

### Notes:

- 1 G. B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan* (London: Cresset, 1950), p. 3. As for Samuel Smiles and his Japanese translator Nakamura, there are in English short but sharp observations made by Sansom in the work cited above p. 484, and also by G. B. Sansom, *Japan, A Short Cultural History* (London: Cresset, 1932) p. 504. Marius B. Jansen made an interesting remark in Marius B Jansen ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 67. Earl H. Kinmonth made a lengthy but superficial study, *The Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). I myself wrote a chapter entitled "Self-Help" in Marius B. Jansen ed., the *Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. V, The Nineteenth Century.
- 2 A. Briggs, *Victorian People* (Penguin Books, 1990), p. 124.
- 3 Pierre Boulle, *The Bridge over the River Kwai* (New York: Vanguard, 1954),
- 4 As for Nakamura's biographical studies, Ishii Kendō's is excellent. See also Takahashi Masao, *Nakamura Keiu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1966).
- 5 *Saikokurisshihen* is reprinted and still available (Tokyo: Kōdansha gakujutsubunko, 1981)
- 6 The anecdote is recorded in Kume Kunitake, *Kyūjūnen kaikoroku* (Tokyo: 1934)
- 7 In order to distinguish the public aspect from the private, Toyoda Sakichi used Toyota for his weaving machine companies while he retained Toyoda for his family use. By the way, Sakichi's grandson, Toyoda Shōichirō, chairman of the Toyota Motor Corporation, was the chairman of *Keidanren* or of the Japan Federation of Economic Organizations in the 1990s.

century, as he is contrary to the Confucian ideal of a gentleman who is not an implement (junzi búqì). Katsura, however, fits Smiles's description of a man devoted to his trade. In his preface to the translation of *Self-Help* Nakamura hailed in exclamations like "Ah, how happy Western peoples are today!" The reason that Japan could follow examples of Western peoples rather quickly and could enjoy the benefits of electrical lighting in rural villages so early is that the majority of Japanese shared Doppo's sympathy with Katsura: there was a large reservoir of uncommon common men toiling diligently in the Meiji era. The most familiar figure of Meiji literature is undoubtedly Botchan, hero of Natsume Sōseki's novel written in 1906. Although readers do not pay much attention to its ending, the hero, having given up his teaching position in Matsuyama, became, like Katsura of Doppo's novel, an electrical engineer with the monthly pay of twenty-five yen. Is this not symbolical that the most popular hero of modern Japanese literature ends his career this way?

The lessons preached by Smiles were quickly transplanted into Japanese soil, while they began to be gradually forgotten in their countries of origin. It is said that the Protestant work ethic which Smiles so much extolled has corroded in Protestant countries. In Japan too, alas, the names of Smiles and of Nakamura Masanao began to be forgotten. In the latter half of the twentieth century the word "welfare" enjoys greater popularity than "self-help". However, I for one, still believe that our philosophy of development assistance to other countries as well as to other individuals should be "Help others help themselves."

an industrial inventor is minutely told by Suzuki Tōsaborō, born and brought up in the same region of Hamana-ko. Suzuki was older than Toyoda Sakichi by fifteen years: Suzuki's autobiographical writing is an eloquent illustration how people working diligently in an agricultural society under the influence of Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856) could become inventive workers and diligent engineers in a new born industrial society. Okada Ryōichirō (1839-1915), disciple of Ninomiya Sontoku, was the most wellknown agricultural reformer of that region in the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate; he later became the leading figure in the local industrialization movement in the early years of Meiji. It was Okada who imported British made weaving machines in 1884 to open Enshū spinning company. Toyoda Sakichi, who was living near by, must have had chances to examine them, before proceeding to invent his own automatic looms.

