

THROWING OFF ASIA I

WOODBLOCK PRINTS OF DOMESTIC "WESTERNIZATION" (1868-1912)

BY JOHN W. DOWER



The remarkably swift "Westernization" of Japan in the late-19th and early-20th centuries was most vividly captured in popular woodblock prints. Images from the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston illustrate the great political, social, cultural, and industrial transformations that took place.

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MIT VISUALIZING CULTURES

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Chapter One: Westernization

What does it mean to speak of people, cultures, or nations responding to "the challenge of the Western world"?

What does "Westernization" involve in concrete practice?

Beginning in the mid-19th century, no non-white, non-Christian, non-Western nation met this challenge more dynamically and dramatically than Japan. Long before its recent accomplishments in automobiles and electronics and pop-culture phenomena like *manga* and *anime*, and long before its disastrous plunge into militarism and war in the 1930s and 1940s, Japan was widely recognized as the great nation-building "success story" of the non-Western world.

In the 19th and early-20th centuries, Japan alone among the major countries of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East succeeded in escaping colonial or neo-colonial domination by the United States and expansionist nations of Europe. Japan alone adopted an agenda of industrialization and "Westernization" that enabled it to emerge as a global power in its own right. Indeed, when the victorious nations of World War One met at Versailles in 1919 to dictate peace terms and form the League of Nations, Japan participated as one of the "Big Five" powers, alongside the United States, England, France, and Italy.

This was an extraordinary accomplishment, particularly when one considers how backward the country had appeared to be only a few generations earlier.

For seven centuries, from the late-12th century until 1868, Japan was ruled by a warrior elite. For over two centuries, beginning in the 1630s, the feudal government based in Edo (present-day Tokyo) had enforced a strict "closed country" (*sakoku*) policy that prohibited Japanese from leaving and foreigners from entering.

While Europe and the United States experienced scientific and industrial as well as political revolutions, and adopted expansionist policies, Japan turned inward—embracing seclusion and, at least at official levels, venerating tradition.

Cities grew, commerce flourished, and literacy became widespread during this long period of isolation. Peace and relative prosperity spawned the vibrant popular culture we can still visualize vividly today through traditional woodblock prints (which first appeared in the 17th century). Still, in the mid-1800s Japan was a small, introverted,

resource-poor, and fundamentally agrarian society. Even within the context of Asia alone, it seemed dwarfed in China's shadow in every way—historically, culturally, physically, and on any imaginable scale of human and natural resources.

This was the country Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States encountered when his warships made two visits in 1853 and 1854 to force the feudal government to abandon the "closed country" policy.

This was a daunting challenge to Japan's leaders, who were aware of Western imperialism and "gunboat diplomacy" elsewhere—including in China next door. In the notorious "Opium War" of 1839 to 1842, defeated China was forced to accept and legalize the opium trade of the Western powers. In the sordid "Arrow War" of 1856 to 1858, shortly after Perry's mission to Japan, the British and French had bombarded Canton and Tientsin and forced China to make additional humiliating concessions.

No one was sure, at the time, whether Japan would sink or swim.

No one anticipated that Japan would or could throw off seven centuries of feudal rule quickly and announce—as the new government did within a matter of months—that "evil customs of the past shall be broken off" and "knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule."

Certainly no one dreamed that in 1894 and 1895, a mere 40 years after Perry's arrival, Japan would be capable of mobilizing a modern army and navy and bringing China to its knees—and, 10 years after that, doing much the same to mighty Tsarist Russia.

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Chapter Two: "Civilization & Enlightenment"

As 1867 gave way to 1868, the feudal government that had opened the country was overthrown by a radical movement led largely by young samurai. The slogans on which the rebels rode to power were reactionary. They called for turning back the clock by "expelling the barbarians" (*jōi*), and for "revering the emperor" (*sonnō*) rather than venerating the warrior leaders ensconced in Edo.

Once the rebels had attained power, they honored half of this "*sonnō jōi*" equation. They placed the emperor—a hereditary and long powerless figure—nominally at the head of their new government. And they immediately flip-flopped and embraced the foreign barbarians.

The new leaders adopted an auspicious new name for the new era: Meiji, written with two ideographs literally meaning "Bright Government." Because supreme authority had ostensibly been "restored" to the imperial dynasty, the occasion was referred to as the Meiji Restoration. The emperor, still in his mid-teens in 1868, became identified as the Meiji emperor. His long reign, extending to 1912, is known as the Meiji period.

