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Spring! Must be AGM time again...

Attend our Annual General Meeting, and see you at our new IMK home!

**BY JOHN E. LE BLANC,
CJST PRESIDENT**

What did you do on your summer holiday? I have just returned from a three-week holiday so that's about all that is on my mind: one week in Whistler snowboarding, followed by two in the British Virgin Islands sailing... relaxing... Life is tough!

Alas, I am back, turning my mind once again to work, the CJST, and my "President's Report" for this newsletter (... as in, how many words must I pound out?). With my holiday out of the way and the spring upon us, it can only mean one thing for the CJST: Annual General Meeting!

Yup, we are just about due for our AGM. While the date has not yet been finalized, our constitution stipulates that it must occur before July. That's because we traditionally don't schedule events in July and August aside from our Ichi-moku-kai gatherings. Our tireless organizers deserve a break, and so many members are away, either on holiday or on the golf links...

That is one of the reasons our AGM is so much fun - we dispense with the niceties of the business stuff, and drink, eat, and pat ourselves on the back for the work of another fiscal year. Speaking of which, while the final financials have not been compiled, we did all right last year while spending a fair chunk of coin on Access Japan 2000. Our finances remain a damn sight better than, say, the second largest economy in the world? (*Meow!* -Ed.) We have not yet received a note seeking a loan, but I will let you know if one arrives.

Bottom line: watch for our AGM notice! As a member in good standing you are welcome to attend, ask questions, run for Board positions, vote, drink, eat and even heckle if you do it well. Remember last year's boffo AGM? Miss this year's soiree at your own risk.

A word on our Ichi-moku-kai (IMK) for our new members:

What is Ichi-moku-kai? Ichi-moku-kai is our monthly social event - literally, our First Thursday Party. The first Thursday of EVERY month we gather at WOW Restaurant, 205 Richmond St. W. from 6:00 p.m. until whenever to socialize, eat, drink and did I mention socialize?

Who Goes to Ichi-moku-kai? The IMK audience keeps evolving, reflecting the wide range of CJST members and their interests. If you haven't been, come check it out - we're a fun bunch! Admission is free for CJST members. Visitors are welcome for a \$5 cover charge, and we have great food specials. Oh, and as a new feature, the first beer for CJST members is FREE!!!!

WOW, our new home, is great, and the management and staff have been wonderful. However, we've been struggling a bit with the layout of the bar/restaurant area. The current configuration isn't ideal for continuous mingling - i.e., as soon as the food ordering starts, everyone pretty much sits down, eats, and leaves. Without getting too faux-Feng Shui about it, we want to create a space that's more free-flowing and comfortable in order to encourage easier mingling. When you come out next time, give us your ideas on how we could "sculpt" our space to better serve our membership, and make the evening even more successful. (And I repeat: First Beer Free!)

Well, according to the "word count" feature on my computer I have finally reached my length requirem... †



**CJST EVENT SUMMARY: "TREASURES OF JAPANESE ART"
MARCH 5, 2001 AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM**

Dr. Klaas Ruitenbeek conducts a special ROM tour in honour of the late Dr. Hugh Wiley

BY ADRIENNE YOUNG

On March 2nd, CJST members and guests were invited to the Royal Ontario Museum to tour the museum's exhibit "Treasures of Japanese Art", recently mounted in honour of the late Dr. Hugh Wiley. Hugh was the curator of ROM's Japanese collection from 1980 to 1999 and was a valued member of the CJST until his untimely death in July of that year.

The fascinating tour was led by Dr. Klaas Ruitenbeek – Louise Hawley Stone Chair of Far Eastern Art at the ROM - who mounted the Japanese exhibit with the aid of Hugh's comprehensive notes. Pointing to artifacts that Hugh had helped obtain for the museum, Dr. Ruitenbeek shared terrific tales about the lives of Japanese – particularly artists - during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. He also showed us how much Japanese, Chinese and Korean art and culture influenced one another.

Almost any Westerner interested in Japan, CJST member or not, knows enough about Japanese art to know that it is usually easy to identify. "Ah!" we say. "That is Japanese!" And we are usually right. I have always assumed that this distinctive quality in Japanese art was the result of Japan's isolation from the rest of the world during much of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, when Japanese artists were likely unaware of foreign techniques such as the Dutch idea of perspective. Dr. Ruitenbeek confirmed that such isolation did indeed occur, from about 1639 to 1854. However, his lecture and the "Treasures of Japanese Art" exhibit both illuminated the surprising extent to which Japanese painters had access to foreign ideas. They were able, for example, to learn about other painting and stylistic traditions by using imported copies of Chinese painting manuals from the 17th century and by developing relationships with the few expatriate artists to come to Japan during the period.