The novelist Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908), in a short story entitled *Hibon-naru bonjin* (An Uncommon Common Man) written in 1903, portrays Katsura Shōsaku, a youth fully imbued with the spirit of *Self-Help*. Katsura, a boy brought up in a village, idealizes Watt, Edison and Stevenson, saves his money, and goes to Tokyo to work his way through school. Though poor, he exhibits none of the heedlessness toward life's necessities that is usually depicted as a virtue (or a vice) in the traditional swashbuckling hero-gallant of East Asia. Instead, Katsura supports himself and his brother while going on to become an electrical engineer who is earnestly "absorbed in the work he is daily performing." He walks around and around some equipment, checking to discover the cause of its malfunction and then repairs it. It would be difficult to find such an uncommon common man who has set his mind to do something with his own hands in other East Asian countries in the first years of the twentieth

similar among themselves, are full of myths either imagined or anecdotes copied from *Self-Help*. In these biographies for children, authors insist on the meaning of originality, on the importance of invention, on the civilized practices of patent and intellectual property rights, while those authors themselves are writing the life of the inventor Toyoda Sakichi by plagiarizing works written by others, which are in their turn products of literary thefts. Toyoda museums are full of these biographies of Toyoda Sakichi written for children.

In the official biography published by the Toyoda Corporation in 1933 and reprinted in 1955 there is no plagiarism, and no mention of Sakichi's having read Smiles's *Self-Help* either. Instead in that official biography written during the years of Japanese nationalism the agricultural reformer Ninomiya Sontoku's influence on the boy Sakichi is very much stressed. What is interesting, however, is the historical fact that Smiles's utilitarian morality and teaching of self-help could be transplanted in Japanese soil without much opposition because they could be grafted onto traditional Japanese ideas of work ethic almost naturally. This process may be attested by the following episode.

In a story entitled *Tetsu-santan* that Kōda Rohan wrote in 1890 to instill the work ethic in young people, the book that its hero is to read is Ninomiya Sontoku's *Hōtoku-ki* (Account of Recompensing Virtue) composed in 1856. Ninomiya Sontoku is an agricultural reformer. But when Smiles's book became popular, Rohan changed the title of his hero's inspiration to make it Nakamura's translation of *Self-Help*. Yet the hero's conviction, "The fruits of your labors will derive from Heaven's boundless abundance" is the same. Rohan's exclamation, "This book made me what I am," fits either source of inspiration equally well. Apropos the process of transfer of work ethic from that of an agricultural reformist to that of

the invention with such felicitous clearness, as to astonish alike judge, jury, and spectators. That was the reason why Heathcoat's patent right was publicly recognized.

This anecdote, which became the common knowledge of Japanese readers of *Self-Help*, made known the importance of the system of patent, and the patent act, prepared by Takahashi Korekiyo, was promulgated in Japan April 18, 1885. The timing was very good. From around the year 1887 Toyoda Sakichi began his career as inventor, and his man-powered, made of wood weaving-machine was patented for the first time in 1891. Between that year to 1930, year of his death, Toyoda Sakichi obtained 84 Japanese patents and 13 foreign patents for his inventions.

They are of course his own inventions, but what is embarrassing and not very fair is about Toyoda Sakichi's popular biographies. I have found that practically all of them are retold stories of the life of John Heathcoat. Of course they are written in Japanese names. The reason of this literary imitation is as follows: when Toyoda Sakichi died in 1930, Yora Matsusaburō, a Nagoya journalist, asked three ghost writers to write Sakichi's biography. As they knew the legend that the young Sakichi was enthusiastic about inventing new machines and that he was very much encouraged by the lives of inventors told by Smiles in his *Self-Help*, Yora and his ghost writers used freely Smiles's book, and in 1931 wrote the fictitious life of Toyoda Sakichi modelled on that of John Heathcoat. In juvenile literature Japanese authors do not pay much attention to historical facts or exactitude; writers hired by rival publishing companies copied, varied, amplified or digested the Yora version of the life of Toyoda Sakichi. It is really deplorable that there exist so many kinds of biographical writings about Toyoda Sakichi which, although very much

kamura to an "imitation" of the British engineer's life by a provincial Japanese.

