuously indulging in his favorite sport of hawking along the way, and arriving in Edo on August 10.

While Ieyasu supervised the campaign against the enemy to the north with one eye, he kept the other on the scheming Ishida to the west through an elaborate network of informants. It was in these weeks that Ishida moved to seize as hostages the families of those daimyo who had accompanied Ieyasu to Edo. His first target was Gracia, the wife of Hosokawa Tadaoki, who as an obedient daimyo wife steadfastly refused to leave her mansion and—as detailed in Chapter 7—died with her mansion in flames, providing the kernel of the story which James Clavell would use in creating Mariko.

In *Shōgun*, the author (with a screenwriter’s instinct?) thankfully simplifies matters by dressing the opposing forces of Ishido and Toranaga in contrasting uniforms of Gray and Brown, enabling the reader to provide some visual sense of who’s who during the chaotic battle scenes. In reality, samurai armies were not fitted out with uniforms (which even in *Shōgun* were explained as exceptional, a mark of the punctilious discipline of Ishido and Toranaga [p. 557]), and the problem of distinguishing friend from foe in battle was often solved by the use of secret signs, like strips of paper knotted in special ways around the sword sheaths. The historical Ishida Mitsunari was also a considerably lesser lord than the Ishido of *Shōgun*, his own personal army being but a small fraction of the total confederation which was to gather at Sekigahara: Ishida was simply the nucleus about which the larger anti-Tokugawa lords clustered. The situation of constantly shifting alliances in Osaka

during the summer of 1600 was so confusing that it indeed cries out for the clarity of Brown versus Gray to retrieve any account of the plotting from hopeless boredom.

The inter-daimyo rivalries in *Shōgun* are more strongly colored by Christianity than they were in historical reality. In a sense, this emphasis reflects the accounts of the contemporary Jesuit missionaries, who tended to emphasize the prominence and number of the Christian daimyo. Whereas in *Shōgun* “there were a number of very important Christian daimyos” (p. 59), historian James Murdoch (with a possible Scotch-Protestant bias of his own) has stressed that the openly Christian daimyo in 1600 in fact numbered only six, with a combined *koku* assessment of merely four percent of the national total (*History of Japan*, II, 390). Nor were any of them on the ruling councils at the time. What James Clavell did to enhance the drama of his plot was to invent two Christian Regents, “Kiyama” and “Onoshi,” both of whom from the sound of their names (neither of which qualify as identifiably Japanese family names) seem to be versions of Konishi Yukinaga, the most powerful and famous of all the Christian daimyo. For additional color, Onoshi was made a leper, a transfer from the non-Christian lord Ōtani Yoshitsugu (whose well-known disease may in fact have been syphilis).

At any rate, through August and on into September of 1600, Ishida Mitsunari forged a massive confederation of daimyo in opposition to Ieyasu. The military campaigns leading up to the Battle of Sekigahara in September, in both the north and the west, are complex and may be found detailed in a variety of texts (Murdoch, Sadler, Sansom, Trumbull). Although there is no proof of it, one may imagine that the weapons and ammunition which Ieyasu confiscated from the *De Liefde* (and Toranaga from the *Erasmus*) served him well in these campaigns. It might be mentioned, however, that Yabu’s dream of a musket regiment had already been realized in Japan, and guns were a standard part of Japanese warfare by this time—indeed, they were a decisive factor in changing the nature of war in Japan in the late sixteenth century. One of the persistent fantasies of the Will Adams legend (although a relatively modest one in *Shōgun*) has been to see Adams as the importer of wholly new and advanced means of gunnery. In fact, in the year 1600 the Japanese were among the world leaders in the quality, quantity, and tactical use of guns—a position they were rapidly to surrender with the coming of peace and the lack of any necessity for further development of such weapons.

Ieyasu as Toranaga

Yoshi Toranaga is not only the most interesting and fully-developed character in *Shōgun*—at least in the minds of most

readers whom I have asked—he is also the most provocative in comparison with the historical model. This is doubtless a mark of the relatively plentiful and colorful material available in English about the historical Tokugawa Ieyasu (notably Sadler’s biography, *Maker of Modern Japan*) on which the author had to draw—in contrast, for example, to the rather sketchy and bland records which history has left us concerning William Adams and Hosokawa Gracia. But the complexity and fascination of Toranaga is equally a genuine reflection of the many-faceted personality of the historical Ieyasu.

The personalities of great heroes in any national history tend often to be reduced to one or two key characteristics, typically supported by nicknames or colorful anecdotes (which are as often as not apocryphal, the classic case being George Washington and the cherry tree). So it is with Tokugawa Ieyasu, whose quintessential qualities of *craftiness* and *patience* are supported by any number of examples. The former is epitomized by the nickname “*tanuki oyaji*,” the Old Badger (more precisely, the old “raccoon dog,” but at any rate an animal known for being clever and devious—yet generally likeable). The quality of patience is captured in an oft-quoted set of Edo period *haiku*; all begin *Nakanakuba* (“If you don’t sing”) and conclude *Hototogisu* (“nightingale”), with the variant middle lines providing the imagined responses to such an uncooperative bird:

Nobunaga: *Koroshite yarō*—“I’ll kill you”

Hideyoshi: *Nakashite yarō*—“I’ll make you sing”

Ieyasu: *Naku made matō*—“I’ll wait until you sing”

In *Shōgun*, James Clavell has provided us in the character of Toranaga a fine elaboration upon both the craftiness and patience of the historical Ieyasu. While some historians might suggest that these qualities have been overemphasized in the traditional Japanese mythology of Ieyasu, in certain ways these images *are* the “real” Ieyasu. As Clavell claims in the introduction to the Japanese translation of *Shōgun* (to appear in September 1980), “If they will open their minds to me, I will tell them the legends that they’ve learned in their schools in dry form. And I can *re-create* it.”

Yet Ieyasu, as befitted the role of most great generals of his day, could at the same time be quite ruthless, notably with members of his own family whenever they stood in the way of his considerable ambition. The depiction of Toranaga’s complex family situation and of the way in which he manipulated his wives, children, and other relatives is if anything considerably less involved than in the case of the historical Ieyasu. His three mature sons as of 1600—Hideyasu, Hidetada, and Tadayoshi (Noboru, Sudara, and Naga in

the novel)—all provided him with numerous granddaughters who enabled a diversity of marriage alliances. He was still to father three more sons (the child with whom Lady Sazuko is pregnant in the summer of *Shōgun* was one of them, born in real life two months after the battle of Sekigahara), for all of whom he provided large domains in solidifying his regime after 1600.

In general, then, Ieyasu was skilled at manipulating people and seems only rarely to have been moved by any deep personal emotions. James Clavell's use of the metaphor of hawking to describe the way in which Toranaga manipulates others is an effective way of conveying this quality of the historical Ieyasu, who was in fact a great devotee of falconry. Rather less true to Ieyasu's character as we know it is the religious attitude of Toranaga, as capsulized in an inspired passage in which the general lapses into a state of meditation:

"Now sleep. *Karma* is *karma*. Be thou of Zen. Remember, in tranquility, that the Absolute, the Tao, is within thee, that no priest or cult or dogma or book or saying or teaching or teacher stands between Thou and It." (p. 622)

Here Toranaga seems to have parted ways with his historical model and become one with his creator in a distinctively Clavellian sermon on the power of individualized salvation in defiance of all organized religion. The historical Ieyasu was far more solicitous of priests, cults, and dogmas, and indeed devoted much of the last years of his life to setting up institutions which would deify his memory and protect his dynasty. He relied heavily on priests among his advisers, notably Suden and Tenkai, the one of the Zen sect, the other of the Tendai; he simultaneously encouraged the apostate Buddhist scholar Hayashi Razan to develop a whole set of moral dogma rooted in the teachings of the Chinese Neo-Confucian school. Yet in all these efforts, Ieyasu was in fact motivated more by a spirit of manipulation than by any extreme personal piety, and one might indeed argue that in his heart of hearts he was perhaps not all that distant from Clavell's Toranaga.

After Sekigahara

James Clavell relates that when he began writing *Shōgun* he had every expectation of recounting the Battle of Sekigahara; indeed, he had anticipated completing the siege of Osaka Castle in 1615. But the narrative developed day by day rather than year by year, and even Sekigahara was left to a brief epilogue. If time and space had allowed, the Battle of Sekigahara would have been a match even for the talents of Clavell, for it was an encounter of epic proportions, involving an estimated 150,000 troops, with both sides fairly equally divided. If one includes other troops en route or

stationed in ready elsewhere, historians have estimated there were some 230,000 men in the field at any one time, making the scale of Sekigahara considerably greater than that of Waterloo over two centuries later. Ieyasu's final victory after a tense two days was made possible primarily by the defection of two critical contingents from the Western confederation in the heat of battle. In the aftermath of Sekigahara, Ieyasu proved himself proverbially patient, and only two of the opposing generals were executed, the Christian Konishi (probably just because he was Christian) and of course the scheming Ishida, both of whom were beheaded in the dry riverbed in Kyoto. Many of the other conspirators found their fiefs diminished, but all were permitted to live.

The conclusion of *Shōgun* depicts Toranaga contentedly meditating on his "*karma*" and the future. Although the historical Ieyasu had no such clairvoyance or even intentions in the autumn of 1600, things did work out for him pretty much as Toranaga predicted: Ieyasu was indeed given (or, for all intents, took) the title of shogun three years later, and he did indeed retire in favor of his heir Hidetada (Sudara) in 1605. And he did also in fact wait patiently for Hideyoshi's heir and his mother Yodo to "make a mistake," although the actual pretext for the siege of Osaka Castle in 1614 was pretty much cooked up by Ieyasu himself. The extermination of the Taikō's line, the last threat to the Tokugawa dynasty, came with the fall of the castle and the annihilation of all its defenders in the summer of 1615.

We can probably read into Toranaga's last lines, "I did not choose to be what I am: it is my *karma*," a decided irony, since in personality both Toranaga and Ieyasu appear to have very much chosen to be what they were. This was at least true of the historical Ieyasu in the fifteen years of his life that remained after Sekigahara, a fulfilling period during which he assiduously constructed a political system of incredible ingenuity, resting on a complex set of checks and balances among the great lords. To provide ideological cement for this system, he encouraged the study of Confucianism and initiated the course of conversion of the samurai class from a practicing warrior elite to a nascent civil service. When Ieyasu died at the advanced age of 75, just half a year after the fall of Osaka Castle, he was certainly the most successful political leader in Japanese history until that time, and the stability of his dynasty for over two centuries after his death would only serve to reinforce the judgment of history.

7 Hosokawa Gracia: A Model for Mariko

Chieko Mulhern



One enduring variation of the romantic formula “boy meets girl, boy gets girl, boy loses girl” goes something like this: a man ventures into an alien world, receives aid and comfort from an exotic woman, and reestablishes his self-identity, but inevitably loses her in the process. Hollywood westerns never tire of this cinematic staple, and science fiction has left many a nonterrestrial beauty transfigured or dematerialized on behalf of a solitary human hero who had invaded her world in some unique conveyance.

So it is no surprise that the Dutch ship’s pilot-major Blackthorne is provided with Mariko, who guides, protects, educates, and loves him, much as her contemporary Pocahontas (1595-1617) did her English Captain John Smith in Virginia and died so very young. In the romantic convention, the exotic woman is expected to be beautiful and high-born within the context of her own society, even if the hero is a mere fur trapper or a stranded sailor. Mariko is a lady of the daimyo class, who has such noble attributes as “beauty, brilliance, courage, and learning” (p. 261) lavished on her by Toranaga’s wise old ex-consort. Voluminous surviving records in both Japanese and Western languages happen to suggest a perfect model for such a romantic heroine.

The Christian Noblewoman

Japan’s history can boast but one Christian noble lady versed in Latin and Portuguese: Hosokawa Tama (1563-1600), baptized Gracia. The fictional heroine’s name happens to be an apt parallel: *mari* (ball) corresponds to *tama* (jewel, ball) and is homophonous with “Maria,” the name by which the Virgin Mary was known to the Southern European missionaries and their early Japanese converts.

As reflected in Mariko’s background as provided in *Shōgun* (pp. 599-600), Lady Gracia was born to a fateful life made of the stuff of historical romance itself. Her father Akechi Mitsuhide (1526-1582) was depicted as the Japanese equivalent of Benedict Arnold in the popular entertainment of the Edo period, if not of her lifetime. The Mitsuhide that she knew—and objective history confirms it—was a cultured, sensitive, dignified man and a competent general with highly technical skills in castle construction and military strategy (as in *Shōgun*, p. 1199). His services were so greatly valued by his overlord Oda Nobunaga (Goroda) that in 1579 the latter ordained the marriage of Akechi’s daughter Tama to Hosokawa Tadaoki, the heir of another trusted general, to bind their loyalties even more tightly.

A scant three years later, Akechi led a sudden coup in Kyoto against Nobunaga, who then perished in the flames engulfing the temple of Honnōji. Akechi was promptly awarded an imperial appointment to the position of *shikken* (“regent,” second only to shogun in the samurai political hierarchy), but was killed within a fortnight of his coup by looting peasants as he was on his way to fight Hideyoshi’s forces, thereby earning the derisive title of Jusan Kubo,” the “Thirteen-Day Shōgun.”

Most of the Akechi family, including Tama’s sisters and their husbands, perished in battle or died by suicide in the aftermath. Hideyoshi, claiming most of the credit, lost no time in gaining hegemony and went on to become the Taikō, but Tama’s husband Tadaoki and his father Yūsai also managed not only to emerge from this dire family crisis unscathed but even to prevail in the process. Immediately after Nobunaga’s fall, the Hosokawa father and son promptly shaved their heads to become lay monks and secluded themselves in mourning, thereby effectively circumventing Akechi’s desperate plea for assistance. Tama was sent into hiding in a remote mountain village for fear of summary execution if discovered alive. For nearly two years (but less than Mariko’s eight years in *Shōgun*, p. 605) she was officially “missing,” until, through the intercession of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the Taikō ordered her brought back and installed in the new Hosokawa mansion just outside Osaka Castle, obviously as an unofficial hostage.

By the time of the birth of her third son, Tama was seeking spiritual solace in the newly imported Christian faith, which she had adopted under the influence of her lady companion Kiyohara Maria, daughter of a high Kyoto court noble who had been one of the Jesuits' earliest converts, and of Takayama Justo Ukon, the devout Christian daimyo and Tadaoki's close friend. Unlike the fictional Mariko, whose language instructor (*p.* 334) and personal confessor (*p.* 312) were both European Jesuits, Tama had but one fleeting personal contact with a Spanish priest and the Jesuit church. On Easter Day in 1587, she slipped out of the house to visit the church and pleaded with Gregorio de Cespedes to baptize her on the spot. Perhaps suspecting the strange noble lady to be the Taikō's consort, the cautious Father declined to take such a precipitous action and instead left her with Japanese Brother Cosme to discuss religion and logic. Cosme later reported his amazement at her "intelligence, knowledge, and power of comprehension such as he had never seen before in Japanese women." Soon retrieved by frantic retainers, Tama was destined never again to leave her house. She continued to study Christian doctrines by way of Maria. While her husband was away on Hideyoshi's Kyushu campaign in 1587, Tama had herself baptized at home by Maria, who was acting under instructions from Fathers Cespedes and Organtino. Thus she came to be known to history as Gracia. Even Tadaoki's rage upon his return failed to make her renounce the faith, and all he could do was order even tighter security around the house to prevent her from giving the retainers the slip again.

A Fiery Death

In 1600 Tadaoki set off to spearhead Ieyasu's punitive expedition against Uesugi Kagekatsu in the north, part of a ruse to lure Ishida Mitsunari into showing his hand. Ishida responded by attempting to make hostages of the families of those lords whose loyalties in the impending confrontation remained uncertain. Ishida's five hundred troops surrounded the Hosokawa mansion, demanding that Gracia move into Osaka Castle. They could not have chosen a worse target. Gracia flatly refused to leave the house without her husband's permission and chose death to safeguard his samurai honor and loyalty to Ieyasu. According to an extant account by a woman attendant named Shimo, who was the last to leave the premises, Gracia ordered her aged chamberlain to stab her chest with a halberd. As Shimo made her escape under orders to deliver Gracia's last letters, the chamberlain sprinkled gunpowder around the room, set fire to the mansion, and duly committed seppuku in the blaze along with the other defenders. Mariko's death in an explosion in *Shōgun* is an equally dramatic transposition and

provides the dramatic advantage of allowing her to die in Blackthorne's presence.

The ensuing public outrage and mass exodus of intended hostages in *Shōgun* parallel the actual situation in Osaka following Gracia's death. Ishida had secured all exits from the city, imposed a six o'clock curfew, and ordered daimyo families into the castle. Yet most of them escaped, thanks to the general confusion created by Gracia's spectacular self-sacrifice as well as to their own vassals' desperate efforts. Some were able to flee in boats after the river guards had been drawn to the flaming Hosokawa mansion.

As a result, Ishida was forced to abandon the hostage plan altogether, while Ieyasu unwittingly reaped the full benefit of Gracia's tragedy. Ieyasu's allies were not only spared the painful moral dilemma of choosing between familial emotion and political allegiance, but they also became irrevocably committed to his cause now that they could no longer play both sides. The vigilantly guarded Gracia did not actually meet Ieyasu in person, let alone work for him, as Mariko does for Toranaga; but, from his point of view, it was as if she had died on his behalf at the critical juncture of his military and political career. Two months later he won a decisive victory at the Battle of Sekigahara and promptly rewarded her husband Tadaoki by more than doubling his fief, from 180,000 *koku* to 399,000 *koku*.

Mariko, whose body manages to remain more or less intact after the explosion, is sent off with a grand-scale, mixed-religion funeral (with the rather un-Japanese public viewing of the corpse and bier cremation), but the historical Gracia also was given an impressive Christian memorial service two months after her death. Legend has it that Father Organtino sent Kiyohara Maria back to the smoldering ruins to collect Gracia's bones (identifiable because no retainer dared to die in the same room) and officiated at a service attended by a large crowd of mourners.

The Hosokawa Heritage

The plot necessities and moral cosmos of *Shōgun* are such that a romantic love interest would have been invented even had the historical Gracia not existed. Once brought together by Toranaga to serve his purpose, Mariko and Blackthorne fit into each other's *karma* with natural ease, but such a union is expected to create just the right sense of jeopardy and ultimate doom that make for high romance. So in Mariko's wake looms the ominous shadow of Buntaro, a "short, thickset, almost neckless" (*p.* 345) "baboon" (*p.* 371), a "squat ugly troll" (*p.* 596) with an "apelike face" (*p.* 587), who appears "hateful, ugly, arrogant, violent" (*p.* 261) even to other Japanese. Such a portrayal of the husband

of Mariko-as-Gracia will come as something of a jolt to Japanese readers. It is comparable to being told that Robin Hood actually was closer in appearance to the Hunchback of Notre Dame than to the dashing Errol Flynn. Lady Gracia's husband Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563-1645) was one of the most glamorous young lords of Momoyama Japan, certain to rate an actor of the Tyrone Power or Robert Redford class in cinema. Extant portraits and historical accounts picture him as tall, lean, and sensitive yet masculine in appearance, and he was well-known for his aristocratic hot temper.

While the fictional Buntaro shares nothing with his father Hiromatsu but their common viciousness (*p. 351*), the historical Tadaoki had more positive qualities in common with his father, the illustrious Hosokawa Fujitaka (1534-1610), better known by his artistic name Yūsai. Both were the epitome of the samurai ideal of *bunbu ryōdō*, the "tandem ways of the literary and martial arts," the concept that the warrior must cultivate both in equal proportions. Yūsai himself made history in his own inimitable way. Soon after Gracia's death, Ishida launched an all-out offensive against Ieyasu's allies. Besieged in Tanabe Castle in the Hosokawa fief north of Kyoto, Yūsai managed to hold off the Osaka horde for nearly sixty days with his garrison of only five hundred troops, until at last Emperor Goyōzei sent an imperial emissary to order Ishida to lift the siege and Yūsai to open the castle gate. One of the most learned men and talented poets of his day, Yūsai had in 1572 been accorded the unique honor of receiving the oral transmission of the poetic secrets of the great imperial anthology *Kokinshū* (A.D. 905). It was the threat of the termination of this cultural lineage by Yūsai's death that moved the emperor to make his unprecedented intervention in samurai political affairs.

Unlike the fictional Hiromatsu, who is credited with having a number of consorts (*p. 586*), Yūsai was a rare monogamist among the warrior lords of the day (Gracia's father Akechi was another). Whereas Hiromatsu's only son Buntaro is said to have killed his consort mother for her alleged infidelity (*p. 586*), Yūsai's wife bore him four sons and four daughters. One of their sons, Okitomo, became Christian in 1595; Yūsai's wife was also converted, to be referred to as "Donna Maria" in the Jesuit annual report of 1600-1.

Hosokawa Tadaoki achieved a level of distinction worthy of Yūsai's heir in his military and cultural accomplishments. By the year 1600 he had already emerged as a member of the elite coterie that served as the primary arbiter of aesthetic taste and social decorum in the privileged circles of Momoyama culture. In particular, he had been one of the famed Seven Disciples of Sen no Rikyū, the great tea master who did more than anyone else to define the

spiritual tone and rules of form which have been religiously upheld to the present day by the schools of tea ceremony. In accord with the spirit of tea, which is essentially a synthesis of many different arts, Tadaoki also distinguished himself as a noted poet, as an authority on protocol and ritual precedent, and as a fine artist—as demonstrated by a handmade gift to his wife, a set of playing cards bearing the "One Hundred Poems" collection and his own gorgeous gilt paintings, some of them extant. In matters of tea, he was the author of two important books, and after his retirement he was in particular demand as a master under the name of Sansai, the only survivor among Rikyū's famous "Seven."

Tadaoki's cultural fame is easily matched by his military reputation. By age fifteen he had already earned a commendation written in Oda Nobunaga's own hand (and surviving today) for his successful campaign in the provinces of Yamato and Kawachi. After his marriage to Gracia he was granted as a fief the 120,000-*koku* province of Tango, which he had conquered himself. By 1600 he held an additional 60,000 *koku* in Kyushu and Junior Third Rank, all independent of his father's heritage.

A Model Husband

It is tempting to conjure up a full-scale rivalry and decisive confrontation between a gallant, blue-eyed soldier of fortune and a fiery epitome of samurai nobility over a tragic and patrician Christian beauty. Alas, the married lover of an Elizabethan Protestant must of necessity be a distressed near-virgin (*p. 605*), persecuted by a brutish husband whose savage wife-beating is witnessed by the hero himself. To ensure that Mariko is not blamed for inviting such mistreatment, Buntaro is further discredited by other atrocious deeds in his past: he executed his own mother, did terrible things to his consorts (*p. 586*), used courtesans and let his wife pay the bills (*p. 677*), and was not known for his manners (*p. 585*).

But when it comes to the historical Tadaoki, even modern feminists are nearly unanimous in lauding him for his unrestrained demonstrations of conjugal love and his steadfast refusal to take on another wife—unusual among feudal lords. In secreting Gracia for two years following her father's uprising, he actually risked untold dangers not only to his own personal safety but also to the very existence of the Hosokawa clan. During Gracia's absence he did in fact take a consort, but only to support the official family claim that his wife was missing. After Gracia's death he took another consort and fathered four children by her, but he never made her his official wife, so that some historical records list these later children as Gracia's!

But this positive image of Tadaoki in the popular Japanese mind also has a darker side, suggesting that the characterization of Buntaro was not the result of literary necessity alone. True to the episode-rich Hosokawa tradition, Tadaoki left more than his share of dramatic incidents to be recounted not only by his own countrymen but even by Westerners. For example, he disinherited his eldest son, whose young wife was related to Regents hostile to Ieyasu, and the son lived out his life as a lay monk hermit. Even more tragic was the case of his second son, who fought on the Osaka side in 1615 and was found alive after the fall of the castle. Much as Hiro-matsu is forced to arrange his beloved grandson Usagi's seppuku in *Shōgun* (p. 219), so Tadaoki had to submit his son's head to Ieyasu so as to allay any suspicion that the Hosokawa might have been betting on both sides (as indeed some other daimyo families had done successfully).

Similarly, just as the relationship between Hiromatsu and Buntaro is strained and even antagonistic in *Shōgun* (p. 351), so the historical Tadaoki is said to have been estranged from his father after Yūsai had committed the "unsamurai-like disgrace" of yielding his castle to the enemy, even though at imperial command. The actual reason for their possibly pretended estrangement was most likely a common desire to consolidate the Hosokawa into a single powerful domain through an anticipated reward for their combined exploits in the great battle of 1600. Such suppression of personal feelings in the face of political necessity is not an uncommon theme in the lives of heroes, whether in Japan or elsewhere. It was in precisely the same era (1601), for example, that Queen Elizabeth had her beloved but overambitious Earl of Essex executed. But whatever the motives actually involved, such episodes undeniably add a touch of ruthless cruelty to the popular image of their protagonist.

As for Tadaoki, whether he was a cold-blooded schemer or a cool-headed survivor, he himself would be the last to deny that he was subject to fits of anger similar to the one confessed by Buntaro (p. 619). The actual incident took place in 1587. Upon learning that his wife had just been baptized in his absence, Tadaoki banished her seventeen lady attendants, all of whom had preceded Gracia in converting to Christianity. He is further said to have sliced off the ears and nose of his son's wet nurse, also a Christian, for assisting in having her young charge baptized along with his mother. (The removal of the ears or nose was at the time a legal punishment, routinely handed out by judges.) Kiyohara Maria, who actually performed the baptism, was not physically punished, perhaps because she was a daughter of Yūsai's maternal uncle (a scholarly court noble and an early Christian convert) and already a Christian when she first became Gracia's companion. By the

Japanese standards of the day, Tadaoki's behavior on this occasion was well within reason and within his rights as head of the clan and family. The Jesuit records, however, picture him as all but the devil incarnate. Their 1587 annual report depicts him as "violent by nature, excessively jealous, and so strict in family discipline that while away on military campaigns he posted two elder vassals to keep watch on his wife."

Tadaoki had not always been antagonistic toward Christianity. In fact he had often related to Gracia the religious beliefs of his close friend Takayama Justo Ukon and had adopted Christian motifs to decorate his personal belongings. His seemingly arbitrary change of heart on learning of Gracia's baptism can best be blamed on the official Japanese policy toward Christianity, which kept shifting with bewildering frequency. Indeed, Gracia's baptism could not have occurred at a worse time for Tadaoki. The Christian Proscription Edict issued by the Taikō only a few months earlier had prompted her to take the irrevocable step. The Taikō, whose attitude toward the Christian Church had been ambivalent at best, is generally believed to have been alarmed by the incautious offer of Gasper Coelho (then Superior of the Japanese Mission) to order all Christian lords to come to the Taikō's aid in his expedition against the powerful Kyushu daimyo Shimazu. Alarmed by the threat of an alliance of Christian lords under foreign command, the Taikō issued the proscription even before returning to Osaka. It was just at this time that Hosokawa Tadaoki came home from Kyushu to find his own wife and a son newly baptized. Had her attendants been male, they would have suffered a punishment far worse.

The Hosokawa Clan after Gracia

Tadaoki outlived Gracia by forty-five years. In his new Kyushu fief he extended hospitality and assistance to Christians, even providing a haven for those fleeing persecution in other domains. But with the death in 1611 of Father Cespedes, who had been Gracia's first Jesuit contact and the priest most trusted by Tadaoki, the daimyo began to turn against the Christians at the same time that shogunate policy moved swiftly from lenient enforcement of the proscription edict toward the stage of mass executions.

In the siege and final destruction of Osaka Castle in the summer of 1615, Tadaoki and his son rendered Ieyasu distinguished service. By 1620, he retired and handed the clan over to his third son (MARIKO's Saruji—but without the hand deformity), who already had the honor of calling himself *Tadatoshi* after the shogun *Hidetada*, whose adopted daughter he had married. *Tadatoshi* had been baptized along with his mother Gracia but later recanted. In 1632 the

Hosokawa clan was transferred to the still larger fief of Kumamoto (also in Kyushu), which at over half a million *koku* was one of the largest domains in the country. There the lineal descendants of Gracia and Tadaoki reigned as daimyo for the remaining two centuries of Tokugawa rule. In an ironic twist of fate, it was the Hosokawa clan under Tadatoshi that claimed the distinction of killing Amakusa Shiro, the youthful leader of the Christian uprising at Shimabara in 1638.