Had the movement to overthrow the government in 1868 failed, its leaders would have gone down in history as reactionary and ruthless terrorists. As it turned out, victory transformed those of them who survived the years of civil disorder into pragmatists. Almost overnight, they became adroit practitioners of what we call today "nation building" and "modernization." They became ardent "Westernizers."

"Westernization," however, had many meanings. Looking inward, it involved building a strong state and rich industrialized nation capable of resisting Western pressure and exploitation. Looking outward at an international arena dominated by expansionist powers, "Westernization" obviously entailed competing in the great game of modern conquest and empire.

Success in the modern world, in short, was measured by one's accomplishments in war as well as peace. "Wealth and power" is the ubiquitous phrase for this. In Japanese parlance, "rich country, strong military" (*fukoku kyōhei*) became the most famous slogan of the early Meiji period.

Domestically, what this entailed in practical terms became apparent quickly. By the mid-1870s, the former warrior fiefs or domains had been turned into prefectures. The hereditary warrior class itself had been abolished. The military had been converted

into a conscript army and navy (with many former samurai recruited as the officer corps). Simultaneously, "industrialization" was jump-started with intimate governmental support.

The coal-burning paddlewheel ships that astounded the Japanese when they appeared in Commodore Perry's fleet in the 1850s quickly became part of Japan's own navy and merchant marine.

"Complete Picture of a Steamship: Scenery of Uraga from the Sea" by Sadahide, 1863

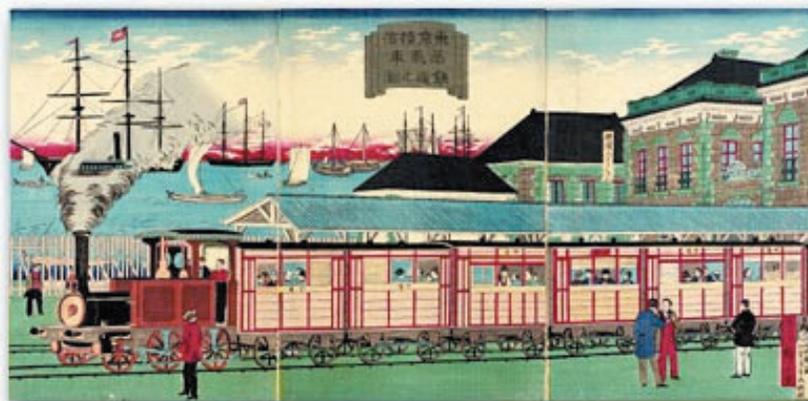
[Y0070] Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



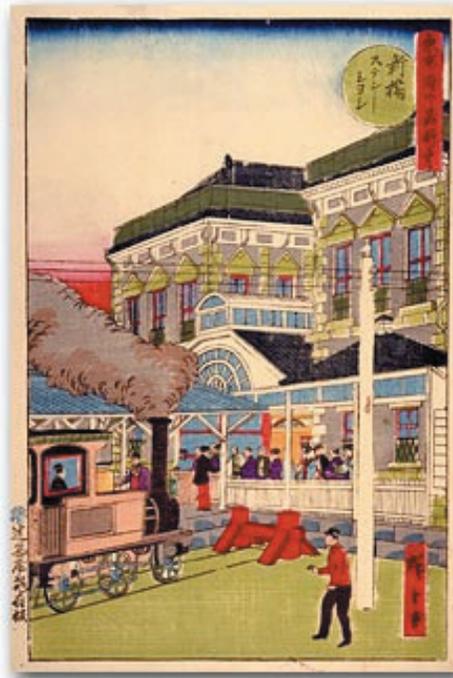
One of Perry's most impressive gifts to the feudal government in 1854—a quarter-scale model train—had been reborn full-scale by the early 1870s, when the first railroad link between Tokyo and Yokohama was opened.

"Steam train between Tokyo and Yokohama" by Utagawa Hiroshige III, 1875

[2000.549] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Telegraph wires began to appear around the same time, along with outdoor street lamps (another of Perry's impressive gifts had been a telegraph apparatus with a mile of wire). Heavy stone and brick Western-style architecture soon became a familiar sight in the Tokyo-Yokohama area.



