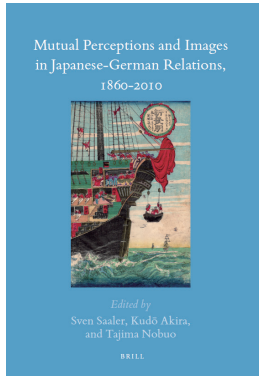


Buchbesprechung / Book Review



Sven Saaler, Kudō Akira and Tajima Nobuo (eds.)
Mutual Perceptions and Images in Japanese-German Relations, 1860-2010

Brill's Japanese Studies Library, Volume 59, Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2017, 437 pp; ISBN: 978-90-04-34541-6
 Price: EUR 109/ USD 126

Japanese-German relations have been well covered in recent historical writing, but how these two recent arrivals on the world stage (only three years separate the Meiji Restoration and the foundation of the German Empire) perceived each other has received less attention, making this a welcome addition to an exciting field of study. Edited by Professors Sven Saaler, Kudō Akira and Tajima Nobuo, and containing seventeen papers, ten of which are by Japanese contributors (and many of them ably translated by Justin Aukema and Michael Wachutka), the work examines mutual representations of Germany and Japan over the 150-year span of 1860-2010, with Saaler's introductory chapter providing a valuable overview, and the texts backed up with 90 illustrations and twelve charts and graphs. For the Anglophone reader, this volume also offers the bonus of introducing a German dimension to the history of mutual image-building between Japan and the West.

The papers are grouped into five sections, organised more or less chronologically, and the first, entitled 'Early Encounters', brings together three papers examining Japanese-German mutual perceptions between the arrival of Count Eulenburg's diplomatic mission, despatched to Japan in 1860 by the Kingdom of Prussia, and the final years of the shogunate.

As Fukuoka Mariko shows, the *bakufu* and its representatives had a hard time understanding the complexities of pre-unification Germany and the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*), as well as the precise relationship the Kingdom of Prussia had with either entity. Consequently, Eulenburg was only able to conclude a bilateral Prussian-Japanese Treaty in January 1861, despite his best efforts to represent both the member states of the *Zollverein* and non-members such as the Hanseatic city states and the grand duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Suzuki Naoko goes on to show how it fell to the members of the first shogunal mission to Europe in 1862, and in particular Fukuzawa Yukichi, to grapple with the so-called 'German Unification

Problem'. One interesting result of this investigation by Fukuzawa and his colleagues was a suggestion that the German Confederation might serve as a suitable model for unifying Japan into a league of daimyo domains. In the event, however, Japan chose a different path after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and became a centralized state, even more so than the federally structured German Empire that replaced the Confederation in 1871. The section concludes with a fascinating examination by Hakoishi Hiroshi of how Prussia was perceived in Japan during the Boshin War (1868-69) which followed the Meiji Restoration. Prussia, represented by its envoy Max von Brandt, was identified alongside France among the foreign powers most sympathetic to the shogunal cause, and like the French officers Jules Brunet and Eugène Collache who unofficially joined the remaining Tokugawa forces in northern Japan resisting the Imperial takeover, Prussia was similarly represented by the brothers Heinrich and Eduard Schnell, who, after supplying armaments and military expertise to the Aizu domain, threw their lot in with their erstwhile customers and the associated clans of the Northern Alliance. The conflict coincided with a boom in new forms of printed media in Japan, and speculation in the Yokohama-based, English-language satirical journal *The Japan Punch* and contemporary, Edo-based Japanese newspapers about Prussian involvement in the conflict, both perceived and actual, gave the Boshin War what Hakoishi memorably describes as 'the characteristics of a fierce information and propaganda war' (p. 126).

Part 2 addresses 'Perceptions of a "Golden Age" of Japanese-German Relations'. Germany's role as a suitable model for Meiji Japan is examined by Katō Yōko in her chapter on the politician and army officer Katsura Tarō, who studied in Berlin during 1870-73 and again during 1875-78. His experiences convinced him of the superiority of the German Empire in matters of military science as well as governance and his letters to Kido Takayoshi, one of the founding fathers of modern Japan, led to the latter's advocacy of universal conscription and a constitution following the German model.

The adoption of German models in the fields of war and law began in earnest in 1885, with the employment of German military and legal advisors. Heinrich Menkhau offers an interesting perspective on nineteenth-century German impressions of Japan by examining the writings of two resident legal experts, Georg Michaelis and Albert Mosse, each of whom were employed for four years by the Japanese government between 1885-90. Neither had much opportunity to engage with Japan beyond what their government handlers permitted them to see (Mosse in particular complained that local officials built 'Potemkin villages' (p. 186) during his study trips into the interior) and both remained firmly convinced of Western cultural superiority, criticizing Japan for a 'lack of morals' without considering the possibility that a different moral framework had evolved in 'an entirely divergent social and cultural context' (p. 188).