With characteristic adroitness, the Hosokawa family managed to remain aloof from the coalition of great western domains which finally toppled the Tokugawa regime in 1868 and at the same time to survive into modern times as dukes under the prewar peerage. Gracia's line counts among its contemporary descendants a number of prominent politicians and scholars. The historical William Adams, Blackthorne's model, never had the pleasure of meeting Lady Gracia, much less conversing with her in Western languages. But the saga of Gracia was memorialized by Jesuit writers soon after her death in a story modeled on the Italian Cinderella cycle. Her life has also been dramatized in numerous tales, novels, stage plays, biographies, and scholarly treatises.

8 Death and Karma in the World of *Shōgun*

William LaFleur



"It's all so simple, Anjin-san. Just change your concept of the world."
Shōgun, p. 528

In reading *Shōgun* I could not shake off the impression that it was the most didactic novel I had read in many years—as strange as this might seem in so swashbuckling a tale. I asked myself exactly what it was that the author, in addition to telling a good story, wanted to say or teach. My first answer was that Clavell in *Shōgun* wanted to provide something of an induction into Japanese civilization, that he intended to convince his readers in the West that, when understood, Japan has been as civilized a culture as our own. But I later revised this opinion and concluded that the author's didactic program is even more ambitious, for he holds that certain aspects of Japanese civilization—basic attitudes about life and death, for instance—ought to be not only appreciated but also adopted by us in the West.

My hunch about this was confirmed by Clavell himself. In conversation he openly acknowledged his belief that Asian people as a whole have "a better attitude toward life and death—death being a part of life ..." He went on to say:

Why should we be afraid of death when it is inevitable? I mean, that's pretty stupid. That thought has been implanted into us by our forebears It's the Jewish-Christian ethic for some reason or another.

What is especially interesting to me is that, perhaps for the first time in Western history, we seem to be ready to entertain the possibility that Clavell's judgments on life and death—completely apart from any artistic or historical problems in *Shōgun*—may be correct. Given such an ambitious objective, *Shōgun* deserves quite serious scrutiny—not only in terms of how well it represents sixteenth-century Japan but also, I think, as a book which reflects aspects of the cultural interchange between Japan and the West in our own time. Here I merely wish to explore and clarify a few historical and philosophical issues which I think are raised by discussions of death and of *karma* in Clavell's book.

“There's a very easy solution, Anjin-san. Die.”

There is a point fairly late in *Shōgun* when Blackthorne looks back over the training he has received—largely from Mariko—and muses about himself:

He was no longer afraid to die. Her courage had shown him the uselessness of that fear and he had come to terms with himself long ago, on that night in the village with the knife. (p. 1027)

Since Clavell holds that fear of death is a useless and dispensable part of the “Jewish-Christian ethic,” it would seem that in *Shōgun* the successful mastery of this fear is the crucial element in Blackthorne's deep initiation into Japan as a superior form of civilization. It is also then the key to Clavell's hope of effecting a change in the world view of the West.

Over the years it has become the (sometimes unpleasant) task of Asianists like myself to raise red flags of warning when we observe too easy and too comprehensive a contrast being made between “the West” and the various cultures of Asia. I am worried about the implication in *Shōgun* that a continual fear of death grips the Western heart whereas virtually every man, woman, and child of sixteenth-century Japan could face death without flinching and even with pleasure. Indeed, *Shōgun* often gives the impression that such a mastery over fear was a *fait accompli* in Japanese society, something so worked into the world view and education of the entire populace that it had become a “natural” part of their lives and outlook.

It is possible, however, to give quite a different interpretation to all the talk about “the honor of a noble death” in the writings of late medieval Japan. The frequency and insistence of such references

may, in fact, suggest that for the Japanese themselves such an attitude could be made to appear “natural” only through constant justification. The instinct for self-preservation has, after all, through millions of years remained fundamentally “natural” to creatures still in the prime of life. There can be no difference between East and West on this. A fear of death was, then, as “natural” for the late medieval Japanese as it is for any other people; what is interesting about their society in that period was the elaboration of cultural mechanisms to *contravene* such natural fears. “Bushido” is in many ways precisely this. But its existence as a code or norm does not in any way indicate that reality in the sixteenth century, for instance, was anything like the ideal or that large numbers of Japanese—as Clavell depicts in *Shōgun*—walked willingly into death.

We can blunt the edge of too sharp a contrast between Japan and the West by working from the other direction as well. It is helpful to remember that, although the West never created anything quite like the Bushido ritual of dying, there has always been an admiration for persons who had personally conquered death. Socrates' tranquil acceptance of the hemlock inspired others at least to think about the possibility of “dying philosophically.” Likewise, deeply rooted religious convictions carried many early Christians through martyrdom with relative tranquility and made it possible for some Jews to conceive their forced deaths as opportunities for “sanctifying the name of God.” It is, then, somewhat risky to assume the existence of a Western attitude which clearly and always contrasts with something else assumed to be *the* Japanese attitude concerning death and life. The novelist has the power, perhaps even the right, to fashion different cultures into virtually opposite worlds. The historian, however, has to call attention to the fact that reality is seldom, if ever, quite like that.

Nevertheless, Clavell's novel and the warm reception it has received may be indirectly saying something extremely interesting about changing attitudes toward death in our own time. The vivid presentation of persons deliberately and painfully dying through seppuku, in what must be the epitome of courage in facing death, implicitly invites Western readers to see how this contrasts with the multiple means we have devised, especially through modern medical technology, to anesthetize ourselves as much as possible as we die. In vivid contrast, seppuku if anything heightens the dying person's awareness of his or her death: it makes dying an unusually *conscious* act. It has, therefore, sometimes been championed as an eminently *human* way to die. Until now, what we usually called “hari-kari” seemed to be a bizarre practice that was gross and nihilistic. Clavell has raised an awareness that there may be much more depth and dignity in seppuku than the West had assumed.

Clavell seems to be making the point that in the modern era we have swung too far in the opposite direction, treating dying as an embarrassment and death as something to be eliminated eventually through technology. It is no longer a natural part of our culture but something hidden away from public view as though it really ought not to be taking place. When interviewed, Clavell told a story of a dying woman who had written him because reading *Shōgun* had “made her remaining days happy.” Her thanks to him for writing the novel clearly gratified him and he went on to comment, “This attitude toward death and life, life and death, you know, in a funny sort of way is a wonderful thing. It’s there for all of us to grab. I’m not unique. Anybody can do it.” Obviously both the author and his readers see *Shōgun* as something more than mere entertainment.

“A great word, ‘*karma*.’ And a great idea.”

Most readers of *Shōgun* may be fascinated but, I suspect, also confused by one word which appears repeatedly in the novel even though its exact meaning remains unclear: *karma*. Even readers who have lived in contemporary Japan will be puzzled by the constant repetition of “*karma*,” a word which appears rarely, if ever, in the conversation of modern Japanese. Even the Japanese equivalents of this Indian word—such as *go*, *in*, or *inga*—are anything but household terms; if they occur at all, it will be in the more reflective conversation of older people, in the temple homilies of Buddhist monks, or in the last novels of Mishima Yukio. It is ironic that “*karma*” is more likely to appear in the dormitory conversation of American university students than in the parlance of contemporary Japanese—even though it is the latter who have in a millennium and a half of their own intellectual history a long record of debate over the concept. Such are the paradoxes of our times: things which one culture seems ready to forget become items of curiosity and fascination to another.

But this still leaves unanswered the question of whether or not Clavell was justified in so liberally sprinkling the word throughout the pages of *Shōgun*, a novel set in the sixteenth century. Although I doubt that even then samurai and others would have dropped the word “*karma*” at every turn, Clavell is correct in his assumption that this Indo-Buddhist concept was important in the mental furnishings of the medieval Japanese. So, although the word has virtually disappeared from the speech of modern Japanese, *karma* as a concept definitely affected the way their ancestors viewed reality. Yet the exact meaning of *karma* never comes very clearly into focus in *Shōgun*, which is understandable in light of the wide diversity of interpretations the Japanese have given to the concept. Having probably absorbed these multiple meanings through his readings

about Asia, Clavell presents us with a kaleidoscopic *karma*, an idea which seems to shift and turn with each usage. It may be helpful to sort out some of these meanings and try to place them in the context of medieval Japanese thought.

One meaning of the term *karma* is quite accurately depicted in that passage where Clavell defines it:

Karma was an Indian word adopted by Japanese, part of Buddhist philosophy that referred to a person’s fate in this life, his fate immutably fixed because of deeds done in a previous life, good deeds giving a better position in this life’s strata, bad deeds the reverse. Just as the deeds of this life would completely affect the next rebirth. A person was ever being reborn into this world of tears until, after enduring and suffering and learning through many lifetimes, he became perfect at long last, going to *nirvana*, the Place of Perfect Peace, never having to suffer rebirth again, (pp. 219-20)

As part of the Buddhism which the Japanese began to absorb from China in the fifth century, the idea of *karma* fascinated them even as earlier it had appealed to the Chinese when they learned of it from the Indians. As understood at that time, *karma* was part of a fundamental lawfulness in the universe and implied that every being makes or breaks his or her own future. There is, then, really no injustice in the world since every being is and has exactly what he or she has merited through the morality or immorality of past actions. Every being, through a sequence of births (transmigration), was continually moving up or down along a ladder stretching between high and low forms of life.

At a time when the concept was still fairly new to the Japanese, we can see it reflected in a drinking song of the eighth-century *Man’yōshū*, by the poet Ōtomo Tabito, who was at once both intrigued by this new notion and skeptical about it:

Getting my pleasures
This way in my present life
May make me turn
Into a bug or a bird
In the life to come

Later writers were much less flippant. The *Nihon ryōiki*, an important work of the early ninth century, presented the notion of karmic rewards and punishments through vivid stories which made the whole system concrete and intelligible to the masses. Its author, a monk by the name of Kyōkai, was thoroughly convinced that, once *karma* was understood by all his countrymen, the Japanese as a people would simply decide to stop doing evil. Kyōkai was completely optimistic about the possibility of this: once people came to realize that each person is the architect of his or her own future

destinies, they would simply choose to do good and receive their happy rewards.

Kyōkai, however, if he had been given an opportunity to read *Shōgun*, would have been either perplexed or indignant at the finale of the novel when Toranaga smiles and muses, “I did not choose to be what I am. It is my *karma*” (p. 1210). Kyōkai would have seen things as quite the opposite; he would insist that Toranaga fails to grasp that it was precisely the pattern of choices which Toranaga *himself* had made over a number of lifetimes that had brought him now to the point of becoming shogun. In the *Nihon ryōiki*, for instance, Kyōkai argues that the various emperors fully deserved their status because they had earned it through the good deeds of earlier lives. For Kyōkai the concept of *karma* made the whole universe appear “rational” and was, therefore, an exhilarating new idea.

Within a few generations after Kyōkai’s time, *karma* had come to be accepted as a proven fact of life and the universe. The entire body of medieval Japanese literature and drama simply assumes its truth. Watsuji Tetsuro, an important modern thinker, has reminded his contemporaries that “Belief in transmigration . . . made complete and common sense to our medieval ancestors; it lay at the basis of their ordinary observations about life.” The prime example of this would be the vast repertoire of Nō plays in which the concept of karmic rebirth is a key element in the dramatic action. And since Nō was the art form officially sponsored and subsidized by the Tokugawa shoguns, a *karma*-centered world view was repeatedly presented and reinforced as true in that era as well.

But *karma* did not remain the relatively simple and straightforward notion it had been for Kyōkai. Nor did all later Japanese share the early monk’s optimistic vision of man’s ability directly to fashion a good future for himself. On the contrary, much evidence suggests that the majority of Japanese came to find the notion of *karma* a fairly depressing one. Once they began to think of their past and present lives, they became impressed—sometimes overwhelmed—with the probability that the accumulated evil deeds of the past would still bear their “fruit” in the future. In Clavell’s apt phrase, they started to “bemoan their *karma*” (p. 749).

One response to this depressing problem was the idea that negative *karma* could somehow be either cancelled or reduced through the actions of a saving deity such as Amida, the Buddha of the Western Paradise. Much of Buddhist piety in medieval Japan consisted of actions designed to undo the threatening effects of past evil. Appeals to Amida and the chanting of various sutras were among the many ways in which Buddhists of the medieval period sought release from *karma*. Most samurai, for example, in

preparation for seppuku would have called on the name of Amida for help; they would certainly not have moved on to death and rebirth with anything as flip as “*Sayonara, Tadeo*” (p. 569).

But another way of dealing with this sense of imprisonment by one’s *karma* was a deliberate *refusal* to be obsessed by such things. In Japan this happened particularly under the influence of that Chinese Buddhist development which the Japanese called “Zen.” In Zen it was religiously important to *avoid* elaborate intellectual concepts, which were viewed as impediments to enlightenment. While Zen Buddhism by no means rejected the notions of *karma* and transmigration, it did encourage people to avoid the spawning of theories of the universe. Emphasis in Zen was placed rather upon the importance of *the present moment*. If Kyōkai had encouraged people to take a broad conceptual overview of many lifetimes, the Zen masters took a radically different approach and encouraged people to jettison all intellectual concepts as so much ballast and to focus instead upon the immediacy of the present. *Karma* was true but ought not become an obsession.

In the pages of *Shōgun* it seems that this version of *karma*—rather than Kyōkai’s—is the prevalent one. It is clearly the one employed when Mariko, perhaps the most expert synthesizer of world religions in our popular literature, counsels Blackthorne:

“Leave the problem of God to God and *karma* to *karma*. Today you are here and nothing can change that. Today you’re alive and here and honored, and blessed with good fortune. Look at this sunset, it’s beautiful, *neh?* This sunset exists. Tomorrow it does not exist. There is only *now*. Please look.” (p. 499)

It is important to recognize that *both* of these views of *karma*—the broad view of Kyōkai and the immediate view of Zen—are present in the pages of *Shōgun*. Consider, for example, the scene in which Blackthorne, with the help of Mariko and a hot bath, puts aside some memories of England which had surfaced in his mind:

“I’d rather not remember,” he said with a lazy smile, turning his mind back to the present. “I can’t remember. Here is where we are and here is where we’ll eat, and I enjoy raw fish and *karma* is *karma*.” He sank deeper into the tub. “A great word, ‘*karma*.’ And a great idea. Your help’s been enormous to me, Mariko-san.” (p. 534)

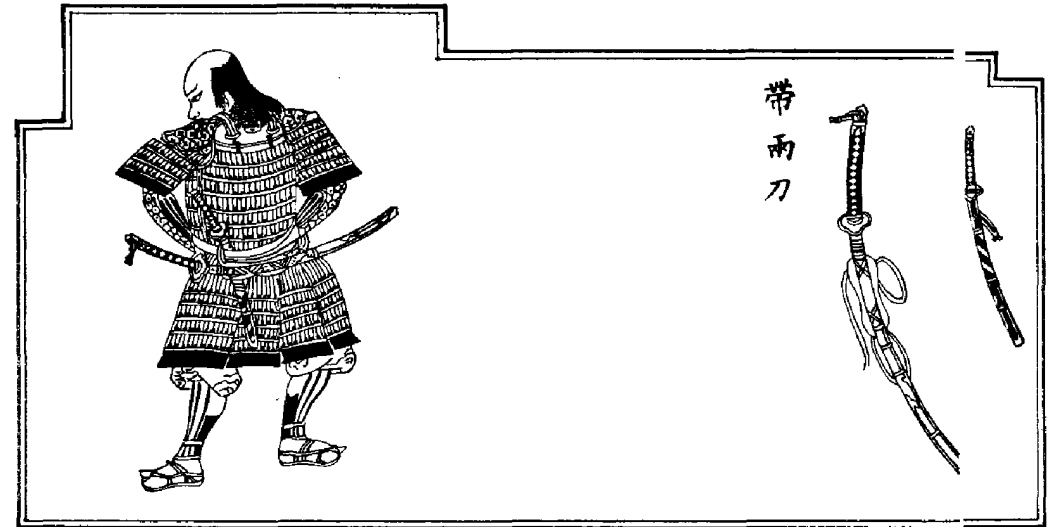
It is important to recognize that this is ambiguous and confusing. Blackthorne summons *karma* as a “great word” not to explore but only to dismiss immediately! It’s a “great idea” but, apparently, especially great when it is not permitted to get in the way of Blackthorne’s enjoyment of his bath, his woman, and his *sushi*. It’s a fine concept, but all concepts have become barnacles to his increasingly enlightened mind and ought to be discarded.

Blackthorne sometimes receives from Mariko and others the advice that *karma* is something with which he *need not* deal. But this argument can be—and in *Shōgun* frequently is—carried one step further: *karma* may also be something with which we really *can not* deal. According to this understanding, *karma* is something over which an individual has absolutely no control. At one point, in order to clarify his intention to Father Alvito, Blackthorne makes the easy equation: “That’s *karma*—in the hands of God—call it what you will” (pp. 786-7). This seems to be the implicit notion in the many passages in *Shōgun* in which *karma* is roughly equivalent to the modern colloquial phrase *shigata ga nai* (“there’s nothing to be done”), a clear statement in Japanese that events have gotten totally beyond the control of the speaker. In such an interpretation, *karma* consists of a fixed state of affairs and the only possible response is one of resignation. It is more like “fate” or the “will of God” and is undeniably a notion of *karma* that has its place among the others in the course of Japan’s history.

The discerning reader will have noticed that by now we have come to a definition of *karma* that has moved a full 180 degrees away from that of the early monk Kyōkai, who had celebrated *karma* as a principle by which each and every being has total freedom over himself—somewhat like the celebrated verse of William Ernest Henley in which “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.” The often contradictory meanings of *karma* which we encounter in *Shōgun* thus reflect the diverse range of material which history itself presented to Clavell. This serves to explain why the main characters in *Shōgun* seem at one moment to have the whole of their destinies in their hands, and yet at the next to accept a kind of genial fate which is totally beyond their control. But Clavell has a distinct advantage over those of us whose *karma* it is to be historians and philosophers. He has an enviable omnipotence as the author—that is, *auctor* or creator—of the worlds of his imagination. He is the maker of novel—that is, new—worlds. So even though his theories stretch the facts of history and the ways of logic, Mariko and then her pupil Blackthorne are made to synthesize the great religious traditions of the world. Often it seems they do so a bit too quickly and easily. How they ultimately put all these things together lies within the subtle structure of their own minds or, more precisely, within the mind of Clavell, their maker, to whose thoughts we finally have no direct access. Even after twelve hundred pages much still seems to lie off-stage, in a place hidden from our view and our analyses. Perhaps that’s the way it ought to be, for it leaves us the anticipation of future revelations by the author in some later incarnation, world, or book.

9 Learning Japanese with Blackthorne

Susan Matisoff



‘This is the key to Japan, neh? Language is the key to anywhere foreign, neh?’

Shōgun, p. 786

The hero of *Shōgun* John Blackthorne, in these remarks to a priest who has presented him with a long-awaited dictionary of Japanese, reveals the delighted enthusiasm of a language student imbued with curiosity, intelligence, and supreme motivation. For Blackthorne, language is indeed the key to Japan, and, for the readers of *Shōgun*, James Clavell’s use of Japanese and approximated Japanese does much to establish the mood of the lone Englishman’s encounter with an alien culture.

At the beginning of chapter one, the dazed, shipwrecked sailor awakens in a strange world where the first words he hears—*goshujinsama, gokibun wa ikaga desu ka?* (p. 25)—are left untranslated for the English reader who can, therefore, directly taste the fear and fascination that grip the uncomprehending pilot. Through Blackthorne’s ears, as it were, the reader who knows no Japanese will pick up words and phrases. The first of these words, prophetically enough, is *onna* (woman) and soon thereafter (though in a different context) *kinjiru* (forbid). The former word Blackthorne

learns through gestures, the latter through the dramatically clear context of the actions of sword-drawn samurai: “extralinguistic cues,” the language teacher might say.

The pains and pleasures of language learning are not frequent subjects of concern in popular novels, with the exception, perhaps, of certain works of science fiction, and there’s much to be praised in Clavell’s decision to take the readers along on Blackthorne’s odyssey into an unfamiliar language. Gradually the reader learns a few words. When *kinjiru* reappears some sixty pages later, surfacing from Blackthorne’s memory in one of those moments of extreme stress in which *Shōgun* abounds, this cross-linguistic device conveys the hero’s state of mind to intense novelistic effect. Language as communication and the need for this communication, however difficult, are major themes of *Shōgun*; and in many cases the major points concerning language raised by Clavell are valid. If this were a work of science fiction and the language a total invention, we might simply praise the skill with which the author builds his readers’ vocabularies. Still, the reader who acquires a smattering of Japanese from *Shōgun* might wish to know something about the validity of his newfound knowledge.

These comments won’t be relevant for the TV film, in which Japanese actors will be speaking their own language. The TV series was made using a script “based on a concept that may well spell success or failure: the Japanese in ‘Shōgun’ speak in their own language, without any translation. So the viewer will be in the same situation as Blackthorne and will learn what is going on just as he does” (Neil Martin in *American Film*, April 1980). Differences in pacing and in the essential effects of the two media may well mean that the viewer will experience Blackthorne’s language learning less vividly than does the reader, but the Japanese emerging from the TV set will presumably be accurate.

Specific details make the novel teem with life; small errors in language don’t really detract from its effectiveness as a novel, though they do limit its usefulness as a language textbook. This might be thought a dead issue, but Julian Barnes in *The New Statesman* (November 21, 1975) commented, “personally, I enjoyed *Shōgun* as a basic primer of Japanese; . . . [the words] seem to be arranged in accordance with the standard learning principle of graded reinforcement.” Some examples may serve to show that this eminently successful novel, whatever else it may be, is *not* a primer of Japanese. While some of its Japanese is totally correct, and some basically correct though anachronistic, other phrases are utter gibberish and much of the Japanese is subtly wrong, for interesting reasons which illustrate basic differences between Japanese and English.

Consider, for example, “*neh*.” This little sentence-ending tag peppers the pages of *Shōgun*, rounding off the speeches of all sorts of Japanese characters, and is even assimilated into the English sentences, as in Blackthorne’s comments quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The reader quickly gets a correct feel for the meaning of the particle: something like the French *n’est-ce pas*, it asks the listener’s agreement or confirmation of the sentence. But the tone is off. Anyone can use *neh* speaking Japanese, but it’s more used by women than men; it is only sparingly used by really articulate Japanese speakers, and the unsuspecting English speaker who acquires an overfondness for *neh* runs the risk of sounding rather too much like a contemporary bar-girl.

For those who know Japanese, reading *Shōgun* produces other similar minor annoyances. Some of the spacing of words and a few of the romanizations are idiosyncratic to Clavell. *Neh* for *ne*, and *goziemashita* for *gozaimashita*, for example, while *kamikazi* for *kamikaze* certainly reproduces the wartime anglicized pronunciation, not the Japanese. The frequently occurring expression *oh ko* is utterly mysterious.

Other than such problems of style, and typographical errors (of which there are relatively few), there are certain difficulties in Clavell’s Japanese which reflect differences between Japanese and English that go beyond mere words. A Japanese-language review of the book (*Hokubei mainichi shimbun*, May 28, 1980) calls the language “classroom Japanese,” objecting to the overpoliteness of some of the common phrases like *wakarimasu ka* (“do you understand?”), which does sound peculiar in exchanges we are to take as gruff speech between soldiers. And though there are occasional correct, complex Japanese sentences in *Shōgun* which must result from Clavell’s asking a Japanese how to say such and such, much of the Japanese reflects not a “classroom” but a “phrasebook” approach to the language.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is *dozo* (which properly should be *dōzo*, not *dozo*: vowel length matters in Japanese, as the title *Shōgun* itself illustrates). Early on in his experience in Japan Blackthorne realizes his desperate need to learn the language; thrown in prison, he meets Friar Domingo, a fellow prisoner who gives him some basic language instruction: “*Domo* is thank you and *dozo* is please. Water is *mizu*” (p. 241). Yes, but. Water is water the world around, we might say—though *mizu* actually means only *cold* water—but “thank you” and “please” are not, always, no matter what the phrasebook may tell us. *Dōzo* as “please” is correct only in situations of invitation: “please come this way,” “please be seated,” “please help yourself,” and so forth. In other situations where an English speaker may use

“please”—asking for a favor (“please pass the salt”) or entreaty (“please, don’t hurt me!”)—*dōzo* would strike the Japanese speaker as wholly inappropriate, or even incomprehensible.

Clavell has plugged in *dozo* as if it corresponded one-to-one with every English “please.” So there are many instances of *dozo gomen nasai*, meant, apparently, for the English “please forgive me.” There are also some examples of the impossible combination *dozo goziemashita*, where it’s unclear what is meant. In one case *dozo* seems to represent the British “please?” for “Huh?” or “What?” (p. 1197). When Blackthorne requests that a bottle of *sake* be passed to him, saying, “Here, give it to me. *Dozo*” (p. 443), *dozo* is inappropriate enough, but when Fujiko levels a cocked pistol at Omi and shouts, “*Ugoku na. Dozo*” (p. 502), apparently to represent “Don’t move—please!”, there’s danger of disastrous confusion. All this could mean is “Don’t move! Please do!”

Plugging in words straight out of a dictionary or phrasebook has produced a number of uncomfortably contorted passages. When Clavell wants to describe a ship as “seaworthy,” he ends up with *sonkei subeki umi* (p. 854), roughly “a sea worthy of respect.” And when Blackthorne presents his sword to Toranaga saying, “*Kara samurai ni samurai, neh?* Please, Lord Toranaga, from a samurai to a samurai, eh?” (p. 650), the impossible word order in the Japanese produces a ludicrous effect, rather than the high drama clearly intended. In Japanese, words which correspond to English prepositions follow their nouns, so the only possible order would be “samurai *kara* samurai *ni*.”

Near the midpoint of *Shōgun* there appears a passage we can view as “the language lecture.” In this interchange between Mariko and Blackthorne, Clavell attempts a basic statement on the differences between Japanese and English. Her native language seems easy to her, and, though Blackthorne “felt his frustration rising,” Mariko assures him, “Oh no, Anjin-san. Japanese is very simple to speak compared with other languages. There are no articles, no ‘the’, ‘a’, or ‘an’. No verb conjugations or infinitives. All verbs are regular, ending in *masu* and you can say almost everything using the present tense if you want” (pp. 527-8). The lecture is at one and the same time charming and confused.

True enough, there are no articles, and conjugational patterns are regular—but enormously complex. Five or six endings may be added in a row to a verb root and *-masu* is only one of these, serving to make the verb more polite. Like *ne*, it is especially characteristic of feminine speech. The systems have changed somewhat since 1600, and the range of verb endings was even more complex then than it is now. In fact, the point about *-masu* endings is immediately contradicted by the next Japanese sentence in the book, one

of the perfectly, elaborately correct Japanese examples, the equivalent of “Lord Yabu does not require to see you tonight” (p. 532). It contains two verbs, but neither, appropriately, ends in *-masu*.

Clavell realizes, in general, the gulf between English and Japanese, and, despite the extensive errors in detail, the general effect on the reader who simply takes the Japanese as it comes is a sympathetic understanding of Blackthorne’s difficulty in his incomplete piercing of the veil of confusion he finds in Japanese. One aspect of this which is quite clearly conveyed is the matter of Japanese “respect language.” Friar Domingo tells Blackthorne, “Always remember that Japaners put a great price on manners and courtesy” (p. 241). This good, blunt advice from the mouth of the fictional character is reminiscent of the words of the real-life Jesuit linguist João Rodrigues, who commented that “it is impossible to learn the language without at the same time learning to speak with dignity and courtesy” (Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, p. 173). Passing references in *Shōgun* comment on differences between men’s and women’s speech and rightly note that it is possible to be inappropriately overpolite as well as to err on the side of rudeness. Yet Clavell often falls into overpoliteness, putting *-masu* forms of verbs into the mouths of rough male speakers in nonpolite situations.

Clavell does much to establish the relative status and respect due different characters through the use of suffixes to names: *-san*, *-chan*, and *-sama*. The first of these is generally used today after names as a kind of neutral-respect title; *-chan* is its diminutive or intimate equivalent, and *-sama* is the formal suffix from which both *-san* and *-chan* were derived. But for 1600 both *-san* and *-chan* are anachronistic, being modern colloquialisms, while *-sama* was in wide use at the time. The effect is especially jarring when Toranaga addresses an *inferior* samurai as *-san* and when Toranaga and his mistress Kiri address each other as “Tora-chan” and “Kiri-chan” (p. 222). Clavell has the right idea but the wrong execution.