"Shimbashi Station"
by Hiroshige III,
1874

[Y0185] Arthur M. Sackler
Gallery
Smithsonian Institution

*"Illustration of the
Foreign Buildings along
the Kaigandori Viewed
from the Yokohama
Wharves"* by Hiroshige
III, c. 1870

[2000.506] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



*"The Most Famous View in
Tokyo: Brick Buildings
along the Ginza"*
by Hiroshige III, c. 1874

[2000.388a-c] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



*“Famous Places in Tokyo:
True View of the Post Office
at Edobashi” by Kobayashi
Ikuhide, 1889*

[2000.509] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Iron bridges became listed among the “famous places in Tokyo.” Young women who had formerly been employed spinning and weaving cotton and silk in small cottage industries were quickly mobilized for larger-scale production using Western-style textile machinery.

*“Famous Places in Tokyo:
Picture of Azuma Bridge
and a Distant View of a
Torpedo Explosion” by
Inoue Tankei, July 1888*

[2000.395] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



*“Album of Ten Prints
Illustrating Sericulture:
Unwinding Strands from
Cocoons by Means of a
Silk Reeling Machine” by
Toyohara Chikanobu,
1880*

[2000.096.09] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Industrialization went hand-in-hand with political and cultural Westernization. Beginning in the mid-1880s, the emperor and empress, cultivated as symbols of a deep imperial tradition, were simultaneously presented as arch-exemplars of Western-style monarchical splendor. A succession of brightly colored “brocade picture” woodblock prints (*nishikie*) presented the imperial couple as fashion plates for Western high couture. The emperor (who almost never appeared in photographs after the first few years of his reign) was invariably depicted in Western-style military dress. Starting in 1886, his consort always appeared in public—and in popular illustrations—wearing the most up-to-date European gowns.

Reinventing the Emperor

Although the imperial court in Japan dated back to around the fifth century, the hereditary emperor actually exercised little if any political power after the rise of a warrior class in the 12th century. When the feudal government was overthrown in 1868, power was ostensibly "restored" to the emperor, who became a potent nationalist symbol in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, he was said to exemplify a "sacred and inviolable" tradition dating back to earliest times. On the other hand, the emperor and his family were presented as symbols of the nation's progressive "Westernization" and modernization. In the late 1880s, woodblock artists churned out many prints celebrating the imperial family, always imagining them in Western attire.

The emperor and empress depicted in Western dress, with court ladies in traditional kimono in attendance.

“Maple Leaves at New Palace,” artist unknown, December 1888 (detail)

[2000.237]
Sharf Collection, Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston





*The Meiji emperor and empress with their young son.
“A Mirror of Japanese Nobility” by Toyohara Chikanobu, August 1887*

[2000.548] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

From the 1870s into the 1890s, to be counted as “high society” in Japan was virtually synonymous with being seen as “highly Westernized.” Woodblock-print artists dwelled lovingly on this, often placing their fashionable men and women in scenes that also included appreciation of Western music (harpsichords and chamber or choral groups) and easily accessible technological wonders such as the sewing machine.



“Illustration of Singing by the Plum Garden” by Toyohara Chikanobu, 1887

[res.53.82] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



“Illustration of Ladies Sewing” by Adachi Ginkō, 1887

[11.18172.74] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Such cultural manifestations of Western influence were often subsumed under the slogan “civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*). This evocative phrase went far beyond just frills and fashions, however, and was explicitly associated with the progressive values of Western “civilization” and the European Enlightenment. Fukuzawa Yukichi, Meiji Japan’s most prolific interpreter of Western values and practices, offered a concise interpretation of what “civilization and enlightenment” entailed. The strength

and progress of the great Western nations, he argued, rested on science; and scientific accomplishment, in turn, required a spirit of free inquiry among the general populace. Thus, it followed that liberal and progressive values were not simply moral and political ideals; they were also part and parcel of creating a "rich country, strong military" capable of assuring national independence.

The symbolic capstone of these various developments in "modernization" and "Westernization" was adoption of a Western-style constitution in 1890. Based primarily on conservative German legal precedents, the Meiji Constitution had two particularly notable features. It formally established Japan as a constitutional monarchy "reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal," in which the reigning emperor was "sacred and inviolable." (The government's German legal advisers had balked at codifying this "divine descent" ideology, but to no avail.) At the same time, the new constitution established an elective "diet" or parliament that lay the ground for a more generally representative government.