Rolf-Harald Wippich and Peter Pantzer introduce images of Japan created in Germany before the First World War (and in Europe as a whole in the latter case). In his examination of the image of Japan in the German satirical magazines *Kladderadatsch* and

Simplicissimus, Wippich covers the period from 1853 to 1914, but the most interesting material dates from the two decades before the First World War when the two journals were operating concurrently (*Kladderadatsch* was founded in 1848, *Simplicissimus* in 1896). For the non-German reader, and especially one brought up with the British magazine *Punch* as a source of historical imagery, it is fascinating to see satire from a different national standpoint. While the sedate, Berlin-based *Kladderadatsch* might have been closer to *Punch*, its Munich-based counterpart *Simplicissimus* possessed a satirical bite unimaginable in a British satirical magazine at that time, and its use of grotesque and often shocking imagery reflected its editors' self-proclaimed policy towards its readership of 'destructive enlightenment' (p. 155). Both journals offered occasional commentary on Japan's rise to great power status, especially after its victory over Russia in 1905, and employed various metaphors to represent the new arrival, but, as Wippich points out, neither journal ridiculed the Japanese to the same extent as their usual European targets, and in particular Kaiser Wilhelm II. Given a choice between representing Japan as the 'Prussia of the East' or as the 'Yellow Peril', *Kladderadatsch* and *Simplicissimus* seem to have preferred the former (and to have made frequent fun of the Kaiser's advocacy of the latter).

Pantzer's paper 'Japan in Early Twentieth-Century European Picture Postcards' is broader in scope and offers a rich vein of Japan-related imagery produced for mass consumption. Illustrated for the most part by anonymous artists commissioned by publishers, postcards achieved a level of mass circulation almost imaginable today (as Pantzer reminds us, this was a time when European postal services could guarantee as many as six deliveries a day in most major cities, and it was possible to receive a reply to a letter or postcard within only a few hours of posting it). Japan was a popular subject, although mostly represented by depictions of kimono-clad Japanese women. The Russo-Japanese War generated more up-to-date imagery commenting on Japan's military success, but more interesting in the German context are the picture postcards that appeared after Japan's declaration of war in August 1914 and portrayed Japan in a negative light as a treacherous, often monkey-like, figure taking advantage of the conflict in Europe to steal Germany's possessions in China.

Notwithstanding Japan's participation on the Allied side in the First World War, or, as it is known in Japanese historiography, the 'Japanese-German War' (*Nichidoku sensō*), the legacy of German instruction in Japan remained strong, as the third part of this book shows, despite its foreboding title 'Drifting Apart: Tensions and War'. Saaler's chapter examines the image of Germany in Japan before 1914, and shows the extent to which the Imperial Japanese Army continued to follow the German model after its last military advisor, Freiherr von Grutschreiber, returned home in 1894. As a breakdown of the foreign assignments of Japanese Staff College graduates over the period 1885-1914 shows (p. 227), Germany claimed the lion's share of the Japanese army's brightest and best – 86 officers in total – while France came a distant second with only 32. How-

ever, while the bedrock of pro-German sentiment in Japan remained the army, together with some parts of the political and academic establishment, the general public and the growing mass media in late Meiji-era Japan tended to view Germany more critically.

Germany's primacy as a model for the Japanese Army even survived the defeat of the First World War. Whereas the lessons of recent wars tend to be evaluated from the perspective of the victor, Japanese military writers after 1918 showed more interest in examining how Germany, rather than the victorious allies, had pursued a policy of total war. In a fascinating chapter Kudō discusses the Japanese evaluation of the 'total war' recently waged by Imperial Germany, in which two forms of mobilization were identified, one focusing on industry (the so-called Rathenau model) and the other on manpower (named after its formulator, General Erich von Ludendorff). The Ludendorff model, geared towards prolonged war, quickly eclipsed the short war Rathenau model, and established a disturbing precedent of the primacy of the supreme military authority in civil-military relations. One influential theorist, Nagata Tetsuzan (who had been stationed in Germany during the fateful summer of 1914 and witnessed the mobilization at first hand) applied both German models to his vision of total war, emphasizing the importance of resources (in particular the acquisition of coal and oil) and manpower, although he also avoided any definite statement on whether Japan's next conflict would be a short blitzkrieg or a prolonged, total war.

