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# Sixty Monumental Years

MICHAEL COOPER

SIXTY is a truly splendid number. Unlike the less obliging hundred, a standard unit in our way of counting, it is divisible by the consecutive numbers two, three, four, five, and six, not to mention that it can be expressed in terms of both dozens and scores. In fact, there is a great deal to be said in favor of the sexagesimal system. It is small wonder that the wise Chinese favored the flexible sixty by combining the decimal cycle of ten stems with the duodecimal one of twelve branches to form a recurring cycle of sixty years. Thus 1998 is the *tsuchinoe tora* 戊寅 year, and the last time such a year occurred was back in 1938. And that was the year in which *Monumenta Nipponica* was first published.

## *Background*

It was hardly a propitious time for Sophia University, founded in 1913, to begin an academic journal. The school buildings had been extensively damaged by the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, and much-needed financial help from Germany was curtailed by the economic depression in the early 1930s; to raise funds there was talk about selling the university's site in central Tokyo and moving to the suburbs. Growing nationalist sentiment was directed against "foreign" institutions such as Sophia, and matters were brought to a head by the Yasukuni Incident on 5 May 1932 when three Christian students of Sophia allegedly refused to bow at Yasukuni Shrine. The imperial army withdrew its training officer, newspapers criticized the university for its lack of patriotism, and student enrollment dropped to a paltry 201 by 1934.

Sophia's founder and then-president, Hermann Hoffmann, held consultations with government officials and high-ranking army officers in an effort to solve the university's problems. On at least one occasion, on 10 February 1933 when he visited Lieutenant-General Araki Sadao, minister of war, and Lieutenant-General Yanagawa Heisuke, vice-minister of war, he was accompanied by a younger German colleague, Johannes B. Kraus, the founder and first editor of MN. Given the circumstances of the troubled 1930s, inaugurating a foreign-language journal required a great deal of courage and initiative, and Kraus appears to have possessed both.

THE AUTHOR was editor of *Monumenta Nipponica*, 1971–1997.

*The Founder*

Johannes B. Kraus was born in Bavaria in 1892 and entered the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit religious order) after leaving high school. His studies in Austria, Ireland, France, and the Netherlands were interrupted by World War I, during which he served as a medical aide. He then specialized in sociology and political science, studying in London and Rome, and finished with doctorates in philosophy and political science. On his arrival in Japan in 1929, he was posted to Sophia University.



Detail of a group photograph with Hermann Hoffmann (seated, left) and Johannes B. Kraus (seated, right) in 1933.

In addition to his teaching duties, Kraus was a council member of the Asiatic Society of Japan (to which he delivered a paper on “Birth Control in Old and New Japan” in 1937). Being a German national, he was not interned during the Pacific War, and when in 1942 the government demanded the dissolution of the “foreign” association, the remaining five Japanese and German council members (including Kraus) successfully persuaded the authorities that the society was a truly international body and did not pose a security threat. The organization was therefore allowed to continue in existence, although all activities were suspended for the duration of the war. As a happy result, the Asiatic Society of Japan was able to celebrate last year its 125 years of un-interrupted existence.

Kraus was also an active member of the OAG (Ost-Asien-Gesellschaft) and served as a useful link between the two societies. As if insufficiently busy, the enterprising Kraus set up the Hegel Society and the Plato Society. His obituary

in MN 7 (1951) records his ease in speaking English, French, and Latin; reading Greek offered no problem, and he was also familiar with Hebrew. His inability to read Japanese well was, we are told, “a sore point with him,” but “his colloquial Japanese together with the charm of his personality” won him many friends and admirers.

Kraus spent most of 1935 in Europe searching for collaborators to contribute to the new Japanese-language Catholic Encyclopedia, of which he had been appointed editor, and he managed to bring out the first two of the projected five volumes before the Pacific War interrupted publication. It was during this European tour that he is believed to have begun thinking about the possibility of starting an academic journal of Japanese studies at Sophia.