No other non-Western country had covered so much ground so quickly in responding to the American and European challenge. Foreign observers were impressed.

The Meiji emperor bestows the new constitution, which formally established Japan as a constitutional monarchy. The empress is seated at the left.

"Illustration of the Ceremony Promulgating the Constitution," artist unknown, 1890 (detail)

[2000.226]
Sharf Collection, Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston





The emperor can be seen seated in an ornate box, upper left, overlooking proceedings of Japan's new elective parliament, the Imperial Diet.

“Illustration of the Imperial Diet of Japan” by Gotō Yoshikage, 1890

[2000.535] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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Chapter Three: "Wealth & Power"

Around 1880, a popular Japanese song appeared with these unsentimental lyrics (as translated many years ago by the distinguished British historian of Japan George Sansom):

*In the West there is England,
In the North, Russia.
My countrymen, be careful!
Outwardly they make treaties,
But you cannot tell
What is at the bottom of their hearts.
There is a Law of Nations, it is true,
But when the moment comes, remember,
The Strong eat up the Weak.*

This—as much (or more) than abstract notions of freedom or equality or individual rights—was the great lesson to be learned from the expansionist Western nations. Power politics and Machiavellian realism—*Machtpolitik* and *Realpolitik*—was the name of the game. However much one might praise global commerce and free trade, the bedrock of international stature was empire and clearly defined spheres of influence. "Diplomacy" was never absent the warships. Mammon (*fukoku* or "rich country" in Japanese parlance) was always accompanied by Mars (*kyōhei*, a "strong military").

By the 1880s, such Social Darwinist thinking was not merely accepted as common sense by Japanese policymakers and public commentators. It was concretely applied to the situation in Asia—and more specifically to Japan's position vis-à-vis China, Korea, and Russia. No matter what international law might say, "the Strong eat up the Weak." This perception became the rationale for building a military establishment capable of overseas missions, and for simultaneously promoting a potent, emperor-centered nationalistic ideology to buttress this.

The Threat of the West

This rare woodblock print reveals the acute sensitivity of the Japanese to the treat of Western “gunboat diplomacy” in Asia. The incident depicted is an attack on China by French warships in 1884.



detail depicting Chinese forces



detail depicting French attackers

*“Story from the Sino-French War”
by Utagawa Kunisada III, 1884*

[2000.161] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

China in particular appeared to be the perfect negative example of this ruthless power struggle. In 1884, for example, a Japanese official published an account of recent travels in China that captured this sentiment in the harshest imaginable terms. The Chinese, Sugita Teiichi wrote, were narrow-minded and obstinate and “do not know the great trends of the world.” As a consequence, China was about to become a battleground of Western economic imperialism, with Japan relegated to being a mere spectator. The choice came down to being “meat” or “a guest at the table”—and it was obvious what Japan’s choice should be. This was, Sugita declared, “the law of the survival of the fittest in the real world.”

As early as 1881, Fukuzawa Yukichi had employed an equally vivid metaphor to introduce much the same theme. In a famous essay titled “A Critique of the Times,” Fukuzawa lavished praise on Japan’s progress in mastering Western learning. Japan, he enthused, was already standing with the West “at the center of civilization”—while China, by contrast, had manifestly failed to attain such enlightenment.

With this prelude, Fukuzawa slipped in the knife, and gave it a telling twist. However attractive Western “civilization and enlightenment” might be, Western imperialism was spreading throughout Asia like a fire. In this situation, Japan could be compared to a man who had built a “stone house” while neighboring China and Korea, unequalled in foolishness, continued to live in “wooden houses.” Even the wise man in the stone house would be imperiled if his neighbors’ dwellings went up in flames. Thus Japan had a right and indeed duty to use force, if necessary, to make backward neighbors adopt the path of “progress.” In so doing, Japan would “give them military protection” and “be their cultural inspiration”—not out of altruism, but out of plain self-interest.

