

I often found a connection between some point of the language—a particular word or the use of a phrase, for example—and how that point could elucidate something very “Chinese” I would encounter in my everyday life in China. The language helped me understand what I saw on the streets or on our travels around the country—how people made their livings, their habits, their behavior toward each other, how they dealt with adversity, and how they celebrated. (15)

Fallows readily admits that Mandarin is one of the most difficult languages to learn, but she acknowledges the difficulty cannot simply be explained by the seemingly arbitrary nature of the language but more so by the intricacy and complexity of it. She deconstructs the language layer by layer and examines the written as well as the spoken word. She explains that most people, including the Chinese, are not equally fluent in both the spoken word and the written. Each element of the language has its own intricacies and difficulties.

This cleverly constructed memoir was an enjoyable read and a truly refreshing discussion of Chinese culture. Fallows employs her engaging writing voice to undermine stereotypes in her discussion of Chinese life, love, and culture, and I found the work to be interesting, intriguing, and intelligent. ■

EMILY GAMMON is a graduate student in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Colorado. She holds an undergraduate degree in both Theatre and in Secondary Education (English concentration) from the University of Maine, Orono. An actor and educator, she has worked with pre-kindergarten to undergraduate students in topics and subjects ranging from storytelling and acting to literature and writing.

Modern Japan A Historical Survey (Fourth Edition)

BY MIKISO HANE AND LOUIS G. PEREZ

BOULDER: WESTVIEW PRESS, 2009

578 PAGES, ISBN 978-0-8133-4409-6, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by Jason Morgan

History teachers at all levels are always looking for solid bits of information that they can use in their lectures in order to shore up the essentially narrative structure of history instruction. If this premise is true, then Mikiso Hane and Louis G. Perez’s *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* (Fourth Edition), a treasure trove of figures and facts, will become perhaps the go-to book about modern Japan on the secondary and post-secondary educator’s bookshelf.

The chapter and section headings are clear and intuitive, following a straightforward chronological flow that allows the readers to position themselves back within the context of the particular period under discussion. Even those new to the study of modern Japan will likely find themselves easily able to situate their increasing understanding of the subject within the then-current social, political, cultural, and economic milieu.

This classic style of history writing also serves to build a kind of dramatic tension; the reader, being presented with an array of historical facts (and, by extension, possible courses of action), is made to feel the gravity of the choices

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to be made by those presented with such a panoply of options. And, when we know that a particular historical actor was required to make choices without full access to the entire range of information now known to us, a sense of foreboding arises without the author having to belabor the point.

Indeed, in adopting this meaty style of history writing—the stolid progression of changes through time marbled with the diversity of quanta of information that complete our positions in a given historical context—the authors have valiantly refused to succumb to the temptation to replace true history-telling with the politically correct but often superficial style, foisted upon historical actors and events by kowtowing to unwieldy categories, such as “gender relations” and “interactions with the other,” which, though perhaps significant to a few people in any historical period, nevertheless many times distort beginning students’ understanding of the past. In other words, the authors of *Modern Japan* write history in order to provide a window to the past and not a mirror in which to practice commentaries upon themselves and their own time.¹

This reviewer was also relieved to find that the authors of *Modern Japan* did not indulge in that distinctly anti-American tone that imparts a false seriousness and sense of balance to works that deal with World War II in the Pacific. When the Americans win a battle—as in the authors’ presentation of the Battle of the Coral Sea and Guadalcanal—Hane and Perez resist the urge to undermine these victories by inserting something along the lines of, “but let us not forget that the Americans were guilty of savagery and atrocities elsewhere.” The Pacific War was brutal and pitiless, but, clearly, the Japanese outclassed the Americans in butchery and in contempt for death. As for those who would try to use the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as trump cards to spread the guilt around evenly—the authors are having none of this tack: the horrors of nuclear war are presented in all of their nightmarish implications, but there is no mawkish moral equivocation of the suffering of civilians with the truths of governmental policy-making. Hiroshima was bombed, the citizens who survived the initial blast endured a hellish agony (more stoically than perhaps anyone else would have been able, as the authors point out), and yet the leaders of Japan would not surrender. This is clear, and the authors are careful to keep their narrative from being bogged down in maudlin eulogies, unctuous editorializing, or moral leveling across the divide of states at war.