### *Memorandum*

A four-page memorandum, typed in German and probably dated 1936 or 1937, is titled “Program for a Multilingual Quarterly.” The document is unsigned, but was written almost certainly by Kraus.

The report begins by saying that the new enterprise should have a Latin title to show “dignity and neutrality.” Various suggestions are made regarding this title: *Documenta Nipponensia*, *Analecta Japonica (Nipponensia)*, *Pharus Orientis* (“Oriental Lighthouse”!), *Mundus Orientalis*, etc. Volumes were to consist of four issues, each containing 200–250 pages. An issue would carry eight to ten articles, running to a total of 160–180 pages, in addition to 20–30 shorter pieces and 10–20 book reviews. This was indeed an ambitious program, and in fact no single issue reached this projected goal. Hokuseidō Press or Sanseidō Press were suggested as possible printers, while Herder would distribute the journal abroad and possibly Maruzen within Japan. The press run of the first issue would be 2,000 copies so that complimentary samples could be sent out to universities both within and outside the country, as well as to well-known libraries and institutions. The journal, the writer adds cautiously, would be announced as a quarterly only when the amount of accepted material made bringing out four issues a year feasible; until then, it would remain a semi-annual publication. Readership would consist of “erudite people interested in East Asia and Japanese culture.”

The contents, the memorandum continues, would deal with the humanities, comparative religion, literature, sociology, law, political science, ethnology, and Japanese history, with special emphasis on the century of early Christian activity in Japan. As regards the journal’s languages, German, English, French, Spanish, and also Latin would be acceptable, as well as Japanese and Chinese if required for special topics (in which case a synopsis in a European language would be supplied). Possible Japanese collaborators might be, among others, Nishida Kitarō, Miki Kiyoshi, Anesaki Masaharu (a personal friend of Kraus), and Yanagita Kunio, while European scholars might include Georg Schurhammer, Henri Bernard, Sir George Sansom, Dr. Richard Ponsonby-Fane, and “Capt. Boxer.” Then follow concrete details regarding length of

articles and book reviews, and the advisability of encouraging exchanges with other learned journals.

The title of the new project appears to have been recommended by the renowned Dutch scholar-diplomat, R. H. van Gulik, after a good deal of discussion, in imitation of the famed *Monumenta Serica*, published at that time in Beijing. The British book-collector Frank Hawley observed that “Nipponica” sounded more nationalistic than “Japonica,” but the former was finally chosen “for reasons of euphony, avoiding a repetition of the ‘a’-sound.”

The enterprise would have been ambitious at the best of times, but in view of the difficult circumstances attending the late 1930s in Japan, it verged on the heroic, perhaps even foolhardy. Yet it succeeded beyond expectations.

### *Publication*

On 27 October 1937 *The Japan Advertiser* announced:

Local University Plans Periodical  
Semi-Annual Publication in Several Languages Will  
Emphasize Research

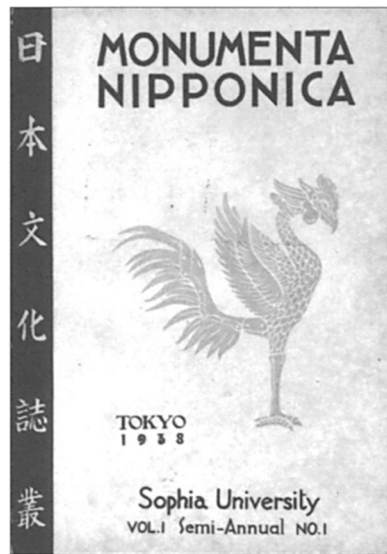
Publication of Monumenta Nipponica, a semi-annual scholarly periodical devoted to Far Eastern cultural problems has been decided on by the authorities of St. [sic] Sophia University. Now being printed, the first issue is expected to appear late this month. It will be a periodical of purely scientific character, according to the editor, Professor Johannes B. Kraus.