Four years later Fukuzawa reiterated this thesis in an equally famous essay titled “On Throwing Off Asia” (*Datsu-A Ron*). In the modern world, he wrote, a nation could only ensure its independence by casting off old customs and introducing Western civilization as Japan had done. By failing to do this, China and Korea remained but “half-civilized countries” with which Japan should feel no allegiance:

We must not wait for neighboring countries to become civilized so that we can together promote Asia's revival. Rather we should leave their ranks and join forces with the civilized countries of the West. We don't have to give China and Korea any special treatment just because they are neighboring countries. We should deal with them as Western people do. Those who have bad friends cannot avoid having a bad reputation. I reject the idea that we must continue to associate with bad friends in East Asia.

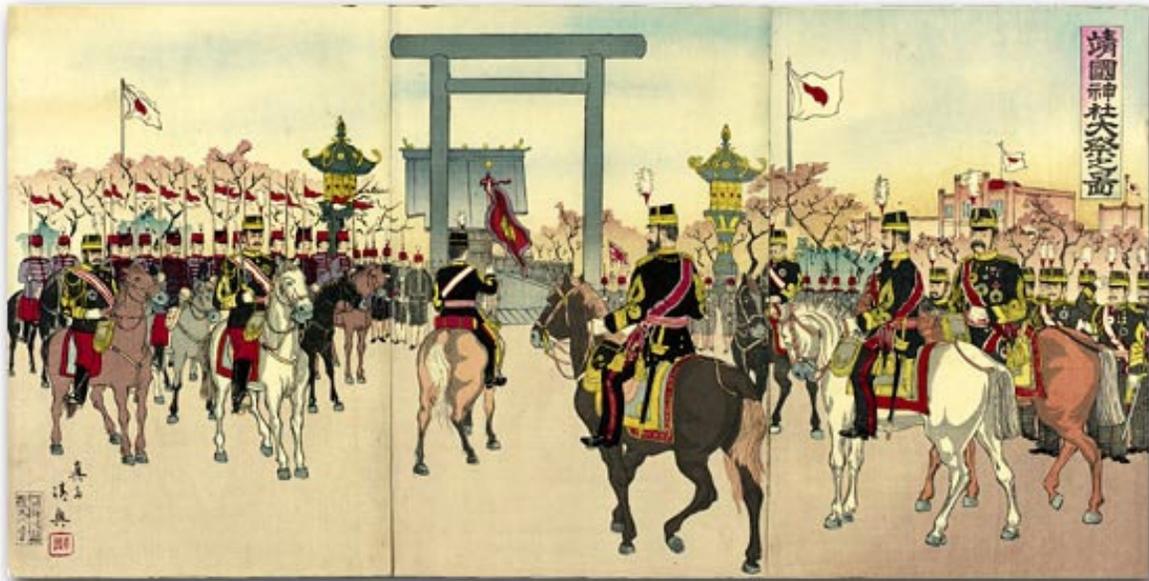
*[quoted in Oka Yoshitake's excellent "Prologue" to Marlene Mayo, ed.,
The Emergence of Imperial Japan]*

"Throwing off Asia"—the most celebrated catch phrase in the rhetoric of early Japanese imperialism—captured the double edge of "Westernization" brilliantly: to survive as a modern nation, Japan not only had to throw off its own past, but also to overthrow the neighbors with whom it ostensibly shared so many cultural and racial affinities.

In so neatly equating unsentimental power politics with "progress," Fukuzawa was parroting the rhetoric of Western imperialism itself, where empire-building was invariably glossed with the rhetoric of bringing "civilization" to backward peoples. In American rhetoric, this was usually phrased in terms of "mission and manifest destiny." In time, the Japanese coined the word *tenshoku* — literally "heaven's work" or "divine calling"—as their own code word for this expansionist vision.

Over the course of the 1880s and early 1890s, these fears and ambitions were pumped up with unrelenting fervor. And as they girded for inevitable war, the Meiji leaders initiated an intense campaign of indoctrination aimed at establishing the emperor as the symbolic center of a muscular modern nationalism. A major step in this direction was the famous 1882 "Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors," a military code that resurrected feudal ideals of the "way of the warrior" and declared selfless loyalty to the emperor to be the supreme duty of the fighting man. In a phrase that was often repeated six decades later in World War Two, the precepts declared that, for the Japanese fighting man, "Duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather."

Simultaneously, the spiritual glory of dying for the emperor was promoted through a series of steps centering on the new Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where the souls of those who died fighting on the emperor's behalf were enshrined. A "Military Exhibition Hall" (the *Yūshūkan*) was established on the shrine grounds in 1882, and—amidst great ceremonial fanfare involving the emperor personally—a huge bronze *torii* (Shinto gateway) was erected there in 1887.



