

Edwin P. Hoyt. *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man*. New York: Praeger, 1992. Pp. x, 214. Cloth, \$24.95.

Since the end of World War II and the subsequent American occupation of Japan, an Imperial conspiracy behind Japanese militarism and expansionism in East Asia prior to and during World War II has always played well in American academia, the press, and in the mind of the general public. The publication of David Bergamini's popular 1300-page tome, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy* (1971), served to reinforce this theory. Bergamini's analysis of Hirohito essentially agrees with the findings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East that sat between 1946-1948, which convicted and sentenced some twenty-five well-known Japanese officials for war crimes, the best known being the infamous General Hideki Tojo. Bergamini weaves his Imperial conspiracy theory from the diary of one of Hirohito's best-known courtiers, the Marquis Koichi Kido, who on many occasions harked back to Ito Hirobumi's Constitution of the Empire of Japan—1889 (Articles I-XVII) in reminding the Showa emperor that it was his constitutional duty to support the war effort and the national administration perpetrating it vis-a-vis that sovereignty rested with the emperor (Article IV). The Preamble and Articles XI-XIII are particularly germane to the case that Kido makes in his diary account.

The recent publication of Edwin P. Hoyt's scholarly biography, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man*, represents the first serious attempt that I know of to extricate the Showa emperor from the clutches of the Imperial conspiracy theorists. Making use of new evidence in the Imperial archives, Hoyt, an expert on the growth of Japanese militarism, portrays Hirohito as captive of an Imperial institution that had been perpetuated for over 2,600 years of turbulent Japanese history through sheer institutional inertia. Since the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan has had four emperors to include the recently crowned Emperor Akihito. The longest reigning and best-known of them has been Hirohito whose reign spanned more than six decades (1926-1989). Hirohito, while a Prince, actually presided over the affairs of Japan for five years before he ascended the throne due to the illness of his father, the effete and eccentric Taisho emperor (1912-1926) and was buffeted on all sides by his religious-pacifist mother, the Empress Dowager Sakado, who never fully gave her approval of him and the conduct of his office, and a host of Imperial advisers, some of whom went back to his grandfather, the Meiji emperor (1868-1912). His grandfather, who was the centerpiece of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, was domineering, but despite this, the Meiji emperor and all of his successors were controlled by their advisers who were drawn from the Genro clique (Council of Elders), the most notable and best-known being the court noble, Prince Kimmochi Saionji, whose influence at Court, to say the least, was inordinate. Even as late as the Manchurian Crisis of 1931, the aged and conservative Saionji was advising the young emperor.

From my reading of modern Japanese history I understand that the objective of the young Japanese intellectuals from Satsuma and Choshu who were behind the Meiji Restoration of 1868 was to secure for themselves a political arrangement that would ensure their continuance in power in the future. What they did not count on, however, was that the Restoration would engender a lively debate throughout Japan as to what type of government Japan should have and what role (if any) the people would play in it. The "People's Rights Movement" (*Jiyū Minken*) of the 1870s and 1880s to a great extent addressed these questions, and so the intellectuals around the Meiji emperor, such as Kido and Okubo, decided that a constitution would be adopted for Japan that would institutionalize many of the proposals put forward by the Movement, and that would perpetuate them in power in the future. The debate among the Meiji intellectuals was whether to adopt a British constitutional model or a German one. In Ito Hirobumi's famous Memorial to the Meiji emperor of December 14, 1880, calling for a constitution for Japan, there was a recognition that constitutionalism was the wave of the future and that power-sharing could not be avoided. Ito had arrived at this conclusion by studying constitutionalism in Germany during the 1880s. Ito wrote, "The present political disturbance is symptomatic of a general trend sweeping the whole world and is not limited to a single nation or province. . . . The change from old to new was accompanied by violent disturbances . . . An enlightened ruler and his wise ministers would

control and divert the force toward a solidifying of the government. To achieve this, all despotic conduct must be abandoned, and there can be no avoiding a sharing of the government's power with the people. . . . The method to be adopted by the government today is to follow the trends of the time to take advantage of opportunities when they appear." Barely a decade later, in 1889, Ito's Constitution of the Empire of Japan was promulgated, which enshrined power-sharing, despite its assertion that "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable" and despite the fact that it reserved Japanese sovereignty in his office.

Any casual study of Japanese politics from 1890 to about 1930 will show that the Imperial institution remained essentially captive to the whims of various Japanese political elements that the constitution of 1889 spelled out in Articles XXXIII-LXXII—the Japanese Diet (Parliament), the Genro clique (or Council of Elders), political parties (Seiyūkai Party, established in 1900, and Kenseikai Party, established in 1916 and later changed to Minseitō in 1927), and the Japanese military, as the so-called Taisho political crisis of 1912 bears out. As early as 1912 there is evidence that the military in Japan got what it wanted. Not even able ministers like Saionji and General Katsura Tarō could keep them at bay. The quarrel in 1912 was over two army divisions, and sending a military representative to support the interests of the military in the Japanese Diet. Seen in this light, then, the Manchurian Crisis of 1931, which was to lead the Japanese Empire into World War II, was an inevitability.

On balance, Hoyt's biography is an invaluable tool in terms of refuting the Imperial conspiracy theory and in terms of reaching an objective assessment of the controversial and much-maligned Showa emperor on whom history is now about to pass judgment. Hoyt's book could be effectively utilized in a college-level course on the History of Modern Japan or in a course on the History of World War II. It is highly recommended reading for college-level history students, Japan scholars and watchers, and the interested lay person.

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**John E. O'Connor.** *Image as Artifact: The Historical Analysis of Film and Television.* Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1990. Pp. vii, 244. Cloth, \$43.50; paper, \$24.50.

The history of the recorded moving image is but little more than a century old. Yet it has been a century of dynamic change, change in part documented, reflected, and ushered in by development of film and television. The recorded moving image is therefore becoming an important source for historians reconstructing the recent past and equally as important a tool for educators teaching about it.

*Image as Artifact* is a product of a much larger American Historical Association (AHA) project, "The Historian and the Moving Image Media," funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The director of this project and the editor and principal author of this book, John E. O'Connor, is a professor of history at New Jersey Institute of Technology. An early American historian, he has been a pioneer in the field of recorded moving image media and history for a quarter of a century with numerous publications to his credit and as chairman and a founder of the Historians Film Committee and editor of its quarterly journal, *Film & History*. He also has been honored recently for his efforts by the AHA with an annual award—The John E. O'Connor Film Award—named after him.

This book is intended to serve as an introduction to the use of film and television imagery in the research and teaching of history by professionals involved in either or both domains. In considering the major methodological and philosophical problems to be addressed when regarding the recorded moving image as an historical artifact, this volume proposes a conceptual framework for its study and utilization. The first two brief chapters on the image as artifact and gathering