In fact, the first issue did not appear until the summer of 1938, just one year before the outbreak of World War II. Its subtitle was “Studies on Japanese Culture, Past and Present,” and this somewhat lengthy description was to continue unchanged until volume 20, when it was shortened to “Studies on Japanese Culture,” and then to the present “Studies in Japanese Culture” in volume 21. For the first 21 volumes, the cover was adorned by an illustration of the *hōō* on the roof of the Byōdōin, which some critics unkindly likened to a scraggy cockerel. A note in German in volume 1 points out that the phoenix is a symbol not only of eternal happiness but of Japanese culture in general.

The first article to appear in the new journal was written by the scholar Karl Florenz, Hamburg, and consisted of an annotated German translation of the *noh* play *Manjū*. Along with an article on Zen Buddhism by Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki and Georges Bonneau’s “Le Problème de la Poésie japonaise,” Sir George Sansom, Tokyo, contributed “Some Problems in the Study of Japanese History,” which with disarming modesty he begins:

I am afraid that this is a pretentious and misleading title for the brief notes which follow. Other occupations have of late prevented me from indulging in Oriental studies, and my qualifications for writing on such a topic, never more than slender, have now sadly diminished. It is only because I was loth to decline a flattering invitation from the editors of *Monumenta Nipponica* to contribute to their first issue that I have ventured to string together these amateurish notes.

The first issue also included pieces on the *mappō jidai*, Alessandro



First issue of *Monumenta Nipponica*.

Valignano's audience with Hideyoshi, and the beginning of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Spaniards of the Philippines. This assembly is in a way typical of the contents of subsequent issues—multilingual articles dealing with *noh*, Buddhism, history, poetry, and early Japanese-European relations. From the start the journal was amply illustrated, and the first issue carried illustrations of an early European map of Japan, woodblock prints portraying life in the Edo period, *ema* votive boards, and books printed by the Jesuit press in Japan.

Two features characterize this first issue and indeed all issues up to volume 6. In his earlier memorandum, Kraus had listed the different languages that authors could use, and a glance at the first issue shows that this was not idle talk. Articles and book reviews appear in English, German, and French, while Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian were employed in later volumes. This polyglot tradition, which must have occasioned considerable problems in proof-reading, continued with diminishing frequency up to volume 18 (1963), when the last article written in German appeared, and from then onward English became the rule.

The second feature of the first issue is the fact that most of the articles were written by either Japanese or European scholars—Karl Florenz, George Sansom, Daisetz Suzuki, Henri Bernard, Johannes Laures, Anesaki Masaharu, Heinrich Dumoulin, R. H. van Gulik, C. R. Boxer (now aged 94, and the only contributor to the first volume still living), and others. The Shinto scholar D. C. Holtom was possibly the only American representative. We have to wait until volume 9 for the first article written by a woman—Carmen Blacker's

translation of Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Kyūhanjō*. This lack of balance was more than compensated for in postwar issues.

### *Aims and Objectives*

The first issue of MN carries a one-page announcement in English and German, "Aims and Objectives."

The "Monumenta Nipponica" pursues a two-fold aim. Primarily it hopes to lay open to a wide circle, composed of American and European readers, the rich treasures of Far East culture, emphasizing the typical values of the Japanese tradition. At the same time it desires to unite those scholars, both of the Japanese and of the several Western nationalities, who may be interested in the many aspects of Far Eastern culture. This double purpose it would accomplish by the establishment of such a common platform as should offer an opportunity to the occidental and oriental alike of exchanging their thoughts and the results of their research-work.

Both this announcement and Kraus's memorandum mentioned above speak of the "Far East" as if MN were prepared to cover East Asian culture in general, but in fact this was not to be the case and wisely so. When other East Asian countries were mentioned, for example, China, this was done only in relation to Japan. There were some exceptions, however, and van Gulik's exquisite work, "The Lore of the Chinese Lute," which first appeared in four installments and then as an MN monograph, is probably the best known.