Through examples of furniture and woodblock prints, the exhibit also illustrated later relationships between Japan and the West. During his tenure at the ROM, Hugh helped build a collection of about 2,000 woodblock prints from the Edo period. Seeing so many of the prints together, one can almost sense the powerful, fascinating effect they had on the Western imagination during the period. The images in the exhibit were almost all figures in landscapes rather than portraits; an example is Hokusai's *Washing In A River*, which illustrated a poem by the Empress Jito. It was these images, not the more formal portraits, that became popular in Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries and influenced the work of Western artists such as Picasso, Braque and Van Gogh. Some of us were also rather surprised to learn from Dr. Ruitenbeek that the Japanese did not

think particularly highly of the woodblock prints that Western artists valued so much.

Unfortunately for those who missed the tour, the "Treasures of Japanese Art" exhibit closed March 5th. But the ROM has a collection of about 5,000 Japanese works of art, some of which are on permanent display in the East Asian galleries. Dr. Ruitenbeek's Chinese exhibit is housed in a separate gallery nearby. Both galleries are wonderful places to spend an afternoon or evening. For more information about ROM programs and exhibits, please call the ROM at (416) 586-5797 or check out the ROM website at www.rom.on.ca. General admission is free most Friday evenings from 4:30-9:30pm. †

Remembering Hugh Wiley...

BY MARGARET BUCKWORTH

Over a year ago, I attended Hugh Wiley's memorial and found that not only was Hugh a great friend and contributor to the CJST, but he was a friend and teacher to many other organizations and people. That day I learned of many Asian societies I had never heard of, such as a Japanese sword (katana) society. I realized I was still learning from this man. Hugh was at almost every CJST and Japanese related event and it appears at almost every other Asian event going in the city!

Hugh was a major driving force on our Social committee, on our board, and after leaving these positions, he would always keep us informed about ROM events and possible speakers for our organization. Two events that I helped organize were initiated by Hugh, the Kimono exhibition tour led by the curator of the Museum for Textiles, and the Kimono Fashion Show at the ROM and the Japan Foundation. My last unfinished project with Hugh was organizing a "koudo" event. (Japanese ancient art of aromatherapy) Unfortunately without Hugh's presence we could not get involved with this ROM event and it was held without us. I wonder what else CJST misses because we don't have Hugh to educate us.

However, it is the man that we miss; his gentle soul, intelligence, inspiration, and wicked sense of humour. It is not surprising that ROM has not been able to replace Hugh Wiley. Last Friday we were able to have one last cultural event that was possible because of Hugh. We viewed Japanese cultural items that Hugh had acquired for ROM. Professor Klaas Ruitenbeek, the curator, colleague and friend of Mr. Wiley's, talked about the exhibit and how Hugh was connected with these pieces. Truly insightful. Thank you for teaching us once again Hugh. The ROM misses you and so do we at CJST. †

Book Review

Bix's biography of Emperor Hirohito is provocative and accessible, but reveals an obvious Western bias

Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan

By Herbert P. Bix

Hardcover | 784 Pages | 6.125 x 9.25 in

ISBN 006019314x

Published in October 2000 by Harper Collins

REVIEWED BY NEIL MARSHALL

According to his brother Prince Chichibu, the kindergarten-age Hirohito revelled in make-believe war games in which he insisted on playing the role of commander-in-chief on the winning side. One day, while quarrelling over toys, Hirohito hit his brother with an artillery piece; the emperor-to-be was taken to the prayer room by a servant where he was made to apologise before photographs of the sun-goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, and his own parents. Hirohito was made to swear to the goddess never again to strike Prince Chichibu. However, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* author Herbert P. Bix states that the Prince "leaves the impression that (Hirohito) did so quite often".

This episode nicely encapsulates the themes prevalent in Mr. Bix's biography - militarism, the emperor's future role as a descendent of the sun goddess - as well as his historiographical method. Mr. Bix was denied access to many of the important documents upon which the official, 102-volume Japanese history of the war was based, as well as Hirohito's own private papers and correspondence. As a result Mr. Bix has relied on published memoirs and diaries, as well as other secondary materials that have been released in a flurry of publication since the death of the emperor in 1989.

Mr. Bix has emphasized in interviews that he is not revealing a new or secret history of the Showa emperor, but rather has relied largely on materials that have been published in Japan but have been disregarded there, and that are still unknown in the West. He places Hirohito at the centre of Japanese preparations for war in Manchuria, China, southeast Asia and America. He is critical of attempts by Douglas MacArthur to whitewash the role of the emperor and preserve him as a figure-head for a new democratic Japan, a country that Mr. Bix rather fancifully seems to think was moulded almost purely by American influence.