The legacy of Japan's perceived betrayal in 1914 and especially the seizure of the German naval base at Qingdao was a major factor in the German image of Japan throughout the years of the Weimar Republic and, as Tajima shows in his chapter, during the early years of the Nazi regime as well. In 1934, the Foreign Minister Neurath lectured the Japanese Ambassador to Berlin on the 'vile ingratitude' shown by Japan twenty years earlier despite 'the kindness that we had shown the Japanese in all areas before the war' (p. 275) and as Tajima observes, anti-Japanese sentiment appears to have widespread in the German Foreign Office before the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan in 1936, and only the Wehrmacht made any consistent effort to reacquaint itself with what the supreme commander Hammerstein-Equord referred to as 'the power on the other side of Russia' (ibid), re-establishing the post of military attaché at the German embassy in Tokyo in 1934. The Nazis themselves came to power without any coherent policy towards East Asia. Unsurprisingly, Hitler had little interest in Japan, or the Far East generally, and if he thought of the Japanese at all, it was as a 'culture-bearing' people occupying a lower rank in his racial hierarchy than the 'culture-founding' Aryan race. Göring and Ribbentrop were similarly lacking in interest or knowledge. Alfred Rosenberg, head of the party's in-house Foreign Policy Office, was largely supportive of Japanese expansion into the so-called 'yellow Lebensraum' of East Asia, but overestimated both the geographical reach of Japan's territorial ambitions and the extent to which Japan would 'challenge Soviet Russia and perhaps even annihilate it with a single blow' (p. 272).

Part 4 examines the ‘Idealization of “The Other” in the Age of Totalitarianism’ through four essays, three of which are devoted exclusively to German perceptions of Japan during the Nazi era. Japanese perceptions of Germany on the other hand, are examined as part of Tano’s contribution on leisure movements in Germany and Japan during 1935-1942, which offers a interesting perspective on how the ‘Strength through Joy’ (*Kraft durch Freude*, or KdF) movement was perceived and emulated in Japan.

Tano Daisuke examines how the Nazi leisure organization KdF had its Japanese counterpart in the Japan Recreation Association (*Nihon Kōsei Kyōkai*) which was founded in 1938. Despite efforts to generate a national leisure movement, or ‘*kōsei undō*’, and the hosting of a Recreation Congress for Asian Development (*Kōa Kōsei Taikai*) in Tokyo in October 1940 (which was attended by representatives of the KdF), there was little tangible result. Despite much admiration for the German model, the economic demands of waging the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) made any form of mass entertainment, ‘healthy’ or otherwise, increasingly unsustainable and with the outbreak of war against the United States in December 1941 the *Nihon Kōsei Kyōkai* faded into obscurity in the following year. Unsurprisingly, in the unforgiving terrain of wartime Japan, ‘Freude’ came a poor second to ‘Arbeit’, and the *Sangyō Hōkokukai* (literally, the ‘Association of Industrial Service to the Nation’), the Japanese version of the German Labour Front (*Deutsche Arbeitsfront*) proved more durable.

The remaining contributions by Hans-Joachim Bieber, Gerhard Krebs and Danny Orbach offer fascinating insights into how Japan was perceived in Germany during the Nazi era.

As Bieber shows, the Nazis managed to side-step the obvious conflicts with their racist world view by emphasising the spiritual links between Japanese and German soldiers, presenting the former not just as samurai supermen, but even as ‘*Germanen im Quadrat*’ or ‘Super Germans’, a claim which proved counter-productive, at least according to a Reich Security Service report in August 1942, which noted “a kind of inferiority complex” (p. 321) on the part of the German population towards the heroic Japanese. In a fascinating comparison of the respective images of Japan held by the academic wing of the SS and the clandestine conservative anti-Nazi movement, Orbach reveals how Professor Walther Wüst, head of the SS think tank, the Ahnenerbe Institut, played down Nazi racism and emphasized instead the common ‘essence’ shared by Japanese and German cultures, while Carl F. Goerdeler, the designated head of a new government, formulated East Asian policies for a post-Hitler Germany in racialist and colonialist terms, perceiving Japanese expansion as a threat to the shared interests of the Western powers.

Krebs examines German perceptions of Japanese heroism more specifically, and reveals that despite Nazi adulation for Japan as a promising ally, the fear of Japan as a potentially formidable foe was never far away. Analogies were made between the respec-

tive native heritages of Japanese Shintoism and German paganism and how each been overlaid with a corrupting cultural import – Chinese Buddhism in the former case, the Christian-Roman tradition in the latter. Sophistry such as this enabled propagandists to portray Yasukuni Shrine and its memorialisation of the war dead as a Japanese counterpart of Valhalla. As Germany's fortunes declined after the defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943, Japan's continued victories in the Far East were seized upon by the Nazis for propaganda purposes. However, as the Japanese fighting spirit was perceived to outshine that of the Germans, a reaction set in. Both Hitler and Himmler took a negative view of imitating the suicide tactics of the Japanese *kamikaze*, while in a speech acknowledging Japanese heroism to the Army High Command in June 1944, Himmler dismissed the idea that the Germans needed to follow the example of a foreign race.

