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## Reflections and engagements

Fukui Haruhiko, Okudaira Yasuhiro, Arthur Stockwin,  
Watanabe Akio, John Welfield

### David Sissons and I

Fukui Haruhiro

The late David Sissons was my PhD adviser and supervised the preparation of my doctoral dissertation at The Australian National University (ANU) from mid-1964 to mid-1967. Yet, my memories of him are fragmentary and blurry. I wish I had kept a diary during that period, but I didn't. My following remarks are, therefore, based on my faded and unreliable memory. And, to be honest, David was and remains to this day largely a mystery and enigma to me.

To begin with, prior to my arrival in Canberra in the early summer of 1964 as his newest ward, I had known somebody I assumed was him only as one of a dozen translators of the selected works of the University of Tokyo political theorist, the late Maruyama Masao, which were published by Oxford University Press in the early 1960s. In the widely publicised collection of Maruyama's works *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* the translator of an article entitled 'Some problems of political power' was named David Sisson. I am not aware of any other instance of my Sissons signing his family name without the last 's'. It is unlikely that he deliberately signed himself as 'David Sisson' in an important publication. On the other hand, I know of no other potential translator of Maruyama's works with a similar name and must assume that my Sissons either misspelled his own name or somebody else did. This scenario, however, is itself an enigma to me, because he was normally extremely careful, even fussy, about minute details, including grammar and spellings, in his own writings and reviews of others'.

As a graduate student at the University of Tokyo in the autumn of 1960, I worked as a research assistant for the eminent political scientist Robert E Ward. I continued in this role as a Fulbright exchange graduate student at the University of Michigan from the fall of 1961 to the summer of 1963. I then returned to Tokyo with Ward to assist in his research on the postwar Allied occupation of Japan. It may well have been he who first heard about and brought to my attention the ANU scholarship program. In any case, I successfully applied for a scholarship with Ward's strong personal support and letter of recommendation. Conscious of my work as Ward's research assistant and record as a graduate student at an eminent American university, I arrived in Canberra in late June 1964 as an older-than-usual and very cocky 29-year-old on a three-year doctoral student scholarship. I spent the next few years with my wife and our infant son, who was soon joined by another, living in the married student housing at ANU and commuting every weekday to my study in the Department of International Relations of the ANU Research School of Pacific Studies (RSPS). I shared this modest room with another Japanese graduate student, Watanabe Akio, who enrolled in the same scholarship program a year or so earlier. My routine continued throughout the three-year period, except for about three months in early 1966, when I conducted fieldwork in Japan.

One incident that broke the monotony of my routine, which I remember vividly and with a sting of remorse, was a short but sharp verbal exchange between David and myself during lunch in the dining hall of University House at ANU. Both Watanabe and I usually had a brown-bag lunch in our study and went to the dining hall only on special occasions. I don't remember what the special occasion was on the day the incident occurred, but it arose from David's intervention in our conversation in Japanese, which was a stern rebuke against our use of Japanese instead of English. He had probably told us that we should make it a rule to speak English all the time on the university campus, if not at home, but we habitually broke the rule. In any event, we were caught red-handed and, rather than apologising, I retorted that I saw nothing wrong about two Japanese nationals speaking Japanese to each other and, worse still, added a totally gratuitous remark to the effect that I had not come to ANU to learn English. David was only trying to help us improve our obviously and grievously inadequate command of English. Watanabe was mature enough to understand that and quietly listened to his admonition, but I was too immature and brash to follow his example. The enigmatic aspect of this incident, however, was that David quickly quit the fight and didn't mention the English-only rule again during the rest of my time at ANU. This incident, among other things, gave me a lasting impression that, despite his occasionally disciplinarian demeanor, he was a fundamentally gentle and shy person — perhaps even a born pacifist.

I found a somewhat similar paradox in his attitude toward money. He was an extremely thrifty person. I remember buying and sending him a copy of the *Asahi Nenkan* (yearbook) from Tokyo during my fieldwork trip to Japan. At his request, I sent it by airmail, the postage for which cost more than the yearbook itself. Upon my return to Canberra, I found him visibly distressed by the price of the postage that I charged him against the receipt. I did think it somewhat absurd to pay more for sending something than for the thing sent, but I had assumed he had known the cost all along and was surprised by his reaction. I was also extremely thrifty at that time, living literally week by week on a meagre scholarship-based stipend paid on a biweekly basis. My thrift, however, was a product of sheer necessity and may be described as situational or even opportunistic. If I could afford to splurge, I would. David's thrift, on the other hand, seemed fundamental and principled, less to do with what he could afford to spend on something than what he should spend on it. I came to believe that it was based on faith and commitment, whether religious or philosophical, deserving of my respect.