Toyoda Sakichi<sup>7</sup> was born as a son to a carpenter in a village near the lake of Hamana-ko in 1867 while Nakamura was still studying in London. Incidentally the writer Kōda Rohan, who in the eighteen-nineties became the leading proponent of the ideas of *Self-Help*, was also born in that year. Sakichi's schooling was limited to four years, however, he became a very productive inventor of weaving machines. In East Asia Japan is said to be comparatively rich in inventors, and the statistics concerning the inventors and inventions are generally estimated by the number of patent holders. In short, the very notion of patent, the system of royalty, licence to use a patented invention and the existence of industrialists who welcome practical applications of scientific principles are the prerequisites without which it would be difficult for any industrializing country to have an inventor, to have a Thomas Edison. In Japan it was Smiles's account of the British inventor Heathcoat's life which introduced the notion of patent. A very interesting story is told about Heathcoat's trial, on the occasion of which Sir John Copley (afterwards Lord Lyndhurst), was retained for the defence in the interest of Heathcoat. When Heathcoat's rights as a patentee were disputed and his claims as an inventor called in question, Copley learnt to work the bobbinet-machine in order that he might master the details of the invention. Smiles writes as follows: On reading over his brief, Copley offered to immediately go down into the country and he did not leave the lace-loom until Copley himself could make a piece of bobbin-net with his own hands, and thoroughly understood the principle as well as the details of the machine. When the case came on for trial, Copley was enabled to work the model on the table with such ease and skill, and to explain the precise nature of

tion with the help of Shūeisha, the Japanese publisher of *Saikokurisshihen*, that helped Choi Namsun establish a printing-shop in Seoul. The Korean translator Choi Namsun later became one of the most distinguished leaders of the Korean Independence movement. Smiles's book taught Choi not only his own self-help but also that of his nation. It was Choi who wrote the famous declaration of independence in March 1919.

The Meiji government was tolerant towards ex-retainers of the Tokugawa shogunate. Together with Fukuzawa's Keiō gijuku, Nakamura's private school Dōjinsha opened in Edogawa, Tokyo, enjoyed an immense popularity. Both Fukuzawa and Nakamura could hire Westerners as professors because they got big sum in royalties on their books. By the way the two books which many members of the Iwakura mission read before and during their two-year trip (1871-73) to America and Europe were Fukuzawa's travel guidebook, *Seiyō tabiannai*, and Nakamura's translation of *Self-Help*. Smiles's book must have suggested to the members what they should see in the West, especially in British factories. The weaving machine that the Iwakura mission saw in Manchester, September 3, 1872, was minutely recorded by Kume Kunitake, official scribe of the mission. That record is a sort of continuation of the description of a weaving machine written by Smiles. There in a factory at Manchester an interesting conversation took place between Kido Kōin and an English engineer. The Japanese vice-minister asked about the possibility of imitation of the machine by outsiders. The English engineer, without ever thinking of the possibility of a Japanese imitation, answered: "Germans have tried hard to advance in this field. However, as they are clumsy, it is impossible for them to overtake the British."<sup>6</sup>

Now let us proceed from the translation of Smiles's book by Na-

“Ten wa mizukara tasukurumono wo tasuku” to ieru kotowaza wa, kakuzen keiken shitaru kakugen nari. Wazukani ikku no naka ni amaneku jinji seibai no jikken o hōzō seri. Mizukara tasuku to iukotowa yoku jishujiryū shite, tanin no chikara ni yorazarukotonari. Mizukara tasukuru no seishin wa, oyoso hito tarumonono saichi no yotte shōzurutokoro no kongen nari. Oshite kore o ieba, mizukara tasukuru jinmin ookereba, sono hōgoku kanarazu genki jūjitsushi, seishin kyōsei narukoto nari. Tanin yori tasuke o ukete jōjuseru mono wa, sonochi kanarazu otorouru koto ari. Shikaruni uchi mizukara tasukete nasu tokoro no koto wa, kanarazu seichō shite fusegu bekarazaru no ikioi ari.<sup>5</sup>