One final linguistic detail requiring mention is the matter of the names of the characters. Nearly all of the names are Clavell’s inventions, of course, though a few are true to their Japanese originals. Names as author’s inventions may bring the characters alive in the writer’s mind and certainly allow him a greater novelistic freedom. As Clavell has said, “I changed the names deliberately, because I thought it was pretentious for me to say, about a real character, Ieyasu Tokugawa, that he got up on top of the castle and peed, you know!” In changing the names, Clavell gave thought to his choices, feeling, “you have to choose a name, a Japanese name, that *looks* good.” Toranaga, he knows, “sounds strange to Japanese ears,” but “in English, to my eyes, it *looked* good, and that

was the only thing that bothered me. And it *sounded* good to me, in my ears.”

Some of the resultant names do, indeed, sound strange to Japanese ears. Naga, for instance, is a common element in longer names, but sounds odd alone. Usagi (“rabbit”) as a surname for Blackthorne’s wife Fujiko put me irreverently in mind of a Playboy bunny. “Fujiko,” for that matter, has an anachronistic sound, as does “Mariko,” since women’s names in the sixteenth century generally had the prefix *O-*, not the suffix *-ko*, which came into common use only within the past century.

Aside from the question of “natural-sounding” names, there’s the problem of differentiating surnames and given names, and a great confusion as to what to do with the name of a married woman. The most complex example is Mariko. The variations on her name are extraordinary. At times she is Toda Mariko, using the surname of her husband, Toda Buntaro, and her given name, Mariko, in normal Japanese order. No problems here, nor can one find fault with the elderly female character who calls her Akechi Mariko, reverting to the surname of her childhood, as daughter of Akechi Jinsai. But when Clavell seeks formality, particularly in writing of Mariko’s last days, various parts of the names of her husband, her father, and even her father-in-law are inserted, inappropriately, into her name as if the author were seeking something similar to Spanish or Portuguese naming patterns. She is “Toda Buntaro Mariko,” “Senhora Mariko Buntaro,” “Toda Mariko-noh-Buntaro-noh-Jinsai,” and “Toda Mariko-noh-Buntaro-noh-Hiromatsu” on different pages. In this at least, the real Japanese would indeed have been “very simple.”

It is easy enough to enumerate the linguistic faults of *Shōgun*, but we should not lose sight of the positive side. Blackthorne’s burning need and desire to learn the language are evoked to wonderful effect. Motivation is always a key element in language training and no contemporary student need worry, as Blackthorne does, that his language teachers will all be crucified should he fail to progress rapidly enough. Blackthorne’s longing for a dictionary and grammar of Japanese and his thrill when the dictionary is finally placed in his hands should properly warm the heart of every language teacher who reads *Shōgun*. In this the novel reflects accurately the historical realities of Japan around 1600, when the Jesuits were working up basic grammars and word lists to aid them in their missionary work. A real Latin-Portuguese-Japanese dictionary of 1595 may be taken as the model for the book that so excited Blackthorne.

As a sympathetic review of *Shōgun* in a Japanese journal has pointed out, though contemporary Japanese is rife with English words and expressions and Japanese students of English today are

legion, there was once a time when there was only *one* English speaker in Japan: William Adams (*Bungei shunjū*, June 1978, p. 186). For all its flaws, *Shōgun* captures the problem of the voyager into a strange language and culture to splendid effect.

Shōgun is, after all, a novel, not a primer, and one which could not exist were we to insist that it be utterly true to life. Were it written in the appropriate Dutch, Portuguese, Latin, and Japanese, there would be no *Shōgun*. The novelistic effect of battered English like “But first, please must see Lord Ishido. Very important” (p. 1106), to convey the idea of battered Japanese, works well, no matter how uncomfortable we may feel over the many “so sorry” ‘s scattered throughout the book. And the salty Japanese-English pidgin of the pilot Rodrigues is an inspired example of enthusiasm and self-confidence as effective elements in communicating through an imperfectly mastered language. “Toady-sama” for “Toda-sama,” Rodrigues says, and in his exuberance, I feel, we find the character who most directly reflects the author’s own attitudes. Clavell never loses his awareness of language as “the key to anywhere foreign,” and through his insightful portrayal of the agonies and ecstasies of language learning he creates much of the realism of Blackthorne’s experience.

10 The Paradoxes of the Japanese Samurai

Henry Smith



The depiction of the samurai in *Shōgun* is often contradictory, and for good reason: the actual historical evolution of Japan's traditional military elite presents us with a complex pattern of paradoxes. In *Shōgun* we see the samurai both obsessed with the ideal of blind loyalty and yet willing at a moment's notice to betray others for personal advantage. We see samurai who can be vicious sadists and yet refined masters of poetry and the tea ceremony. And we see samurai who habitually act on sudden, unthinking impulse and yet who seem to be constantly calculating every future move. Historical records provide plentiful support for this kind of paradoxical behavior, and indeed more: if anything, James Clavell has simplified the complexities of the samurai class to present a clearer and more dramatic image.

What we need, then, is some framework for sorting out these complexities and resolving—or at least clarifying—the paradoxes. One basic distinction, obvious but too often overlooked, is between the ideal and the reality of the samurai. Of course, it is not as though the ideal and the reality were two separate worlds: each has constantly influenced the other throughout the course of history. One might also argue that the ideal of the samurai has become in certain ways more “real” than reality, particularly for modern Americans, who are subjected almost exclusively to mythicized

forms of samurai behavior in films, in writings about Zen, and in the mystique surrounding the martial arts. *Shōgun* fits generally within this mythology, particularly in its portrayal of ordinary samurai as blindly loyal to the point of inhumanity. And yet at the same time Clavell manages to *humanize* samurai behavior, describing the inner workings of the samurai mind.

The Samurai Facing Two Ways

Another explanation for contradictory samurai behavior is that the class underwent a radical change midway through its seven-century career as Japan's ruling elite. It just happens that the year 1600, in which *Shōgun* is set, represents the pivotal point of this transformation. The samurai at this time was a Janus-faced creature, looking back at an era of constant war and looking forward to an era of constant peace. Behind him lay bloody battles, treachery, and rapid mobility: ahead of him lay a life of increasingly bureaucratic normalcy and a fixed, hereditary place in a closely ordered society. Purists might insist that Rodrigues' observation to Blackthorne that the “Whole country's split up into castes, like in India. Samurai at top, peasants next important” (p. 141) is less accurate for 1600 than for fifty years later. But by 1600 the direction of change was already clearly established, especially because of the all-important process of removing the samurai from direct control over the land and placing them in castle towns under the immediate control of the daimyo.

One way to dramatize this historical shift is to compare two well-known samurai films, Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) and Kobayashi's *Harakiri* (1962). In *Seven Samurai*, we see the military class as a motley assortment of individuals, drawn together in part by sheer love of violence and in part by an idealistic devotion to the cause of justice; never is any mention made of loyalty to an overlord, for these samurai have none. The film reflects Kurosawa's expressed preference for the chaotic conditions of sixteenth-century Japan: “It's my favorite period. People were straightforward and unpretentious then. It was a time of great ambitions and great failures, great heroes and equally great scoundrels” (*New York Times*, April 27, 1980, p. D15).

In stark contrast is the image of the samurai in *Harakiri*, which is set just a few decades later in the year 1630. The samurai is now locked into a rigid system of oppressive control by the new Tokugawa government, and the hero, an impoverished masterless samurai (*rōnin*), has been reduced to making umbrellas for a living. He manages in the end to expose the hypocrisy and inhumanity of the new peacetime regime—but only for the film viewer, since we are left to understand that “history” left no trace of his protest. Of

course, Kobayashi and Kurosawa—and, in turn, Clavell—are not documentary historians but artists with a message for a modern audience. Still, the contrast between the two films suggests in a dramatic way the tremendous change which the samurai class was undergoing around the year 1600 in the transition from war to peace.

The historian would make one further warning: the term “samurai” is used in *Shōgun*, as in many books, to cover an extended hierarchy, ranging all the way from lowly footsoldiers (a substantial number of whom were recruited from the peasantry on a temporary basis) to the daimyo class. In *Shōgun* all these are described uniformly as “samurai,” and it might make things a bit clearer if we bear in mind the technical distinction between a *bushi*, a full-fledged warrior with the privilege of riding a horse and having direct audience with a lord, and an *ashigaru*, a footsoldier with far less status. For example, the rowers on Toranaga’s galley or the sentries lolling about half-naked (p. 871) should be considered *ashigaru* and not true samurai. But what matters is not so much the terminology as an appreciation of the fact that the “samurai class” (including *ashigaru*) was very large in size (as much as six to seven percent of the population) and very diverse in rank and privilege. The *ashigaru*, who accounted for as much as three-quarters of the combat force in this era, rarely aspired to the most idealized standards of samurai behavior, nor indeed were they expected to do so.

Loyalty versus Ambition

In her frequent reminders of the importance of total loyalty to one’s lord, *Shōgun*’s Mariko is articulating what is without doubt the central theme in the code of the Japanese samurai. Although in the era of *Shōgun* there did not yet exist the formal ideology which came to be known as “Bushido” (“the way of the warrior”), all the basic components of the creed had already been given expression in a variety of ways. Take, for example, the “family instructions” (*kakun*) which the heads of leading samurai clans began to compose in the Kamakura period. These lists of precepts, often lengthy, were mostly of a practical nature, but did include passages on the general duties of the samurai, among which loyalty to a feudal overlord was of course emphasized.

It was especially in epic war tales of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the samurai virtues of bravery, loyalty, and honor were singled out and glorified. Above all it was *The Tale of the Heike*, the chronicle of the Taira defeat in the Genpei War (1180-85) and the greatest of all the military epics, that set the precedent for stirring accounts of loyalty and valor among samurai. A provocative argument has been made that the earliest written

versions of *The Tale of the Heike* had little such emphasis, but that it was rather the fertile imaginations of wandering storytellers that provided the heroics, many years after the events of the war had passed from living memory. This raises the interesting possibility that many documented instances of obsessive loyalty among later samurai—of which *Shōgun* provides its own share of fictional examples—were at least in part a case of life imitating art. Such is the power of fiction!

But if feudal loyalty was so deeply ingrained an ideal by the sixteenth century, how are we to explain the omnipresence of “treachery” in the politics of the period? In *Shōgun*, of course, we are given examples of both loyalty and treachery which in frequency and degree tend to be considerably exaggerated for dramatic effect. And yet in fact the themes of treachery and constant reversal of fortunes have long dominated the historiography of the Sengoku period in Japan. The phrase commonly used to depict this phenomenon is “*gekokujō*,” literally “the lower overcoming the higher”—in a word, the betrayal of one’s lord. Still, if we put to one side the moralistic judgment implied by the word “treachery,” we can view this period in Japanese history as one of tremendous social mobility and opportunity.

Of course *gekokujō* never got completely out of hand. For one thing, treachery and disloyalty were pretty much limited to the top levels of the samurai class and did not become typical of the populace at large. When popular unrest did appear, the samurai unifiers were quick to respond. One of Nobunaga’s first military targets was the Ikkō sect of Buddhism, which had established itself in several large territorial bases; the only other case of large-scale commoner control of territory was the exceptional (and abortive) Shimabara Rebellion in 1638. For another thing, we must not forget that however much the ideal of loyalty may have been violated in practice, it was a living part of the samurai mentality. The highly moralistic tone of the samurai code as a whole may in fact have served to keep treachery at a fairly low level, considering the revolutionary times, and to prevent absolute rogues and hoodlums from winning any lasting political power.

Finally we must remember that feudal loyalty in Japan, as in any such society, was *mutual*, owed as much by a lord to his vassal as vice versa. One would have difficulty appreciating this solely on the basis of *Shōgun*, in which samurai obedience often seems blind to the point of fanaticism, and in which daimyo authority appears unconditional to the point of whimsy. History does of course provide examples of fanatic loyalty, but in general a samurai, like anyone else, was motivated to a great extent by self-interest and by the instinct for self-preservation. Death of a lord often meant

immediate loss of employment and estate for all his retainers, so that seemingly extreme measures to protect one's lord were simply common sense. In *Shōgun*, for example, the decision of one of Yabu's men to jump off a cliff in hopes of saving his lord's life (p. 182) makes sense at least as the collective decision of several retainers (although the "Bansaiiiiiiii!" scream, literally "Long live [the Emperor]," is a product of modern militarism rather than traditional feudalism and has the unfortunate effect of conjuring up World War II stereotypes).

So also the lord for his part was obliged to protect and reward his retainers. Tokugawa Ieyasu himself was highly attentive to the proper compensation and encouragement of his closest vassals, as we can sense in this passage from his famous "Legacy":

The vassal samurai of the Tokugawa house, great and small, all have shown the utmost fidelity, even suffering their bones to be ground to powder, and their flesh to be chopped up for me. In what way soever their posterity may offend—for anything less than actual treason—their estate may not be confiscated.

Bun versus Bu

A theme which appears from an early point in the "house instructions" of medieval daimyo concerns the duty of the samurai to cultivate the literary (*bun*) as well as the military (*bu*) arts. Eventually expressed as the slogan *bunbu ryōdō*, "the twin ways of the literary and military arts," the concept of the basic complementarity of civil and military pursuits was central to the samurai class throughout its history, both as an ideal and as a practice. This emphasis on the importance of literary pursuits reflects the strong influence of two role models, the Chinese literati and the Japanese courtier class, both of which the samurai strove to emulate in cultural achievement. It was an idea of great importance in the era of *Shōgun* and was to be codified as the very first provision of the basic Tokugawa code, the Laws Governing the Military Households (*Buke shohatto*, 1615): "From of old the rule has been to practice 'the arts of peace on the left hand, and the arts of war on the right'; both must be mastered."

History confirms that most Japanese samurai, particularly those of the upper ranks, worked hard to perfect their literary skills. The type of "literacy" which they sought entailed not only a basic ability to read and write Japanese, but, given the mixed nature of written Japanese in this era, a mastery of Chinese as well. Of equal importance were the two artistic skills central to the idea of *bun*, calligraphy and the composition of poetry. Beyond this, samurai were expected to have keen aesthetic judgment in all the arts, both fine

and applied, an ability that was brought to bear in the most highly developed way in the tea ceremony. It was precisely in the era of *Shōgun* that the Japanese tea ceremony saw the creative burst of innovation that brought it to the state of perfection in which it survives today. A fusion of both courtier and Buddhist traditions, the tea ceremony was assiduously cultivated by samurai.

In *Shōgun*, we are given descriptions of both poetry composition and tea ceremony as practiced among the samurai, although the net impression is that bloody *bu* was far more their central concern than tasteful *bun*. Still, the very contrast suggests the element of tension inherent in the expectation that samurai be adept at both killing and culture. In the idealized formula, *bun* and *bu* are complementary but practiced separately (with different hands, in the metaphor quoted above). *Shōgun*, in its rather more down-to-earth portrayal of the samurai as a man of culture, suggests that perhaps psychologically the division of labor was not so neat.

A good example would be the single depiction of the tea ceremony, which Toda Buntaro performs for his wife Mariko (pp. 766-77). The superficial effect of the ceremony is one of idealized detachment and beauty; yet lurking just below the surface and imparting dramatic tension to the scene is Buntaro's jealousy and his everyday behavior as an ugly brute. This reminds us that the tea ceremony and other such cultural pursuits were often carefully calculated to provide respite from the constant tensions and hostilities of war. While examples of daimyo pacifying their wives in the manner of Buntaro are unknown historically, the tea ceremony was frequently used between daimyo themselves as a way of making peace. In ways that the conventional English translation "ceremony" fails to convey, the practice of *chanoyu* (literally, "hot water for tea") was a means of easing communication in an era of constantly confused intentions. This social aspect of the cult of tea helps explain the fierce rivalries among the leading lords of the time for the best in tea utensils. Indeed, this trade came to have major economic significance in the era of *Shōgun*, since a single tea caddy could in fact be traded for a virtual kingdom (p. 773).

Just as culture itself came to be a political business, so also did military matters come to be a matter of artistic concern, as best exemplified in the incredible attention lavished on the design and decoration of swords and their accoutrements. What does all this suggest about the *psychology* of the samurai? After all, a sword is meant for killing, for chopping off heads and hacking up bodies. (Incidentally, the practice of testing swords by chopping up corpses was a common one, although it was done with great ritual, not in the casual and irreverent way described in *Shōgun* [p. 229] and never legally on living commoners as alleged by Rodrigues [p. 141].)

Isn't there something contradictory about the practice of butchery and the espousal of super-refined aesthetic ideals?

In particular, the personality of Yabu, although a fantasy of James Clavell's, suggests that there was indeed a seamy side of the samurai psyche. The most chilling example is the "Night of the Screams," the slow boiling in water of one of Blackthorne's shipmates, which is related through the sadistic ecstasy of Yabu as he listens from a distance. What is interesting here is Clavell's use of stereotyped images of Japanese aestheticism—composing poems to falling petals in a Zen-like trance—to describe a scene of outright brutality. Connoisseurs of the refined standards of Japanese court poetry will have good reason to be scandalized by such a scene. And yet isn't Clavell, by following his instincts as a novelist, suggesting something about the relation between sadism and aesthetics in the samurai personality? Perhaps the high-minded ideal of the complementarity of *bun* and *bu* could sometimes in real life degenerate into cruelty as an art.

Heart versus Head

For any professional warrior, the need to respond to a threat "without thinking" is a simple matter of self-preservation. But in the Japanese samurai class, this instinctive need was elevated into a refined philosophy, largely under the influence of Zen Buddhism. This way of thought is quite accessible in America today, thanks to the popularity of the Asian martial arts; for a fully developed exposition, the interested reader can turn to such classic works as Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* (1953) or to D. T. Suzuki's *Zen and Japanese Culture* (1959). What is interesting about this philosophy of the samurai military arts is the way in which it resolves the paradox of the Buddhist respect for life with the warrior's professional need to kill. The ultimate solution is that a total concentration and spiritual preparedness to meet the enemy will in fact serve to *deter* all actual conflict. A number of Zen stories convey this point, none better than the legend illustrating the superior quality of the swords made by the master Masamune (as recounted in *Zen and Japanese Culture*, p. 92):

As far as the edge of the blade is concerned, Masamune may not exceed Muramasa, one of his ablest disciples, but Masamune is said to have something morally inspiring that comes from his personality. The legend goes thus: When someone was trying to test the sharpness of a Muramasa, he placed it in a current of water and watched how it acted against the dead leaves flowing downstream. He saw that every leaf that met the blade was cut in twain. He then placed a Masamune, and he was surprised to find that the leaves avoided the blade. The Masamune was not bent on killing, it was

more than a cutting implement, whereas the Muramasa could not go beyond cutting.

In *Shōgun*, however, the sense of Zen-like spontaneity and intuitive readiness among the samurai is often conveyed in a somewhat less lofty manner, and the effect is to show the samurai more as an unthinking automaton than as a man whose superior spiritual power serves to "go beyond cutting." Perhaps the best way to supplement the picture of samurai behavior in *Shōgun* is to consider the ideal of *sincerity* in samurai tradition: whereas "heart" in *Shōgun* seems to mean simply "not using the head," a more positive understanding of the term may be found in Ivan Morris' *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (1975).

According to Morris, "sincerity" (*makoto*) is the "cardinal quality of the Japanese hero" and is characterized by "purity of motive," manifested as a certain innocence, even foolhardiness, and a general contempt for practical or material concerns. Equally important, "sincerity" and its stress on an individual's intuitive moral sense could often work *against* the ideal of loyalty, should one's overlord act immorally. It is no surprise, then, that the concept of *makoto* was used as often as not as an excuse for rebellion, or at least protest, against the status quo. Readers of Morris' book will find a provocative account of the ways in which this ideal could lead samurai as often to extreme disobedience as to extreme loyalty.

But whether we interpret "heart" as a reliance on blind intuition or as a commitment to selfless idealism, we are left asking, where is the "head" in samurai tradition? This question is left largely unanswered not only in *Shōgun*, but also in much of the more romantic and idealistic writing about the samurai. Was there no place in the "way of the warrior" for careful thinking, for pragmatic concerns, and for long-range planning? The answer is yes, indeed there was, and it provides a major, if not very glamorous, element in the history of the samurai class.

In *Shōgun*, for example, we are given few glimpses of what was the everyday function of upper samurai in the medieval period, the management of landed estates. True, military responsibilities were heavy, particularly in a year of large campaigns such as 1600, but on the whole samurai were less accustomed to lopping off heads than to negotiating with peasants for the proper tax yield, supervising the construction and repair of castles, and sitting on committees for the administration of justice. Competent daimyo had to be as expert in matters of flood control, road repair, and personnel management as in the appreciation of tea bowls or the technique of seppuku.

From the viewpoint of an institutional historian, the most important thing about the era of *Shōgun* is the transition of the samurai from a landed warrior to a stipended bureaucrat. This transformation was gradual and would continue throughout the Tokugawa period, but it had its start in the consolidation of large domains in the late sixteenth century and in the assembly of the samurai class in the new castle towns of the daimyo. Not unexpectedly, this process was reflected in an official emphasis on typically bureaucratic standards of performance. Medieval family instructions had long stressed the importance of prudence, frugality, neat appearance, and scrupulous performance of one's assigned duty. But it was only during the Tokugawa period that there evolved, under Confucian influence, a virtual ideology of bureaucratism, stressing measurable and efficient performance in matters of practical administration. In such circumstances, a good pragmatic "head" was in the long run to prove more valuable to the samurai than "heart" or "sincerity."

Life versus Death

Much is made in *Shōgun* of the samurai as one who can face death with complete equanimity. This is indeed a central theme within the historical tradition of the samurai, although it should be emphasized at the outset that Clavell clearly departs from the historical ideal when he characterizes the samurai as a "death-seeking warrior" (p. 48). We see this in practice, for example, when Buntaro is ordered to cease his preparations for seppuku and thereby "cast himself back into the abyss of life" (p. 397), or in the query of Yabu's death poem, "What is life but an escape from death?" (p. 1188). While such an exaggeration may help dramatize Clavell's personal message about facing death (see Chapters 2 and 8), it has little basis in Japanese history. Indeed, the historian presented with such a characterization feels compelled to stress that the Japanese are fundamentally a life-affirming people and that the ideal of the samurai was to face death not with yearning, but with *indifference*.

The more appropriate emphasis, and one which finds ample expression in *Shōgun*, is that for a samurai *honor* was more important than life. This is a common idea among many traditional military elites, but there is little doubt that it was practiced with particular rigor by the Japanese samurai. Persuasive evidence is to be found in the accounts of European visitors to Japan in the era of *Shōgun*, who stress time and again the samurai attachment to honor and consequent fearlessness of death. Francis Xavier observed that the Japanese "are much concerned with their honor, which they prize above all else," while the Italian traveller Francesco Carletti asserted bluntly that "there is no nation in the world which fears death less." While some such reports were undoubtedly

exaggerated for the benefit of European readers, the emphasis is so consistent as to leave little doubt that samurai preference for death over dishonor was an impressive reality at the time.

One extreme dishonor for a samurai was capture by the enemy, as Mariko instructs Blackthorne:

A samurai cannot be captured and remain samurai. That's the worst dishonor—to be captured by an enemy—so my husband is doing what a *man*, a samurai, must do. A samurai dies with dignity. For what is life to a samurai? Nothing at all. All life is suffering, *neh*? It is his right and *duty* to die with honor, before witnesses (p. 394).

Although the historian might wish to tone down the *machismo* in Mariko's emphasis on "man" (in Japan, the same would be expected of a samurai woman) and the rather nihilistic stress on life as "nothing at all," the passage is basically valid as a description of the historical samurai. Suicide as a way of avoiding capture probably originated in the fear of torture, but it did in fact become standard practice.

If anything, *Shōgun* underemphasizes the specific practice of seppuku, or ritual suicide by disembowelment (known more commonly in the West by the less elegant term "harakiri"). The act is described once in detail (pp. 568-9), but is in no way sensationalized. On the whole, Clavell seems more interested in the psychology leading up to suicide than in the act itself, particularly in the detailed descriptions of aborted seppuku on three separate occasions, first by Buntaro (pp. 393-7), then by Blackthorne (pp. 509-14), and finally by Mariko (pp. 1044-50).

The readers of *Shōgun* are thus spared any excessive contemplation of the blunt physical reality of self-destruction by means of slicing open the abdomen and spilling out the intestines. The careful reader will even note that Blackthorne's "near-seppuku" would not actually have been seppuku, since his blade was aimed at his heart and not his bowels (p. 512). This disparity helps explain one important element in the origins of seppuku, the conception that the bowels (in Japanese, *hara*) serve as the place of the spirit—the role of the heart in Western belief—and that death by disembowelment was thus a way of displaying one's soul for all to see that it was clean and pure. Hence, as Mariko stressed, the importance of dying before witnesses.

But beyond this rather abstract explanation of the symbolic meaning of seppuku, we really know very little about the history and psychological structure of what is after all a very bizarre custom. The practice of ritual suicide in any form is fairly rare in human history; when found, it is usually a form of sacrifice of servants on the death of a ruler or of the wife on the death of a husband (as in

the Hindu custom of suttee). One Japanese anthropologist, breaking an apparent taboo on the scholarly investigation of seppuku, has recently proposed that the practice may in fact represent a form of sacrifice, specifically the offering of the entrails of captured prey to the gods, a ritual widely practiced in hunting cultures. Whatever its primitive meaning, seppuku first appeared in the tenth or eleventh century among the Minamoto warriors of northeast Japan, members of a strongly hunting-oriented clan. After the Genpei War, the practice then spread to the samurai class as a whole, probably encouraged by glorified depictions of seppuku in medieval war tales. (For a particularly awesome example, see the description of the death of Satō Tadanobu in the fifteenth-century chronicle *Yoshitsune*, translated into English by Helen McCullough.)

In actual practice, seppuku tended with time to become more and more a matter of formality, with the cutting of the abdomen abbreviated or even eliminated, and death coming with decapitation by the second (in the manner denigrated by Hirasaki Kenko just before his more traditional form of seppuku in *Shōgun*, p. 568). This was particularly true during the Tokugawa period, when seppuku became essentially a form of execution reserved for members of the samurai class. Yet the fact remains that the practice survived for many centuries, and Western eyewitness accounts from the nineteenth century confirm that samurai were indeed able to disembowel themselves without flinching. Seppuku survived as a tradition in the modern military class and was given a spectacular revival in the rigorously traditional suicide performed by the writer Mishima Yukio in 1970.

Given its uniqueness and long survival in practice, seppuku perhaps deserves closer attention by scholars of Japan. One line of inquiry has been proposed by Ivan Morris in his suggestion that seppuku may involve “the transformation of a sadistic fantasy into a masochistic one” (*The Nobility of Failure*, p. 367). This would certainly provide logical consistency to the behavior of the sadistic Yabu, whose suicide is described by Omi as “the best I have ever seen The two cuts, then a third in the throat. Without assistance and without a sound” (pp. 1184-5).

The Formulation of Bushido

In the era of *Shōgun*, the “code of the warrior” was largely a matter of unwritten rules about which all samurai tended to agree, whether or not they adhered to them in detail. Constant warfare meant that bravery, loyalty, and an ability to face death coolly were fairly basic to survival. Likewise, the absence of warfare during the long Tokugawa peace after 1615 created a need to shore up the ideals of the samurai class against perceived erosion. The result was

a variety of articulate and often impassioned writings about the “way of the samurai,” which came eventually (mostly in the twentieth century) to be known as “Bushido.” Precisely because of their polemical quality, these versions of the samurai “code” tended to be even more rigid and extreme than earlier practice had been and did much to widen the gap between the ideal and the reality of the samurai class.

Among the writers on Bushido, there were differences of emphasis. Yamaga Sokō (1622-85), who is often known as the “father of Bushido,” was a *rōnin* anxious to prove himself and worked hard at the military arts. His primary intellectual bent, however, was Confucian, as reflected in his stress upon the importance of decorous moral behavior among samurai. He placed particular emphasis on the hierarchical relationships prescribed in Neo-Confucianism, not only that of samurai to lord, but also of child to father, wife to husband, and younger to older brother. He justified the samurai’s lack of any obvious productive function (a lack which was especially conspicuous in peacetime) on the grounds that a true warrior should be engaged in full-time practice of the moral “Way” and thereby serve as a model of behavior for the rest of society.

Rather different in tone is a work which in modern times has come to be widely known as the most uncompromisingly pure tract on samurai behavior, the collection of thoughts and anecdotes entitled *Hagakure* (now available in a new translation by William Scott Wilson). This work was compiled from 1710 to 1716 from conversations with an aging samurai named Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1645-1716) of the Nabeshima clan in Saga (Kyushu). *Hagakure* is less a systematic philosophy than a collection of random thoughts, and it is best known for its forceful opening lines: “The Way of the Samurai is found in death. When it comes to either/or, there is only the quick choice of death. It is not particularly difficult.” It is here that we get about as close as history will permit to the idea of death found in *Shōgun*; but note that even in *Hagakure*, death is not something to be actively sought out: at best, it is a matter of flirtation. *Hagakure*, although known in traditional times only in the secret circles of Saga warriors, has acquired a devout following in the modern period, both among the military and most recently in the person of Mishima Yukio, who wrote a book-length commentary on it (translated into English by Kathryn Sparling as *The Way of the Samurai*).