David was remarkably effective in supervising my doctoral work in general and preparation of my dissertation in particular. Throughout my stay in Canberra, I was somehow made to feel constantly under his watch without, however, much actual physical contact. In fact, I saw and consulted with him no more frequently than once a week at most throughout the three-year period. Nonetheless, he included a preliminary draft of a section of my dissertation, entitled 'The associational basis of decision-making in the Liberal Democratic Party', in the RSPS's in-house publication, *Papers on Modern Japan*, edited by him and published in 1965, less than a year after I arrived in Canberra. This was my first scholarly publication, and it was followed three years later by a draft of another section of my dissertation, entitled 'The Liberal-Democratic party and constitutional revision', in the next (1968) issue of the same in-house publication. A slightly revised version of the latter article was published in the same year in the *Washington Law Review*, under the title 'Twenty years of revisionism', which was in turn reprinted in the book *The Constitution of Japan: Its First Twenty Years, 1947-67* (Dan F Henderson, ed.).

I cannot pinpoint the exact date when I began drafting the text of my dissertation, but it must have been only a few months after I returned to Canberra from my fieldwork in Japan in the spring of 1966, considering that my scholarship support was to expire at the end of June 1967. I do, however, remember how I proceeded with the preparation of the drafts: David ordered that I prepare and deliver to him the draft of each chapter each fortnight; I did so, and he would quickly go over it, probably jotting down a few comments in the margins; he would then send it over to Dr Arthur Stockwin, who had completed his doctoral work under David's supervision a few years before and was teaching in the undergraduate division at ANU at the time, for a detailed and thorough editorial job; and, finally, he would return it to me, more for my information than for my approval. My original draft was obviously full of grammatical errors and syntactic irregularities. It was therefore David's misfortune to have served as my dissertation adviser-cum-editor.

Even more unfortunate was Arthur Stockwin's luck to have been where he was at the time. My dissertation would neither have been written the way it was written, nor finished when it was finished, but for the presence and help of these two individuals.

Thanks to their help, I completed and submitted my dissertation before my scholarship period ended in June 1967. I had yet to sit for an oral examination to defend my dissertation, however, and David set up an exceptionally distinguished examination panel, composed of Professors Nobutaka Ike (Stanford), Ronald Dore (London School of Economics) and Colin Hughes (University of Queensland). It took a few more months to send by mail a copy of the dissertation to each member of the panel and have Ike and Dore send their opinions to Hughes, also by mail, a period I had to endure without scholarship support. To my pleasant surprise, David negotiated for me a one-semester temporary lecturer appointment with the history department of the University of Adelaide.

Following the end of my appointment at Adelaide, I sat for and passed the oral defence of my dissertation in November 1967. No sooner had I done so than David sent an edited copy of my dissertation to ANU Press and had it accepted for publication. Meanwhile, I had a job offer — a tenure-track assistant professor position — from the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), which I accepted. David suggested at the time that I should consider staying at ANU as a research fellow and write another book or two before moving to another university in the United States or elsewhere. As usual, however, he brought it up only once and never returned to the subject, and I moved to and began teaching at UCSB in the winter of 1968.

As soon as he realised that I was headed to UCSB against his advice, he arranged, again without my knowledge, simultaneous co-publication of my dissertation by ANU and UC presses. As a result, the dissertation was published in 1970 under the imprints of the two university presses as *Party in Power: The Japanese Liberal Democrats and Policy-making*. About the same time, I was urged by a Japanese political scientist, the late Seki Hiroharu, then of the University of Tokyo Institute of Oriental Culture, to translate the manuscript into Japanese for publication in Japan as well. I promptly undertook and finished the translation and had the result published by a well-established, though relatively unknown, publishing house in Tokyo, Fukumura Shuppan. To my great and pleasant surprise, this edition was reviewed favourably in all major Japanese newspapers and sold exceptionally well for an academic work. While Professor Seki, rather than David, was directly responsible for this development in my academic career, it was obviously built on the foundation already laid by David and Arthur.