“Illustration of Grand Festival at Yasukuni Shrine” by Shinohara Kiyooki, 1895

[2000.513] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The “brocade pictures” depicting the emperor that flourished in the 1880s and 1890s reflected this carefully cultivated new nationalism. Even when depicted engaged in familial or recreational or civilian activities, the emperor was almost invariably dressed in military uniform and plastered like a bulletin board with sashes and medals. At the same time, even when war still lay years in the future, he was frequently portrayed as the great supreme commander overseeing military maneuvers.



“Illustration of a Military Review” by Toyohara Chikanobu, 1887

[2000.247] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



“Observance by His Imperial Majesty of the Military Maneuvers of Combined Army and Navy Forces” by Toyohara Chikanobu, 1890

[2000.499] Sharf Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

In a rare lithograph of the emperor dating from around 1889 (based on an 1887 drawing of the photography-shy monarch by the Italian Edoardo Chiossone), he is portrayed beneath an elaborate decoration that features not only military flags, but also a small rendering of a divine, conquering progenitor. Here was a graphic image of the sovereign enshrined in the constitution that came into effect in 1890—the “sacred and inviolable” supreme commander of the new Japan.

In 1884 (with the help of a German geopolitical adviser), Japanese strategic planners added another compelling metaphor to the catalog of reasons for taking military action on the Asian continent. Korea, it was declared—politically unstable and wracked by conflict that pitted pro-Chinese against pro-Japanese factions—was a “dagger pointing at the heart of Japan.” It could never be allowed to fall into hostile hands.

When, in 1884, China sent troops to Korea to quell a pro-Japanese domestic uprising, only fear that Japan was not yet militarily prepared for war persuaded the Meiji leaders to work out a negotiated solution with China. Ten years later, when renewed turmoil in Korea again raised the prospect of Chinese intervention, the Japanese were stronger and not amenable to another negotiated solution. War with China came when the Japanese poured thousands of troops into Korea—in the name, as the propagandists would have it, of protecting Korea against intrigues by China. Neither Korea nor China nor Japan nor Asia would ever be the same again.



“True Portrait of His Majesty,” lithograph based on a drawing by Edoardo Chiossone, ca. 1889

[2000.547] Sharf Collection,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Propaganda of “Defending Korea”

A number of Sino-Japanese War prints, such as this one, depicted Korean dignitaries in the company of the Japanese. This served the purpose of reinforcing the Japanese argument that they were fighting to protect Korea against Chinese encroachment and had the support of more progressive Korean leaders in doing so.



*“Minister Ōtori
Escorting the Korean
Regent as They Enter
the Palace at Keijo” by
Toyohara Chikanobu,
1894
(with detail)*

[2000.203]

Sharf Collection, Museum
of Fine Arts, Boston



Detail of Japanese Minister Ōtori escorting the Korean king's father, who was appointed regent after the king was forced to abdicate.

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Chapter Four: Sources

Sources, followed by [Credits](#)

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Complementary Readings

For background reading and/or classroom assignment, teachers may find entries #1 and #2 below particularly useful.

1. Marlene Mayo, ed., *The Emergence of Imperial Japan: Self-Defense or Calculated Aggression?* (D. C. Heath, 1970). This collection of essays addressing Meiji Japan's emergence as an imperialist power includes a particularly valuable "Prologue" by Yoshitake Oka, from which several of the quotations in the Essay derive. Oka's concise essay is one of the best short overviews available of "Social Darwinist" and "Realist" thinking by late-19th-century Japanese.
2. Donald Keene, "The Japanese and the Landscapes of War," in Keene's *Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese Culture* (Kodansha International, 1971), 259-99. This essay by one of the most distinguished literary and cultural scholars of Japan is excellent for placing the woodblock prints of the Sino-Japanese War in the broader context of Japanese popular culture (and war enthusiasm) at the time. The essay has had several lives. See also Keene's "The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and Its Cultural Effects in Japan," in *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, Donald Shively, ed. (Princeton University Press, 1971), 121-75; also the 1981 Kodansha reprint of *Landscapes and Portraits*, which is titled *Appreciations of Japanese Culture*.
3. Shumpei Okamoto, *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War* (Columbia University Press, 1970). This scholarly analysis is the best account of the politics of the Russo-Japanese War on the Japanese side. It concludes with discussion of the riots that erupted in Japan when the terms of the "Portsmouth peace settlement" were made public.