Kraus continued to edit and produce the first six volumes, each consisting of only two issues. But readers received full value, for the two annual issues of the first five volumes contained well over 600 pages, with volume 3 running to 719 pages, well over a hundred pages longer than recent annual volumes of MN. The subscription in those pre-inflation days was a modest ¥6 or U.S.\$5.00, postage included.

Not content with putting out MN in those difficult wartime years, Kraus also began the MN monograph series and by 1943 had published in four years no less than eight volumes in German, English, French, and Portuguese, with two more in preparation. Doubtless he received help from Assistant Editor Joseph Roggendorf, but this output is astonishing, given the diversity of languages, the economic and political problems of the time, and the sheer quantity of publications. It was therefore a heavy blow both to MN and the university that Kraus died suddenly on 3 March 1946 at the age of only fifty-four when he suffered a heart attack while digging a jeep out of snow in the Hakone mountains.

### *Postwar Revival*

Publication of the journal after volume 6 (1943) and in the immediate postwar years became impossible owing, it is recorded, to the devastation of Tokyo (Sophia University was badly damaged in air-raids) and shortage of supplies. The absence of the energetic founder from 1946 was undoubtedly another fac-

tor in the journal's nonappearance for eight years. Kraus's successor was a compatriot, the vastly learned sinologist Wilhelm Schiffer, aided by no less than five associate editors. They managed to bring out volume 7 at the beginning of 1951, but "owing to circumstances" this was a double issue of only 390 pages.

As a result of gross inflation, the yen subscription rate had increased by 4,800 percent and was set at ¥2,880, although the overseas rate had risen to only \$8.00, in keeping with the postwar exchange rate of \$1.00:¥360; the price of the double issue of volume 8 in the following year dropped to ¥2,160 or \$6.00. Volumes 9 and 10 were also double issues. Matters changed with volume 11 (1955). For some reason, the standard of printing is poor (the text appears to be have been produced by offset from a typed copy), but for the first time in its history MN was able to bring out three issues in one year. Despite the indifferent quality of the printing, 11:2 contains an article that carries a large number of illustrations—Oliver Statler's authoritative "Modern Japanese Creative Prints," with fifty-seven figures. This number was exceeded only once, in volume 15 (1959–1960), in the Swiss businessman U. A. Casal's "Japanese Art Lacquers," with its 117 illustrations.

### *Editors*

Wilhelm Schiffer continued as editor during the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, but as can be seen from the reference to volume 15 above, the publication of the journal had become somewhat irregular. The two parts of volume 16 also stretched over 1960–1961. The four issues of volume 17 were combined in 1962, as was also the case of volume 18 in the following year. Only in volume 19 (1964) were two issues published separately. As publication was falling behind schedule, Francis Mathy (whose MN articles on Kitamura Tōkoku are still in demand) was appointed co-editor, 1962–1964, but as a result of various problems Schiffer resigned his post in April 1964.

Schiffer was succeeded by Joseph Pittau, who had just returned to Japan after gaining his doctorate at Harvard in 1963 with his well-known work on political thought in the early Meiji period; he was later appointed the president of Sophia University and is currently Rector Magnificus of the Gregorian University, Rome. Pittau's period of office was relatively brief, 1964–1968, but he left his mark not only in the quality of the articles published but also the noticeable improvement in the journal's appearance achieved by employing the Voyagers' Press for printing. He revamped MN's general layout, changed the subtitle to "Studies in Japanese Culture," and banishing the long-lived phoenix, produced a new cover that as regards color and design has remained to the present day; listing of articles on the cover was later added from volume 27:2 (1972).