A decade after I left ANU upon the completion of my doctoral work, I returned there as a visiting fellow in the RSPS Department of International Relations to work with Arthur on a joint research project on Australian–Japanese relations

in the early to mid-1970s, with special attention to the twists and turns in the negotiations for the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation under the governments of Gough Whitlam (later Malcolm Fraser) and Tanaka Kakuei (later Miki Takeo). I spent the last half of 1976 in the department and am sure to have met David at least several times during the period. Yet, I don't remember any specific detail of personal contact with him then, perhaps because we were both very busy with our own work but, more likely, due to my poor memory.

To my shame, the same applies to my last meeting with him a decade and a half later. This happened sometime in the early 1990s in Tokyo. I was on a short research trip and he was a visiting professor at Hiroshima Shūdō University. We ran into each other at the International House of Japan in Tokyo and shared lunch. We talked for some time, mainly about his research on the origins of early Japanese migration to Australia and mine on the structure of political patronage and corruption in contemporary Japan. To my great embarrassment and regret, however, my memory of this last meeting with him is just as foggy and insubstantial as those of our earlier contacts back in Canberra in the 1960s.

Despite this impenetrable fog that envelopes and clouds my image of him, I know with absolute certainty two things about him and our relationship. One is that he launched me on my lifelong professional career. He, and he alone, was responsible for the timely completion of my doctoral dissertation at ANU and its virtually instant publication by two university presses, which in turn promptly earned me the tenure-track teaching position at UCSB and ensured my job security for the rest of my professional working life. The other is that he did this with total selflessness, neither asking for nor receiving anything in return, at least from me. At a more general and collective level, the government and people of Australia at the time treated foreign scholarship students with what strikes me as an extraordinary manifestation of transnational altruism and generosity. In such a context, he may have been the embodiment of the policy of his government and the sentiment of his people. That, however, detracts nothing from the huge personal debt of gratitude I owe to him. I only wish I had thanked him more appropriately when it was still possible to do so.

## My reminiscences of David Sissons

Okudaira Yasuhiro

David and I met for the first time in 1956. He was conscripted towards the end of the Pacific War and was serving in uniform. After Japan's defeat, he was stationed at Iwakuni (Yamaguchi prefecture) as a member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force and remained in Japan for about two years. We met, however, during his second period of residence in Japan.

In everything that he did, David was temperamentally modest and circumspect. While in military service, he underwent training in Japanese, and apparently had experience as an interpreter, but I think that in his relationship with me there were more occasions when we spoke English than when we spoke Japanese. As for me, I had absolutely no skill in English conversation, and so David was probably too shy to use Japanese.

In 1956 David came to Japan as recipient of the Saionji Kinmochi Scholarship, and enrolled as a researcher at the Institute of Social Science of Tokyo University. At that time (1953–58) I was a research assistant at the same institute. We worked together in the same university office, and were in the habit of taking lunch and tea together, and we talked about everything under the sun.

Among our discussions, he told me how as a youth he had walked in the mountains near where he lived, taking several days at a time, on his own and without meeting a soul. This struck me as remarkable and impressive. When he became tired on these walks, he would always look out for a shepherd's hut, these huts were usually left unlocked, and appropriate eating utensils were provided for anyone to use. The fact that private shepherds' huts were also provided for public use struck me as representing the 'Waltzing Matilda' spirit of Australia.

Talk of mountain walks brings to mind a time we went skiing together in winter to Nozawa *onsen* (hot springs) in Nagano prefecture. Neither of us were particularly good skiers but, as soon as we reached the *onsen*, he found a ski instructor and entered into a regime of studying the art of skiing. I am not skilful, but am content if I can somehow slide down the slopes by my own efforts, but David was the deliberate type who had to cope with skiing by learning the skill steadily, step by step.

The inn where we were staying at Nozawa *onsen* was pure Japanese style, and included a splendid bath. Since I yielded to nobody in my enthusiasm for *onsen*, over the days that we were staying at that inn I used to go into the baths any number of times day and night. I don't know how it is nowadays, but at that time my kind of *onsen* mania was nothing out of the ordinary. But, since David had no connection with this *onsen* 'culture', he seems to have regarded my frequent bathing as a trifle surprising. I remember that he said: 'The Roman Emperor Nero liked bathing in hot springs so much that he ruined himself as well as the country.'

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Once, at Tokyo University, David and I had finished our lunch and were returning to the university when, near to Akamon (the Red Gate), we encountered the well-known Professor Maruyama Masao walking with somebody else on the other

side of the road. Something that David said on that occasion struck me as most interesting and has remained in my memory: 'Maruyama has a fine face, doesn't he? He ought to be a Kabuki actor.'