4. Richard Hough, *The Fleet That Had to Die* (Ballentine, 1960). Although not at all essential to understanding the background of the war prints, this readable account describes the ill-fated journey of the Russian Baltic Fleet as it sailed around the world to Port Arthur, only to be destroyed by Admiral Tōgō in the Battle of Tsushima in 1905. Hough's narrative captures some of the flavor of the times on the (hapless) Russian side in a particularly colorful manner.

5. Henry D. Smith II, *Kiyochika: Artist of Meiji Japan* (Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1988). This short (and hard-to-find) publication provides an overview of the greatest Meiji woodblock artist, whose war prints—particularly of the Sino-Japanese War—receive close attention in the present Web site.

Illustrated English-Language Publications of Meiji War Prints

"Throwing Off Asia" is at present the most densely illustrated and accessible treatment of Meiji woodblock prints focusing on the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. (The Essays alone include 165 prints, of which 111 depict the Sino-Japanese War and 34 the Russo-Japanese War.) There are four noteworthy published catalogs in English that feature the war images. These include prints not included in the MFA collection on which "Throwing Off Asia" is based, as well as interesting captions and commentaries.

6. *Impressions of the Front: Woodcuts of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983). Devoted entirely to prints of the Sino-Japanese War, this excellent catalog is based on the extensive collection of Meiji war prints at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A total of 86 full-color prints are reproduced (in small format), accompanied by generous commentary. The arrangement is chronological rather than thematic or by artist, enabling the reader to follow the course of the war visually. Essays by Shumpei Okamoto (on the war) and Donald Keene (on the prints) enhance the value of this hard-to-obtain publication. *Impressions of the Front* also includes maps, a battle chronology, and a bibliography.

7. *The Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)*, Nathan Chaikin, ed. (Bern, Switzerland: privately published, 1983). This sumptuous volume reproduces 92 prints of the Sino-Japanese War, primarily from the Geneva-based collection of Basil Hall Chamberlain, a famous turn-of-the-century British expert on Japan. The full-page reproductions include many in color, and editor Chaikin provides detailed commentary on both the prints and the military history of the war. Organization is chronological, rather than by artist or theme.

8. *In Battle's Light: Woodblock Prints of Japan's Early Modern Wars*, Elizabeth de Sabato Swinton, ed. (Worcester Art Museum, 1991). Based on Meiji war prints from the Sharf Collection (before that collection was donated to the Boston Museum of Fine Art), this catalog includes prints from both the Sino-Japanese War (53 plates) and Russo-Japanese War (27 plates). Within this, grouping is by artist. Brief captions and commentary accompany each print.

9. *Japan at the Dawn of the Modern Age: Woodblock Prints from the Meiji Era*, Louise E. Virgin, ed. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2001). This exhibition catalog celebrates the donation of the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection of Meiji prints (on which this present "Throwing Off Asia" web site is primarily based) to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The catalog contains 77 color plates (22 depicting Meiji Westernization and the emperor, 39 on the Sino-Japanese War, and 16 on the Russo-Japanese War), with brief commentaries for each. Also included are essays by Donald Keene, Anne Nishimura Morse, and Frederic Sharf.

Illustrated Japanese Publications of Prints

10. KONISHI Shirō, *Nishikie—Bakumatsu Meiji no Rekishi* [Woodcuts—A History of the Bakumatsu and Meiji Periods], 12 volumes (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977). This lively, large format, full-color collection of "brocade pictures" (*nishikie*) depicting current events between 1853 and 1912 includes volumes devoted to the Sino-Japanese War (vol. 11) and Russo-Japanese War (volume 12).

11. ASAI Yūsuke, ed. *Kinsei nishikie Sesōshi* [A History of Modern Times through Woodcuts], 8 volumes (Tokyo, 1935-36). This old collection, with extensive black-and-white reproductions, is a standard reference source.

Illustrated Collections

12. H.W. Wilson, *Japan's Fight for Freedom: The Story of the War Between Russia and Japan*, 3 volumes (London: Amalgamated Press, 1904-1906). This exceptionally lavish, large-format British publication totals 1,444 glossy pages and includes hundreds of photographs as well as excellent black-and-white reproductions of sketches and paintings by foreign artists. This is surely the best single overview of the type of war photography and serious war art that appeared regularly in British periodicals like the *Illustrated London News*. As the title indicates, the overall approach is favorable to Japan.