Through other less extreme and more popular attempts to rationalize the existence of the samurai class in an era of peace, the values of this military elite gradually spread throughout Japanese society as a whole. This is in distinct contrast to the West, where older aristocratic values were *rejected* by the rising middle class. One milestone

in the popularization of samurai values was the glorification of the story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin, a group of samurai who in 1703 avenged the death of their lord for an alleged insult and died by seppuku as a result. Through the influence of various dramatic and literary re-creations, particularly the play *Chūshingura*, the commoner class of Japan came to internalize the ideal forms of samurai behavior.

The greatest relevance of samurai values for the historian lies in precisely the fact that they did spread, in varied dress, to other classes, and thereby managed to survive the sudden demise of the samurai class itself in the few years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Indeed, it was probably the very diffusion of samurai-like values that best explains the ease with which the class itself was eliminated. In a rough sense, Japan became a nation of samurai, so that all the traditional *bushi* dilemmas of loyalty versus ambition, heart versus head, and life versus death are still with many Japanese today.

11 Consorts and Courtesans: The Women of *Shōgun*

Henry Smith



(Note: This chapter relies heavily on ideas and information provided by Chieko Mulhern, Final responsibility for facts and interpretations remains with the author. H.S.)

From an historian's point of view, the depiction of Japanese women in *Shōgun* has a panoramic quality. The author draws details and images from a millennium of history, ranging from the world of the Heian court in the tenth century to the Edo pleasure quarters of the seventeenth century and even to the bars and cabarets of contemporary Japan. From a literary point of view, such a telescoped portrayal is effective, since it increases the diversity and complexity of the female characters and their attitudes. But it is also of use to draw the telescope out to its full length again, in order to appreciate a few of the ways in which the role and status of women have changed over the course of Japanese history.

“In the Beginning, Woman Was the Sun”

These words, which became the rallying cry of the modern Japanese women's movement when they appeared as the motto of the new magazine *Seitō* (Bluestockings) in September 1911, call attention to the prominent role of women in the mythical origins of

Japanese history. The image of the woman as sun is a direct reference to Amaterasu, the sun goddess and progenitor of the Japanese imperial line and, by extension, of the Japanese nation itself. The importance of this role is symbolized by the tale of the darkening of the world when Amaterasu shut herself up in a cave and so alarmed the assembled multitude of gods that they staged a dance to lure her forth. It was also a goddess who was chosen to perform the dance and who, in a manner expressive of early Japanese attitudes toward sexuality, “became divinely possessed, exposed her breasts, and pushed her skirt-band down to her genitals.” Here we find the prototype of the shamaness figure so important in this early age.

This mythic power of woman extended into historical times in the frequent mention of female political rulers. The earliest historical account of Japan, a Chinese record of A.D. 239, describes the country as ruled by a shamaness-queen “Pimiko,” and, according to imperial chronology, Japan was ruled by an empress for fully half the period from 592 to 770, in eight separate reigns. In a turning point in the transformation of woman from “sun” to “moon,” however, the tradition of female rulers was terminated in the wake of a scandalous involvement of Empress Shōtoku with a handsome Buddhist monk whom she attempted to promote to political power. Of the ensuing seventy-six emperors of Japan, only two were women and neither had any real political influence, although one may be of interest to the readers of *Shōgun*: Empress Meishō (r. 1629-43), the first ruling empress in almost one thousand years, was the granddaughter of the second shogun Hidetada and his wife Ogō (Sudara and Genjiko in the novel).

The eclipse of female imperial leadership by no means presaged the end of women as a leading force in Japanese history, however, for the talented court ladies of the tenth and eleventh centuries emerged to play a preeminent cultural role. Required to be of good birth, skilled at literature, and ready with wit, the ladies of the Heian court produced an impressive amount of literature, including the great classical novel *The Tale of Genji* (c. A.D. 1000). Yet in terms of political and economic power, women were at a clear disadvantage. The legal codes of the period, based on Confucian models, relegated women to a distinctly inferior status. But perhaps because of the lingering influence of earlier matriarchy, the codes were not always followed, and women could, for example, own and inherit property, although they were almost always at the mercy of men for the actual management of their estates.

The Samurai Patriarchy

The replacement of the court aristocracy by the rising samurai class as Japan’s ruling elite in the late twelfth century had

contradictory implications for women’s rights: advantageous in the short run but detrimental in the long run. Probably as a reflection of the highly unsettled social situation in the early Kamakura period (1185-1333), women of the samurai class enjoyed a substantial degree of personal and legal freedom, greater than that of the Heian court ladies. They could inherit and bequeath property and in some cases actually managed their own estates. Adultery was not treated as harshly as it would be later, and women could even petition for divorce. When Mariko claims, in an important statement about women in *Shōgun*, that “We own wealth and property, our bodies and our spirits. We have tremendous powers if we wish” (p. 368), she could be referring only to an era about four centuries earlier than her own.

By the fifteenth century, the position of women was clearly in decline, completing the shift from the mythic woman-as-sun to the role of woman-as-moon against which twentieth-century feminists were at last to rebel. Samurai men, too busy with politics to indulge in the leisurely game of Heian courtship, were concerned above all with a verifiable line of succession. Marriages became in medieval Japan what they were in medieval Europe, political alliances of families under total patriarchal control. Polygamy continued to be the accepted practice for men, although the Chinese legal precedent of a single main wife and all the rest “consorts” came to be more strictly enforced than in the Heian court. But for women, monogamy was the ironclad rule and, by the *Shōgun* era, female chastity was regarded as a matter of life and death, so that, in his involvement with Mariko, Blackthorne was courting mortal danger, as well as moral condemnation by his Protestant conscience. Samurai law made no distinction between rape and love affair or between contemplation and consummation, nor did it allow for mitigating circumstances. As Mariko warns Blackthorne (p. 367), a husband indeed had the right and even the obligation to kill his unfaithful wife and her male partner, although to do so he needed the consent of his relatives.

Much further from historical reality, however, is Mariko’s simultaneous claim that “We may leave our husbands if we wish, divorce them” (p. 368). It is true that women of all classes could effectively divorce their husbands by seeking refuge in nunneries (known as “dash-in temples”). And since so many failed to escape the hot pursuit of husbands, the rules were eased to the point that a sandal thrown within the temple precinct was deemed sufficient to ensure a woman legal sanctuary! But because a woman had to become a nun and remain in the nunnery for at least three years, the “dash-in temples” were a last and desperate resort. In addition, a number of clans refused to recognize these temples as legal sanctuary, and there

are hardly any known cases of samurai women winning divorces in the era of *Shōgun*.

In sad fact, the situation of marriage and divorce was precisely opposite from Mariko's explanation. Far from being free to determine such matters, many hapless ladies were married, divorced, torn from their children, and remarried at the whim and convenience of their fathers, brothers, and even overlords. One of the most pathetic examples was the Taikō's own sister Asahi (mentioned but unnamed in *Shōgun*, pp. 454, 657), who was first married to a peasant, widowed, married again to a samurai, and in her forties finally reclaimed by her brother to become the reluctant Ieyasu's main wife and a virtual hostage. Sudden divorce continued to be a constant threat to the Japanese wife throughout the Tokugawa period, when what was commonly known as a 'three-and-a-half line letter,' addressed to a woman's father or former guardian, constituted legal grounds for turning her out of the house overnight. The husband could choose from a long list of widely accepted reasons for divorce, including infertility, unfiliality toward in-laws, and—believe it or not—overindulgence in the drinking of tea.

So also Mariko's boast that "We own our own wealth and property" (p. 368), while true to a degree for the Kamakura period, was in historical fact a distant memory by the year 1600. Even daimyo did not technically "own" the land within their fief, but instead merely derived income from it, so that they were neither able nor expected to make gifts of land as dowries. Although a very few high-ranking women were given their own incomes—Ieyasu, for example, provided a stipend for the Taikō's widow ("Yodoko" in *Shōgun*)—most women owned nothing in their own names, so that Mariko's offer to Blackthorne of funds from her "personal estate" to build his ship (p. 1179) would only have been possible much earlier (or much later, in the modern era).

And finally what of Mariko's assertion that "We can go freely where we please, when we please" (p. 368)? It is true that Western observers around 1600, particularly those from southern Europe, where unmarried women were vigilantly guarded from public exposure, were appalled by the sight of Japanese women walking freely outside and enjoying flower-viewing parties in public. But these were commoner women, and ladies of the samurai class were no freer than the Catholic maidens. Hosokawa Gracia's confinement at home for the last sixteen years of her life (see Chapter 7) was far from an aberrant case, for daimyo wives were rarely allowed to leave their homes. Common to the codes of nearly all the clans were prohibitions against samurai women going out-of-doors, receiving male visitors, or even attending religious services without their menfolk. In all likelihood, the average daimyo never saw the female

family members of his friends or even his vassals. One daimyo's 20,000-*koku* estate was confiscated and his line abolished by Ieyasu for having looked into a lady's palanquin on the street, so that in real history Ishido would have been resorting to a desperate measure when he insisted on raising the curtain of the palanquin bearing the disguised Toranaga (p. 359).

But apart from Mariko's remarkable independence of mind and movement, the sense of samurai women conveyed in *Shōgun* is quite close to historical reality in suggesting their generally subordinate place in society. One character who is, if anything, extreme in this respect is Fujiko, whose self-abnegation and masochistic urge to obey make her almost a caricature of the reality. Mariko counsels Blackthorne to treat Fujiko, if he wishes, "as nothing—as this wooden post or the shoji screen, or as a rock in your garden—anything you wish If you won't have her as consort, be merciful. Accept her and then, as head of the house, according to our law, kill her" (p. 498). Well, samurai law was certainly harsh with women, but not quite *that* extreme. The head of the house could kill a wife or consort only for adultery; any other offense would mean simple divorce. But Fujiko's position is of course exceptional; she seems to have no immediate family to defend her, and being the consort of a foreigner was certainly no ordinary position.

One must not forget, of course, that samurai women comprised only a tiny percentage of Japanese female society. We have very little information about the lives and rights of the commoner women, who accounted for the great majority, and can only assume that things were not much better for them. Yet there did remain a few specialized roles for women which offered them a bit more than the ordinary amount of freedom. As nuns, for example, thousands of Japanese women dedicated their lives to charitable works, religious training, and writing. Still another professional niche for women was that of the wet nurse (called "foster mother" in *Shōgun*, p. 577), who was often relied upon for the upbringing of a samurai. Most famous of these was Kasuga, the wet nurse of the third Tokugawa shogun Iemitsu (son of Sudara and Genjiko in the novel). It was in fact her own political maneuvering that led to the choice of her "milk son" as shogunal heir.

Mediators and Survivors

In spite of their legal situation, a few women were able to exert personal influence in the era of *Shōgun*, and some famous examples appear in the pages of Clavell's novel. Readers with a preconceived view of Japanese male-female relations as wholly "feudal"—a view for which the Tokugawa period offers plentiful evidence—may be tempted to discount as a Western male fantasy the relatively

positive image of women in *Shōgun*. But in the far more unsettled and mobile society of the Momoyama period depicted in *Shōgun*, opportunities for women to wield political power did indeed occasionally present themselves. It is true that, by the sixteenth century, high-ranking samurai women rarely engaged in battle alongside their men as they had sometimes done in earlier feudal times (as did, for example, the famed female warrior Tomoe, the consort of a Minamoto leader of the twelfth century who became the protagonist of a Nō play bearing her name). But even in less physically active roles, women in the time of *Shōgun* still won fame for their political, if no longer their military, achievements. Four such historical personalities appear in *Shōgun* in relatively minor roles, and readers may be interested in knowing more about their real-life models.

Next to Mariko, the most endearing female character in *Shōgun* is surely Kiritsubo-noh-Toshiko, affectionately known as “Kiri” (p. 222). Her model is Acha-no-Tsubone (1555-1637), a consort who came to enjoy Ieyasu’s confidence and often served as his political mediator and adviser during his rise to shogun. Married young to a middle-ranking samurai, she was widowed at the age of twenty-two and entered Ieyasu’s service two years later, in 1579. She gradually came to win Ieyasu’s trust and affection, and even accompanied him on his military campaigns. Kiri’s role in *Shōgun* as Toranaga’s spy and contact within Osaka Castle was doubtless inspired by the key part played by Acha in negotiating the truce following the winter siege of Osaka Castle in 1614-15. She persuaded the Toyotomi forces to agree to some tricky terms regarding the disposition of the outer moat; Ieyasu promptly misapplied the treaty to fill the inner moat as well, turning the castle into a sitting duck for his troops. The final annihilation of the Heir and his mother the following summer thus owed much to Acha’s diplomatic efforts. Considering that Ieyasu had two wives, fifteen consorts, nineteen children, and no shortage of competent male vassals, Acha must have been an exceptional woman to earn so much trust from one of the most cautious men in Japanese history. Her career thus demonstrates that women *could* achieve positions of considerable influence, and a number of other such cases are known among the wives and consorts of leading daimyo.

A rather different course was the one followed by the Taikō’s wife Nene (1541-1624), who appears in *Shōgun* as “Yodoko.” The daughter of a footsoldier, she was married to Hideyoshi in 1561 when he was little more than a footsoldier himself, and she remained until his death his only wife and trusted confidante. Hideyoshi valued her opinion highly and treated her with the utmost respect, even though for consorts he preferred women of blue blood (in

contrast to Ieyasu, all of whose women after his first wife under-ranked him). In *Shōgun*, Yodoko mercifully dies before the tragic fall of the Toyotomi, but in real life Nene proved to be a pertinacious survivor. Known after 1585 by the title Kita-no-Mandokoro and after the Taikō’s death in 1598 by her nun’s name of Kōdaiin, by 1614 she was living safely distant from Osaka Castle and circumspcctly avoided lifting a finger to save the lives of the Heir and his mother. As if to assure her future silence, Ieyasu had earlier built the temple of Kōdaiji for her retirement in Kyoto. She lived into the reign of the third Tokugawa shogun, enjoying her court title of Junior First Rank.

But by far the most renowned of all the historical models for the women in *Shōgun*—with the possible exception of Mariko’s counterpart Hosokawa Gracia—was the Heir’s mother (“Lady Ochiba”). Born in 1567 and given the personal name of Chacha, she was known as one of the most beautiful women in Japan and, as Hideyoshi’s favorite consort, came to be addressed as Yodo-dono (the Lady of Yodo, after the castle which Hideyoshi built for her). If Gracia was a romantic heroine victimized by circumstances beyond her control, Yodo more closely resembled a Greek figure whose fall is brought on by her own tragic flaw. A haughty and willful woman with a tendency to act impulsively, Yodo’s prestigious connections made her many enemies: as Nobunaga’s niece, she was coveted by a number of ambitious warlords; as the Taikō’s favorite, she was envied by many; as a sister-in-law of Ieyasu’s heir, she was feared and suspected by Ieyasu himself; and as the mother of Hideyoshi’s heir, she was both placated and manipulated by the Toyotomi loyalists. Even while alive, she suffered many malicious rumors about the parentage of the heir Hideyori, whose elegant good looks were in disconcerting contrast to the simian features of the Taikō. (The suspected father was not Ishido-as-Ishida, as intimated in *Shōgun*, but rather Ōno Harunaga, who led the Osaka forces in 1614-15 and acted as Yodo’s second at her suicide.) Even after her death, she continued in disrepute and came to be known in Edo-period chronicles as “Yodo-gimi”—“*gimi*” commonly denoting a low-ranking lady of the night.

Considerably less flamboyant than Yodo was her younger sister Ogō, the “Genjiko” of *Shōgun*, who was more the survivor type, managing to advance in position in spite of a long string of personal disasters. Orphaned by the age of ten, she was married off to a minor lord at twelve at the order of Hideyoshi. But after a few years of apparently contented marriage, she was ordered divorced by the Taikō and remarried to his own nephew. This new husband was soon killed in the Korea campaign, and Ogō, now twenty-three, was once again married off at the Taikō’s command to Ieyasu’s

seventeen-year-old heir Hidetada (*Shōgun*'s Sudara). This strange match at last brought stability and even some distinction to the long-suffering Ogō, who was to be the only main wife of a Tokugawa shogun to give birth to a future shogun: all the rest were the issue of consorts. Her several other children also made distinguished matches, one daughter marrying the Taikō's heir and another the reigning emperor.

Is "Love" a Barbarian Word?

In an important passage in which Mariko is instructing the bewildered Blackthorne about the customs of Japan, she turns to the topic of love:

"Love is a Christian word, Anjin-san. Love is a Christian thought, a Christian ideal. We have no word for love' as I understand you to mean it. Duty, loyalty, honor, respect, desire, those words and thoughts are what we have, all that we need." (p. 370)

Well, it all depends on what Mariko has in mind when she speaks of "Christian love." Often, she seems simply to mean love of the garden-variety type featuring affection, desire, and a longing to be together. So it is when, three hundred pages later, she is offered the prospect of a divorce from Buntaro: "Oh to be free, her spirit sang. Oh, Madonna, to be free!"—but "Remember who you are, Mariko, remember what you are. And remember that 'love' is a barbarian word" (p. 670).

If all Mariko means is spontaneous affection, as she seems to, then she is dead wrong, for simple love was one of the most ancient of themes in Japanese literature and could be expressed with a rich vocabulary: the Japanese "have no word for love" only in the sense that they have many, many words for love. Nor should the unsuspecting reader be lulled into thinking that the Japanese in 1600, or at any other time in their history, were incapable of falling in love without instruction from abroad.

Still, if we permit the author his due in dramatizing by exaggeration, we find that, from the historian's point of view, Mariko may be suggesting some interesting differences between Japan and the West in the evolution of the *ideal* of "love." The Japanese side of the story would probably begin with what is conventionally known as "the oldest poem in Japanese," quoted for us by Mariko on page 603 of *Shōgun*: "Eight cumulus arise / For the lovers to hide within . . ." Mariko uses the poem to illustrate the psychological need of the Japanese for an "Eightfold Fence" to mask the emotions, but the original emphasis of the poem is rather on the secluded passion of two newlyweds. From the same period comes the greatest

repository of early Japanese love poetry, the *Man'yōshū*, an eighth-century anthology which includes some of the most expressive and intense love songs in world literature.

In the following Heian period, love remained central to Japanese literature, as seen in the novels and diaries of the ladies of the Heian court. The common theme of all these writings was the relationship between the sexes; *The Tale of Genji*, for example, details three generations of courtship and seduction, yet related with exquisite refinement and scarcely a hint of erotic interest. Already one can detect the dampening effect of Buddhism. Although not in general as "sex-negative" a religion as Christianity, neither is Buddhism, which views *all* human passions as futile and fleeting, particularly sex-positive. We might hypothesize that such pessimism about this-worldly attachments, which became a central motif in medieval literature, worked in the long run to diminish the preoccupation with romantic love in Japanese elite culture.

So also the rise of the samurai class and its concern with duty, loyalty, and the subjugation of personal emotions may help explain the decline in the status of love in medieval Japan. Still, as the most basic of human emotions, love continued to appear as a common theme in the military epics and popular stories of the time. But for the samurai class itself, it seems fair to say that romantic love was not a central cultural concern.

It is here we find an interesting contrast with the West. In many respects, feudal Europe was quite similar to feudal Japan. But just at the time that a cult of courtship was on the wane in Japan, a similar tradition was emerging in Europe. Somehow, for reasons which are still hotly debated among historians, there appeared in late eleventh-century France the curious literary phenomenon of "courtly love," which was to have a profound and lasting influence on Western notions of romantic love. Perhaps this is what Mariko had in mind when she referred to "Christian love," since courtly love was in fact strongly bound up with Christianity (one theory connecting it to the worship of the Virgin Mary). One can doubtless find within the Japanese literary tradition certain themes and forms which approximate the structure of "courtly love," but never did it become as pervasive an influence as in Europe.

"We're Taught to Be Ashamed . . ."

At one point in his initiation into Japanese sexuality, Blackthorne feels obliged to apologize to the courtesan Kiku:

"We're taught to be ashamed of our bodies and pillowing and nakedness and . . . and all sorts of stupidities. It's only being here that's made me realize it. Now that I'm a little civilized I know better." (p. 696)

Once again, *Shōgun* presents us with a clear-cut contrast between the two cultures. The Japanese see the body and its sexual functions as “so simple” and “natural,” pleasant but nothing to get steamed up about, while the West—as personified by Blackthorne—is ridden with guilt and shame about such matters. This is doubtless a complex issue, but here as elsewhere it may help to point out a few ways in which the historical contrast is not quite as stark as *Shōgun* might have us believe.

First, some historians would stress that the sexual attitudes ascribed to Blackthorne are anachronistic for the year 1600 and reflect instead nineteenth-century Victorian views. Secondly, as one recent critic has suggested, the Western “repression” of sex may be of less historical importance than the “great sexual sermon,” chastising ourselves for all that repression (with Clavell, one might add, as one of its most eloquent preachers), which has swept over the West in recent decades (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 7). In other words, what is important is not so much the content of Clavell’s sermon as the question of why he should be so worked up over the matter at all.

Third, on the specific issue of nudity: the idea that “they don’t notice nakedness and that’s totally sensible. You’re in Japan” (p. 455) is correct in the sense that there are few moral or religious proscriptions against nudity among the Japanese. But as a matter of social decorum, the Japanese traditionally have been among the most discreet people in world history when it comes to the unclothed body. In the historical era of *Shōgun*, notwithstanding the fantasy of a nude Mariko slipping nonchalantly into the bath with an agog Blackthorne (to be re-enacted by Shimada Yōko for the delight of overseas viewers of the feature film version of *Shōgun*, but—thanks to good old Victorian prudery!—not in the American TV series), Japanese rarely entered the bath without a loincloth for men and an underskirt for women. Even in the erotic art of the Tokugawa period, when mixed bathing became popular among the lower classes, lovers are inevitably shown heavily clothed, with only the (greatly magnified) genital union exposed. In striking contrast to the West, the Japanese have virtually no tradition of the depiction of the nude in art. So, although not ashamed of nudity, neither did the traditional Japanese ever find it especially proper.

The Willow World

Although prostitution, as “the world’s oldest profession,” was common in Japan long before the era of *Shōgun*, it was precisely in these years that it became highly organized, with the establishment of officially licensed pleasure quarters. The unification of Japan in the late sixteenth century involved the concentration of large and

disproportionately male populations in the mushrooming castle towns of the daimyo, and the feudal authorities viewed the inevitable rise in the demand for prostitution as something to be tolerated—but segregated. The first such legal district was the Shinchi area of Osaka, recognized by Hideyoshi in 1585. Then in 1589 a patent was issued to two *rōnin* for a similar operation in the Shimabara quarter of Kyoto. The famed Yoshiwara of Edo, which the colorful Gyoko of *Shōgun* envisions as her pet project (p. 1180), was in fact created in 1616 by a samurai named Shōji with permission from the Tokugawa shogunate. The only detail really at odds with history in the *Shōgun* version is the sex of the proprietor: all of the traditional Japanese pleasure quarters were founded, owned, and operated by men, originally samurai, and the image of Gyoko as a rough-and-tumble, foul-mouthed “Mama-san” is straight out of the GI bars and cabarets of Occupied Japan.

Within these licensed pleasure quarters, particularly in the three great cities of Kyoto, Osaka, and Edo, the type of courtesan known as the “geisha” (literally, “a person of artistic accomplishment”) emerged. This “Willow World” was a strange realm of fantasy and play, in which self-conscious efforts were made to imitate the aristocratic game of courtship as depicted in *The Tale of Genji*. Courtesans were ranked like Heian ladies, and each was called by a professional name chosen from a list of *Genji* characters. Wealthy customers were entertained with such courtly pursuits as poetry contests, incense-guessing games, and mock weddings. Yet beneath all the ritual play lay the simple fact of prostitution, for the Willow World was in the end a world for satisfying male lust. But it was satisfaction in style, and men competed with each other in making sexual activity a matter of technical virtuosity. Mariko’s insistence to Blackthorne that “giving pleasure to the woman is equally the man’s duty” (p. 554) may seem enlightened, but in fact giving pleasure to the woman was considered an entertaining challenge in the Willow World, certainly not a duty.

Some of the flowery vocabulary used in *Shōgun* in matters of sex may sound quaint, but it is a good reflection of a rich and ancient Chinese tradition of literature about sex, a tradition which was perpetuated in Tokugawa Japan. The very term “Willow World” (*karyūkai* in Japanese) was taken from an ancient Chinese poem, as was the expression “Clouds and Rain” (p. 693), which was first used in a Chinese text of the third century B.C. and became the standard Chinese literary expression for the sexual act. Under the influence of Taoism and Yin-Yang theory, the Chinese from an early date evolved systematic and detailed sex manuals. The oldest surviving version of these is preserved, interestingly enough, in Japan, as a chapter on “The Bedchamber” in a medical text of the Heian

period (*Ishinhō*, A.D. 984). Here one can find, for example, the “classic ‘six shallow and five deep’ rhythm” (p. 811, actually “one deep and nine shallows” in the classic version) and the elaborate variety of coital positions of the sort found in Mariko’s “pillow book” (p. 898), many with poetically exotic names. The sexual vocabulary of *Shōgun* follows this model, although the actual sources are diverse: some terms are authentically Chinese (“Jade Gate,” p. 657), most are Clavellian (“Steaming Shafts,” p. 706, or “Pellucid Pestle,” p. 810), and only one is indigenously Japanese, the “Heavenly Spear” (p. 50) being the phallic instrument which in the mythical accounts gave birth to the Japanese islands themselves. The ingenious sexual devices which Kiku displays for the astonished Blackthorne (pp. 694-5) are also essentially Chinese in origin (although the Chinese themselves preferred to insist that all such mechanical aids were of barbarian origin!), but came to be used as well within the pleasure quarters of Tokugawa Japan. As for “*harigata*” (in Japanese, normally *harikata*) or dildos (p. 693), it is very unlikely that a high daimyo lady in the year 1600 would be accustomed to such instruments as Mariko appears to be, but they did come to be used a century later in the shogunal harem by the many women (attendants, maidservants, and even consorts themselves) who were isolated from men on pain of death. In the era of *Shōgun*, available evidence suggests that *harikata* were used primarily for the training of male prostitutes, and perhaps for the use of their customers.

“The Sin That Does Not Bear Mentioning”

In the course of Blackthorne’s painful efforts to shuck off his guilt-ridden attitudes toward sex, probably the most memorable detail is his livid outrage at Mariko’s innocent suggestion that “Perhaps you would prefer a boy?” (p. 330). While his reaction seems implausibly extreme for a hardened sailor, it does reflect the attitudes of many of the more moralistic Western observers of Japan at the time. Although in the same scene Mariko claims knowledge of similar habits among Catholic priests, it was actually the Jesuits who were the most bitter in their denunciations of Japanese homosexual practices. Father Alessandro Valignano, the model for Father dell’Aqua in *Shōgun*, wrote, for example, that the Japanese had a lamentable addiction to sensual vices, but:

Even worse is their great dissipation in the sin that does not bear mentioning. This is regarded so lightly that both the boys and men who consort with them brag and talk about it openly without trying to cover the matter up. This is because the bonzes teach that not only is it not a sin but that it is even something quite natural and virtuous and as such the bonzes to a certain extent reserve this practice for themselves. They are forbidden under

grave penalties by ancient laws and customs to have the use of women and so they find a remedy for their disorderly appetites by preaching this pernicious doctrine to the blind pagans. (Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, p. 46)

Homosexual practices were indeed widespread in the Buddhist priesthood in Japan and often respectable. It is not surprising, therefore, that many customers of the houses of male prostitution which began to spring up precisely in the *Shōgun* era were monks. But of perhaps even greater interest was the spread of homosexual practices within the samurai class itself during those years of constant warfare and consequently long periods of isolation from women. Oda Nobunaga, for example, who sired numerous sons and daughters, was also noted for his fondness for handsome boys, and popular belief has it that he was assassinated by Akechi Mitsuhide because he had promised to reward his favorite page with a fief which happened to belong to Akechi at the time. Many other leading warriors had similar interests, and Mariko is absolutely right in implying that homosexual behavior was never viewed as sinful or improper.