Pittau's successor was the then-Associate Editor Edmund R. Skrzypczak. By this time the annual subscription had increased to ¥3,000 or \$10.00, and this yen rate must be one of the few prices within Japan that has risen by only



33 percent over the past thirty years. Skrzypczak held office for only two years, but in that brief time he published a general index of volumes 1–25 at the end of volume 25, and brought out a considerable number of MN monographs, before eventually leaving to teach at the Australian National University, Canberra. It was also during his editorship that the journal's office was transferred to its present spacious location on the 13th floor of No. 7 Building on the Sophia campus, overlooking busy Shinjuku-dōri and offering a magnificent view of Mt. Fuji to soothe the troubled breast.

For want of a more qualified candidate, the present writer took office on 1 April 1971. In its wisdom, Sophia appointed him the first full-time, non-teaching editor—a prudent step as the growing popularity of the journal, while undoubtedly gratifying, meant an ever-increasing amount of work, editing, approaching reviewers, and hunting down hapless referees. Finally, in 1972, Kraus's dream of bringing out the journal as a quarterly was at last realized, and since that year MN has appeared punctually (well, fairly punctually) four times a year. As nobody else sensibly seemed to covet the post, the editor remained on the job for twenty-six years, overseeing the journal from volume 27 to the spring issue of volume 52 (1997). Ably assisted for the past fourteen years by Muro Nobuko as secretary, he brought out general indexes for volumes 1–40 and then 1–50. A word of appreciation is due to Komiyama Insatsu, Tokyo, which since volume 32:3 (1978) has maintained an admirably high standard of printing that has become an MN hallmark.

This long period of office may perhaps be dubbed the Snoopy *jidai* of MN's history owing to the editor's strange predilection for that amiable beagle, an affection that some people have regarded with surprise, others with alarm and suspicion. The MN *nengajō* often featured that winsome dog, the office rug bore his portrait, and favored subscribers found their MN envelopes decorated with his logo.

A *kanreki* is a time for change, a new staff, a new beginning, fresh ideas, and the aged editor was happy to choose Professor Kate Wildman Nakai (aided by the new managing editor Lynne E. Riggs) as his successor and the first woman editor of the journal, confident that MN would be in most capable hands in the future. The change-over was a wonderful and significant way to begin the new sixty-year cycle of MN's existence, at a time when the journal is now sent out to more than forty countries.

### *Changes*

Over the years MN has seen many changes and developments. As pointed out above, collaborators in the early issues were for the most part Europeans or Japanese. In addition, many of the book reviewers were recruited from non-Japanese members of the Sophia staff. This pattern began to change appreciably as Japanese studies in the U.S. took off after the Pacific War, to the extent that the majority of the authors and reviewers now appearing in MN are U.S.

scholars. The journal in effect has lost its original in-house, European character and has expanded to include the work of a wide range of scholars (rather along the lines of the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, which is by no means limited to the work of Harvard people).

This development was not achieved by deliberate editorial design, but simply because the field of japanology has grown so remarkably in U.S. universities. But recent years have witnessed a welcome trend in which European japanologists have organized and united. There is immense scope in Japanese studies in Europe, and MN would dearly like to take further advantage of this rich potential. The last several issues have in fact featured articles written by British, Dutch, and German scholars.

### *Monographs*

Reference has been made above to MN monographs, and it was noted that Johannes Kraus began bringing out these volumes shortly after the foundation of the journal. Characteristically the first volume in the series was written in German, *Kirishito-ki und Sayō-yoroku*, 1940, and in the same year appeared Johannes Laures's standard catalog, *Kirishitan Bunko*, which went into two revised editions. *Japanese Chronological Tables*, first brought out in 1952, enables readers to convert the Japanese lunar calendar into the Western solar one, and has been re-issued several times. In all, fifty-eight monographs, many now out of print, are listed, the latest appearing in 1986. The added workload in editing and publishing the journal in recent years has made it difficult to continue bringing out these volumes on a regular basis; in addition, the establishment of new Japanese monograph series in the U.S. (at the University of Michigan, for example) and elsewhere has perhaps reduced the formerly felt need for MN to publish both the journal and monographs.