I have only a few quibbles. The index is not as exhaustive or as cogently ordered as it perhaps could be. There is a paucity of maps, and the ones that are used do not reproduce well in black and white. In some chapters, the authors seem to have used the same handful of reference materials for the bulk of their research. However, anyone looking for a substantial introduction to the history of modern Japan from the Meiji Restoration to the very recent past could perhaps do no better than to begin with Hane and Perez’s rich, but highly accessible, text. ■

NOTES

1. I follow here an enlightened review by Jonathan Chaves of *A Wild Deer amid Soaring Phoenixes: The Opposition Poetics of Wang Ji*, *China Review International* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 189–193.

JASON MORGAN is a doctoral student in Japanese History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. A graduate of the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga and the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, he spent more than five years in Japan and is interested in legal history and the history of the Japanese empire.

India and Pakistan *Continued Conflict or Cooperation?*

BY STANLEY WOLPERT

BERKELEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 2010

144 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0520266773, HARDBACK

Reviewed by Thomas Lamont

Stanley Wolpert, one of America’s senior and foremost pundits on South Asia and India in particular, has given us a smart, concise, and accessible overview of Indian-Pakistani relations. This short book is primarily an intelligent explanation of the ongoing rivalry between India and Pakistan. Yet it is also an impassioned and eloquent call for better relations between these two nuclear-armed states that are both critical to the future of Asia as well as to the US. While Wolpert covers well-trod ground, and many experts will perhaps find little of interest here and even quibble with some of his material, Wolpert’s tone is even-handed and his writing is, as usual, engaging and deft. *India and Pakistan: Continued Conflict or Cooperation?* is also surprisingly up-to-date and will be extremely useful for several years for students who are studying this important but protracted issue for the first time. One undergraduate told me that he found the book a helpful supplement in his semester-long course on India since independence.

The first part of the book is a brief yet solid overview of the simmering tensions that rose to the surface during the latter years of the Indian independence movement, especially the critical years just prior to 1947. Wolpert succinctly recounts the jawing between Jinnah and Nehru as independence approached and the growing communalism and religious extremism that marked the era. He puts Kashmir front and center in his analysis, and in the first two chapters, he describes how the unresolved status of Kashmir during the run up to, and the immediate aftermath of, Partition and independence sabotaged better relations between India and Pakistan. Wolpert effectively explains the competition between Pakistan and India for control of Kashmir and their efforts to gain allies abroad and at home in this struggle. He gives insightful and sometimes amusing anecdotes that illustrate how Pakistani and Indian leaders allowed petty interests to dominate policy or misjudged each other and miscalculated on a grand scale. The most scathing criticism is directed at Zulfikar Bhutto and Indira Gandhi who come off as largely self-serving egoists. The ineptitude and venality of Indian and Pakistani leaders is a stark contrast to the author’s thoughtful and sympathetic portrayal of ordinary people in South Asia, especially the Kashmiris. Wolpert thoughtfully describes how Kashmiris, the unwitting inhabitants of some of the world’s most hypnotic topography, have borne the brunt of the conflict between India and Pakistan as a result of some unfortunate geography. Although Wolpert is careful to place blame on individuals rather than paint Pakistanis, Indians, and Kashmiris with a broad brush, he also notes how mass movements such as Islamic and Hindu extremism have exacerbated the relationship between Pakistan and India, especially by meddling in Kashmir.

Toward the end of the book, Wolpert gives what seems like a blow-by-blow description of the relevant events of the last two decades. While some teachers might find this synopsis of recent history, including the Mumbai attacks of 2008, somewhat tedious or lacking nuance, students will probably find this section helpful since most of them will likely have at best only a cursory grasp of this material. Wolpert does an especially good job of explaining the role of Afghanistan in Pakistani-Indian relations, something American students might find particularly relevant.

Wolpert concludes *India and Pakistan: Continued Conflict or Cooperation?* by boldly offering an earnest solution to the problems at the heart of the