13. James H. Hare, ed., *A Photographic Record of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Collier & Son, 1905). This glossy, large-format, 256-page volume includes photographs by a number of cameramen (as well as a brief commentary on “The Battle of the Sea of Japan” by the influential American naval strategist A. T. Mahan). In comprehensiveness as well as clarity of the reproductions, this is an outstanding sample of the war photography of the times. (The same publisher produced another large-format volume on the war—titled *The Russo-Japanese War: A Photographic and Descriptive Review of the Great Conflict in the Far East*—that includes many of the same images, is also of considerable interest, but is of lesser technical quality.)

14. *Nishi-Ro Sensō* [The Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1974). This volume reproduces the distinctive and elegantly tinted photos of the American photographer Burton Holmes, whose war work deserves to be better known.

15. *Shashin: Meiji no Sensō* [Photos: Wars of the Meiji Period], Ozawa Kenji, ed. (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 2001). This thick volume (270 pages) contains numerous black-and-white reproductions of photos of the Seinan civil war (1877) and the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars.

16. *A Century of Japanese Photography*, John W. Dower, ed. (Pantheon, 1980). This is an English-language adaptation of an outstanding collection of prewar Japanese photography edited by the Japan Photographers Association and originally published under the title *Nihon Shashin Shi, 1840-1945* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1971). Three plates depict the Sino-Japanese War (plates 169-71) and twelve are photos from the Russo-Japanese War (plates 172-83). The latter include several truly classic images.

General Historical Texts

Teachers, students, and anyone else who wishes to pursue the history of Japan’s emergence as a modern nation further will find the following publications particularly useful as both general overviews and reference sources:

13. James H. Hare, ed., *A Photographic Record of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Collier & Son, 1905). This glossy, large-format, 256-page volume includes photographs by a number of cameramen (as well as a brief commentary on “The Battle of the Sea of Japan” by the influential American naval strategist A. T. Mahan). In comprehensiveness as well as clarity of the reproductions, this is an outstanding sample of the war photography of the times. (The same publisher produced another large-format volume on the war—titled *The Russo-Japanese War: A Photographic and Descriptive Review of the Great Conflict in the Far East*—that includes many of the same images, is also of considerable interest, but is of lesser technical quality.)

14. *Nishi-Ro Sensō* [The Russo-Japanese War] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1974). This volume reproduces the distinctive and elegantly tinted photos of the American photographer Burton Holmes, whose war work deserves to be better known.

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General Historical Texts

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17. *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*. This outstanding encyclopedia exists in two editions: (1) a detailed 9-volume version (published in 1983 and containing over 10,000 entries, including extended essays by major scholars); and (2) an abridged and lavishly illustrated two-volume version titled *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (1993). Anyone seriously interested in Japanese history and culture should have these reference works on hand. For this present web site, see in particular the entries on "Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95" (by Akira Iriye) and "Russo-Japanese War" (by Shumpei Okamoto).
18. Paul H. Clyde & Burton F. Beers. *The Far East: A History of Western Impacts and Eastern Responses, 1830-1975*, 6th edition (Prentice-Hall, 1975). Originally published in 1948, this standard "diplomatic history" remains a useful reference for sharp analysis as well as basic data.
19. Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford, 2003). This survey history by a leading scholar reflects the most recent research on modern Japan. (384 pages).
20. Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 2nd edition (Westview Press, 1992; originally published in 1982). Hane's great strength lay in his keen ear for the "voices" of people at all levels of Japanese society. (473 pages).
21. Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 2nd edition (D.C. Heath, 1996). Originally published in 1978, this thoughtful overview has the additional virtue of brevity. (307 pages).
22. Peter Duus, *Modern Japan*, 2nd edition (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Originally published in 1976, this is another reliable survey text. (376 pages).
23. Julia Meech-Pekarik, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (Tokyo and New York: John Weatherhill, 1986). This is the standard introduction to Meiji prints in English.

Illustrated Periodicals

For American and British graphic responses to the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars as these appeared in popular periodicals, the following weeklies are of particular interest:

Illustrated London News
Punch
Harper's Weekly
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

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