One day, David came along with a young official of the British Embassy and myself to have lunch at a famous eel restaurant at the top of Masago Hill (today that whole area has changed and the restaurant no longer exists). I was surprised when the official arrived in a splendid car, with a Japanese chauffeur. During the meal we talked about all sorts of things and, in the course of the conversation, David suddenly said to me 'His English and my English differ a good deal, don't they?' David's impression was that the embassy official's English was the English of Oxford and Cambridge, whereas his English was that of Australia. I replied that I didn't think there was a great deal of difference.

Some years later, I spent a couple of years at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and, as a result, inevitably my usage became Americanised, but I feel sure that my English is basically the English that David taught me.

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I was studying the US constitution and administrative law at the University of Pennsylvania between the autumn of 1959 and the end of spring 1961. In the meantime, about halfway through 1960, David came to the University of Washington, Seattle, and took the opportunity to survey Japanese studies (Japanology) in the United States. One day a letter came from David, saying that he was soon going to return to Australia but that, before going home, he would like to meet up with us on the East Coast. When he arrived at Philadelphia airport, I met him with a car, but I was new to America and had only just got a driving licence. My car was a venerable Chevrolet from the early 1950s that I had just received from a friend returning home to Finland, and even now I have feelings of nostalgia about it.

My wife and I were living a life of poverty with everything in a single room. Since there was only one bed, we took the mattress off the bed and we slept on that, while David slept on the bed without its mattress. It was better than camping outside and, anyhow, it was only for three days, so nobody felt put out by these arrangements.

The problem was the next morning. Early in the morning a cold front came through and created a blizzard. Our first plan was that morning to drive the car to New York City. We brushed off the snow and tried to start the car, but the battery was flat and the car would not start. After charging the battery at a nearby gasoline station, we managed to get the car started. Luckily it was fitted with snow tyres, and there was no problem in driving on the snow.

To tell the truth, it has completely slipped my memory whether or not the three of us actually got to Manhattan. For me, only just licensed to drive, the battery problem first of all and then the sudden blizzard scared me out of my wits. David, however, reacted entirely differently, staying calm and collected, and methodically helping to sort things out.

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In 1961 David was appointed to a position in the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific Studies, at The Australian National University. In early summer of the same year, we returned to Japan, but my appointment was in the Faculty of Law of Nagoya University. Soon after I moved to Nagoya, around 1962, David returned to Tokyo, and for a year stayed and collected research materials. I was delighted that once during his stay he came to see us in Nagoya. It was summer, and thus the season to enjoy the regional specialty of cormorant fishing on the Nagara River in Gifu City. For both of us this was our first experience of going to see the spectacle of cormorant fishing. In ancient times, cormorant fishing meant using these birds to catch fish. Today it means reviving what used to be a method of fishing as a performance for sightseers. To create an atmosphere in which men clad in ancient costume actually use cormorants time and again as a fishing spectacle, and call it 'cormorant fishing', is a great performance at which tourists enjoy dinner parties on the river bank, washed down with saké. For me this is a kind of ceremony or pattern, whereby what has been done since ancient times is revived, and I take it as example of cultural continuity.

This was my first and last experience of cormorant fishing, and I think it was the same for David.

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While I was working at Nagoya University, David, still in Tokyo, wrote me a letter: 'At present a retired judge of the Tasmanian High Court is in Tokyo. Do you think you could manage to get an invitation for him to lecture from the Nagoya Lawyers Association?' (I now cannot for the life of me remember the name of the judge, so I will just refer to him as 'the judge').

Based on this written request from David, through the good offices of a senior professor in the Law Faculty of Nagoya University, I entered into negotiations with the Nagoya Lawyers Association to make arrangements for a lecture (and to provide expenses associated with the invitation). Without difficulty, I received the go-ahead from the association, and the judge's lecture meeting duly took place. My memory of the lecture has faded, but I think it was a presentation about law in general, focusing on the rule of law. I undertook the interpretation and, being in my early 30s, even though my interpreting was inexperienced, I did it off the cuff and without too much fuss, but when I think of it now it sends a shiver down my spine.