Mr. Bix received his doctorate from Harvard University and is currently is a professor of history at Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo. Thus it is not surprising that he at least attempts to place Hirohito's life in an historical perspective; some of the most

interesting parts of the book deal with the education of the future emperor. Educated by "middle-of-the-road academics" associated with Tokyo Imperial University, the future emperor's teachers "were a hybrid of the old unchanging Japan and the new." The book stresses that Hirohito was heir both to a late-Meiji invention of tradition rooted in Restoration ideology and the real-life Emperor Meiji, his grandfather, a rarely present but powerful influence upon the boy. As a youth he developed a life-long passion for marine biology and taxonomy. Statues of Darwin, Lincoln, and Napoleon Bonaparte adorned his study.

Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan has been lavishly, and perhaps prematurely, praised by worthy commentators such as Edwin Reischauer and Noam Chomsky. Mr. Bix's research silences any idea that Hirohito was an inconsequential figure in the war effort. Wary at first of aggression by his military in Manchuria, the emperor slowly warmed to his role as head of the armed forces and custodian of the national polity, or *kokutai*. Perhaps the most damaging aspect of Hirohito's conduct as portrayed by Mr. Bix concerns the emperor's expressions of frustration when Japan's stunning military successes began to sour. When confronted with certain military defeat he refused to accept it: "Rise to the challenge; make a tremendous effort; achieve a splendid victory," he told Admiral Shimada on June 17, 1944, and the next day warned General Tojo, "If we ever lose Saipan, repeated air attacks on Tokyo will follow....whatever happens we have to hold there."

Hirohito became gradually disenchanted with the conduct of his military officers as defeat after defeat piled up following the loss of the Solomon Islands. In a very insightful passage, Mr. Bix shows Hirohito at the end of the war writing to the eleven-year-old Crown Prince Akihito in Nikko where he had been evacuated: "Our people believed too much in the imperial country and were contemptuous of Britain and the United States. Our military men placed too much weight on spirit and forgot about science." He goes on to compare the present-day generals unfavourably with Yamagata, Oyama, Yamamoto and other great commanders from the days of the Meiji emperor. And young Akihito, in his diary, blames the defeat on the inferiority of Japanese naval and scientific power.

Despite the title, which promises a book on the making of modern Japan, Mr. Bix has relatively little to say about post-war Japan. He had originally planned to write an account of the effect of modernisation on Japanese elites; that is perhaps the book we might wish he had written. It is very hard indeed to see, given the evidence that Mr. Bix presents, that Hirohito could have had much influence on the military or could have reined in the excesses in Manchuria or China. The book is written from a relentlessly Western point of view; the Kellogg-Briand Pact which established an international peace code in 1928, is naively presented as the covenant of international relations, which it was only in the most theoretical sense.

(Book review continued next page)

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BOOK REVIEW:

Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan

(continued from previous page)

Thus the context of Japanese imperialism, which is the context of European imperialism of the nineteenth century that ruthlessly carved up Africa and large parts of Asia, is not adequately presented. Nor is American imperialism in Hawaii, the Philippines or elsewhere emphasized. China was indeed victimised by Japanese aggression, but that aggression had been going on for ten years before Pearl Harbour, while Britain and America protested only on the grounds of their supposed “rights” in China. America had 2,000 troops ashore and 13 naval vessels patrolling Chinese waters when Japan invaded China in 1937. Mr. Bix absurdly cites Roosevelt as “Hitler’s most implacable enemy” during a period when Roosevelt was avoiding involvement in Europe or Asia, and when Europe had been essentially lost to Nazi Germany through American torpor. Japan’s militarily logical pre-emptive strike on Pearl Harbour provided a trauma in the American psyche that provided a justification for war crimes as great or greater than those for which Togo and others were hung.

Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan is the result of ten years of labour, and Mr. Bix is to be commended for drawing on a wide range of Japanese sources and creating a successful and deliberately provocative book. It is a major contribution to Western historiography on Japan and is written in an accessible style. Mr. Bix, of course, lacked access to the emperor’s diaries, personal correspondence or recorded conversations (all still controlled by the imperial household), so the picture of Hirohito that emerges is a distant rather than intimate one. His depiction of court ritual and aspects of official state Shinto which he correctly contrasts with “sect Shinto” (perhaps more properly folk Shinto) are sharply critical, bordering on the satirical.