Nakamura achieved a sonorous style that still strikes a respondent chord in many people. Nakamura, moreover, was cautious enough to ask Koga Kin'ichirō, a senior Confucian scholar, and Sanda Kanemitsu, an open minded national scholar, to write introductions recommending *Self-Help* to Japanese readers. Nakamura himself wrote in vigorous Chinese personal comments which were most convincing. Nakamura's introductory note to Chapter II "Leaders of Industry—Inventors and Producers" is indeed a hymn to the achievements brought by the industrial revolution to the peoples of the West. Among the Chinese who were impressed by Nakamura's comment were K'ang Yu-wei (Kang You-wēi) in whose preface to *Riben shumūzhi* (1897) Nakamura's phrases are recognizable. Yáng Changjì, who later became the first father-in-law of Máo Zédong, wrote serialized articles on self-help: national and individual, in the monthly magazine *Xin Qingnián* vol.II no. 4 and 5 (1916-17). However, one of the most interesting case of *Self-Help*'s influence in East Asia is that the book's Korean translation was made from the Japanese transla-



to be more precise, a scholar with two legs grounded both in Orient and in Occident. From the ancient China of the sages Nakamura, though a Confucian scholar by education, made his turn to the West. He discovered in the person of Smiles a new sage who preached the gospel of work. The second shock was the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate. Upon his return home, Nakamura, ex-retainer of the Tokugawa shogun, who had distinguished himself under the old regime, had no prospect for the future, and it was to encourage himself and young men in similar situations that Nakamura translated *Self-Help* while living like an exile in the countryside of Shizuoka. Fortunately, the translation of an English book by the most accomplished Confucian scholar of the time made a strong appeal to the Japanese, who after the opening of the country were thirsting for the knowledge of the West and were eager to know the secret of its industrial greatness. It was the same thirst which made the overseas returnee Fukuzawa Yukichi's book *Seiyō-jijō*, or "Conditions in Western Lands" the bestseller of the day. While Fukuzawa explained physical conditions in Europe and America, Nakamura made moral sides of the Westerners known to the Japanese. Let us read the first sentences both in the English original as well as in Nakamura's *kanbunkundokutai* Japanese:

"Heaven helps those who help themselves" is a well-tryed maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigour and strength. Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates.

less regarded as something of foreign origin, as in the case of national scholars or *kokugakusha*, and as something replaceable by some other learning of different origin, as in the case of Dutch scholars or *rangakusha*. Compared with the ideological situation in Korea of the mid-nineteenth century, the existence of these schools of thought other than that of Confucius in Japan was a clear point of difference. The appearance in Japan of scholars like Nakamura was not a mere coincidence.

In fact, Nakamura was most favorably impressed by what he saw and heard in London, when he went there as early as in 1866. He found the Chinese account of the Countries Overseas, *Haiguó túzhì*, written by WèiYuán (1794-1856) rather misleading. Nakamura became the first Oriental to discover what democracy is, by describing the daily life of Queen Victoria and her relationship with Parliament. By translating Smiles's *Self-Help* into Japanese, Nakamura became the first Japanese to open the eyes of his compatriots: the Japanese understood for the first time the moral principles by which Westerners were guided: self-help, industry, perseverance, scientific pursuits, integrity and honesty, courage and gentleness. The lives and deeds of Westerners described by Smiles tend to be idealized, but the moralistic tone with which the book was written, although displeasing to readers of later generations both in England and in Japan, suited well the taste of Japanese readers brought up according to Confucian ethical traditions. Through the hands of Nakamura Smiles became a sort of Victorian Confucian, which partly explains the exceptional success of Nakamura's translation.