The accommodation that the association prepared for the judge was a fully Japanese-style inn called the Inuyama at the famous Inuyama Castle on the outskirts of Nagoya. It was not a small inn, but nobody on the staff spoke English. For my part, thinking that this would be an interesting experience for the judge, I asked one of the managers to treat him as he would a Japanese person, but I showed the manager the judge's schedule for returning to Tokyo the next day, and asked him to stick to it. Then without taking dinner with the judge, I parted from him.

Later, David told me that the 'judge' had been his senior officer during his military service. In any case, he gave the impression of being a military type of person. (It is strange that David hardly opened up at all about his period in the military. He spoke a very little about his experiences on duty near the Cowra prisoner-of-war camp, as well as of his service after the war at the Iwakuni military base of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, and very occasionally added other stories to these, but that is all.)

When it was I am unable to remember, but while both of us were in Tokyo, David suddenly came out with the statement: 'Tomorrow, I am going to cast an absentee vote.' I did not understand what this was all about. Since in Japan at that time, at the level of national elections, no system of absentee voting by Japanese citizens resident abroad existed, I could not work out what this might actually mean.

In Japan, the right for Japanese living abroad to vote in elections for the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors was first granted by a revision of the election law in 2005. By contrast, in the case of Australia, perhaps taking the United Kingdom as a model, I think an absentee voting system was established at almost the same time as the federal government was established in 1901. This made me realise that there were many differences among the ways in which democracy was accepted in Japan and Australia,

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After living for around five years in Nagoya, in 1966 we (the Okudairas) returned to Tokyo. I returned to work in my old nest, the Institute of Social Science at Tokyo University. One day in 1969 a letter came from David, sounding me out about whether I would like to spend a year in Canberra together with my family. This invitation was really wonderful, and I was delighted to accept. Thus for my wife and me, together with our son and daughter, this was a great undertaking.

ANU provided for our family one of the single-storey houses scattered between the campus and Lake Burley Griffin. I still remember that our daughter, who was in a lower grade of primary school, said delightedly: 'Wow! This is the first time since I was born that I have lived in a detached house!' It remains in my memory that David and Bronwen had filled our refrigerator with all sorts of food items

ready to use, and I do not forget this. From then on for a year our family received the warmest treatment from them in all sorts of ways, so that we could enjoy life in Canberra to the full.

As for me, rather than making Australia itself the object of my research, I thought I should seek to understand the country in a broad and general way. As the least courtesy from a visitor to a country that had treated us so generously, I thought I should attain a broad understanding of the founding history of this country, and so I read general histories. One thing that I learned in studying this way was that Japan looked at the world with a focus on Britain, the United States and Europe, but had Australia in its sights hardly at all. By contrast, Australian people were concerned with what was going on behind the scenes in Japan, and had tended to view Japan as a potential enemy. There seems to have been a feeling of danger that Japan, which was exercising control over China and Korea, might turn its sights onto Australia; Australians were deeply suspicious of what lay behind the Greater Japanese Empire, and were watching it very closely. To learn about this historical environment was for me a big surprise. For me this was in truth a precious education in history.

While I was at ANU, David was working hard to write a piece on the Japanese constitution. But for me, while I was staying on purpose in Australia, I had no desire to write about things in Japan, since I thought that would be a waste of time. Whereas I was negative towards this, David's advice was very positive. At that time (the early 1970s), the number of articles in English about the Japanese constitution was extremely small, and I think he wanted to get me to fill this gap. In the end, following David's advice, I wrote a short article about it. This was 'The Japanese Supreme Court: its organisation and function'.<sup>1</sup> Since my ability to express myself in English was limited, the article emerged only after immense assistance from David.

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David gave great consideration to make sure that my stay in Australia should be fruitful. One of the things he did was to organise dinner parties and so on, so that I could meet some of the most distinguished legal scholars in the land. The first of these that I should mention was Sir Kenneth Bailey, who should probably be regarded as the most active Australian lawyer on the world stage. Despite his fame, his temperament was genial and amiable, and of course he was master of a wide range of issues. I remember that I met him in 1971 and, since he died the following year, I had the immense good fortune to meet him when he had not long to live.

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1 *LAWASLA*, vol. 3, no. 1 (April 1972), p. 67.

More than 20 years after that time, I had occasion to take an interest in the abdication of the British King Edward VIII. One of the many issues of constitutional procedure involved was that King Edward was not only king of the United Kingdom, but was also king of the British dominions beyond the sea, as well as Emperor of India, giving rise to a complexity of titles. Recognition of his abdication was not just a question of having everyone accept the UK example. Many students of public law wrote all sorts of articles on this problem. I have not collected these articles, but there was a truly exceptional one by Bailey (then a professor in the University of Melbourne Law School, I am afraid I lack the citation at present). Sir Kenneth in his younger days stood out from the crowd.