With the establishment of the Tokugawa peace after 1615, organized male prostitution flourished along with its female counterpart, particularly under the reign of the third shogun Iemitsu, whose preference for men was coincidentally much like that of his near-contemporary, James I of England. Iemitsu even jeopardized the continuation of the Tokugawa bloodline with his exclusive interest in males until, persuaded at last by his loyal wet nurse Kasuga to do his duty, he took a wife and, eventually, seven consorts. The shogunate cracked down on male prostitution after Iemitsu’s death in 1651, less from specific disapproval of homosexual practices than from a feeling that any conspicuous indulgence in pleasure was bad for the morale of the samurai class. A period of tolerance and even encouragement then followed during the rule of the eccentric fifth shogun Tsunayoshi (r. 1680-1709), whose homosexual behavior was considered scandalous only because he attempted to promote some of his male favorites into positions of power. It was in Tsunayoshi’s reign that the great writer of fiction of this era, Ihara Saikaku, who had until then devoted himself exclusively to depictions of heterosexual love for a townsman audience, wrote a collection of stories of samurai love entitled *Nanshoku ōkagami* (The Great Mirror of Manly Love, 1687), perhaps in a calculated effort to appeal to a samurai readership.

Although in general homosexual love was merely accepted without censure among the samurai, one does find in certain instances a positive and even idealistic justification of homosexual practice as useful training for a warrior. A homosexual relationship was seen

as a sort of tutorship in Bushido, with the younger lover imitating the older in the cultural and martial arts, much as among the warriors of ancient Sparta. In particular, such relationships were considered invaluable for teaching the virtue of loyalty, and samurai lovers generally proved dependable comrades in battle, loyal vassals, and trustworthy bureaucrats. The text most revealing of this idea is *Hagakure*, an early eighteenth-century collection of reflections on the way of the samurai (see Chapter 10). In one passage, a samurai master “who understood the foundation of homosexuality [*shudō*, ‘the way of young men’]” is asked to summarize his understanding: “It is something both pleasant and unpleasant.” He elaborates:

To lay down one’s life for another is the basic principle of homosexuality. If it is not so, it becomes a matter of shame. However, then you have nothing left to lay down for your master. It is therefore to be understood as something both pleasant and unpleasant. (William Scott Wilson, trans., *Hagakure*, p. 59)

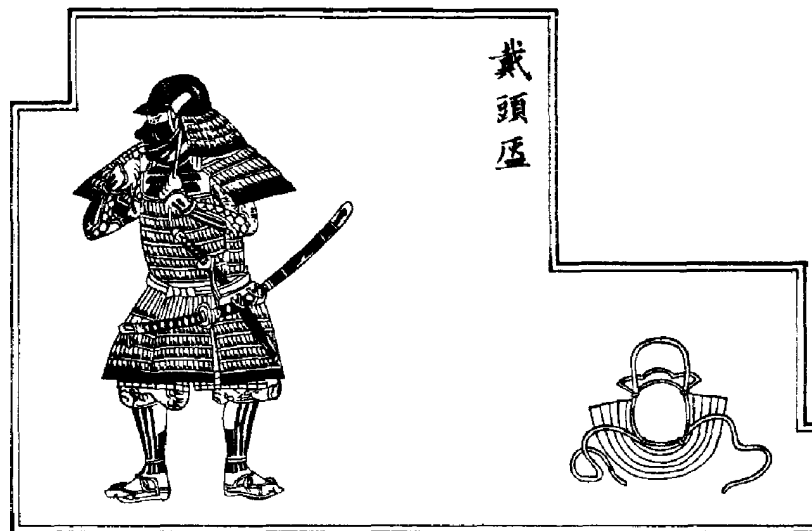
It is interesting that this conception of samurai love for one another corresponds surprisingly well to Mariko’s expositions of the true meaning of love in Japan, as for example:

“Pillowing always has its price. Always. Not necessarily money, Anjin-san. But a man pays for pillowing in one way, or in another. True love, we call it duty, is of soul to soul and needs no such expression—no physical expression, except perhaps the gift of death.” (p. 555)

This idealistic interpretation finds reaffirmation in the views of Mishima Yukio, the modern Japanese novelist who was profoundly influenced by the ideas of *Hagakure* on love and death and who was in the end to die by seppuku with a young man acting as his second. Three years before his death, in a book-length commentary on *Hagakure*, Mishima wrote: “Romantic love as seen by Jōchō [the author of *Hagakure*] is always reinforced by death. One must die for love, and death heightens love’s tension and purity. This is the ideal love for *Hagakure*” (Mishima, *The Way of the Samurai*, trans. Kathryn Sparling, pp. 23-4). In these words we can sense a certain affinity between Mishima Yukio and James Clavell in their common idealization of the samurai tradition for its relevance in modern life. It remains only to stress that scholarship in both Japan and the West has so far provided us with no more than a tentative understanding of the many complex issues in the history of sexual attitudes and behavior in Japan. By insistently raising these issues, *Shōgun* encourages us to ask new questions and seek new answers in the effort to develop a comparative history of human sexuality.

12 Raw Fish and a Hot Bath: Dilemmas of Daily Life

Henry Smith



For visitors to an alien culture, the most pressing dilemmas stem from the mundane mechanics of daily life: eating, dressing, sleeping, washing, and getting about. And so with Blackthorne, who is as perplexed by Japanese customs as by such abstractions as *wa* and *karma*. Here again we can detect an unmistakable sermon by James Clavell, having as its major themes the perils of meat-eating and the virtues of bathing. If life in Southern California is any indicator of current American culture, the message should strike a sympathetic chord with many readers of *Shōgun*. It was here in Santa Barbara, for instance, that the “California hot tub,” a cultural amalgam of the Japanese bath and *Sunset* life-style, was born. And few Californians—or indeed New Yorkers—will have trouble identifying the “slivers of raw fish on balls of tacky rice” in *Shōgun* (p. 150) as the increasingly popular Japanese dish of sushi. So also will the growing band of vegetarians in America find powerful support for their cause in the meatless diet preached by Mariko.

The historian as well finds these cross-cultural dilemmas of daily life intriguing. At one level, they reveal basic differences in religious belief and philosophical outlook among different cultures. At the same time, such matters as diet and hygiene—closely related as they are to population change, patterns of nutrition, and the incidence of disease—are of concern to the social historian. Unfortunately,

the systematic study of such topics is still in its infancy among historians of Japan, and is made especially difficult for the era of *Shōgun* by the widespread destruction of records for that period, in contrast to the relatively rich documentation available for Europe. One unique source of evidence, however, does survive in Europe itself, the detailed and often perceptive accounts of European visitors to Japan at the time. Particularly useful because of their comparative insights, these European accounts (of which a fine cross-section may be found in Michael Cooper's anthology, *They Came to Japan*) were also of evident use to James Clavell in writing *Shōgun*.

The Population Riddle

Diet and hygiene are intimately related to the fundamental question of how many people are being supported by a given amount of resources. It is here that we encounter our first big stumbling block, for we have only the haziest idea of the population of Japan in the year 1600. There are theories, to be sure. The conventional view is voiced by *Shōgun*'s Rodrigues, who, in providing the newcomer Blackthorne with a comparative overview (p. 192), indicates that the population of "twenty-odd million Japmen" amounted to "more than the population of all Portugal, all Spain, all France, the Spanish Netherlands, and England added together, and you could almost throw in the whole Holy Roman Empire as well to equal it." Turning to such a recent work as Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones' *Atlas of World Population History* (1978), we find that the normally bombastic Rodrigues is only slightly exaggerating. For the year 1600, the atlas gives Japan's population as 22 million, and the combined total for the five nations mentioned comes to less than 27 million; only by throwing in the Holy Roman Empire, with a population of 20 million, was he wide of the mark.

Confident of his sources, Rodrigues assures the astonished Blackthorne, "Why should I lie? There was a census ten years ago. Father Alvito said the Taikō ordered it and he should know, he was there." In historical fact, Hideyoshi did indeed order a national survey of both land and people in 1591, but it was never carried out except in scattered domains. Thus we have no official contemporary record of Japan's national population in 1600. The figure of 22 million in McEvedy and Jones' atlas is apparently derived from an estimate made for the period 1572-93 by Japanese historian Yoshida Tōgō in the 1930s; on the basis of official rice production figures in *koku*, Yoshida came up with a national population figure of 18.5 million. But contemporary scholarship has been critical of the questionable assumptions upon which Yoshida based this estimate; a different approach recently tried yielded the much lower figure of 12.3 million for 1600. (For a discussion of the issue, see Susan Hanley and Kozo

Yamamura, *Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan, 1600-1868*, pp. 43-45.)

These conflicting population estimates have important implications for the issue of population *change*. The first national census figure which we have for Japan is 26 million for the commoner population in 1721; if we add ten-odd per cent (a rough guess) for the samurai class, the national total would be in the range of 30 million. Comparing this figure with the traditional estimate for 1600 of approximately 20 million, we see that the population of Japan must have been growing steadily during the seventeenth century. And if we were to accept the revised estimate of about 12 million for 1600, this would indicate an extraordinary pace of growth for a traditional society. Whichever way, Japan's population was clearly expanding in the era of *Shōgun*, a fact corroborated by documented increases in the productivity of agriculture and in the area of land under cultivation.

Even with room for growth in 1600, Japan by European standards was already a very densely settled country. It is doubtful, however, that the Japanese themselves, whose usual standard of comparison would surely have been China, felt uniquely populous. Still, Mariko's statement would basically hold: "We're a frugal people—we have to be, only so little of our land, perhaps a fifth of our soil, can be cultivated—and we're many. With us it's a virtue to be frugal, even in the amount of food we eat" (p. 365). European accounts of the time confirm the frugality of the Japanese, although it should be stressed that among the samurai class this reflected less a sensitivity to limited resources than an ethic of dietary restraint common to many military elites. Only later, especially in the twentieth century, did the Japanese come to have the acute sense of ecological limits implied by Mariko.

Another important dimension of population change in Japan around the year 1600 was the dramatic expansion of the urban sector, thanks to the boom in castle-town building by the daimyo. Indeed, the century 1550-1650 in Japan was one of the most intensive periods of city-building known in world history, and one about which historians still have much to learn. The contrast with Europe is effectively conveyed by Blackthorne's reaction on viewing Osaka from a distance: "I thought London was the biggest city on earth, but compared to Osaka it's a small town" (p. 189). Blackthorne exaggerates, of course, as does Rodrigues in response ("They've got dozens of cities like this one"), but not by much. In every domain of Japan in this era, substantial cities were under construction, many with populations in excess of ten thousand. To man this massive building operation, the various daimyo had to recruit large

numbers of laborers, artisans, and merchants, most of them from the countryside.

Never Meat?

Clavell's nicely drawn contrast of the eating habits of the Western "barbarians" with those of their Japanese hosts in *Shōgun* dramatizes an issue of fascination to the anthropologist and historian alike. On the one hand, we have the Japanese practice, as capsulized by Mariko: "We don't eat foods like you do, so our cooking is more simple. Just rice and a little fish, raw mostly, or cooked over charcoal with a sharp sauce and pickled vegetables, a little soup perhaps. No meat—never meat" (p. 365). And so all of Blackthorne's meals in the novel follow this plain pattern, "a sparse meal, never satisfying and never meat" (p. 531).

On the other hand, we have the European diet, typically described as an orgy of alcohol and cholesterol, best depicted in the scene in which the overindulgent Blackthorne "lay in a semicoma on the floor, retching his innards out." There on the table lay the cause of his misery, "the remains of a mutilated haunch of roast beef, blood rare, half the carcass of a spitted chicken, torn bread and cheese and spilled beer, butter and a dish of cold bacon-fat gravy, and a half-emptied bottle of brandy" (p. 427). Few readers will find this vision of the Western diet an appetizing one, and here we may detect a lecture on the errors of the contemporary West in overreliance on animal fat and alcohol. Indeed, the West already seems anxious to learn the lesson, as evidenced in the clear Oriental influence on French *nouvelle cuisine*, in the vogue for "lightness" which has swept through the American beverage market, and, of course, in the growing popularity of Japanese food in the West.

But let us turn to history to ask, how great *was* the dietary contrast in the year 1600? In the accounts of Western observers at the time, we find persuasive evidence that it was indeed great. Father Valignano (the model for Father dell'Aqua) reported, for example, that "Their victuals and ways of cooking them are such that they are quite unlike European food, both in substance and taste. Until a man accustoms himself to their food, he is bound to experience much hardship and difficulty." As for the content of the diet, Father Luis Frois' description is close to that of Mariko's: "This nation feedeth sparingly, their usual meat is rice and salads, and, near the sea side, fish." (Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, pp. 192-3).

In certain matters of detail, however, the historian might wish to qualify the extremes found in *Shōgun*. On the European side, for example, the gross and unmannered eating habits of Blackthorne and his shipmates seem more a mark of sailors' behavior in a foreign port than of general European barbarism: even the common

people in the West would certainly have been more genteel in their table manners. Still, in matters of etiquette, the Japanese of the time unfailingly impressed even the most cultured European visitors. No contrast was more impressive than the Japanese use of chopsticks, never letting the fingers touch the food, as opposed to the European practice of eating with the fingers.

When it comes to the eating of meat, we learn from French historian Fernand Braudel that European levels of consumption were indeed unique. For the world in general, he points out, "man's diet between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries essentially consisted of vegetable foods," but:

Europe, which was wholly carnivorous, was the great exception to all this. For several centuries from the middle ages its tables had been loaded with meat and drink, worthy of Argentina in the nineteenth century. This was because the European countryside, beyond the Mediterranean shores, had long remained half empty with vast lands for pasturing animals. (*Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*, p. 67)

Braudel goes on to note that meat-eating declined in Europe in the seventeenth century under increasing population pressure and rose to the previous level only with the availability of salted and then frozen meat imports from America. This explanation of European trends helps pinpoint two obvious ecological reasons for the low level of meat consumption in Japan: the relatively high population density since the medieval period and the shortage of land for pasturing animals.

In addition, as Mariko explains when offered a gravy-laden chicken leg by a Portuguese sailor, there were strong cultural constraints as well: "To eat meat—to eat meat is forbidden. It's against the law, and against Buddhism and Shintoism" (p. 426). In reality, however, the situation was not that simple. There were no explicit "laws" against eating meat, but there were religious restrictions. Shinto, the indigenous Japanese religion, did not specifically forbid the eating of meat, although the Shinto abhorrence of blood pollution probably discouraged it. Buddhism, however, clearly banned the eating of meat as a corollary of its general prohibition against the taking of life. Although the avoidance of animal flesh (including fish) was practiced faithfully only by the Buddhist clergy, such beliefs strongly influenced the Heian aristocracy in the form of a taboo against eating any four-legged animals—birds were always a different matter. Kyoto nobles were known to indulge from time to time in venison or wild boar meat for "medicinal purposes," but on the whole the taboo was scrupulously observed.

It was a very different matter with the samurai and indeed with all Japanese outside the tiny court aristocracy at Kyoto. As a hunting

class, the samurai had always consumed their prey and continued to do so in the era of *Shōgun*. Animal flesh was in fact greatly prized by samurai and formed a regular part of their diet when available; some historians have even related the dynamism of the Japanese warrior to a diet rich in animal protein. European reports in the era of *Shōgun* confirm the widespread consumption of wild game in Japan, as for example Don Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco, governor of the Philippines, who visited Edo in 1608 and observed “the market where game is sold: there was a vast quantity of rabbits, hares, wild boars, deer, goats, and other animals, which I never saw before” (Rundall, *Memorials of the Empire of Japan*, p. 176). To this list might be added such delicacies as bear, otter, and raccoon dog.

Don Rodrigo continues with an important qualification: “The Japanese rarely eat any flesh but that of game, which they hunt.” Although horses and oxen were widely (and, in this period, increasingly) used in Japan as beasts of burden, they were rarely eaten. There were exceptions, of course. In the Edo period, for example, horsemeat was prized under the euphemism of “*sakura-niku*” (“cherry-blossom meat,” after its color), and several of the specialty restaurants that served it survive in downtown Tokyo today. Closer to the era of *Shōgun* were reports of daimyo who experimented with eating beef. We have proof that Hosokawa Tadaoki, the model for Buntaro, ate beef on at least one occasion: it is recorded that Hideyoshi, after his victory over the Hōjō at Odawara in 1590, treated some of his daimyo allies, including Tadaoki and his friend Takayama Ukon, to a celebratory feast of beef. But this was a passing fad, and the Japanese were not again to consume beef in any conspicuous way until the Meiji period (1868-1912), when beef-eating again became a craze and eventually a normal (but minor) part of the Japanese diet, particularly in the Meiji invention known as “*sukiyaki*.”

We must also stress that, except among the Buddhist clergy, the prohibition against eating meat referred only to four-legged animals. It obviously never applied to fish, which have always provided the overwhelming bulk of animal protein in the Japanese diet, but neither did it apply to birds. Indeed, fowl ranked only slightly below fish as the most prized food in the era of *Shōgun*. Japanese of all classes, including the Kyoto aristocracy, have always been fond of bird flesh and it seems safe to say that almost no winged species was safe from being served up on the tables of traditional Japan. Pheasant in particular was considered a great delicacy, and Mariko’s reluctance to sample such a representative dish as “small pheasant, cut into tiny pieces, barbecued over charcoal with a sweet soya sauce” (p. 688) can be explained only as a peculiar personal

preference: it was certainly not a national trait. Even European visitors were astonished by the variety of fowl consumed by the Japanese, although here we find the same qualification as with four-legged animals: as an early observer noted, “they never eat hens, because, as it seems to me. they breed them and they never eat anything they breed” (Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, p. 191). It was less the eating of meat than the raising of animals to be eaten which most clearly set the Europeans apart from the Japanese.

During the seventeenth century, the eating of meat was probably on the decline in Japan, both because of increasing population pressure on available game reserves and because of the separation of the samurai from the land and hence from easily accessible hunting grounds. Not until the resumption of Western influence in the late nineteenth century did the Japanese begin to raise animals for food, and even then economic constraints made red meat impractical except as a luxury item. It has only been in the past two decades, with the rapid rise in living standards, that a dramatic increase in the eating of meat has occurred in Japan, and even now the Japanese remain a people nourished primarily by rice, fish, and vegetables. In this sense, not much has changed since the era of *Shōgun*.

Staples and Frills

From the European point of view in 1600, the most peculiar feature of the Japanese diet may have been its heavy reliance on rice as the overwhelmingly favored staple. Rice had for centuries been the main crop in Japan, and its high nutritional value and ease of storage made it the mainstay of the economy. Only with increases in productivity in the medieval period, however, were the majority of Japanese able to eat rice on a daily basis. Still, much of the peasantry was too poor to eat rice alone and often mixed it with millet, barley, and beans. The rice of the era of *Shōgun* was unpolished brown rice, or at best semi-polished for the courtier class. The thorough polishing that produces the “white rice” we know today became possible only with technological developments of the later Edo period—bringing with it a marked increase in the incidence of beri-beri.

To the extent that reliance on rice was heavy, the Japanese diet was indeed, as Mariko suggested, “simple.” And the diet of the samurai in particular was “frugal” in that they were morally discouraged from overindulgence of any kind. For the rest of the population, however, frugality was less a virtue than a necessity, as it was for most people in the premodern world. One should add that Japanese of all classes strove to supplement their diet of rice and other grains with a great diversity of vegetables, seaweeds, nuts, fruits, mushrooms, seafood, and game: in this sense, the Japanese

diet was far from “simple.” The banquet menus of the samurai were incredibly varied in ingredients, in visual arrangement, and in methods of preparation—including grilling, sauteeing, deep-frying, boiling, steaming, drying, smoking, salting, and pickling.

Because of their regular contact with Europeans, many Japanese in the era of *Shōgun* became interested in imported foods and foreign cuisine. Many American readers of *Shōgun* will have recognized the “bamboo basket of deep-fried fish in Portuguese style” (p. 320) as tempura, although few may have realized the Portuguese influence on the creation of the dish. The word “tempura” itself is of European origin, probably from the Portuguese *temporas*, the “Ember days” of abstinence on which meat was replaced by fish. Tempura apparently became quite popular in Kyoto in the 1610s, as one sad story suggests. In early 1616, the aging Tokugawa Ieyasu heard of the latest Kyoto delicacy, seabream deep-fried in sesame oil, and immediately ordered it prepared for his table. The aging samurai ate more than usual, and four hours later began to suffer sharp intestinal pains. Although historians believe that Ieyasu was already terminally ill with stomach cancer, his death not long after has always been linked anecdotally with the eating of tempura!

The seventeenth century was a period of unprecedented international exchange of food plants, and foreign traders brought many other new foods to Japan at this time—some from other parts of Asia, some from Europe, and some from the New World. Many of the Japanese names for these foods reflect their foreign origin. Squash was called *kabocha* from association with Cambodia; potatoes seem to have been linked to the trade with Jakarta, for they were known as *jaga-imo* (*imo* being any edible tuber); a sweet poundcake which is still highly prized in Japan was called *castella*, after the Portuguese word for “Spain” (cf. Castille); and the sweet potato came to be known as the *satsuma-imo* because it was imported from the Ryukyu Islands via the southernmost domain of Satsuma. Some of the imports, such as potatoes and bread (known as *pan*, after the Portuguese *pão*), never really caught on until the renewed fad for things Western in the Meiji period. But others, like yams and watermelons, came to be widely cultivated under the Tokugawa regime.

The exchange of stimulants was another aspect of trade in this period. The major East Asian export in this category was of course tea, although it became popular in Europe only later in the seventeenth century. As reflected in *Shōgun*, the drinking of tea was nearly universal in Japan by the 1600s. Originally imported from China, it had occasionally been used by the Heian aristocracy, but it was not until the thirteenth century that, with the encouragement of Zen monks, tea-drinking became common in Japan. As for European influences on Japan, tobacco would certainly head the list,

and it is surprising to find no mention of its use in *Shōgun*, because it was “welcomed and adopted with an almost frenzied enthusiasm” after its introduction in the 1590s (Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, p. 433). Despite disapproval by Confucian moralists and occasional bans by the shogunate (the earliest in 1609, a full decade before James I’s crackdown in England), tobacco came to be a familiar commodity in Tokugawa Japan.

Cross-cultural influences in the area of alcoholic drinks are less conspicuous, perhaps because both Japanese and Europeans were too attached to their own preferred varieties. For the most part, samurai stuck to sake, although a number of daimyo are on record as having experimented with brandy, whiskey, and wine. We even have one account of a group of daimyo sipping red wine following a tea ceremony! (If that sounds like an implausible combination, consider the “original blend of *sake* and white-grape wine” which Suntory International tested in the American market in early 1980 under the name of—you guessed it—“Shōgun.”)

And What About Raw Fish?

Near the end of *Shōgun*, Blackthorne hears the voice of his departed lover Mariko speaking to him, gently urging him on to cultural understanding: “Oh, Anjin-san, one day perhaps we’ll even get you to like raw fish and then you’ll be on the road to nirvana—the Place of Perfect Peace.” Blackthorne’s problem is shared by many in the West today: “raw fish” has emerged as a symbol for all those things in Japanese culture which Westerners find particularly difficult to assimilate. Logically, we might ask why this should be so. Don’t we eat clams and oysters on the half shell, a feat more challenging by common-sense standards than slipping down a piece of tuna sushi? But no matter: until they try it, most Westerners tend to be horrified by the idea of eating raw fish, and most Japanese happily reciprocate with an unshakable conviction that only the most peculiar foreigner can master this unique custom.

It is the business of the anthropologist to figure out why raw fish should be such a potent mark of Japanese exclusivity. The historian can simply confirm that the Japanese have indeed eaten fish raw, or at least near-raw, for centuries. Francesco Carletti, an Italian visitor to Japan in the late 1590s, observed that the Japanese “usually eat [fish] in a practically raw state, after having dipped it in boiling vinegar” (Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, p. 191). Carletti probably exaggerates in claiming that the Japanese “usually” ate fish raw, for records show that various forms of cooking and curing were more common. Since it is dangerous to eat fish raw unless it is perfectly fresh (particularly in the summer), raw fish in both traditional and contemporary Japan has always been something of a delicacy.

In being served “raw fish, as always” (p. 594), Blackthorne was being treated like a special guest.

Actually, the majority of fish dishes in traditional Japan which a Westerner would have described as “raw” were in fact pickled in salt or vinegar. The two most common terms for raw fish were *sushi* and *namasu*, both of which are probably related etymologically to *su*, “vinegar.” Sushi, for example, seems to have originated as a method of preserving fish by natural fermentation, either by mixing it with rice or simply by salting it lightly. The sushi which has become so popular in America today—perfectly raw fish layered on vinegared rice—was concocted in the city of Edo in the late Tokugawa period as a way of showing off the freshness of the produce of Edo Bay. The dish of plain raw fish seasoned with soy sauce known as *sashimi* is of older origin and seems to have just been coming into fashion in the 1600s.

“You’re All So Clean!”

Much like “raw fish,” the “Japanese bath” has become a symbol of something very difficult to approach—but absolute nirvana once you get used to it. For Americans today, the greatest anxiety associated with the Japanese bath seems to be caused by a lingering Victorian resistance to mixed bathing. Many nineteenth-century Western visitors to Japan were scandalized by mixed bathing, and it was in part their disapproval which led the Japanese to gradually abandon the custom. But even though mixed bathing survives in Japan today only in remote villages, the Western response lives on, now transformed from moral indignation to sheepish inhibition—as demonstrated by a recent television commercial in which a young American couple (the kind that has just lost their travelers checks) is paralyzed with embarrassment to find a Japanese gentleman in the bath with them.

For Blackthorne, however, the bath provoked a rather different reaction, a sort of cultural resistance to cleanliness which we are led to understand was characteristic of Elizabethan England. By the end of *Shōgun*, the reader is left with an image of the filthy, lice-infested Europeans sharply contrasted to the immaculate, sweet-scented Japanese. Blackthorne of course eventually learns his lesson: midway through the novel, as he is reflecting on the squalid living conditions back in England, he blurts out to Mariko, “What a stinking bloody waste! . . . you’re all so clean and we’re filthy and it’s such a waste, countless millions, me too, all my life . . . and only because we don’t know better!” (pp. 697-8).

What light does history shed on this contrast? On the European side, we find that the year 1600 indeed represented something of a low point in the vicissitudes of bathing, and nowhere was it lower

than in England. We must note that the history of bathing rarely exhibits steady progress from barbarous filth to civilized hygiene, but rather a constant series of ups and downs, depending on religious attitudes, the availability of water, and simple fashion. Everyone knows, for example, of the astonishing sophistication of the Roman public baths, a reflection of an advanced hydraulic technology and a cultural interest in the more hedonistic aspects of bathing. Public bathing thus became a well-established tradition in the Mediterranean world, particularly in Islamic cultures. Who has not heard of the “Turkish” bath?

With such a strong tradition of bathing in the Mediterranean and Near East, why were the English in 1600 so averse to the habit? One factor was the antagonism of the Church to Roman-style public bathing as licentious and hedonistic—which indeed it often was. But even the Church seems not to have been able to prevent a widespread revival of bathing in medieval Europe. Why then did a decline occur again from about the fifteenth century? Fernand Braudel offers this explanation:

The West experienced a significant regression from the point of view of body baths and bodily cleanliness from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Naked public bathing was general for both sexes in the middle ages. The public baths disappeared, we are told, as a result of sixteenth-century contagions and of the terrible syphilis: At Frankfurt-am-Main they decreased to nine in 1530 from thirty-nine in 1387. Was this the result of fear or because of a new modesty? We cannot make a clear division. In any case the whole idea of bathing began gradually to disappear in the West at the same time as the public bath However, public baths were retained in Finland and Russia, even in villages, with a sort of medieval innocence. They reappeared in the West in the seventeenth century, but public baths at that time meant much the same as brothels for rich clients. (*Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*, p. 240)

These speculations are reflected in the attitude of Blackthorne, who resists his first bath for fear of dysentery (p. 51). But as stressed by Sandra Piercy in Chapter 4, the English were not inalterably opposed to bathing, and in the Elizabethan era the famous waters at Bath and elsewhere continued to attract those in search of cures. Still, there can be little doubt that the English were not, in general, a bathing people in 1600.

What about the Japanese? In terms of religious belief, the Japanese have always been well-disposed to bathing, as Mariko suggests when she tells Blackthorne that “The bath is a gift to us from God or the gods, a god-bequeathed pleasure to be enjoyed and treated as such” (p. 527). But the real religious justification was considerably less hedonistic than Mariko implies. In Shinto belief, bathing was a matter neither of pleasure nor of personal cleanliness, but rather a

symbolic act of ritual purification. Daily bathing was thus not a religious necessity for the Japanese. Among the Heian aristocracy of the tenth century, “bathing, at best a rather perfunctory process, could take place only once in five days—and then only if the day was auspicious” (Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince*, p. 140). Heian records indicate that the ceremonial bathing of newborn children was a matter of considerably greater concern than was daily bathing for hygienic reasons. Nor is there any evidence of public baths in the capital at this time.

