

Nobuko Margaret Kosuge, *Popi to Sakura: Nichi-Ei wakai wo tsumugi-naosu* [Poppies and Cherry-blossoms: Spinning the Bitter Memories into British-Japanese Reconciliation], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008, 336 + 8 pps, ISBN-13: 978-4000247665
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This book is a slice of contemporary history told in the form of an autobiography by Professor Kosuge. It is an account of the steps she took to work for reconciliation between the Japanese and British Prisoners-of-War who came into their hands during the Asia-Pacific war. These steps were initially taken around 1996 in Cambridge and later expanded to assume a national dimension. References are made later in the book to work by the Far East Prisoners-of-War and the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group (later the Burma Campaign Society).

At the outset Professor Kosuge, a visiting scholar, presented a bouquet of poppies at the ceremony on Armistice Day, 1996, at the war memorial in Cambridge. Thereafter, a central role was played by members of the Poppy and Sakura Club in Cambridge. Clearly, the symbolism was important. For the Japanese, Sakura (cherry blossom) is taken to represent Japanese culture and is a token of peace and friendship. The Poppy, by contrast, is a symbol of sacrifice and suffering. It is an emblem carried forward from the First World War when large casualties were sustained in Flanders fields where poppies grew. The colour of poppies being red, it represented the shedding of blood and ultimately death in the service of one's country. That tradition was carried forward to the Second World War and beyond. Poppy Day and Remembrance Sunday are occasions when the war dead of two world wars are remembered and, along with them, the casualties in prisoner-of-war camps.

The need for improved British–Japanese understanding on the POW issue increased as the war receded in memory; and, with the help of Ambassadors Fujii and Hayashi and Minister Numata, a conference of veterans and academics specializing in Japan was held in Cambridge in December 1997. This resulted in the publication of the conference papers (Kosuge and Philip Towle, eds, *Britain and Japan in the Twentieth Century*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2007). The next stage was for the veterans involved in various organizations dedicated to reconciliation to be invited to visit Japan. This took place in March 1998 when they met the Japanese veterans of the Burma campaign and vowed to forget the past. Their itinerary took in visits to the shrine to the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo. Encouraging sentiments were exchanged between the Cambridge and Japanese delegations. It must have been something of a disappointment when, on the occasion of the state visit to Britain by the Japanese Emperor and Empress later that year, the Japanese Hinomaru flag was burnt by some ex-soldiers and others turned their backs on their majesties.

Professor Kosuge ends with an account of the further symposium held in London at the Cabinet War Rooms in 2005 to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War under the title 'Enemy and Friend: Britain and Japan at War and Peace'. The key papers sought the reasons, both direct and indirect, for the abuse of Allied POWs by the Japanese military, concluding that it had a misguided mentality which rated the capture of soldiers in battle very low and disregarded the human suffering endured by those who became their prisoners. Japanese delegates at the conference confirmed that there was evidence of a greater desire for reconciliation on the part of the Japanese in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s though that was directed at Asian war prisoners as much as western ones. The success of the reconciliation process with former enemies and occupied territories has had its limitations. But the successes of the Japan–UK

reconciliation, such as they are, may hopefully be relevant to Japan's approaches towards other former enemy countries.

Professor Kosuge has long been concerned with postwar reconciliation on which she has written an important general study, *Sengo wakai* (Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2005). In the present work, which is devoted solely to Britain, she explains that those like herself born after the war cannot be punished for the past misdemeanours of their countrymen but must accept some degree of responsibility. With such a philosophy, she deserves great credit for her initially private initiatives to improve understanding of the POW issue and for her achievements which are chronicled in this book. She in turn gives credit to others in the field who have quite independently taken up similar projects in other areas of Britain. She also mentions her associates in this important venture over the last decade who are too many to mention here. It is a modest and endearing account and a tribute to all concerned.

Unlike other books on similar themes, this book is not primarily concerned with the ancient litany of 'forgive', 'forget', and 'apologize'. Instead, it sets out at length the practical steps which she and her British associates took to deal with a human issue which damaged British–Japanese relations throughout the postwar decades. They were in the main the personal endeavours of enlightened people and did not involve governments, which had resolved the issue to their own satisfaction with Prime Minister Murayama's public apology of 1994. This book deserves the attention of all of us who seek a formula for defusing long-standing tensions between peoples.

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Yasuko Kameyama, Agus P. Sari, Moekti H. Soejachmoen, and Norichika Kanie (eds.), *Climate Change in Asia: Perspectives on the Future Climate Regime*, UNU Press, Tokyo, 2008 (Paperback), ISBN-13: 978-9280811520 \$34.00
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Aptly named, the book *Climate Change in Asia: Perspectives on the Future Climate Regime* provides a critical and comprehensive examination of what governments in Asia are doing to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and what they can do in the future.

Climate change is perhaps the most talked about environmental issue on the planet. It affects all of us, in every part of the globe, in every country. Within the debate, however, more work needs to focus on Asia, and the role it can and will play in reducing GHG emissions at the global scale. It is this gap in the literature that the book *Climate Change in Asia* helps to fill. For such a complex topic, the editors have successfully provided a useful and practical compilation of essential information on the Asian region and its role in the climate change debate.

The topic of climate change is a difficult one at best, involving multi-sectoral approaches and inter-linkages across a broad spectrum of industries and government ministries.¹ The challenge is

¹ W.J. Burroughs (2007), *Climate Change: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, New York: Cambridge University Press.