Another person that I was able to meet through David was Professor Geoffrey Sawyer of the ANU. Not only was he at the summit of Australian constitutional and administrative law studies, but he was also famous as a theorist and commentator in the broad sphere of politics and administration, including international politics. In 1950, when ANU was being established, he moved from the Melbourne University Law School to become one of the founding members of ANU.

Sawyer, while he was at Melbourne University, had been one of the disciples of Bailey, who told me: 'Sawyer was a splendid and incomparable law school teacher, and was loved by the students at the Melbourne Law School. When he moved to ANU, he was constrained to act more as a researcher than as a teacher, and I am inclined to think that that was Australia's loss.'

After a year and a half in Australia, I returned to Japan. After returning home I have never, even till now, deliberately continued studying the Australian constitution and administrative law. I don't know a great deal about contemporary Australian constitutional development. Even so, reform of the Australian public law system in the second half of the 20th century is impressive. In particular, administrative law reform and the development of the freedom of information system contain outstanding features. Even though the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia lacks a bill of rights, it is most enviable that constitutional democracy based on an administrative investigation system along US lines has put down roots and continues to develop. In my opinion, behind this establishment of constitutional democracy, lay the theoretical work conducted by Bailey and Sawyer. The fact that I have been able to arrive at this understanding undoubtedly owes everything to David.

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Finally, I would like to mention a particular personality that I was able to meet with David's help. This was Professor William Macmahon Ball, who had been David's academic supervisor while he was studying at the University of Melbourne. One day in 1971, when I was able to investigate materials relating to the

administration of broadcasting at the Melbourne headquarters of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) (an arrangement that David had set up for me) he also fixed up a meeting with Ball.

Ball was, for the Japanese, an outstanding personality during the Occupation (1945–52) as the British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council for Japan, which had been set up in relation to the postwar management of Japan. He was somebody who might even be described as a transcendent being. When I visited his house, he had left official duties behind and was leading a life of comfortable retirement, in a chalet deep in the mountains. In order to take me from central Melbourne to this remote mountain chalet, the office of the ABC provided a car and driver (this was undoubtedly something that David had arranged on my behalf).

To the image that I had of Ball was attached to some extent the description of an imperious individual, but in reality he was affable and friendly. Since this was a meeting for which I had not prepared a set of questions beforehand, the interview ended up as a discursive evaluation of Japan in general terms. Indeed, I now realise to my regret that I should have asked him to speak about the position he took as British Commonwealth representative about whether or not to retain the Emperor.

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I think that at this point I should end this tribute to David. His last stay in Japan was after he retired from ANU at the beginning of the 1990s and came as a professor of Hiroshima Shūdō University. Just before he left for Hiroshima we had dinner together in Tokyo and, for the two of us, this was our final meeting. In fact, one of David's first articles was on the so-called 'pacifist clause' (article 9) of the Japanese constitution. I knew this article, but had lost the citation, and I intended to ask him for it, but then I found I had lost the chance of doing so.<sup>2</sup>

## David Sissons, my doctoral supervisor and mentor

Arthur Stockwin

David Sissons was the supervisor of my doctoral thesis at The Australian National University between 1961 and 1965. I owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for putting me on the right path in researching and thinking about Japan and its politics. I will go so far as to say that my subsequent career depended crucially on the supervision he gave me over those early years. He was not an easy

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<sup>2</sup> Professor Okudaira died in January 2015.

supervisor and, at times, I thought he was being unreasonably demanding, but that was in the end a boon since, at the time, I lacked not only research experience but also the discipline needed to successfully complete a doctoral course.

David only took over my supervision about a year after my wife Audrey and I arrived in Canberra from the United Kingdom for me to take up a PhD scholarship. Having spent 18 months in the mid-1950s on an intensive Russian course at the Joint Services School of Languages, successively at Bodmin, Cambridge and Crail, and having graduated in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the University of Oxford, I proposed in my application to ANU that I would write a thesis on Soviet foreign policy in Asia. No doubt there was an element of grantsmanship in this proposal, but in any case when I arrived I found that there was nobody at ANU with the right sort of expertise to supervise a thesis in that area. At the time, reliable information from the Soviet Union was hard to come by but, in pre-researching Soviet foreign policy in East Asia, I became interested in Japan, so that I began to look at the foreign policy of Japan and, more generally, find out what I could about that country. I remember spending hours immersed in successive volumes of *Keesings Contemporary Archives* following developments in Japanese politics and foreign policy since the war. I also enrolled in first-, and then second-, year Japanese at the Canberra University College, and also did conversation classes with various Japanese graduate students at ANU. But when I started I doubt if I knew more about Japan than I did about Argentina, and the sum of my knowledge about Argentina was Eva Peron and Fray Bentos beef.