In the midst of his life Nakamura got two shocks: in London he was overwhelmed by the greatness of Western civilization. That culture shock was the reason why the leading *kangakusha* or Chinese scholar of the Shōheikō academy became belatedly a *yōgakusha* or Western scholar, or

us consider briefly some psychological elements which made the difference in time and in quality of the translation.

Every time a Japanese historian is invited by Chinese universities both in Taiwan and in the continent to give a talk about Japan's turn to the West, he always receives the same questions, which are as follows. Why was it possible for a Confucian scholar like Nakamura to go to London and to study English? Why was it possible for a defeated Tokugawa official to publish the translation of *Self-Help* and eventually to become an intellectual leader of Meiji Japan? In case of Yán Fù as his family was not rich enough, after the death of his father Yán Fù gave up the hope to become a government official by taking examinations, he reluctantly chose to go to England in 1877 with a scholarship.

Nakamura was born in 1832 to a low-ranking samurai family but was admitted to the bakufu's Shōheikō academy on the basis of his scholarly promise<sup>4</sup>. His education was fundamentally Confucian, but he was also drawn to Western studies. The Confucian scholar secretly learnt Dutch and later English especially after the coming of Perry's squadron in 1853. This sort of deviation was not imaginable for Sino-centric Chinese men of letters but was possible for a Japanese samurai-scholar, because what was important for him was to find the best way to defend his country, and the Japanese intellectuals have always thought consciously or unconsciously that the center of the civilization is situated not within Japan herself but somewhere beyond the sea. Moreover, Confucian studies had slightly different meanings to Chinese officials and to Japanese samurai-scholars. Confucian studies, being genuinely Chinese, could not be discarded so simply by Chinese scholar-statesmen without provoking identity crisis, while in Japan Confucian studies, although orthodox under the Tokugawa regime and even thereafter, were more or

when I was a child. “Made in Japan” pre-war days meant merchandise which was cheap but of bad quality. In the late 1930s Japan exported bicycles, but no cars.

However, a quarter of a century after the capitulation Japan began to export cars and to construct bridges not only within Japan or South-east Asia but also as far as on the Bosphorus, and this time the myth of Western superiority in technology seems to have been really shaken.

In the life of a nation as well as in the life of an individual the impression left by the first foreign book often remains deep in the heart. In the case of China it was Thomas Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* published in 1894 and translated into Chinese in 1898 by Yen Fu (Yán Fù) under the title of *Tian yan lun* which left a decisive impression on Chinese intellectuals. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Qing China was at the mercy of imperialistic powers. The social Darwinian idea of the survival of the fittest seemed to explain the harsh international realities surrounding China, in which the stronger nations preyed upon the weaker nations. Huxley’s book helped Chinese intellectuals to understand the destiny of the weak who were becoming the victim of the strong. Compared with China, Japan was lucky, for she had opened the country much earlier in 1868 and the first English book translated was more optimistic in its nature: *Self-Help*. The book helped the Japanese help themselves. Unlike Huxley’s book, Smiles’s book served as a guidebook for the industrialization of Japan. By the way, the second English book which Nakamura translated into Japanese in 1872 and which Yán Fù translated into Chinese in 1903 is the same: John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty*. However, as Nakamura and Yán Fù will be remembered less as the translators of *On Liberty* but more as the Japanese translator of *Self-Help* and the Chinese translator of *Evolution and Ethics* respectively, let

word for word from Smiles's book. This kind of small facts is, I believe, not to be neglected in studies of intercultural relations. Otherwise they tend to be too ideological and schematic and to repeat some preconceived ideas concerning Japan and the Japanese. Let us examine concretely the problems of transfer (or readjustment) of work ethic: how diligence of people working in an agricultural society transformed itself into diligence and inventiveness fit for an industrial society, and how the impact of a foreign book could open new perspectives.