The book is presentist and Western in its perspective, with little patience to see the Japanese view of things. Interesting remarks on the burgeoning leftist movement in the 1920s and early 1930s are left to dangle and are not connected with the post-war left-wing and anti-American movements that compelled writer Kenzaburo Oe, for example, to fight against the destruction of Okinawan culture by the American occupation.

So, perhaps it is Japan’s superb literary tradition that can provide us with an eloquent glimpse into what the emperor and his cult and image meant to those living in Japan before defeat changed everything. A preternaturally brilliant story such as Kenzaburo Oe’s *The Day He Himself Shall Wipe My Tears Away*, or a recent novel such as *The Stones Cry Out* by Hikaru Okuizumi (who was recently interviewed at Harbourfront by Professor Ted Goossen) complement, and sometimes transcend strictly historical accounts. They possess an ambiguous resonance that is more subtle and suggestive than the rather angular documentary biography by Mr. Bix. †

Once a Gaijin...

BY STUART CREEMORE

After living in Japan for a few years, there are a few things I can’t figure out. Like, how come Canadians are so stupid, eh?

Sorry to have to put it that way, but just think about the last time you bought something in a store (not counting Loblaws). If the cashier punches in the right numbers, you should be okay, because the machine will tell them how much change to give you, and so you just have to watch carefully to make sure they’re counting correctly. But if you try something fancy, like saying, “Hang on, I think I’ve got 23 cents here”... you’re in for trouble, believe me.

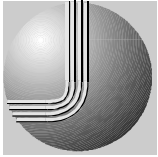
The truth is, young people can’t do basic math. That’s never a problem in Japan. No sir-ee Bob. The Japanese know how to count, and they know how to teach children to count. Somewhere along the line, maybe because creative self-expression seemed so much more important, Canadians lost those very basic skills. And it’s not just math – people don’t know how to read or write anymore either. But then, who needs to when you’ve got pagers, cellphones and email, where spelling doesn’t count.

And good luck if you’re expecting common courtesies! Clerks, if you can find one, get annoyed if you ask hard questions like, “Excuse me, where can I find sand paper?” You might get a mumbled “hardware” if it’s not too close to closing time, or of you’re not interrupting a personal conversation, but don’t expect anyone to actually help.

In Japan, smiling clerks will make sure you find exactly what you’re looking for, as if they actually value your business. Here, even when the store makes an obvious error, they’ll try to make it seem like it’s your fault: “(-sigh-) This isn’t scanning. You’ll have to go and get another one.”

My friends warned me that coming back wasn’t going to be easy. But I never expected Canadians would annoy me so much. Why can’t they dress better? Why do they have to look so fat and stupid? Why do I have to tip for such lousy service? Why do sales clerks take their breaks at the busiest times? Why do the taxis stink? How do you get a job handling money without knowing how to add and subtract?

I know, I know – why don’t I just go back to Japan, eh? †



**CJST EVENT SUMMARY: TED GOOSSEN'S LECTURE ON
MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA AND AUDREY HEPBURN'S NECK
FEBRUARY 21, 2001 AT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION**

Prof. Goossen discusses Japan's portrayal in Western fiction

BY ANNETTE GOULIN

On February 21, 2001, York University professor and CJST member Ted Goossen captivated an audience of nearly 100 at the Japan Foundation as he discussed Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* and Alan Brown's *Audrey Hepburn's Neck*, both of which are Japan-themed novels written by Westerners. Coincidentally, Prof. Goossen lectured on the same Japan Foundation stage where Arthur Golden had stood two years earlier.

The event was co-presented by the Japan Foundation Toronto and the CJST (thanks to Eiko Shaul). Prof. Goossen dedicated the evening to Professor Ken (Kinya) Tsuruta, a late friend and colleague who had influenced him profoundly. An expert in Japanese literature and culture, Prof. Goossen also lectures in Tokyo, Kyoto and Toronto on Japan-related issues. Wearing his signature cap, he announced mischievously that he was looking forward to the glass of cognac that Japan Foundation Director Mr. Suichiro Ogino had promised him after the lecture...

Prof. Goossen engaged in a fascinating examination of character development and typing of Japanese as presented in two Western novels. Golden's wildly successful *Memoirs of a Geisha*, published in 1997, has sold over five million copies and has been translated into 27 languages (although, ironically, not into Japanese yet due to the complexities of imparting proper nuances to the language). All this success has come despite Steven Spielberg's abandonment of the film project and despite the pending defamation lawsuit by former geisha Minako Iwasaki. Golden's erstwhile friend and main resource for the novel. *Geisha* follows the rags-to-riches life of Sayuri, who is sold by her poor widower father into a Kyoto geisha house and rises to become one of the top geishas in Japan. The novel, written in the form of a memoir as told to a Westerner, cleverly weaves romantic and erotic elements into an enchanting storyline.