When David arrived in the Department of International Relations in 1961, my situation rapidly improved. I had been working, more or less, under my own steam, trying to prepare an outline of a workable thesis topic on Japanese foreign policy since the war, but my ideas lacked focus and I was unsure how to proceed. David had recently spent some three-and-a-half years in Tokyo, researching the latest developments in Japanese politics, and he understood what was important and what was not. In 1960 he had published an important article in two parts on the Japan Socialist Party,<sup>3</sup> and he suggested to me that I research the concept of 'neutralism' or 'non-alignment' that underpinned the foreign policy prescriptions of what was still the principal opposition party in Japan.

'The neutralist policy of the Japanese Socialist Party' thus became the title of my thesis and, much later, the thesis was the basis for my first book. Once David arrived, I found myself under purposeful direction for the first time since my arrival in Canberra. He insisted that I redouble my efforts to improve my still very basic Japanese, and I accordingly arranged still more language lessons with Japanese students at ANU. These normally took the form of two-hour sessions, one hour in

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<sup>3</sup> David CS Sissons, 'Recent developments in the Japanese socialist movement', *Far Eastern Survey*, March & June, 1960.

which I engaged the student in English conversation, and the other hour where he would engage me in Japanese conversation. I also recorded short-wave broadcasts in Japanese from Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai (the state broadcaster), barely audible through the static, and these formed material for lessons. I remember replaying time and again a tape that included the phrase *higashiyama no fumoto e* (towards the foot of East Mountain [in Kyoto]).

During the fieldwork research for my thesis, David arranged for a fee waiver for me at the Institute of Social Science (*Shaken*) of Tokyo University, found me a supervisor (the historian Professor Hayashi Shigeru) and gave me a number of useful introductions and briefings about what to expect in Tokyo.

And then, very early in 1962, Audrey and I, with our six-week-old red-haired daughter, embarked in Sydney on the *Suez Maru*, of the venerable OSK line (*Ōsaka Shōsen Kaisha*) for a two-week voyage, with one stop in Brisbane, to Japan. This was a cargo ship, taking 12 passengers, including a young Japanese man importing racehorses from Australia to Japan (the horses were in a stable on the deck). There was an elderly Japanese doctor with little English who explained to us the workings of a baby's digestive system by drawing the mechanism on a blackboard. The ship's purser bore a striking resemblance to the Emperor, which was a source of hilarity among other officers, thus challenging our assumptions about continued reverence for the Emperor. During the course of the trip, the French conducted their first nuclear test, and the population of Tokyo passed 10 million. We disembarked, not at Yokohama, but at the small port of Yokkaichi, to the west of Nagoya and later notorious for pollution-induced asthma, and travelled thence to Tokyo on the leisurely rail service that preceded the development of the *Shinkansen*. We were inexperienced parents, my Japanese was still far from adequate for research purposes, and this was our first sight of Japan. But we had one unexpected social asset in the form of our baby daughter who, with her flaming red hair, introduced us to many new friends.

Once we had settled in to a prewar wooden house in the suburb of Nishigahara, several kilometres north of the Hongō campus of Tokyo University, I was able to concentrate on my research. David set me on a regime of writing a substantive paper to be despatched to him at the end of every month. He would send these back to me promptly, emblazoned with comments in red ink, some relating to content and some to style. This was years before Lynne Truss wrote her book on punctuation, but David was probably even more punctilious about how to punctuate than she. He also swooped on verbosity with sharp talons, and gradually guided my writing towards a spare style unencumbered with surplus adjectives, though I probably never quite measured up to his ideal. Over the 15 months we were in Japan, he not only taught me much about research, but also about how to write. At first, I think I was shocked by his stern approach, but later I came to appreciate its merits.