It was probably Buddhist rather than Shinto influence that contributed most directly to the spread of both personal and public bathing in Japan after the Heian period. Cleanliness was highly valued for both ritual and practical purposes in the Buddhist monasteries, which generally had a separate building for the bath. The timing is unclear, but it would appear that the habit of daily bathing was gaining popularity most rapidly in Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in the cities—at precisely the time that bathing was passing through its “regression” in Europe. The contrast of bathing habits depicted in *Shōgun* thus may represent more an historical coincidence than a fundamental cultural dichotomy between “filthy” Europeans and “clean” Japanese.

From paintings, from European accounts, and from one surviving Momoyama-period bath in a Kyoto temple, we know that the predominant type of Japanese bath in 1600 was the steam bath, not the soaking tub enjoyed by Blackthorne, which became dominant about a century later. The bath consisted of a small wooden chamber, entered through a low door, with steam rising through a slatted floor. Men normally wore loincloths in the bath, and women entered in underskirts. After sweating loose the dirt, a bather would have bath attendants scrape the skin with bamboo sticks (in much the same way the Romans used curved metal tools) and rinse off the remaining dirt with wooden buckets of water. The soap lavished on Blackthorne in *Shōgun* would have been unusual; soap was a recent import to Japan from Europe (first mentioned in a 1596 letter by Ishida Mitsunari, the model for Ishido) and was such a luxury that it would probably not have been wasted on a visiting barbarian. For cleansing, the Japanese traditionally used lime, lye, clay, soapberry, and, for the hair, egg whites mixed with flour or volcanic ash. As in Europe, the public baths in the cities of Japan often doubled as houses of prostitution. The female bath attendants (*yuna*) were eventually banned by moralistic Tokugawa officials and replaced by men, known as *sansuke*, whose back-scrubbing services disappeared from the public baths of Japan only in the 1960s.

We still know very little about the precise dynamics of the evolution of bathing into the refined and widespread custom that it had

already become among the Japanese by the seventeenth century. It is likely that the increased popularity of bathing owed much to the building of the castle towns, where concentrated populations created a demand for public baths and where, thanks to efficient city planning, water was plentiful and uncontaminated. As for the effects of frequent bathing, we may speculate that superior Japanese bodily cleanliness, in conjunction with the practice of recycling human wastes for fertilizer (see *Shōgun*, p. 533), helped reduce the frequency and severity of epidemics in Japan. For although the Japanese did suffer the ravages of dysentery, smallpox, and influenza, on the whole the impact of communicable disease seems to have been less than in medieval Europe. Contact with the West brought new diseases to Japan: syphilis (the “Chinese pox” of *Shōgun*) arrived as early as 1512 (over three decades before the Europeans themselves!), smallpox after 1822, and the bubonic plague later in the nineteenth century.

Ritual Pollution

Just as the ritual ablution stressed in both Shinto and Buddhism helped encourage the habit of bathing, so its obverse, a belief in ritual pollution, fostered a much less admired feature of Japanese society, the outcastes known in *Shōgun* as “*eta*.” This connection is made clear in one of the most effective scenes in the novel, in which Blackthorne (who by now “knows better”) visits his Dutch shipmates in the *eta* sector of Edo—the place they feel most at home. This is a marvelous play on the reversal of cultural values, by which those things most despised by the Japanese (filth and meat) are precisely what the Europeans find most congenial.

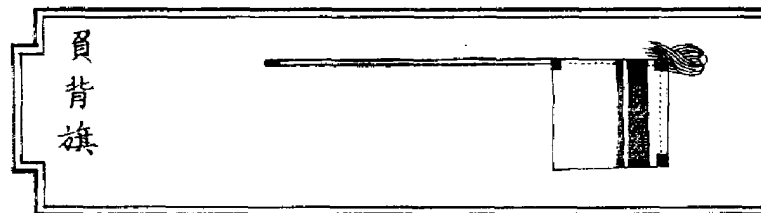
Just as purification rituals influenced the development of bathing in Japan, so also various religious convictions, from the Shinto abhorrence of death to the Buddhist proscription against the killing of animals, laid the basis for the evolution of the outcaste class. Because of these taboos, such tasks as the butchering of animals and the manufacture of animal products came to be relegated to specialized groups. It was during the tenth to twelfth centuries that organized discrimination began, with the Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples overseeing the segregation of the tasks in question. In the Tokugawa period, the *eta* were in charge of disposing of the dead at execution grounds, as described in *Shōgun*. Despite an active liberation movement over the past several decades, there is still an outcaste class in modern Japan. The term “*eta*” is highly pejorative in contemporary Japan, and has been replaced by various euphemisms, of which the most common is *burakumin* (“villagers”).

The *eta* class as conveyed in *Shōgun* seems more like an ethnic minority than the ritually and professionally segregated class that

they in fact were. It seems unlikely, for example, that the Japanese of the time would have used the word “*eta*” as a curse, and certainly not as frequently as do the characters in *Shōgun*. In all probability, actually saying the word would have been avoided. One must also remember that ritual pollution does not necessarily mean literal pollution, so that the sentiment of one of the Dutch sailors that “Eters’re the best heathen we’ve seen here. More like us than the other bastards” (p. 870) is not entirely plausible: it is likely that Japanese outcastes would have been just as mystified by the Europeans’ love of meat and fear of baths as were other Japanese.

So as Blackthorne takes leave of his unregenerate crewmen, who are most at ease among the most despised in Japan, we can understand how much “his mind was locked with confusion. Nothing was wrong with *eta* and everything was wrong with *eta*” (p. 871). But finally, of course, he breaks down and opts for the Japanese way: “Jesus God, I’d love a bath right now!”

Who’s Who in *Shōgun*



This list includes all the major characters in *Shōgun* and, in addition, most of the minor characters for whom there are clear historical models. Most of the models are only approximate, and might be better understood as “sources of inspiration”; James Clavell himself has indicated that he sometimes drew on more than one historical personage to create a single character. The page numbers in italics indicate where characters are introduced or their backgrounds described in *Shōgun* (Dell paperback edition); all other page and chapter references are to *Learning from Shōgun*.

Akechi Jinsai (father of Mariko and assassin of Goroda; pp. 599, 1199) ≈ Akechi Mitsuhide (1526-82), daimyo and assassin of Oda Nobunaga; father of Hosokawa Gracia. See pp. 63, 111.

Alvito, Father Martin (“Tsukku”; Jesuit priest and interpreter for Toranaga; pp. 162, 191, 301 ff.) ≈ João Rodrigues, S.J. (1561?-1633), known as “Tçuzzu” in Momoyama dialect; interpreter for both Hideyoshi and Ieyasu. See pp. 47, 53, 83. Rodrigues was the author of an authoritative book about Japanese culture, translated by Michael Cooper as *This Island of Japan*. For a detailed biography, see Michael Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China*.

Beppu Genzaemon (lord of Odawara, defeated by Nakamura and Toranaga; p. 476) ≈ Hōjō Ujimasa (1536-90), daimyo of Odawara, defeated by Hideyoshi with Ieyasu’s aid in 1590. See p. 45.

Blackthorne, John (English Pilot-Major of the *Erasmus*; pp. 16, 133, 553) ≈ William Adams (1564-1620), English pilot of the *De Liefde*, arrived in Japan in 1600, came to be known to the Japanese as Miura Anjin. See Chapter 1. The most detailed biography of Adams is P. G. Rogers, *The First Englishman in Japan*.

Braganza, Friar (Franciscan priest whose tale is related by Friar Domingo; pp. 238-240) ≈ St. Pedro Bautista (Blanquez), O.F.M. (1542-97), martyred at Nagasaki in February 1597. See p. 48.

[Toda] **Buntaro** (husband of Mariko and son of Hiromatsu; pp. 346, 586, 619) ≈ Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563-1645), son of Yūsai and husband of Gracia; a leading ally of Tokugawa Ieyasu. See pp. 63-70, 91, 95.

Caradoc, Alban (English shipbuilder and pilot, Blackthorne's teacher; p. 16) ≈ Nicholas Diggins, a well-known shipbuilder of Elizabethan England, under whom William Adams served as apprentice. See p. 3.

Chano-Tsubone (Naga's mother; pp. 740, 883) ≈ Saigo-no-Tsubone, consort of Ieyasu and mother of his fourth son Tadayoshi (see **Naga**). The name in the novel appears to come from Chana-no-Tsubone, another of Ieyasu's consorts and the mother of Tadateru (see **Tadateru**).

[Yoshi] **Chikitada** (Toranaga's grandfather; p. 76) ≈ Kiyoyasu, Ieyasu's grandfather, who was killed at age twenty-five; for the historical incident, see Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, pp. 38, 95. "Chikitada" seems to be modelled on the name of Ieyasu's great-great-great-grandfather Chikatada.

Chimmoko (Mariko's maid; p. 791), Fictional. The name is unusual in Japanese and was perhaps inspired by the word *chimmoku* ("silence," the title of Endō Shūsaku's well-known novel on Christianity in early seventeenth-century Japan); it also bears a strong resemblance to *chimpoko*, a little boy's word for his penis, which may explain why the name was changed to Chimoko in the film-script for television.

dell'Aqua, Father Carlo (Jesuit Father-Visitor of Asia; p. 302) ≈ Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (1539-1606), an Italian Jesuit who in 1574 became Visitor-General to the missions in Asia and visited Japan on three occasions (1579-82, 1590-92, 1598-1603). See pp. 47, 52, 110.

Domingo, Friar (Franciscan friar whom Blackthorne meets in prison; p. 231). Fictional.

Elizabeth (Blackthorne's daughter; p. 719) ≈ the daughter of William Adams, whom he left behind in England, whose name is given in East India Company records as "Deliverance." See pp. 3, 5.

Felicity (Blackthorne's wife; p. 697) ≈ William Adams' wife, whose maiden name was Hyn, and whose given name was probably either Mary or Elizabeth. See pp. 2-5.

Ferriera, Captain General (Captain of the Portuguese Black Ship from Macao; p. 302). No direct model; the historical Captain-Major for the Great Ship from Macao in 1600 was Horatio Neretti, acting on behalf of the Governor of Macao, Dom Paulo de Portugal; the voyage has been described as "most successful and profitable" (Charles Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, p. 46).

[Usagi] **Fujiko** (Mariko's niece, widow of Usagi, and eventually Blackthorne's consort; pp. 395, 443, 656). Fictional. See pp. 84, 103.

Fujimoto (a samurai clan; p. 73) ≈ apparently the Fujiwara, who historically were not a military family, but rather the most powerful clan in the Kyoto court aristocracy during the Heian period (ninth to twelfth centuries). See p. 55.

Genjiko, Lady (wife of Sudara and sister of Ochiba; pp. 279, 517) ≈ Asai Ogō (or Kogō), wife of Tokugawa Hidetada and later known as Sōgen'in. See pp. 105-106.

Go-Nijo (the reigning emperor of Japan; p. 368) ≈ Go-Yōzei (1571-1617), the 107th emperor of Japan (r. 1586-1611); the historical emperor Go-Nijō reigned 1301-08. The prefix "Go-" means "later" and indicates a second emperor of the same name. See p. 66.

Goroda (dictator of Japan, assassinated by Akechi Jinsai; pp. 215, 600) ≈ Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), first of the three great unifiers of Japan in the sixteenth century, killed in a coup by Akechi Mitsuhide. See pp. 54-55, 63, 111.

Gyoko (Mama-san of the Tea House in Mishima; Kiku's mistress; pp. 98, 676). Fictional. See p. 109.

Harima Tadao (Christian daimyo of Hizen in Kyushu; pp. 239, 964) ≈ Arima Harunobu (1567-1612), the Christian daimyo of the

fief of Arima in Hizen, near Nagasaki (but not, as in the novel, including it).

Heir, The. See **Yaemon**.

[Toda] **Hiromatsu** (daimyo of Sagami and Kozuke, old ally of Toranaga; father of Buntaro; *p.* 119) ≈ Hosokawa Fujitaka (1534-1610), daimyo of Tamba and leading cultural figure of his day, better known by his artistic name “Yūsai.” See pp. 63, 66-68.

Ikawa Tadazuki (daimyo of Suruga and Totomi who held Toranaga hostage as a youth; father of Jikkyu; *p.* 223) ≈ Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519-60), a leading daimyo in whose house Tokugawa Ieyasu spent his childhood as a hostage; the Imagawa were defeated by Oda Nobunaga at the Battle of Okehazama in 1560.

Ishido Kazunari (daimyo, one of the five Regents, implacable enemy of Toranaga; pp. 213, 420) ≈ Ishida Mitsunari (1560-1600), the daimyo who organized the confederacy against Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1600; the historical Ishida was not a Regent, but rather a member of a board of five “Commissioners.” He was executed in Kyoto following the Battle of Sekigahara. See pp. 55-58.

[Ikawa] **Jikkyu** (Christian daimyo, enemy of Toranaga; son of Tadazuki; *pp.* 60, 223). Fictional; the Imagawa clan had already been destroyed (see **Ikawa Tadazuki**).

Joseph, Brother. See **Uraga-noh-Tadamasa**.

Kiku (courtesan at the Tea House in Mishima, under the employ of Gyoko; *p.* 98). Fictional. See pp. 108-110.

Kiritsubo-noh-Toshiko (“Kiri,” matron of Toranaga’s ladies-in-waiting; *p.* 222) ≈ Acha-no-Tsubone (1555-1637), an early consort and later a trusted political adviser of Tokugawa Ieyasu. See p. 104.

Kiyama, Lord (Christian daimyo, one of the five Regents; *pp.* 225, 999) ≈ roughly, Konishi Yukinaga (?-1600), leading Christian daimyo who sided with Ishida Mitsunari at Sekigahara; the historical Konishi was not one of the Regents. See pp. 58, 61.

[Toda] **Mariko** (Christian wife of Toda Buntaro, secret love of Blackthorne; *pp.* 259, 599-600) ≈ Hosokawa Gracia (1563-1600), wife of Tadaoki and leading Christian lady of Japan. See Chapters 7 and 11.

Michael, Brother (Japanese Jesuit acolyte; *pp.* 753, 1110) ≈ Chi-jiwa Seizaemon (c. 1569-?), christened Don Michael, one of two young nobles sent to Europe in 1582-7; also the model for “Brother Joseph” (see **Uraga-noh-Tadamasa**).

Minikui (Toranaga’s vassal spy; *p.* 290). Fictional. The name means “ugly” and was changed to Sasuke in the television filmscript.

Minowara (an ancient military clan; *p.* 74) ≈ the Minamoto, the warrior clan which came to power in the late twelfth century and established the Kamakura shogunate; the first shogun, who is called “Yoshitomo” in *Shōgun*, was Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-99). Tokugawa Ieyasu claimed Minamoto ancestry. See pp. 56, 96.

Mura (village headman of Anjiro, in reality a samurai spy for Toranaga named Akira Tonomoto; *pp.* 46, 220, 469, 1205). Fictional. The name means “village” and was changed to “Muraji” in the television filmscript.

Naga (one of Toranaga’s sons, aged seventeen; *pp.* 198, 740) ≈ Tokugawa Tadayoshi (1580-1608), fourth son of Ieyasu. See p. 59.

Nakamura (“The Taikō,” previous leader of Japan, died a year before Blackthorne’s arrival in Japan; father of the Heir, Yaemon; *pp.* 49, 51, 74, 190, 215, 337) ≈ Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-98), second of the three great unifiers of sixteenth-century Japan; see pp. 45, 48-49, 55, 63-64. For a biography, see Walter Dening, *The Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*.

Noboru (eldest living son of Toranaga; suffers from the Chinese pox; *pp.* 227, 258) ≈ Tokugawa Hideyasu (1574-1607), second son of Ieyasu; died of syphilis at the age of thirty-four. See p. 59.

Nobunaga (Toranaga’s first and favorite son, forced to commit seppuku at age nineteen; *p.* 658) ≈ Tokugawa Nobuyasu (1558-78), ordered to commit suicide at age nineteen because of his mother’s scheming (see Tachibana, Lady).

Ochiba, Lady (consort of the Taikō, mother of the Heir Yaemon; *pp.* 216, 283, 517) ≈ Asai Chacha (1567-1615), Hideyoshi’s favorite consort, known as “Lady Yodo”; mother of the Toyotomi heir Hideyori. See pp. 55, 61, 105.

[Kasigi] **Omi** (samurai in charge of Anjiro, nephew of Yabu; *pp.* 33, 90). Fictional. See p. 53.

Onoshi, Lord (Christian daimyo from Kyushu, one of the five Regents; a leper; *p.* 225) ≈ an apparent composite of the Christian daimyo Konishi Yukinaga (also the model for **Kiyama**) and Ōtani Yoshitsugu (1559-1600), who is thought to have suffered from leprosy, Ōtani, who sided with Ishida Mitsunari at Sekigahara, committed suicide during the battle. See *p.* 58.

Rodrigues, Vasco (Portuguese pilot; *pp.* 135, 142). Fictional.

Saruji (son and heir of Buntaro and Mariko; *p.* 635) ≈ Hosokawa Tadatashi (1586-1641), heir of Tadaoki; later married a daughter of the shogun Hidetada (“Sudara” in the novel). See *pp.* 57, 69.

Sazuko, Lady (Toranaga’s newest consort, aged seventeen; *p.* 280) ≈ O-Kane, consort of Tokugawa Ieyasu and mother of Yoshinao (1600-50), Ieyasu’s seventh son, who was born two months after the Battle of Sekigahara. See *p.* 60.

Sebastio, Father (Jesuit priest who interprets for Blackthorne in Anjiro; *p.* 30) ≈ the unidentified “Portugall Iesuite” who confronted William Adams and his crew after their landing in Kyushu. See *pp.* 4, 45.

Sen-no-Nakada (Japan’s most famous tea master; *p.* 773) ≈ Sen-no-Rikyu, the great innovator and synthesizer of the tea ceremony. See *p.* 66.

Spillbergen, Paulus (Captain-General of the *Erasmus*; *p.* 13) ≈ Jacob Quaeckernaek (?-1606), Dutch captain of the *De Liefde*, known as “Jap Quaeck.” He later joined a Dutch fleet and was killed in a sea fight with the Portuguese. See *p.* 4.

Sudara (Toranaga’s second living son and heir, aged twenty-four; *pp.* 227, 886) ≈ Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632), Ieyasu’s third son and his successor as shogun (r. 1605-23). See *pp.* 59, 106.

Sugiyama, Lord (one of the five Regents, richest daimyo in Japan; *p.* 225) ≈ roughly, Maeda Toshiie (1538-99), daimyo of Kaga, second only to Tokugawa Ieyasu as the wealthiest daimyo. Maeda was one of the five original Regents and his death in 1599 weakened the council in much the same way as the resignation of “Sugiyama” in *Shōgun* (*p.* 624).

Tachibana, Lady (Toranaga’s first wife, put to death twenty years earlier for plotting against Goroda) ≈ Lady Tsukiyama, first wife of Tokugawa Ieyasu; plotted against Oda Nobunaga and was put

to death in 1579. For details of the incident, see Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, Ch. IX.

Tadateru (Toranaga’s youngest son, aged seven; *p.* 740) ≈ Tokugawa Tadateru (1592-1683), Ieyasu’s sixth son.

Taikō, The. See **Nakamura**.

Takashima (an ancient military clan; *p.* 74) ≈ the Taira, the samurai clan which was defeated by the Minamoto in the Genpei War of 1180-85.

[Yoshi] **Toranaga** (Lord of the Kwanto, President of the Regents; *pp.* 199, 656) ≈ Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), unifier of Japan and first Tokugawa shogun. See *pp.* 2-6, 49-50, 57-61. For a detailed biography, see Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu*.

Tudor (Blackthorne’s son; *p.* 547) ≈ the son, name unknown, whom William Adams left in England; since no son is mentioned in Adams’ will of 1620, it is presumed that the son had died in the meantime. See *p.* 3.

Uraga-noh-Tadamasa (previously Brother Joseph, a Japanese Jesuit acolyte who apostasized and became a retainer of Blackthorne’s; *pp.* 750, 918, 1110) ≈ Chijiwa Seizaemon (c. 1569-?), christened Don Michael (hence also the apparent model for **Brother Michael**), sent to Europe in 1582-87 as representative of the Christian daimyo Arima (see **Harima Tadao**) and Ōmura; he apostasized after his return from Europe. See *p.* 47. For historical details, see Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter*.

Usagi (grandson-in-law of Hiromatsu, husband of Fujiko, who is forced to commit seppuku; *pp.* 200, 217-19). Fictional. The name means “rabbit.”

[Kasigi] **Yabu** (daimyo of Izu; uncle of Omi; *p.* 67). Fictional. See *pp.* 15, 92, 96.

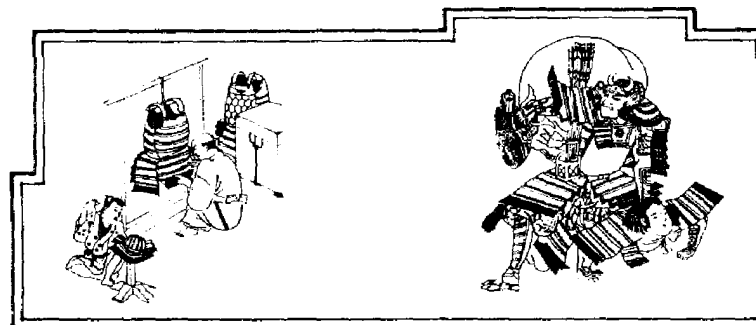
Yaemon (“The Heir” of the Taikō, son of Lady Ochiba; *p.* 72) ≈ Toyotomi Hideyori (1593-1615), the son and heir of Hideyoshi (but widely rumored to have been fathered by someone else; see *p.* 105) and his consort Lady Yodo; perished with his mother at the fall of Osaka Castle in 1615, ending the Toyotomi line. See *pp.* 55, 61.

Yodoko, Lady (widow of the Taikō; *p.* 277) ≈ Nene (1541-1624), widow of Hideyoshi, known in 1600 by her nun's name Kodaiin. See pp. 104-105.

Yoshinaku, Captain (samurai captain, escort of Blackthorne and Mariko to Edo and then to Osaka; *p.* 790). Fictional.

[Saigawa] **Zataki** (daimyo of Shinano; half brother of Toranaga; *pp.* 625, 733). Nō apparent model. The name may have been derived from "Satake," the daimyo of Mito in 1600.

Glossary



This glossary provides *a)* definitions of basic Japanese terms appearing in *Shōgun* and *Learning from Shōgun*; *b)* brief comments on historical aspects of some of the Japanese customs depicted in the novel; and *c)* relevant page references to *Shōgun* (in italics, from the Dell paperback edition) and to *Learning from Shōgun* (in roman type). The editor is grateful to Chieko Mulhern for providing detailed information on the history of Japanese customs.

abortion. For the courtesan Kiku, abortion may have been a simple matter of drinking a "weird-tasting cha" (*p.* 1189) which involved "no risk to her" (*p.* 935), but most women of the time had to resort to far more dubious and life-threatening measures, such as drinking lye or inserting objects into the uterus. It was only in the late twentieth century that abortion became such a casual and low-risk operation as that depicted in *Shōgun*. Abortion, and infanticide as well, were nevertheless common in premodern Japan, particularly in the later Tokugawa period.

Amida Tong (*pp.* 284-94). This secret band of religious assassins is a fictional amalgam of Chinese secret societies, known as "tongs," and the Japanese Pure Land Buddhist sect known as "Ikkō" ("single mind," indicating not fanaticism, as is sometimes suggested, but rather total faith in the Buddha Amida). Although the Ikkō sect did have independent military power until it was crushed by Nobunaga (see *p.* 89), it was never known for clandestine activity. The Buddha Amida, on whom Pure Land believers called for salvation with the chant "*Namu Amida Butsu*" ("Hail to the Buddha Amida"; cf.

pp. 286, 1037), was a symbol of all-embracing compassion, so the association of Amida with assassins is a bit incongruous. See pp. 76-77.

anjin (p. 128). Japanese for “pilot” (literally, “contemplating the needle [of the compass]”) and the name by which both Blackthorne and the historical William Adams were known; see p. 5.

Anjiro. The fictional village where the *Erasmus* lands, inspired by the real fishing port of Ajiro; see p. 17. Ajiro is located on the Izu peninsula just north of Ito, the port where William Adams built two ships for Ieyasu; see pp. ix, 5.

ashigaru. A footsoldier; see p. 88.

bamboo saw, death by. This punishment, inflicted on Ishido in *Shōgun* (p. 1211), was the most sensational but probably the least practiced mode of public execution prescribed by Japanese law, apparently for want of passersby willing to pull the saw. See pp. 54-55 for its best-known historical use.

bansai! [normally **banzai**] (p. 182). Literally, “ten thousand years,” this word traditionally appeared on the funeral banners of the aristocracy. It was not until modern times that it came to be used in the sense of “three cheers,” or, as in *Shōgun*, as a military cry meaning “Long live [the emperor]”; see p. 90.

battle cries. In *Shōgun*, samurai shout the names of their leaders as battle cries, such as “Kasigi!” or “Toranaga!”, (pp. 478, 561, etc.), but in feudal Japan it would have been disrespectful to speak the name of one’s lord (especially his personal name) under any circumstances. The traditional prebattle invocation to the war god went “*ei, ei, ō*” (pronounced “ay, ay, oh”), rising gradually in crescendo; if any name were used, it would probably have been that of the enemy. Some Christian daimyo were known, however, to emulate the Spanish custom of invoking the names of Christ, Santa Maria, and Santiago against their infidel enemies.

birthdays. The birthday reception for Lady Ochiba in *Shōgun* (pp. 972, 983 ff.) is unusual, since the Japanese had no custom of commemorating one’s day of birth. The birth of an heir was celebrated, and the attainment of the ages 60, 77, and 88 called for congratulatory ceremonies, but not for women and not on the day of birth: by traditional Japanese counting, everyone’s age changes with the beginning of a new year and not on the exact birth day.

Black Ship (pp. 70, 241). The name given by the Japanese to the annual Portuguese trading ship from Macao, probably because of the color of the hull. Known by the Portuguese as the “*Nao del Trato*” (p. 161), or “Great Ship of Trade,” these carracks were of immense size, reaching as much as 1600 tons. For their history, see Charles Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon* (1959). The term “black ship” was revived in the nineteenth century to describe the fleet of Commodore Perry.

boiling enemies (pp. 95-96, 112). Although boiling one’s enemies does not appear to have been a common practice in Japan, the most famous example occurred, in fact, in the era of *Shōgun*, when the legendary burglar Ishikawa Goemon was thrown into a pot of boiling oil for attempting to break into Osaka Castle and steal the Taikō’s fabulous hoard of gold. The round iron tubs which later came into use for bathing (see *Shōgun*, p. 527) were thus known as “Goemon baths.”

bushi. A warrior; a more formal term than “samurai”; see p. 6.

Bushido. Literally, “the way of the warrior”; loosely or generically, the code of behavior of the Japanese samurai, emphasizing loyalty, bravery, and honor. In a more narrow sense, the term refers to Tokugawa period writings on proper samurai behavior; see pp. 88, 96-98.

calendar. As explained by Tsukku (p. 340), the Japanese counted years by reference to special “era names,” which were changed periodically for any of a variety of reasons; the average length of an era in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was about four years. In addition to era names, as Tsukku also explained, a cycle of twelve years, each named after an animal, was also used; to further complicate matters, this was joined with a secondary ten-year sequence (named after the Chinese five elements, in “junior-senior” pairs) which, when used in parallel, combined to create a longer sixty-year cycle. The traditional Japanese calendar was based on the lunar year, in contrast to the Western solar calendar.

carrier pigeons (pp. 468, 546, 622). Although indispensable to the plot of *Shōgun*, carrier pigeons apparently were not known in Japan in the sixteenth century. Imported from the West during the Tokugawa period, they appear to have been used primarily for amusement, although one anecdote does tell of an Osaka merchant who made a killing on the rice market by using carrier pigeons to get early warnings of price fluctuations. Military use of carrier pigeons

in Japan began in 1899, when three hundred birds were imported from China; pigeons were widely used by the Japanese for communications in World War II.

castle town. The conventional term used to describe the large cities which grew up around the castles of the daimyo in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see pp. 115-6.

census. The national census ordered by the Taikō in 1591 (*p. 192*) was never carried out, but the practice of keeping careful population records became well-established in the course of the Tokugawa period. The registration system described by Mariko (*p. 713*) was developed only after the suppression of Christianity in the 1630s, when the practice of requiring all commoners to register at Buddhist temples was begun. Initially a device for controlling Christianity, the temple registration system provided the basis for the first national census in 1721; see p. 114.

cha (*pp. 321, 689, etc.*). In Mandarin Chinese and Japanese, “tea.” The English “tea” comes from a Chinese dialectical variant of the same word. See p. 14.

chanoyu (*pp. 263, 766-77*). The Japanese “tea ceremony”; see pp. 66-67, 91.