The myth of Western superiority in technology once so glorified in popular novels and films seems to be disappearing. Some forty years ago the commercially most successful film called *The Bridge over the River Kwai* fixed in the minds of peoples around the world the image of cruel Japanese soldiers maltreating British prisoners of war. The point at issue which was overlooked by most of the worldwide audience of the time, however, was the self-complacency of the idea of "white man's burden" with which that film was made. In that popular film Japanese engineers were depicted as incapable of constructing even a bridge. Every time Japanese soldiers built a bridge, it immediately collapsed. British prisoners of war, instead, had technological expertise, and thanks to that they could regain confidence in themselves. Methodological conquest by the Occidentals, eulogized by Paul Valéry, was repeated again and again by Colonel Nicholson, or more exactly by Monsieur Pierre Boulle, the French author of *the Bridge over the River Kwai*<sup>3</sup>. As a wartime prisoner in Indochina, Boulle was partly right in his belief in the Western superiority in technology. Throughout the years of war practically all passenger cars driven by Japanese militaries in the occupied Southeast Asia were not made in Japan but were made in countries with which the Japanese empire was at war. I myself remember what "made in Japan" meant

book in which Nakamura thought to have found the secret of the industrial greatness of Victorian England was *Self-Help* written by Samuel Smiles in 1859. While he was studying abroad, the shogunal government that had dispatched Nakamura's group to London was collapsing, and upon his return Nakamura was obliged to retire, together with other ex-retainers loyal to the deposed Shogun, to the countryside of Shizuoka, where he translated Smiles's *Self-Help*. His translation was published in the fourth year of Meiji, in 1871, and that was the first English book ever translated in its entirety into Japanese. It became eventually the most influential single Western book translated into Japanese. The sale of *Self-Help* was unbelievably good: more than one million copies of Nakamura's translation had sold by the end of the Meiji era of 1912. The original was a bestseller in England too, and a quarter of a million copies had sold by 1905<sup>2</sup>. As that enthusiastic reception of *Saikokurisshihen*, which is the Japanese title of *Self-Help*, seems to indicate an important aspect of Japanese response to the demands of industrial society, I will try to analyze the case of the Japanese translator of *Self-Help*, Nakamura Masanao, as there are many interesting traces of influence left by the Japanese translation of *Self-Help* among East Asians of different professions, from writers like Kōda Rohan, Kunikida Doppo to the great inventor Toyoda Sakichi. By the way, one of the first texts of moral education widely used in the 1870s by the Japanese after the opening of the country was no other than Nakamura's translation of *Self-Help*, and the book's influence is recognizable in later texts of moral education or *shūshin*. I myself was brought up during WWII, but as a schoolboy I learnt the story of the British physician Jenner in my textbook when Japan was at war with the British Empire. That story of the discoverer of vaccination, which I have recently found to my surprise, was a story taken almost

# Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*

—the best-selling guidebook for Meiji Japan's modernization—

HIRAKAWA Sukehiro

“The modern history of Japan is in essence a record of the clash and fusion of two cultures, the development of an Asiatic civilization under the impact of Western habits of life and thought, the response of a feudalistic system based upon agriculture to the demands of industrial society.” With these words Sir George Sansom begins his *Western World and Japan*<sup>1</sup>. What I am going to discuss here is an example of this process, exemplified by one of the first Japanese samurai-scholars sent to the capital of England in 1866. The person in question is Nakamura Masanao alias Keiu (1832-1891), who held the most prestigious professorship of *o-jusha* at the governmental Shōheikō academy in Edo in the final years of the Tokugawa era. The accomplished Confucian scholar, however, of his own will accompanied twelve young students to London as their supervisor. Nakamura, moreover, was very favorably impressed not only by the material aspects of Western civilization but also by moral elements of English culture as well. To the Confucian scholar the discovery of Protestant work ethic was a kind of culture shock, and Nakamura became the first Japanese to point out that if important elements of Western civilization were to be borrowed the ethical background of which they were an outgrowth must not be neglected. The