### *Miscellanea*

Statistics are dull things, God wot, but if the new editor kindly accepts this brief note for publication (and there is no guarantee that she will), then "Sixty Monumental Years" will become MN's 941st article. Book reviews? They must number well over 2,500. Most prolific author? The former Sophia professor Heinrich Dumoulin, 1905–1995, with his twenty articles (mostly dealing at first with Kokugaku and Kamo no Mabuchi, only later with Zen Buddhism). The most-studied subject? Probably the so-called Christian Century, fulfilling one of the aims listed in Kraus's memorandum; in volume 1 he expressed the hope that each issue would carry at least one article on this topic, although over the years such contributions have grown fewer. Another subject in which MN has made a mark is noh, publishing translations of plays and studies on Zeami's and Zenchiku's seminal writings. Through the years J. Edward Kidder's updating on recent archaeological discoveries has been appreciated by readers both in Japan and overseas. For the past ten years an anonymous

and annual report titled “Cultural Survey” has supplied overseas readers with a brief and not overly serious account of the previous year’s cultural and archaeological discoveries, exhibitions, and current affairs in Japan.

It may well be considered invidious to refer to specific authors and their articles when so many scholars have generously contributed fine work to the journal. But one more exception may perhaps be allowed. Which MN article received most publicity in the past twenty-five years? Undoubtedly, “Portrait of a Daimyo: Comic Fiction by Matsudaira Sadanobu,” by Haruko Iwasaki (now at University of California, Santa Barbara), in 38:1 (1983). Sadanobu’s comic story *Daimyō katagi* was an unpublished work, and so by exception the journal included the original Japanese text as well as commentary and English translation. The *Mainichi shimbun* and *Asahi shimbun* published half-page accounts on the same day, and the phone in the MN office scarcely stopped ringing for weeks. One gentleman inquired rather crossly why was Iwasaki living and teaching abroad—as a Japanese, should she not be working in her own country? The sensation accompanying the publication of this article was distinctly odd. As the author points out, the existence of Sadanobu’s amusing piece of juvenilia was no secret: it had been mentioned in an article published back in 1929 and four copies were known to exist in public collections. But for some reason or other (respect for Sadanobu?) nobody had ever gotten around to studying and publishing the story.

### *Future Contributions*

With its new staff settled in, MN looks forward to receiving a wealth of contributions in the future. On receipt, articles are promptly read to see whether their subject and quality warrant their being sent out to anonymous referees. Potential authors are advised to study the type of material the journal favors (“How to sell more U.S. automobiles in Japan” would not be viewed with any degree of enthusiasm), as well as the normal length of published works. It makes it simpler for all concerned if the new style sheet, available on request, is followed. MN is now published entirely in English, but genuinely welcomes contributions from non-native speakers; in such cases, however, it is strongly recommended that the articles be examined by native speakers before submission so that spelling and style can be checked.

One final point. Financing a scholarly journal does not come cheaply, and institutional aid has greatly helped MN over the course of its long history. During the Pacific War, when overseas subscriptions could no longer be received, the Gaimushō and Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai came to the rescue by purchasing 200 copies of each issue. In more recent times the Japan Foundation has followed suit and pays for subscriptions to be sent to many different countries. But the bulk of the cost of producing MN is borne by Sophia University, and its generous annual subsidy to cover salaries and expenses and to keep down subscription rates is necessarily high. (Japanese postal rates are extremely expensive, so that nearly 40 percent of a \$36.00 sub-

scription is spent on mailing the four annual issues; at the time of the *endaka* a few years ago, this figure rose to 56 percent.)

It is only right that credit be accorded Sophia University for having established and then continuing to finance “a common platform as should offer an opportunity [to Japanese and Westerners] alike of exchanging their thoughts and the results of their research-work” over the past sixty years, as the founder Johannes B. Kraus wrote in “Aims and Objectives” in 1938.