Chinese pox (*pp. 258, 373, etc.*). Syphilis, introduced to China by Western voyagers and thence, probably by *wakō*, to Japan; the earliest documented case of syphilis in Japan occurred in 1512—only two decades after the outbreak of the disease in Europe following Columbus’ return from America. Also known in Japan as the “Ryukyu pox.” Ieyasu’s son Hideyasu (“Noboru” in *Shōgun*) was one of the better-known victims of the Chinese pox. See p. 125.

Clouds and Rain (*p. 153, etc.*). An ancient Chinese literary term for the sexual act; see p. 109.

consort (*p. 69*). Under traditional Chinese and Japanese law, a man was permitted only a single legal wife, and all other wives were known as “consorts” or “concubines”; see p. 101. In Japan, children born of consorts were considered legitimate and often became heirs; see p. 106.

cotton (*pp. 243, 321, 532, etc.*). Cotton clothing was still quite unusual in Japan in 1600, but it was to become more popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The loincloth given to Blackthorne (*p. 243*) would probably have been linen or the cheaper hemp

(silk would have been reserved for a daimyo). Cotton was grown in Japan in the sixteenth century, but was used primarily for tents, banners, and, most importantly, the tapers to ignite matchlocks.

courtesan (*pp. 151, 682, etc.*). A conventional term for a prostitute catering to the wealthy, later known in Japan as “geisha.” See pp. 108-110.

courtier. A term conventionally used to refer to members of the traditional civil aristocracy of Japan, who resided in the capital of Kyoto; a small class, it was replaced by the samurai as the ruling elite after the twelfth century. In *Shōgun*, Ogaki Tamamoto (*pp. 95, 1133*) is an example of the courtier. See pp. 55, 90, 100.

crucifixion (*pp. 191, 229*). A form of execution which was first practiced in Japan in the twelfth century under the first shogun, Yoritomo, but which became prevalent only in the sixteenth century. Japanese crucifixion differed from that in the West in that the limbs were lashed rather than nailed to the frame, an additional crosspiece was provided for the legs, and the victim died not of exposure and debilitation but by being lanced through the vital organs.

daimyo. A feudal lord, in military and administrative control of an autonomous domain yielding an income of at least 10,000 *koku*. In 1598, there were 204 such daimyo, ranging from 68 with incomes of the minimum 10,000 *koku* to Tokugawa Ieyasu with over 2.5 million *koku*.

death poems (*pp. 338, 839, 1188*). Although Hideyoshi’s death poem (*p. 338*) is historically accurate, it was not the usual Japanese custom in this period to compose death poems; the ritual of a warrior such as Yabu composing a poem before seppuku (*p. 1188*) or imminent death in battle was devised by the modern Japanese military class.

dictionary (*pp. 315, 527, 578, 785*). Historically, the dictionary given to Blackthorne would probably have been the tri-lingual Latin-Portuguese-Japanese dictionary published by the Jesuit press in 1595; a far more complete dictionary of Japanese was completed by a team of Jesuit linguists in 1603. See p. 84.

divorce (*p. 368, etc.*). See pp. 40, 101-2.

doctors. As Blackthorne gratefully notes (*p. 322*), Japanese doctors did not bleed their patients, but instead relied on the traditional

Chinese techniques of herbal medicine, acupuncture, and moxa cautery. Japanese doctors were, however, far behind the West in surgical procedures; they did not know how to suture, cauterize, splint, or remove bullets, and normally just applied ointment papers over open wounds. For Western doctors, see p. 41.

dozo (*passim*). Japanese for “please,” as in the case of an invitation; see pp. 81-82.

Edo [Yedo] (*pp. 858-60*). The capital of the Tokugawa domain, established by Ieyasu in 1590 on the site of a former medieval castle which had reverted to a fishing village. By 1600, as Blackthorne noted (*p. 568*), Edo was on its way to becoming the world’s largest city and, by the end of the seventeenth century, had grown to a population of probably over one million. In 1868, Edo was made the imperial capital of Japan and renamed “Tokyo.”

Eight-Fold Fence (*pp. 602-3, 835*). Mariko’s metaphor for the Japanese use of rituals, customs, and taboos to ensure privacy, the expression comes from an ancient Japanese poem; see p. 106.

emperor (*pp. 967, 1133-4*). In Japanese, “*tennō*,” the hereditary line of rulers of Japan since mythical times, theoretically divine and unbroken. In the era of *Shōgun*, the emperor had very little political power but was essential for the legitimation of national rule; see p. 56. The emperor was “restored” to power with the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868.

Erasmus. The name of Blackthorne’s ship and the original name of its historical counterpart, the *De Liefde*; see p. 17.

eta (*pp. 472, 643, 869, etc.*). The Japanese outcaste class; see pp. 125-6.

Floating World (*pp. 1189, 1195*). In Japanese, “*ukiyo*,” used from about the middle of the seventeenth century to describe the hedonistic world of the theater and the pleasure quarters of Japanese cities.

footwear. Most Japanese in 1600 went barefoot both indoors and out. When required, the preferred footwear was sandals of rush or straw (as in *Shōgun*, *p. 29*). Wooden clogs had long been known in Japan (especially for field work), but in 1600 they were still not in general use. The clog-wearing samurai in *Shōgun* (*p. 32, etc.*) would have been unusual, since clogs were far too noisy and clumsy for a battle-ready warrior; only in the peaceful eighteenth century

did samurai come to wear them. The indoor slippers presented to Blackthorne (*p. 29*) were generally unknown until modern times. *Tabi* socks (*p. 321, etc.*) were less common in 1600 than they are in *Shōgun*; made of leather, they were used mostly by samurai as outdoor wear; *tabi* were considered special, and permission was required to wear them. Cotton *tabi* became popular only in the late seventeenth century, and even then a young courtesan such as Kiku (*p. 1194*) would not have worn them, since geisha were very proud of their bare feet.

funerals. Mariko’s funeral (*pp. 1101-2*) accords closely with descriptions of Japanese funerals by Western observers of the time. Although public exposure of the corpse seems unusual for the Japanese (see p. 65), one such case is detailed in an account by the Jesuit chronicler Luis Frois; see Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, pp. 363-7.

Garlic Eaters (*p. 348, etc.*). Used in *Shōgun* to refer to Koreans. In the modern period, Japanese sometimes refer to Koreans as “smelling of garlic,” much as they speak of Westerners as “smelling of butter.” It is unclear whether garlic was as common in Korean cuisine in 1600 as it is today and whether such an epithet was actually used in the period of *Shōgun*. We may certainly presume, however, that the Japanese invasions of Korea under Hideyoshi (see p. 45) caused strong feelings of animosity between Koreans and Japanese, and that such derogatory labels were used by both sides at the time.

geisha (*p. 747*). Courtesans of the Tokugawa period who provided singing and dancing entertainment along with their sexual services; literally, “a person of artistic accomplishment.” Although Gyoko’s “invention” of the geisha is imaginary, it was precisely in her time that this type of courtesan emerged; see pp. 108-9.

guns (*pp. 507, 542, 556, etc.*). Guns were introduced to Japan by Portuguese visitors in 1543 (see p. 46) and were known as “Tanegashima,” after the name of the island where the Portuguese landed. Guns became a crucial factor in the warfare of the late sixteenth century in Japan; see p. 58.

hair styles. Mariko is historically a bit ahead of her time in wearing her hair “in the latest Kyoto fashion, piled high and held in place with long silver pins” (*p. 259*): this description fits the “Katsuyama style” originated in the 1650s by a Yoshiwara courtesan of that name. Most women of the period of *Shōgun* continued to wear their hair in the aristocratic *taregami* style, long and straight down the back. A noblewoman like Mariko would have had long straight hair

(possibly scented with floral oils), shaved eyebrows (with false eyebrows painted higher on the forehead with soot paste), red-painted lips, and blackened teeth.

harakiri. Ritual suicide by disembowelment; literally, “belly-cutting.” A more vulgar term than “seppuku,” commonly mispronounced “harry-carry” in the West. See pp. 73, 95.

harikata (*p.* 693). A dildo; see p. 110.

hatamoto (*pp.* 489, 495). A direct retainer of the Tokugawa shogun with an income of less than the 10,000 *koku* required for daimyo status and with a theoretical right of audience with the shogun; those below the *hatamoto* in rank were called *gokenin*. During most of the Tokugawa period, the *hatamoto* (sometimes called “banner-men”) accounted for about one-fourth of the shogun’s approximately twenty thousand retainers. See p. 7 for William Adams’ status as *hatamoto*.

hawking (*pp.* 613-20, 1160, 1207). An ancient noble sport in Japan, banned in 728 in deference to Buddhist belief but revived in the twelfth century as a major pastime of the samurai class. Tokugawa Ieyasu was a skilled and avid falconer; see p. 60.

Hemimura. The village in which William Adams’ estate was located; see pp. ix, 5, 9, 11.

Hirado. An island off the northwest coast of Kyushu and a major port for foreign trade with the West in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. William Adams, the model for Blackthorne, was employed by the English East India Company’s trading station in Hirado and died there in 1620; see pp. ix, 5.

hostages (*pp.* 69, 121, 216, etc.). The taking hostage of family members (particularly the heir) of one’s vassals in order to ensure loyalty became a common practice in the sixteenth century and was eventually institutionalized under the Tokugawa shogunate in the “alternate attendance system,” under which all daimyo were required to keep their wives and heir in Edo and to live in Edo themselves every other year.

Izu (*p.* 53, etc.). A peninsula located on the Pacific Ocean about seventy-five miles southwest of Tokyo; formerly Izu Province, it is today part of Shizuoka Prefecture.

judo and karate. Although a samurai like Mura would certainly have been familiar with the techniques of weaponless fighting which he displays in *Shōgun* (*p.* 51), he would not have known them by these names. The term “jūdō” was used by a martial arts school in the early eighteenth century, but the form known today was synthesized in the late nineteenth century by Kano Jigorō (1860-1938) from a variety of existing techniques known as “*jūjutsu*” (“the art of flexibility”). Karate (more properly, *karate-dō*, “the way of the empty hand”) was imported to Japan from its native Okinawa in the 1920s by Funakoshi Gichin (1869-1957).

kami (*p.* 652, etc.). In indigenous Shinto belief, sacred forces, often translated as “gods,” which were most commonly manifested as the spirits of trees, rocks, places, distinguished men, ancestors, and mythological figures.

kamikaze (*p.* 459). Literally, “divine wind,” historically used to refer to the typhoons which drove off the invading Mongols in the thirteenth century. The term was revived in the twentieth century as part of the title of certain suicide squadrons in the Pacific War. Often mispronounced “kamikazi” in the West (cf. p. 81).

karma (*passim*). In Buddhism, the accumulated consequences of one’s actions throughout past incarnations. See Chapter 8.

koku (*p.* 94, etc.). A unit of measure, equivalent to about five U.S. bushels, used to measure the income of land in terms of its productivity in rice.

Kwanto [Kanto]. Literally, “east of the barrier,” referring to any of several mountain passes on the way from Kyoto to the northeast; more specifically, the broad coastal plain along the Pacific Ocean in central Honshu, traditionally comprising eight provinces. Edo (the modern Tokyo) is located on the Kanto Plain.

“Legacy” of Toranaga (*p.* 847). This corresponds to the Legacy of Tokugawa Ieyasu, a set of private instructions left to his successors; see pp. 53, 90. For English translations, see Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, III, 796-814, and Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, pp. 387-98.

massage (*pp.* 76, 872). A well-developed art in traditional Japan, often practiced by the blind. The use of “fragrant oil” to massage Blackthorne is unusual and would more likely be a service of contemporary “Turkish baths” in Japan; the traditional method involves squeezing the muscles or pressing nerve points, techniques

which slippery skin would make difficult. One must also be lightly clothed, not naked, as in *Shōgun*.

meat-eating (pp. 365, 427, etc.). See pp. 40, 116-9.

Mishima (pp. 99, 291, 468). Yabu's castle town. A real city, Mishima was the ancient capital of the province of Izu and a major stop along the Tōkaidō; historically, however, it was a post town, not a castle town.

Murasama [sword] (pp. 77, 621). Corresponds to the historical Muramasa, a famous maker of sword blades (see the legend quoted on pp. 92-93). The story of the curse of such a blade on Toranaga's family is based on historical accounts; see Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, pp. 94-95.

Nagasaki (pp. 240, 664). A port in western Kyushu, ceded to the Jesuits by the Omura daimyo in the 1570s and used as a center for missionary and trading activities until it was confiscated by Hideyoshi in 1587 and placed under central control. After the expulsion of the Catholics in the 1640s, it became the sole port for foreign trade in Japan, served by Dutch and Chinese merchants. See pp. ix, 48-50.

neh? (*passim*). A sentence-ending particle implying expectation of agreement; see p. 81.

nightsoil (pp. 533, 836). A euphemism for human excrement, which was widely used as fertilizer in traditional Japan. In the cities of the Tokugawa period, landlords derived an important part of their income from the sale of tenants' wastes to nightsoil collectors. See also p. 125.

ninja (pp. 1050-62). Practitioners of *ninjutsu* ("the art of stealth"), experts in espionage, sabotage, and assassination. The *ninja* of *Shōgun*, whose "only purpose in life was violent death for pay" (p. 1062), reflect the romanticization of the *ninja* in modern Japanese popular entertainment: the historical *ninja* were primarily experts in political intelligence rather than fanatical assassins. Although Toranaga was said to have considered *ninja* to be "filth" (p. 1077), the historical Ieyasu prized the services of *ninja* and used them extensively. In fact, the only lord in Japan in 1600 who could have ordered a *ninja* attack of the scale mounted by Ishido in *Shōgun* would have been Ieyasu himself, since he then controlled the Koga and Iga *ninja*, the two largest traditional groups. For an account of the *ninja*, see Andrew Adams, *Ninja: The Invisible Assassins* (Ohara Publications, Los Angeles, 1970).

"Oil Seller" (p. 784). Blackthorne's sword, which is nicknamed after its victim; the account in *Shōgun* is based on an historical (or at least legendary) incident, in which Tokugawa Ieyasu ordered a retainer to cut down an oil merchant who had acted in a rude manner and who managed to "walk a few paces before falling divided into two"; see Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, p. 352.

Osaka (pp. 120, 189, 195). Osaka, originally known as Ishiyama, was a fortified settlement built in the early sixteenth century by followers of the Ikkō sects of Buddhism (see **Amida Tong**). With the suppression of the Ikkō by Nobunaga in the 1570s, Ishiyama came under the control of Hideyoshi, who renamed it Osaka and built his great castle there in 1583-6. After Hideyoshi's death, Osaka became the castle town of his heir Hideyori; when the Toyotomi family was destroyed in 1615, Osaka was briefly assigned to a Tokugawa-related daimyo, but in 1619 it came under the direct control of the shogunate. Although a large garrison was stationed in Osaka Castle during the Tokugawa period, the city was basically run by merchants and served as a national rice brokerage center. Osaka Castle was destroyed in World War II, but has been rebuilt in ferro-concrete. See pp. ix, 38, 56-61, 104-5, 115.

pillow book (p. 898). In ancient Japan, the term "pillow book" was used to describe a genre of literary miscellanies, informal journals which were probably composed after retiring and hence kept near the writer's pillow; the most famous example is Sei Shōnagon's *The Pillow Book* (late tenth century; translated by Ivan Morris). In the seventeenth century, however, the expression came to be applied to erotic books, some of which were used as visual aids for the sexual education of young brides, since the "aversion to talking about pillowing" (p. 333) was scarcely a barbarian monopoly. It is this sort of manual which Mariko seems to have shown to Blackthorne.

pillowing (p. 329, etc.). In *Shōgun*, making love. James Clavell has said that he chose this word because it is more pleasing than "fornication" and more polite than its four-letter Anglo-Saxon equivalent. It does not really correspond to any Japanese word, although the term "pillow" is used in some archaic combinations that connote sex (such as "pillow book"). The nuance of "pillowing" is considerably more sensuous in the West than in Japan, where pillows have traditionally been quite small and hard, made of wood or of cloth stuffed with tea or buckwheat chaff.

peeing on a bargain (pp. 299, 485). It is unclear how well-established a custom this was among the samurai, but the historical story of

Hideyoshi and Ieyasu's (the Taikō and Toranaga in *Shōgun*, p. 163) sealing the transfer of the Kanto in this way is recounted in Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, p. 163; according to this anecdote, the incident came to be known as "the pair of pissers on the Kanto" (*Kantō no tsure-shōben*).

poisoning enemies (p. 1164). Yabu's plot to poison Jikkyu in *Shōgun* is by no means implausible (especially the detail of bribing a cook, for it is said that Ieyasu bribed a cook to set fire to the kitchen of Osaka Castle in 1615), but on the whole poisoning seems to have been an exceptional way of dealing with one's enemies in medieval Japan, for reasons that are not clear; see Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, I, 631.

raw fish (pp. 150, 365, 1202). See pp. 121-2. **Regents,**

Council of (pp. 72, 225, etc.). See pp. 55-56.

rocks growing (pp. 835, 1018). In *Shōgun*, Mariko recommends that Blackthorne try listening to a rock grow, as a way of promoting *wa*. This provocative device appears to be a sort of Zen riddle especially formulated for the Western mentality, to which the idea of rocks growing seems nonsensical. To the Japanese mind, however, this notion would not be such a conundrum, since the Japanese believe that rocks do indeed have life within them; the myths even speak of a time when rocks could move about and were given to occasional violence. Japanese have always been great observers and connoisseurs of rocks, considering them to possess life and individuality, so that watching them grow would have seemed quite natural to Mariko.

rōnin (pp. 78, 254, etc.). A masterless samurai (literally, "wave person," that is, someone floating unattached), who has left his lord's service either by choice or compulsion (most commonly because of the confiscation of the lord's fief). The stigma against *rōnin* implied in *Shōgun* was a product of the peaceful Tokugawa period, when prospects of re-employment were slim.

-sama, -san, -chan (*passim*). Forms of address attached to a person's name; the latter two are modern corruptions of *-sama*, *-san* indicating respect and *-chan* familiarity; see p. 83,

samurai (p. 30, etc.). A Japanese warrior, from *saburau*, "to serve." The ruling class of Japan from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries, the samurai comprised about six or seven percent of the total population during the Tokugawa period (1600-1868).

Sekigahara, Battle of (p. 1211). The decisive battle in October 1600 at which Tokugawa Ieyasu and his allies defeated a coalition headed by Ishida Mitsunari and thereby secured hegemony over all Japan. This battle is considered by many historians to be the beginning of the Tokugawa period. See pp. ix, 56-58, 60-61.

seppuku (pp. 568-9, etc.). Ritual suicide by disembowelment; a more proper term than harakiri. See pp. 73, 95-96.

Shinto (pp. 652-3). The indigenous religious beliefs of the Japanese, as distinguished from Buddhism, which was introduced from China. Literally, "the way of the gods [*kami*]", See pp. 117, 123-5.

shogun (pp. 72-74). A national military ruler, an office delegated by the emperor. Literally, "general," the title was first assumed by Minamoto Yoritomo in 1190; Tokugawa Ieyasu assumed the position in 1603. See pp. 2, 56.

silk (p. 303, etc.). Silk had long been prized by the Japanese upper classes as the finest fabric available for clothing, and its import from China constituted a major element of foreign trade in the era of *Shōgun*; see p. 49. The Japanese had produced domestic silk for centuries, but in 1600 the Chinese product was much more valued; not until the Tokugawa period did Japanese silk come to match and even surpass Chinese silk in quality, eventually becoming Japan's leading export to the West in the pre-World War II period.

soap (pp. 63, 527, 654). A recent import to Japan in 1600 and an unusual luxury; see p. 124.

sushi (pp. 580, 769). Raw fish with vinegared rice; see pp. 121-2.

swimming (pp. 454-7). Although it is conceivable that a Westerner such as Blackthorne could have instructed the Japanese in head-first diving (pp. 455-6), it is certain that his samurai pupils would have been able to swim rings around him. The "art of swimming" (*suiei-jutsu*) was an indispensable part of the martial arts, since samurai often had to fight in the many rivers that divide the Japanese terrain. Samurai were trained not only to swim, but also to engage in mortal combat, in full armor if necessary, both in and under water. Having mastered techniques of combative swimming, samurai knew how to grapple with an enemy while falling overboard, how to disentangle armor from seaweed, and even how to jump out of the water into boats. The one thing that samurai would probably not have done is swim naked, as in *Shōgun*; samurai were rarely parted from their weapons and at the very least would have

worn a loincloth, which was almost a part of the body for the traditional Japanese male.

tai-fun (pp. 464, 971, etc.). A typhoon. “*Tai-fun*” appears to be a dialectical Chinese pronunciation, the source of the English “typhoon”; in Japanese, the characters (meaning “great wind”) are read *taifū*.

taikō. Hideyoshi’s highest title, used as a proper noun to refer to Hideyoshi himself. His first court title was *kampaku*, or “regent” for the emperor, which he took in 1585; in 1591, after ceding his title to his heir Hideyori (hence the reference to Yaemon as “Kwampaku,” p. 278), he himself became *taikō*, a special title for a retired regent. See p. 55.

tokonoma (pp. 549, 624). A slightly raised alcove in a Japanese room, typically decorated with a flower arrangement or hanging scroll. The *tokonoma* was a feature of teahouse architecture and in the modern period of most Japanese houses. Misspelled “*takonoma*” (“octopus room”) in *Shōgun*.

Tōkaidō (p. 290). Literally, “eastern sea road,” the great coast highway from Edo to Kyoto.

tooth-blackening. In *Shōgun*, the only blackened teeth are those of the courtier Ogaki (p. 965) and the (apparently) transvestite Regent Ito (p. 1077). By the seventeenth century, however, the practice had spread beyond the courtier class to all upper-class married women, so that Mariko in real life would certainly have blackened her teeth. For the traditional Japanese, gleaming black teeth were considered very sexy in a woman and elegant in a man; for a sensuous modern appreciation of this aesthetic, see Jun’ichirō Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* (Leete’s Island Books, 1977), especially pp. 33-35. Teeth were blackened by the periodic application of a solution of iron filings pickled in vinegar and sake.

uniforms. The Brown and Gray uniforms in *Shōgun* are a fictional device; see p. 57.

wa (pp. 472, 602, 609, 642, etc.). The frequent use of “*wa*” in *Shōgun* to indicate a transcendent state of spiritual “tranquillity” would strike most Japanese as peculiar. In Japanese, *wa* implies the reconciliation of conflicting elements (and hence is perhaps best translated “harmonization”) and is used primarily to refer to *social* harmony, as in the famous sixth-century injunction of Prince Shōtoku: “Concord [*wa*] is to be esteemed above all else; make it your

first duty to avoid discord.” Many Japanese corporations today similarly use “*wa*” as a motto to encourage cooperation among employees; see Thomas Rohlen, *For Harmony and Strength* (Univ. of California Press, 1974). “*Wa*” can also suggest harmonious balance in an artistic sense, and as such constitutes an important aesthetic of the tea ceremony. The conception of *wa* in *Shōgun* is far more privatized and anti-social than in conventional Japanese usage.

wakō (p. 666). Japanese pirates, active in the trade with China; see pp. 44-45.

wheeled vehicles. As explained by Mariko (p. 801), wheeled vehicles were surprisingly rare in traditional Japan, although ox carts were commonly used for heavy loads. Vehicles with wheels were not only of limited practical use in Japan’s rainy climate and hilly terrain, but were also severely restricted by the Tokugawa government as a means of status regulation and military control.

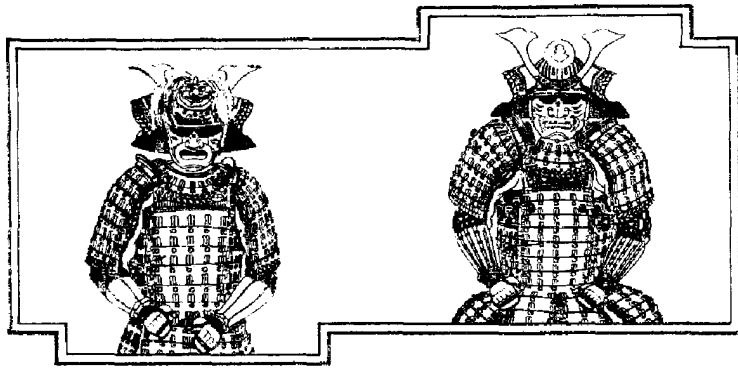
Willow World (pp. 100, 678, etc.). The licensed pleasure quarters; see pp. 108-110.

Yedo. See **Edo**.

Yoshiwara (p. 1180). The licensed pleasure district of Edo; see p. 109.

Zen (p. 48). A Chinese sect of Buddhism introduced into Japan in the thirteenth century; patronized generously by the samurai class, Zen Buddhism came to have a profound influence on samurai morality and on Japanese aesthetics; see pp. 77, 92-93.

For Further Reading



Basic Background

First choice for an introduction to Japanese political history is Peter Duus, **Feudalism in Japan** (Knopf, 1969, paper), a brief and well-written survey of Japanese history until the nineteenth century, emphasizing samurai rule. For general histories with an emphasis on culture, see George Sansom's classic **Japan: A Short Cultural History** (1931; rev. ed., Appleton-Century, 1943; Stanford, 1979, paper) and R. H. P. Mason and J. G. Caiger, **A History of Japan** (Free Press, 1972). A more detailed political narrative is provided in George Sansom, **A History of Japan** (3 vols.; Stanford, 1958-73; 1978, paper).

For the background of *Shōgun* in particular, four books are of special importance and were of obvious use to James Clavell in his preparatory research for the novel. Heading the list is Michael Cooper, ed., **They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640** (Univ. of Calif., 1965), a well-edited collection of fascinating primary materials. Second is Arthur Sadler, **The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu** (Allen & Unwin, 1937; Tuttle reprint, 1978, paper), the only English-language biography of the model for Toranaga; often tedious, it is nevertheless filled with fascinating detail, much of which reappears in *Shōgun*. Next is Charles Boxer, **The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650** (Univ. of Calif., 1951), the standard account of early European contact with Japan. Finally, James Murdoch, **A History of Japan, Vol. II: During the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse (1542-1651)** (2nd of 3 vols.; Kobe: Japan Chronicle, 1903; long out of print), remains the single most detailed political history of the period; although outmoded by current standards,

Murdoch has still not been replaced and, despite (or even because of) its old-fashioned tone, his book provides provocative insight and pleasant reading.

Shōgunalia

James Clavell's **Shōgun** (Atheneum, 1975) is now most readily available in the Dell paperback edition (first printing, June 1976; thirty-eighth printing, March 1980), but those interested can still acquire the one-volume Atheneum hardback edition (now in its fourteenth printing), the two-volume edition produced for The Literary Guild, and editions in most major foreign languages—including Japanese (3 vols.; TBS-Britannica, Autumn 1980). For a sampling of reviews of the novel, see *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, v. 6, p. 114; the most thorough of the various journalistic reviews were the ones by Webster Schott in the *New York Times Book Review* (June 22, 1975, p. 5) and D. J. Enright in the *New York Review of Books* (Sept. 18, 1975, pp. 44-45). For a more academic review, see Sheila Johnson in the *Journal of Japanese Studies*, v. 2, no. 2 (Summer 1976), pp. 445-8.

The making of the twelve-hour television miniseries of *Shōgun* (broadcast by NBC Sept. 15-19, 1980) proved to be a rerun of many of the crises in cross-cultural communication which fill the novel itself. For a short account, see Neil Martin, "Shōgun: Culture Clash in the Orient," *American Film*, April 1980, pp. 18-23; more details and hundreds of photographs are provided in **The Making of James Clavell's Shōgun** (Delta Books, 1980, paper).

A board game entitled "Samurai," by Dan Campagna (© 1979, Heritage Models), may amuse readers of *Shōgun*, since it uses many of James Clavell's fictional characters (but with no attribution whatsoever); a mapboard game of the military simulation variety, "Samurai" is of marginal educational value and is marred by frequent misspellings and errors of fact. There also exists a board game actually entitled "Shogun," by Epoch Playthings; it is an excellent game—a sort of checkers with an element of chance introduced by a magnetic board—but its only tie with Japan is that it was invented there: it is lacking in any cultural or historical content. Another entry in the category of Shōgunalia unrelated to the novel (except for the name) is Suntory's wine-sake beverage "Shōgun" (see p. 121).

