

Preface

Japan faces issues today that are unique in her history. She must respond to the increasing diversity of public desires and needs as the domestic economy grows. She is challenged to promote energetic cooperation with other nations as a responsible member of the international community. She must cope with an unprecedented variety of matters in this modern era.

However, we must realize that the force that has driven Japan rapidly forward since the Meiji Era to the position she holds today among the the advanced industrial nations, in spite of centuries of pre-Meiji isolation, was powered by the skills and abilities that created the society, economy, and culture during those centuries of isolation in the Tokugawa Era. This fact provides the motive for promoting scholastic studies in modern Japanese history. The clear and accurate understanding of the history and society of our past should be very important to our nation's future political, economic, and social progress.

The house of Morita, in which I was born and am the present head, goes back fifteen generations, the head of each generation honored by the title Kyuzaemon. My ancestors served as the head of Kosugaya, an out-of-the-way village on the Chita Peninsula in the ancient province of Owari, now Aichi Prefecture. The family business has been the brewing of sake, miso, shoyu, begun in the mid-Edo period and continuing to today. The house-brewed sake has the name "Nenohi-matsu," and our storehouses for sake and miso in Kosugaya are still in use.

In the compound of our house are other storehouses filled with old documents left by the successive generations of my forebears. About ten years ago, I showed some of these documents to Professor Tokuei Mezaki of the University of the Sacred Heart, who is interested in historic documents. It was found that in each generation the head of the house had carefully maintained voluminous records of the activities of each generation; These were included among the daily accounts of the family business from the Edo period to the Meiji Restoration.

I therefore decided to make these documents available to scholars engaged in historical research. To compile them properly and make them widely available, I asked for the help of members of the Department of History and Social Science at the University of the Sacred Heart, under the direction of Professor Mezaki. This also occasioned the establishment of The Ray-Kay Foundation of The People's Culture in November 1978, to promote research in the modern history of Japan, and the building of a museum-library in Kasugaya so that scholars can have access to the documents.

The Foundation has been active for some years supporting research activities in this field, awarding prizes for superior research, collecting data and research results, releasing publications, and sponsoring lectures and conferences. Professor Tetsuzo Tanikawa (Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation; Member of the National Academy of Art), my great friend from the same locality, and other distinguished individuals have guided the Foundation in its many activities. The Foundation also aims to clarify the relationship of the past to the present and future through exchanges of views among leaders in various fields in and out of Japan and thereby contribute to perspectives for the future of society.

I am very happy that a bibliography of the documents has now been published through the cooperation of many research associates and hope that these historic materials will be widely utilized by researchers in this important field. Finally I express my deep appreciation to Professor Minoru Takamaki, who directed the actual compilation of the bibliography, and the staff of the Department of History and Social Sciences of the University of the Sacred Heart.

Akio Morita

Akio Morita
Trustee, The Ray Kay
Foundation of
The People's Culture
Chairman, Sony Corporation