SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Complementary Readings

For background reading and/or classroom assignment, teachers may find entries #1 and #2 below particularly useful.

1. Marlene Mayo, ed., *The Emergence of Imperial Japan: Self-Defense or Calculated Aggression?* (D. C. Heath, 1970). This collection of essays addressing Meiji Japan’s emergence as an imperialist power includes a particularly valuable “Prologue” by Yoshitake Oka, from which several of the quotations in the Essay derive. Oka’s concise essay is one of the best short overviews available of “Social Darwinist” and “Realist” thinking by late-19th-century Japanese.

2. Donald Keene, “The Japanese and the Landscapes of War,” in Keene’s *Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese Culture* (Kodansha International, 1971), 259-99. This essay by one of the most distinguished literary and cultural scholars of Japan is excellent for placing the woodblock prints of the Sino-Japanese War in the broader context of Japanese popular culture (and war enthusiasm) at the time. The essay has had several lives. See also Keene’s “The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 and Its Cultural Effects in Japan,” in *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, Donald Shively, ed. (Princeton University Press, 1971), 121-75; also the 1981 Kodansha reprint of *Landscapes and Portraits*, which is titled *Appreciations of Japanese Culture*.

4. Richard Hough, *The Fleet That Had to Die* (Ballentine, 1960). Although not at all essential to understanding the background of the war prints, this readable account describes the ill-fated journey of the Russian Baltic Fleet as it sailed around the world to Port Arthur, only to be destroyed by Admiral Tōgō in the Battle of Tsushima in 1905. Hough’s narrative captures some of the flavor of the times on the (hapless) Russian side in a particularly colorful manner.


**Illustrated English-Language Publications of Meiji War Prints**

"Throwing Off Asia" is at present the most densely illustrated and accessible treatment of Meiji woodblock prints focusing on the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars. (The Essays alone include 165 prints, of which 111 depict the Sino-Japanese War and 34 the Russo-Japanese War.) There are four noteworthy published catalogs in English that feature the war images. These include prints not included in the MFA collection on which "Throwing Off Asia" is based, as well as interesting captions and commentaries.

6. *Impressions of the Front: Woodcuts of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983). Devoted entirely to prints of the Sino-Japanese War, this excellent catalog is based on the extensive collection of Meiji war prints at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A total of 86 full-color prints are reproduced (in small format), accompanied by generous commentary. The arrangement is chronological rather than thematic or by artist, enabling the reader to follow the course of the war visually. Essays by Shumpei Okamoto (on the war) and Donald Keene (on the prints) enhance the value of this hard-to-obtain publication. *Impressions of the Front* also includes maps, a battle chronology, and a bibliography.

7. *The Sino-Japanese War* (1894-1895), Nathan Chaikin, ed. (Bern, Switzerland: privately published, 1983). This sumptuous volume reproduces 92 prints of the Sino-Japanese War, primarily from the Geneva-based collection of Basil Hall Chamberlain, a famous turn-of-the-century British expert on Japan. The full-page reproductions include many in color, and editor Chaikin provides detailed commentary on both the prints and the military history of the war. Organization is chronological, rather than by artist or theme.
8. *In Battle’s Light: Woodblock Prints of Japan’s Early Modern Wars*, Elizabeth de Sabato Swinton, ed. (Worchester Art Museum, 1991). Based on Meiji war prints from the Sharf Collection (before that collection was donated to the Boston Museum of Fine Art), this catalog includes prints from both the Sino-Japanese War (53 plates) and Russo-Japanese War (27 plates). Within this, grouping is by artist. Brief captions and commentary accompany each print.

9. *Japan at the Dawn of the Modern Age: Woodblock Prints from the Meiji Era*, Louise E. Virgin, ed. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2001). This exhibition catalog celebrates the donation of the Jean S. and Frederic A. Sharf Collection of Meiji prints (on which this present “Throwing Off Asia” web site is primarily based) to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The catalog contains 77 color plates (22 depicting Meiji Westernization and the emperor, 39 on the Sino-Japanese War, and 16 on the Russo-Japanese War), with brief commentaries for each. Also included are essays by Donald Keene, Anne Nishimura Morse, and Frederic Sharf.

**Illustrated Japanese Publications of Prints**


11. ASAI Yūsuke, ed. *Kinsei nishikie Sesōshi* [A History of Modern Times through Woodcuts], 8 volumes (Tokyo, 1935-36). This old collection, with extensive black-and-white reproductions, is a standard reference source.

**Illustrated Collections**

12. H.W. Wilson, *Japan’s Fight for Freedom: The Story of the War Between Russia and Japan*, 3 volumes (London: Amalgamated Press, 1904-1906). This exceptionally lavish, large-format British publication totals 1,444 glossy pages and includes hundreds of photographs as well as excellent black-and-white reproductions of sketches and paintings by foreign artists. This is surely the best single overview of the type of war photography and serious war art that appeared regularly in British periodicals like the *Illustrated London News*. As the title indicates, the overall approach is favorable to Japan.
13. James H. Hare, ed., *A Photographic Record of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Collier & Son, 1905). This glossy, large-format, 256-page volume includes photographs by a number of cameramen (as well as a brief commentary on “The Battle of the Sea of Japan” by the influential American naval strategist A. T. Mahan). In comprehensiveness as well as clarity of the reproductions, this is an outstanding sample of the war photography of the times. (The same publisher produced another large-format volume on the war—titled *The Russo-Japanese War: A Photographic and Descriptive Review of the Great Conflict in the Far East*—that includes many of the same images, is also of considerable interest, but is of lesser technical quality.)


**General Historical Texts**

*Teachers, students, and anyone else who wishes to pursue the history of Japan’s emergence as a modern nation further will find the following publications particularly useful as both general overviews and reference sources:*
13. James H. Hare, ed., *A Photographic Record of the Russo-Japanese War* (New York: Collier & Son, 1905). This glossy, large-format, 256-page volume includes photographs by a number of cameramen (as well as a brief commentary on “The Battle of the Sea of Japan” by the influential American naval strategist A. T. Mahan). In comprehensiveness as well as clarity of the reproductions, this is an outstanding sample of the war photography of the times. (The same publisher produced another large-format volume on the war—titled *The Russo-Japanese War: A Photographic and Descriptive Review of the Great Conflict in the Far East*—that includes many of the same images, is also of considerable interest, but is of lesser technical quality.)


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17. **Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan**. This outstanding encyclopedia exists in two editions: (1) a detailed 9-volume version (published in 1983 and containing over 10,000 entries, including extended essays by major scholars); and (2) an abridged and lavishly illustrated two-volume version titled *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (1993). Anyone seriously interested in Japanese history and culture should have these reference works on hand. For this present web site, see in particular the entries on “Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95” (by Akira Iriye) and “Russo-Japanese War” (by Shumpei Okamoto).


Illustrated Periodicals

For American and British graphic responses to the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars as these appeared in popular periodicals, the following weeklies are of particular interest:

Illustrated London News
Punch
Harper’s Weekly
Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper

Credits

“Throwing Off Asia” was developed by Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare.

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