1. The Will Adams Legend

The best of the various biographical writings on William Adams is Philip G. Rogers, **The First Englishman in Japan: The Story of Will Adams** (London: Harvill Press, 1956). Less detailed but also of interest are: Arthur Diosy, "In Memory of Will Adams, The First Englishman in Japan," *Trans. and Proc. of the Japan Society*,

London, v. 6, pt. 3 (1904), pp. 325-53; Lord Redesdale, "Three Hundred Years Ago," *ibid.*, v. 8 (1907), pp. 3-21; and Ilza Veith, "Englishman or Samurai: The Story of Will Adams," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, v. 5, no. 1 (Dec. 1945), pp. 5-27.

Numerous published primary sources on William Adams and his English compatriots in early seventeenth-century Japan are available and provide fascinating details for those willing to tolerate wildly inconsistent spelling and tedious trade reports: Thomas Rundall, ed., **Memorials of the Empire of Japan in the XVI and XVII Centuries** (Hakluyt Society, 1850; Burt Franklin reprint, 1963), which contains the most important letters of Adams; C. J. Purnell, ed., "The Log-Book of William Adams, 1614-19," *Trans. and Proc. of the Japan Society, London*, v. 13, pt. 2 (1915), pp. 156-302, a record of Adams' two voyages to the Ryukyu Islands which also includes more of his letters; Ernest Satow, ed., **The Voyage of Captain John Saris to Japan, 1613** (Hakluyt Society, 1900; Kraus reprint, Liechtenstein, 1967), the journal of the man who opened the English trading station in Japan (see p. 6); E. M. Thompson, ed., **The Diary of Richard Cocks, Cape-Merchant in the English Factory in Japan, 1615-1622** (2 vols.; Hakluyt Society, 1883; Burt Franklin reprint, 1965), which contains a number of references to Adams; and M. Paske-Smith, ed., Peter Pratt, **History of Japan, Compiled from the Records of the English East India Company** (Kobe: Thompson, 1931; Barnes and Noble reprint, 1972). For a secondary study of the English trading station, see Ludwig Riess, "History of the English Factory at Hirado (1613-1622)," *Trans. of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, v. 26 (1898).

2. The Attractions of an Opposite

Little has been written on the attractions of a topsy-turvy culture; on a closely related topic, see David Plath, ed., **Aware of Utopia** (Univ. of Ill., 1971), a set of essays on the "perennial place of impossible dreams." The model for Shangri-la is traced in Edward Bernbaum, **The Way to Shambala** (Anchor Books, 1980, paper).

Considerably more has been written on Western images of Japan, although much remains to be explored. For an Asian overview, see John Steadman, **The Myth of Asia** (Simon and Schuster, 1969, paper) and Harold Isaacs, **Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India** (J. Day, 1958; M.E. Sharpe reprint, 1980, paper). For Japan, Jean-Pierre Lehmann, **The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850-1905** (Allen & Unwin, 1978), examines Western ideas of Japan in the Meiji period, and is nicely supplemented by Robert Rosenstone, "Learning from Those 'Imitative' Japanese: Another Side of the American Experience in the Mikado's Empire," *American Historical Review*, June

1980, pp. 572-95. For the post-World War II period, an excellent short history is Sheila Johnson, **American Attitudes Toward Japan, 1941-1975** (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975, paper). Some interesting specialized essays may be found in Akira Iriye, ed., **Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese Relations** (Harvard, 1975).

3. Cross-Cultural Learning

Teachers at the secondary level who are interested in ways of using *Shōgun* in the social studies classroom will find useful information and exercises in "Shōgun: A Guide for Classroom Use," a pamphlet prepared by Teaching Japan in the Schools (TJS) and available for \$2 from TJS, 200 Lou Henry Hoover Building, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305; those interested may wish to ask for information on other teaching-related materials produced by TJS. Also of special interest to teachers at the secondary level will be **Opening Doors: Contemporary Japan** (The Asia Society, New York, 1979), a resource manual for teaching about Japan today. For continuing information on educational resources about Asia, teachers of all levels should profit from **FOCUS on Asian Studies** (published three times annually, subscription \$3 from Service Center for Teachers of Asian Studies, Ohio State Univ., 29 W. Woodruff Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43210).

Historical novels have received little attention either as a genre of literature or as potential tools for teaching history, perhaps because their relationship to both history and literature is so complex and so ambiguous. For those interested in other historical novels about Japan, two by Oliver Statler are highly recommended: the classic **Japanese Inn** (Random House, 1961; Arena Books, 1972, paper), an excellent introduction to Tokugawa Japan by way of the history of an inn along the Tōkaidō, and **Shimoda Story** (Random House, 1969), a novel about Townsend Harris, the American diplomat who negotiated the commercial treaty with Japan in 1858 (see p. 8). William Butler's **The Ring in Meiji** (Putnam, 1965) also deals with Americans in mid-nineteenth-century Japan, while Shelley Mydans, **The Vermilion Bridge** (Doubleday, 1980), is set in eighth-century Nara Japan. For an example of historical novels by Japanese writers, see Eiji Yoshikawa, **The Heike Story** (trans. Fuki Uramatsu; Tuttle, 1956, paper), a modern retelling of the classic *The Tale of the Heike*.

More manageable than retrospective historical novels in the teaching of history and culture are the literary classics of the culture itself; for a discussion of approaches, see "Teaching Social Studies Through Literature," *Social Education*, v. 42, no. 5 (May 1978), which includes a discussion by Elgin Heinz of *The Tale of Genji*.

4. Blackthorne's England

Tudor England (Penguin Books, 1950) by S. T. Bindoff is a clear and well-written introduction to the political history of the Tudor period and includes basic information on English social, legal, and religious institutions. Carl Bridenbaugh in **Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, 1590-1642** (Oxford, 1967; paper) explores in detail the restless society of late Elizabethan and early Stuart England. John E. Neale's biography, **Queen Elizabeth I** (London: J. Cape, 1934; Anchor Books, 1957, paper), is the classic account of the life and reign of Elizabeth I; Neale's admiration for the queen is evident, but the book is balanced and beautifully written.

Garrett Mattingly's **The Armada** (Houghton-Mifflin, 1959; paper) provides a detailed description of the diplomatic maneuvering and military preparations leading up to the great sea battle of 1588 as well as a stirring account of the battle itself. In **The Expansion of Elizabethan England** (St. Martin's, 1955), A. L. Rowse tells the tale of exploration and warfare in lively style. James Williamson, **The Age of Drake** (London: A. and C. Black, 1938), traces Elizabethan voyages of exploration, trade, and colonization against the background of English domestic and foreign policy.

Peter Laslett, **The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age** (Scribner, 1965; paper), is a pioneering investigation of the day-to-day lives of ordinary people in preindustrial England. **The English People on the Eve of Colonization, 1603-1630** (Harper, 1954; paper) by Wallace Notestein is a clear and well-written introduction to English society in Blackthorne's time, while Keith Thomas' fascinating **Religion and the Decline of Magic** (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971) takes a look at the world view of the English in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Penry Williams surveys changes in English society and culture in **Life in Tudor England** (Batsford, 1965).

5. Trade, Diplomacy, and Christianity

The best general surveys of early contact between Japan and the West are Charles Boxer. **The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650** (Univ. of Calif., 1951); Michael Cooper, ed., **The Southern Barbarians: The First Europeans in Japan** (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971); and George Sansom, **The Western World and Japan** (Knopf, 1949; Vintage, 1973, paper), which continues the story through the nineteenth century.

For a general overview of Japanese expansionism in the time of *Shōgun*, see Yoshi Kuno, **Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent** (2 vols.; Univ. of Calif., 1937). Japan's diplomatic difficulties with China are recounted in Wang Yi-t'ung, **Official Relations**

Between China and Japan, 1368-1549 (Harvard, 1953), and So Kwan-wai, **Japanese Piracy in Ming China During the 16th Century** (Michigan State Univ., 1975). A revisionist interpretation of early Tokugawa foreign policy is provided by Ronald Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku: Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *Journal of Japanese Studies*, v. 3, no. 2 (Summer 1977), pp. 323-63.

The activities of Western traders in East Asia in the era of *Shōgun* are detailed in several works by Charles Boxer, including: **Fidalgos in the Far East, 1550-1770** (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), a history of the Portuguese trade based in Macao; **The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555-1640** (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1959); and **The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800** (Knopf, 1965). For the early English traders in Japan, see references in "The Will Adams Legend" above. The activities and influence of the Dutch in Nagasaki after the exclusion of the Catholics are treated in Charles Boxer, **Jan Compagnie in Japan, 1600-1850** (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950); Grant Goodman, **The Dutch Impact on Japan, 1640-1853** (Leiden: Brill, 1967); and Donald Keene's delightful **The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720-1830** (London: Kegan Paul, 1952; rev. ed., Stanford, 1969, paper).

Two excellent recent books on early Christianity in Japan are Michael Cooper, **Rodrigues the Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China** (Weatherhill, 1974), a detailed biography of the model for "Tsukku" in *Shōgun*, and George Elison, **Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan** (Harvard, 1973), a scholarly and penetrating study of the acceptance and then rejection of Christianity in seventeenth-century Japan. For a different sort of understanding of the dilemmas of Christians in Japan in this period, see Endō Shūsaku, **Silence** (trans. William Johnston; Tokyo: Sophia Univ., 1969), a provocative novel by a modern Japanese Catholic author.

6. The Struggle for the Shogunate

For the evolution of Japan's premodern political institutions, the best book is John Hall, **Government and Local Power in Japan, 500 to 1700** (Princeton, 1966). Useful essays on the evolution of the daimyo and their castle towns in the era of *Shōgun* may be found in John Hall and Marius Jansen, eds., **Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan** (Princeton, 1968; paper). For specialized scholarly essays on the period, see John Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Kozo Yamamura, eds., **Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650** (Princeton, 1980).

The military history of the sixteenth-century unification of Japan is detailed in such general histories as Murdoch and Sansom (see "Basic Background" above) and in a readable and well-illustrated survey by S. R. Turnbull, **The Samurai: A Military History** (Macmillan, 1977). For the rise and fall of the military importance of firearms in Japan, see Noel Perrin, **Giving Up the Gun: Japan's Reversion to the Sword, 1543-1879** (David Godine, 1979), an interesting book which is best read in conjunction with a perceptive review by Conrad Totman in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, v. 39, no. 3 (May 1980), pp. 599-601.

For biographical background on the three unifiers of Japan, useful summaries and revealing documents may be found in Ch. xv, "**Heroes and Hero Worship**," in W. T. de Bary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (Columbia, 1958; paper). Virtually nothing about Nobunaga is yet available in English; Hideyoshi is only slightly better served by Walter Dening's badly outdated **The Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi** (Kobe, 1888; rev. ed., 1904; 3rd ed., 1930), but should at last receive some of the attention due him in a political biography by Mary Elizabeth Berry, **Hideyoshi** (Harvard, forthcoming). For Tokugawa Ieyasu, the indispensable English-language source is Sadler's **The Maker of Modern Japan** (see "Basic Background" above). For a good introduction to the political structure of the Tokugawa shogunate, see Conrad Totman, **Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843** (Harvard, 1967). Totman is also currently preparing a biography of Tokugawa Ieyasu aimed at a general audience.

7. A Model for Mariko

The only English-language materials which provide any details about Hosokawa Gracia and her family are Charles Boxer, "**Hosokawa Tadaoki and the Jesuits, 1587-1645**," *Trans. and Proc. of the Japan Society, London*, v. 32 (1934-5), pp. 79-119, which quotes interesting Jesuit descriptions of Gracia, and Johannes Laures, **Two Japanese Christian Heroes: Justo Takayama Ukon and Gracia Hosokawa Tamako** (Tuttle, 1959), a rather eulogistic account by a Jesuit scholar. The connection between Hosokawa Gracia and the Japanese "Cinderella cycle" (see p. 70) has been proposed by Chieko Mulhern in "**Cinderella and the Jesuits: An Otogizoshi Cycle as Christian Literature**," *Monumenta Nipponica*, v. 34, no. 4 (Winter 1979), pp. 409-47.

8. Death and Karma

There is as yet no systematic study of Japanese approaches to death; for an introductory survey, see William LaFleur, "**Death and Japanese Thought: The Truth and Beauty of Impermanence**,"

in Frederick Hoick, ed., *Death and Eastern Thought: Understanding Death in Eastern Religions and Philosophies* (Abingdon, 1974, paper), pp. 226-56. A samurai view of death is presented by Winston King in "**Practicing Dying: The Samurai-Zen Death Techniques of Suzuki Shōsan**," in Frank Reynolds and Earle Waugh, eds., *Religious Encounters with Death* (Penn. State Univ., 1977), pp. 143-58. For suggestive studies of attitudes toward dying in modern Japan, see Robert Lifton *et al.*, **Six Lives, Six Deaths: Portraits from Modern Japan** (Yale, 1979).

On the theme of *karma* in Japanese thought, only fragmentary insights are available in English. Kyōkai's *Nihon ryoiki*, a basic source, has been translated by Kyoko Nakamura as **Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition** (Harvard, 1973). For a Zen perspective, see Ch. 4, "**The Problem of Karma**," in Francis Dojun Cook, *How to Raise an Ox: Zen Practice as Taught in the Zen Master Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* (Los Angeles: Center Publications, 1978). An anthropologist's insights about the basic problem of "fatalism" in Japan, trying to explain how a culture long preoccupied with fate can so successfully deal with sudden change, are provided by David Plath in "**Japan and the Ethics of Fatalism**," *Anthropological Quarterly*, v. 39 (July 1966), reprinted in Irwin Scheiner, ed., *Modern Japan: An Interpretive Anthology* (Macmillan, 1974, paper).

For general background information on the history of Japanese religion, see W. T. de Bary, ed., **Sources of Japanese Tradition** (Columbia, 1958; paper), and Joseph Kitagawa, **Religion in Japanese History** (Columbia, 1966).

9. Learning Japanese

A good short introduction to the Japanese language is Joseph Yamagiwa, "**Language as an Expression of Japanese Culture**," in John Hall and Richard Beardsley, eds., *Twelve Doors to Japan* (McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 186-221. For more detailed linguistic surveys, see Haruhiko Kindaichi, **The Japanese Language** (trans. Umeyo Hirano; Tuttle, 1978), and, for a more academic and historical emphasis, Roy Miller, **The Japanese Language** (Univ. of Chicago, 1967). Two different approaches to the fascinating issues raised by the Japanese language in its cultural context are Roy Miller, **The Japanese Language in Contemporary Japan: Some Sociolinguistic Observations** (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977, paper), and Takao Suzuki, **Japanese and the Japanese: Words in Culture** (Kodansha Intl., 1978).

10. The Samurai

An excellent general history of the samurai, authoritatively written and beautifully illustrated, is Richard Storry, **The Way of the Samurai** (Putnam, 1978); it includes a far more detailed bibliography than is possible here. For a briefer survey, see H. Paul Varley, **Samurai** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970). Ivan Morris' **The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan** (Holt-Rinehart, 1975) examines the important concept of "sincerity" in the samurai tradition.

The medieval epics are a marvelous repository of lore about the samurai class in its classic phase. **The Tale of the Heike** is available in a readable if uninspired translation by Hiroshi Kitagawa and Bruce Tsuchida (2 vols.; Univ. of Tokyo, 1975; paper). The influence of this great epic on samurai values (see pp. 89-90) is discussed in Kenneth Butler, "The Heike Monogatari and the Japanese Warrior Ethic," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, v. 29 (1969), pp. 93-108. Two other important military epics have been translated by Helen McCullough; **The Taiheiki: A Chronicle of Medieval Japan** (Columbia, 1959) and **Yoshitsune: A Fifteenth-Century Japanese Chronicle** (Stanford, 1966).

For the samurai martial arts, see, in addition to the titles mentioned on p. 92, the excellent three-volume survey by Don Draeger, **The Martial Arts and Ways of Japan** (Weatherhill, 1973-4): *Classical Bujutsu*, *Classical Budo*, and *Modern Bujutsu and Budo*. Also of use is Oscar Ratti and Adele Westbrook, **Secrets of the Samurai: A Survey of the Martial Arts of Feudal Japan** (Tuttle, 1973).

For primary sources on Bushido, see Miyamoto Musashi, **A Book of Five Rings** (trans. Victor Harris; The Overlook Press, 1974), a treatise by one of Japan's greatest swordsmen; "Yamaga Sokō and the Origins of Bushido," in W. T. de Bary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (Columbia, 1958; paper); and Yamamoto Tsunetomo [Jōchō], **Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai** (trans. William Scott Wilson; Kodansha Intl., 1979). The classic version of the story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin is Donald Keene, trans., **Chūshingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers** (Columbia, 1971; paper). For a description of the practice of seppuku, Jack Seward's **Harakiri: Japanese Ritual Suicide** (Tuttle, 1968) is good on the details of the ritual but weak on any psychological analysis.

Modern Japanese interpretations of Bushido must be used with care; for example, Nitobe Inazo's well-known **Bushido: The Soul of Japan** (1899; rev. ed., Putnam, 1905), although suggestive, was written by a Japanese Christian for an Anglo-Saxon audience and has strong polemical overtones. Equally deserving of caution is Mishima Yukio's **The Way of the Samurai: Yukio Mishima on**

Hagakure in Modern Life (trans. Kathryn Sparling: Basic Books, 1977).

The tea ceremony, the most all-encompassing of the many cultural pursuits of the samurai in the age of *Shōgun*, is described in good historical detail in Arthur Sadler, **Cha-no-yu: the Japanese Tea Ceremony** (Kobe: Thompson, 1934; Tuttle reprint, 1962, paper). For a description of the Japanese tea ceremony as it is practiced today, see Tanaka Sen'ō, **The Tea Ceremony** (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1973). Okakura Kakuzō's famous **The Book of Tea** (1906; Tuttle, 1956) is an inspired account of the tea ceremony infused with nineteenth-century romanticism. A basic source of information on other aspects of the cultural activities and patronage of the samurai class is the **Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art** (31 vols.; Weatherhill, 1972-80), which includes volumes on *The Feudal Architecture of Japan*, *Momoyama Decorative Painting*, *Momoyama Genre Painting*, *The Namban Art of Japan*, and *The Garden Art of Japan*.

11. Consorts and Courtesans

Very little is available in English on the history of women in traditional Japan. For a concise survey of the changing status of women in medieval Japan, see Joyce Ackroyd, "Women in Feudal Japan," *Trans. of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 3rd ser., v. 7 (1959), pp. 31-68. The position of women in the Heian period is discussed in Ivan Morris, **The World of the Shining Prince** (Oxford, 1964; Penguin, 1979, paper). Useful comparative material on marriage and inheritance may be found in F. Joüon des Longrais, **L'Est et l'Ouest: Institutions du Japon et de l'Occident Comparées** (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1958).

For the women of *Shōgun*, some sense of Hideyoshi's relationships with Nene and Yodo may be obtained from Adriana Boscaro, trans. and ed., **101 Letters of Hideyoshi** (Tokyo: Sophia Univ., 1975), while information on Ieyasu's wives and consorts is provided in Sadler, **The Maker of Modern Japan** (see "Basic Background" above).

For the world of the seventeenth-century Tokugawa courtesan, particularly as it appears in literature, see Howard Hibbett, **The Floating World in Japanese Literature** (Oxford, 1959; Tuttle reprint, 1974, paper). A marvelously detailed description of the traditional Yoshiwara is J. E. de Becker, **The Nightless City, or the History of the Yoshiwara Yukwaku** (1899; Tuttle reprint, 1971, paper). The authoritative history of Chinese ideas about sex is R. H. van Gulik, **Sexual Life in Ancient China** (Leiden: Brill, 1961); no comparable work has yet been done for Japan, although some useful information may be found in Howard Levy, **Sex, Love, and the Japanese** (Washington, D.C.: Warm-Soft Village Press, 1971). For a partial

translation of Saikaku's *Nanshoku ōkagami*, see E. Powys Mathers, trans., **Comrade Loves of the Samurai** (1928; Tuttle reprint, 1972).

12. Daily Life in Traditional Japan

Two general surveys of daily life in traditional Japan are available in English: Louis-Frédéric, **Daily Life in Japan at the Time of the Samurai, 1185-1603** (trans. from the French; Praeger, 1972), emphasizes the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, while C. J. Dunn, **Everyday Life in Traditional Japan** (London: Batsford, 1969; Tuttle reprint, 1977, paper), focuses on the Tokugawa period. In the absence of any specialized scholarly studies, the most useful and provocative information on customs and daily life is to be found in the accounts of Western observers, such as Michael Cooper's **They Came to Japan** (see "Basic Background" above). Of the many other Western accounts, particularly revealing are Engelbert Kaempfer, **The History of Japan** (3 vols., Glasgow: MacLehose, 1906; AMS reprint, 1971), a late seventeenth-century chronicle of Japan which includes an excellent description of the Japanese steam bath (II, 323-5), and Basil Hall Chamberlain, **Things Japanese** (1890; many later editions; Tuttle reprint, 1971, paper).

The standard study of Japanese population trends is Irene Taeuber's **The Population of Japan** (Princeton, 1958); for a more recent and detailed analysis of the Tokugawa period in particular, see Susan Hanley and Kozo Yamamura, **Economic and Demographic Change in Preindustrial Japan, 1600-1868** (Princeton, 1977; paper). The growth of castle towns is traced in John Hall, "The Castle Town and Japan's Modern Urbanization," *Far Eastern Quarterly* (1955), reprinted in John Hall and Marius Jansen, *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1968; paper). For a cross-cultural comparison of Edo and London, see Henry D. Smith II, "Tokyo and London: Comparative Conceptions of the City," in Albert Craig, ed., *Japan: A Comparative View* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 49-99.

Postscript: The TV Transformation

From the start, the production of *Learning from Shōgun* has been a delicate balancing act, an attempt to maintain a tone which would attract the sympathy of both enthusiastic amateurs and skeptical academics. I must confess, however, that my sense of balance (let's call it "we") has been somewhat disturbed by the TV film version of *Shōgun*. At best, it was passable soap opera with beautiful costumes and sets. At worst, and too often, it was a jumble of some of the more simplistic generalizations and grotesque situations found in the novel. It was, in short, a far less subtle, less integrated, and in the end less satisfying work than the novel on which it was based.

This unfortunate distillation of the most dubious aspects of *Shōgun* was achieved by the conscious elimination of precisely those aspects of the novel which made it, in our minds, most worthy of consideration. To begin with, virtually all of the political intrigue among the Japanese daimyo was either eliminated or left incomprehensible; even those familiar with the novel found the TV plot difficult to follow. Hence most of the political background which has been emphasized in *Learning from Shōgun* will be impossible to appreciate on the basis of the film alone. The most regrettable sacrifice was Toranaga, who in the novel is a rich and complex character but who in the film is reduced to an inscrutable cipher, notwithstanding the majestic presence of Toshiro Mifune.

Even more unfortunate from our point of view was the elimination and even reversal of the theme of "learning from Japan," which we considered so fundamental to the novel. Clavell's original Blackthorne was a confused and complex man, his prototypical qualities as a WASP hero constantly challenged by the mores and beliefs of the Japanese. As conceived by director Jerry London and played by Richard Chamberlain, however, Blackthorne becomes instead an aloof victim of Japanese aggression who manages to "become" a samurai only by stubborn adherence to his own Western code of values; about all he really "learns" is the art of bathing and a few words of Japanese. Consider, for example, his lines to Yabu in protest against the threatened crucifixion of the Anjiro villagers: "It is against my Christian conscience. I will have to commit suicide at once." In the novel, one senses the fundamental moral contradiction between Christian conscience and suicide, but in the film the two statements are edited into a perfectly smooth, unflinching sequence.

The transformation of Blackthorne from cross-cultural learner to stubborn ethnocentrist finds a fascinating real-life parallel in the

creation of the film itself, as detailed in *The Making of James Clavell's Shōgun* (Delta Books, 1980), the official account of the project. Here we find a candid and often amusing chronicle of the persistent American refusal to accommodate to Japanese ways, a refusal which seems to have left the project persistently lacking in any of the *wa* (in the Japanese sense; see Glossary) which is so idealized in the novel. *The Making of Shōgun* also provides a revealing explanation of the logic which lay behind the television transformation:

There is no question that [scriptwriter Eric] Bercovici's approach subtly changed *Shōgun*'s basic perspective. Clavell himself notes that, in the novel, Blackthorne is the alien. "It's a Japanese story, a very pro-Japanese story." In the beginning, we are not at all sure that Blackthorne is a hero Only as he finds the beauty of Japan do we find the beauty of his character.

By switching the perspective from the Japanese to Blackthorne, all is reversed. Blackthorne becomes a hero and it is Japan that is alien. When we first see him on the deck of the *Erasmus* in the film version, he is quite a recognizable Western hero. Says Clavell simply, "Different media. You don't relate film form to book form." (pp. 36-37)

The context of this startling admission makes it clear that the difference in perspective is not simply a matter of form: it reveals instead a tacit conviction that the American television public in 1980 is so xenophobic that it cannot tolerate an image of the Japanese (or presumably other such non-white, non-Christian cultures) as anything more than incomprehensible "aliens." What has been effected is a reversion to the basically ethnocentric structure of the Will Adams myth (see Chapter 1), deprived of the strongly pro-Japanese tone which distinguished Clavell's novel.

The controversial decision by Bercovici to have all the major Japanese characters except Mariko speak only in Japanese, with no subtitles and no dubbing, stemmed as much from the "alien" approach to Japan as from any concern for authenticity. As explained in *The Making of Shōgun*, "The plan was simple: The entire story would be told through Blackthorne's eyes What he did not understand, we did not understand" (p. 33). The unfortunate effect was to make the Japanese principals appear far more "inscrutable" than in the novel. In particular, the central male actors were foreclosed from communicating any but the most primitive (and typically hostile) emotions to the American television audience.

The one great strength of the TV series was the reliance on Japanese expertise to create "authenticity." But what was achieved was rather the *look* of authenticity, a largely cosmetic effect which presented the uncomfortable contradiction of skilled Japanese actors, finely costumed, who often behaved in the most un-Japanese ways. Mariko's hairdo may be more historically correct than in the novel,

but she still insists that "Japanese is a very simple language," instructing Blackthorne in distinctions of inflection which do not make sense in her own tongue. More disturbing than such minor errors was the film's emphasis on those scenes from the novel which tended most to caricature Japanese behavior. What on earth did all the Japanese actors make, for example, of the scene in which the old gardener is executed for taking down a rotten pheasant in defiance of Blackthorne's orders, contrasting the humane and life-affirming Western hero with the blindly obedient and life-negating Japanese?

Presumably, most of the native Japanese involved in the production of "Shōgun" passed off such scenes with good humor, tolerating them as the sort of exaggeration typical in the Kabuki theater. But among the American television viewers, a good many were more insulted than amused, particularly in the Japanese-American community. One of the strongest reactions came from Clifford Uyeda, former national president of the Japanese-American Citizens League, who wrote that the "captivating" costumes and photography "were mere settings in which subtle racism was beamed into the subconscious mind Japanese characters were not individuals. They were stereotypes, often gross, sometimes odious. Samurai were depicted as a class of people cruel to the point of being inhuman. Japanese people were cast as a race to whom life has little meaning except death" (*Pacific Citizen*, Sept. 19, 1980, p. 6).

So the TV transformation involved a certain loss of innocence for *Shōgun*, a submission of a very private and self-contained fantasy to the compromising demands of the American entertainment industry. The unfortunate part is that so much good will went into the making of the film series, particularly on the part of James Clavell, who stresses at the end of *The Making of Shōgun* that "*Shōgun* was written to be a bridge between East and West and to dramatize and try to explain the Land of the Gods to the West. It is passionately pro-Japanese" (p. 224). Perhaps I am being impatient and idealistic in my disappointment with the TV version of *Shōgun*. It was certainly a presentation of great visual appeal, with some fine acting by a number of the principals. And for all the latent stereotyping, "Shōgun" does seem to have left a generally positive feeling toward the Japanese among the majority of viewers. If only as "the world's costliest language lesson" (*N.Y. Times*, Sept. 15, 1980), the TV "Shōgun" left millions of Americans knowing far more about Japan than before. Deep-rooted cultural biases cannot be broken down overnight, and "Shōgun," like its parent novel, offers a hopeful foundation on which to build the deeper cross-cultural understanding which is so clearly the ideal of James Clavell. (H.S.)