For all the talk on both sides of German-Japanese spiritual affinity, the wartime pact between the two nations remained a 'hollow alliance' and as Saaler remarks in his introductory chapter, 'Germany and Japan fought their wars separately, and they both surrendered separately' (p. 46).

Following the defeats of 1945, formal diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan did not resume until 1955 (it took the former German Democratic Republic even longer, only taking place in 1972). The contributions to the fifth and final part of the book, all by Japanese scholars, examine 'Post-War Images'.

Based on her analysis of the representation of Japan in the influential weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, Kawakita Atsuko focuses on how Germany and Japan have come to terms with the recent past and the settling of wartime issues. The question of 'overcoming the past' (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) began to achieve prominence in the 1970s, with articles in the *Spiegel* often contrasting Japan's apparent reluctance in dealing with its own past with the soul-searching underway in Germany, and, as Kawakita's comparison with Japanese press coverage of this issue indicates, this process was reported on in Japan without any reference to comparable issues of Japanese responsibility. The idea that Germany should serve as a contrasting model in this respect did not develop in Japan until 1985, with coverage of Chancellor Weizsäcker's famous speech on the 40th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. In the 1990s, an equivalent Japanese expression, '*kako no kokufuku*', with an implicit acknowledgment of a German model, gained greater currency in the Japanese press.

Satō Takumi's essay on the consumption of Nazi imagery in Post-War Japanese Popular Culture presents the unsettling flipside to the examination of past horrors. Fascination with the Nazi past is a widespread phenomenon. In Britain, the humorist Alan Coren poked fun at the conventional wisdom in the publishing world that the best-selling books were those on golf, cats and the Third Reich by having his 1975 collection of essays published under the title *Golfing for Cats* – with a swastika on the cover. Three years later, however, a distinctively Japanese spin on Nazi-inspired imagery appeared

with the best-selling anime 'Farewell to Space Battleship Yamato: Warriors of Love' (*Saraba uchūsenkan Yamato: ai no senshitachi*). As Satō describes it, 'it was as if the German Panzer Division blitzkrieg had been projected into outer space, with military uniforms fashioned after the Third Reich (...) taking on a new form of aestheticism.' (p. 404). The subculture of so-called 'Nazi Culture', snappily abbreviated to '*Nachi-ka-ru*', has been popular in anime and manga ever since, though since 2000 its consumption has taken on more localized, niche forms as it has been incorporated into '*otaku*' culture. The image of Hitler in Japanese popular culture has likewise changed. The depiction of him as a symbol of 'absolute evil' current in the 1990s was gradually replaced by a more 'human' version in the 2000s (a similar change can be seen in the 2004 film *Der Untergang*), a change we should probably welcome, since as Satō points out, 'denouncing Hitler as a demon ultimately results in seeing him as a "super human" (*Übermensch*)' (p. 407).

Iwasa Takurō concludes the collection by examining two aspects of German (and by extension European) sociological methodology frequented applied to Japan, the 'group model' and the 'cultural importer' model, both of which enjoyed wide currency (especially the former, which for a time provided a favourable contrast – and even a corrective – to the perceived individualism of Western societies). As Japan – and Europe – entered the Heisei era, however, both models proved inadequate to their appointed tasks. As Japanese society became increasingly individualistic, the 'group model' became less relevant, while the continuing popularity of Japanese popular and '*otaku*' culture abroad (the first comprehensive exhibition devoted to manga outside Japan will open at the British Museum later this year) has effectively turned the 'cultural importer model' inside out.

If any criticism of this book can be made, it is that the perceptions under discussion are not always balanced with contemporaneous examples from the other side. The best example of this imbalance can be found in Part 4, in which three contributions combine to give an impressive overview of how Japan was perceived in Germany during the entire Nazi era, and yet only Tano's chapter provides an equivalent view from the Japanese side. An extra chapter examining Japanese perceptions of Germany during the Second World War while the two allies were co-belligerents would have been welcome. However, given the broad chronological sweep of this book and the fact that many aspects of the history of German-Japanese relations are still awaiting further research, this is probably an unreasonable request. This is a valuable work with much to offer the reader.

Sebastian Dobson is an independent scholar of the history of photography and Japan's foreign relations in the Bakumatsu and Meiji eras.

His most recent publication is an examination of nineteenth-century Japanese studio practice in *Portraiture and Early Studio Photography in China and Japan* (Routledge, 2017).