Although not as commercially successful, equally intriguing is Brown's *Audrey Hepburn's Neck*. Published in 1996, it chronicles the life of Toshi, who grows up an aspiring artist in lonely, rural Hokkaido and comes of age in lurid Tokyo where he pursues his fascination with foreigners. Toshi's (mis-)adventures, successes and failures are a deft mix of raunchy comedy juxtaposed with moments of dead-serious poignancy. The appeal of *Neck* lies in its gentle satire of a world not familiar to most readers, such as its use of so-called Japlish. Further, Brown gives nod to some provocative Japanese issues such as war and racism, adding the heft of social awareness to what would otherwise be strictly a 'fun-read' novel.

Geisha and *Neck* make interesting comparison/companion pieces, as both are written by white American males speaking

through young Japanese eyes. Arthur Golden and Alan Brown both depict (and take broad artistic liberties with) a foreign culture that fascinates them immensely. They are both in their forties and are first-time authors. Perhaps not surprisingly, their respective novels also contain a number of parallels. Both works follow the metamorphosis of a character who moves from a simple village to a dizzying city. Sayuri (*Geisha*) and Toshi (*Neck*) have very little or no communication with their parents, yet are deeply affected by thoughts of them throughout their lives. Both protagonists are transformed through sad events and through the people they meet.

In addition to a discussion of the two novels, Prof. Goossen provided a historical summary of Western attitudes toward Japan, which have shifted back and forth over the years. The pendulum of opinion has swung frequently since the 1940s when the West felt fear and loathing toward war-time Japan. Post-war feelings were of pity and concern, which then shifted into admiration for Japan's rise in manufacturing. However, fear and loathing returned in the 1980s and early 1990s as bubble-economy Japanese businesses charged into North American markets. The pendulum has swung back yet again in the 1990s and into the 21st century, as the West's sympathy is reawakened by Japan's struggles with a major earthquake in Kobe, a poor economy, a recession, and various social problems. Japan is once again friendly and fascinating, not threatening. Whether by fortuitous coincidence or by calculation, *Geisha* and *Neck* were both published in the late 1990s, at an ideal time for eliciting positive reactions from Western readers. It was a nostalgic return to the feel-good Japan.

Over the past quarter-century, other popular Japan-themed novels have included *Shogun* (1975), James Clavell's epic selling over 12 million copies; and Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun* (1991), a bestseller and feature film released at the height of Japan's corporate might and subsequent Western backlash. Although not considered as commercially successful as these novels or Golden's *Geisha*, Brown's *Neck* was awarded the Kiriya Prize (Pacific literature) in 1996.

Prof. Goossen opened the floor to comments and questions from audience members following his hour-long lecture. Guests then enjoyed wine, cheese and crackers (thanks to Ken Bole for the wine service). Many people were overheard enthusiastically discussing their own take on *Geisha* and *Neck*. Thus ended another enjoyable CJST event. See you at the next one!

**"Other" News from Japan will return
next issue...**

President John challenges you to...

NAME THIS NEWSLETTER!

(A bottle of sake for the winner...)

To celebrate the re-formatting of our CJST newsletter we are holding a "Name the Newsletter" contest.

Our new editor feels that the present name, *CJST News*, is a little stale. I tend to agree, but have been blissfully tolerant of the fact since change requires effort and effort means more work for me... unless she runs the contest!

The winner of the contest will receive glory, adulation, admiration... **AND A BOTTLE OF SAKE!** Send your ideas to Linda Adachi at ladachi@nikon.ca, or snail-mail your suggestions to:

CJST, P.O.Box 327, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1G3

SERENITY NOW!

... some Computer Haiku to console the hapless computer user's soul...

*The Web site you seek
Cannot be located but
Countless more exist.*

*With searching comes loss
And the presence of absence:
"My Novel" not found.*

*Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.*

*The Tao that is seen
Is not the true Tao, until
You bring fresh toner.*

*Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.*

*Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.*

*ABORTED effort:
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask way too much.*

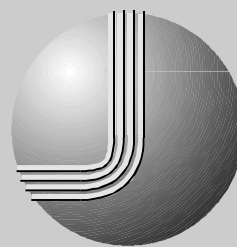
*Three things are certain:
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.*

*Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.*

*You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on.
This page is not here.*

*First snow, then silence.
This thousand dollar screen dies
So beautifully.*

*Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.*



CJST NEWS

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We welcome comments, suggestions and contributions you may have on Japan and related topics for this publication.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and not of the CJST or its Board of Directors.

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