Every month, alongside my report to David, I had to send him accounts of what we had spent, which then formed the basis of our living allowance from ANU. From David's point of view, this was not a formality and, on one occasion, he disallowed reimbursement for strawberries. While we were still in Canberra, he told me that I should register for the 'rice ration', but when I enquired about this at *Shaken*, I was told that it no longer existed. I also found that at *Shaken* he was famous for his skill in minimising his living expenses over the years he had been attached there, eking out, I believe, a two-year scholarship to last three-and-a-half years. Unlike my acceptance of his supervisory rigour, our appreciation of David's financial discipline might be described as 'muted'. Even so, when towards the end of 1962 he came to Tokyo for a period of research leave from ANU, we had a brief conversation about finances, in which he sent himself up as 'bastard Sissons'.

After he arrived in Tokyo he probably judged that I was on the right track, and so his supervision became less critical, and we were able to discuss my research in a more relaxed manner. For a week or so in the winter of 1962–63 he and I went skiing at Akakura in Nagano prefecture. We travelled in the evening (perhaps overnight) on a train packed with skiers and, for most of the journey, had to stand in the corridor. We were part of a group from *Shaken* that had hired a lodge belonging to the university's Department of Forestry (or perhaps a government forestry institution). The external temperature was far below freezing and, except for the kitchens, there was no heating other than a *kotatsu*, a heated depression in the floor beneath a low quilted table, on which we rested our feet in the evening. At night we would bury ourselves under *futon*. In the mornings we would spend about 20 minutes travelling on a ski lift up through the fog, dressed in every stitch of clothing we had with us, until the sound of Austrian yodelling music signalled that we were approaching the summit.

My period of research in Japan was supposed to last a year, but David realised that I needed more time, and negotiated for me an extra three months so that I could do more interviewing. My Japanese only became sufficient to conduct interviews two or three months into our stay, so I had some interviewing backlog to catch up with. We therefore did not leave Japan until May 1963. I secured a berth on another cargo ship taking a few passengers, the *Tenos* of the Australia West Pacific Line, travelling with a bunch of people who had walked straight out of a story by Somerset Maugham. One of the passengers was the wife of the head of a British oil company in Japan, travelling to Australia to clear up an estate. There was another woman, rather down at heel in appearance, whose son, according to the oil company lady, had been involved in black market operations in Japan. This piece of intelligence she had no intention of keeping to herself. Another passenger attempted unsuccessfully to recruit me to help the Australian security services.

The ship began its journey from Kōbe, so that we had to travel down the country by train with accumulated luggage, including research materials I had collected. David had arranged to come to our house at a given hour and help us to bring our luggage to the railway station (probably Tokyo central station). The hour came and went without a sign of David until, eventually, he turned up having travelled on a slow clanking tram (the old *toden*) rather than by taxi, thus no doubt saving a few hundred yen. As it turned out, it hardly mattered, but for an anxious period we wondered what had happened to him.

Some time in the late 1960s, David once again spent a period of research in Japan, having expected to be able to use the National Diet Library, the central repository of material about Japanese politics. But unfortunately, the library was closed for rebuilding more or less throughout the period he was there. Thus fortuitous circumstance led to a fundamental shift in his research direction. For several years, he had been researching the history of relations between Australia and Japan, devoting, as he told me, every Thursday to this task. Now, he shifted his focus almost entirely onto research into the history of Australia–Japan relations, and that field was enormously enriched by his efforts during the rest of his life.

In June 1971, the Australian Institute of International Affairs held a conference in Sydney on ‘Japan and Australia in the seventies’ and, after the conference, I was asked to edit the proceedings for publication. David contributed a paper for the conference, dealing with the history of immigration, trade and defence relations between the two countries. When it came to the task of editing the proceedings, I told David that his paper was longer than I could accommodate, and asked him to make it shorter. After a while, he sent me his revised paper, with additional material, so that it was appreciably longer than the original. We easily came to a compromise: his paper would include only material on immigration, and he could expand that if he wanted to, but up to a specific word limit.<sup>4</sup>

Between November 1971 and September 1972 the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia held regular hearings on the broad and comprehensive topic ‘Japan’. David acted as specialist adviser to the committee. He also submitted and presented papers on the history of immigration and defence issues between the two countries. I myself made submissions to the committee and was ‘examined’. I remember well the important part that David played in the proceedings. There is one memory I still retain from that exercise, namely an informal conversation during a tea break between Senator Sim, the committee chairman (Liberal), David and me about the rights and wrongs of the atom bombing of Hiroshima. Senator Sim was arguing that the decision to bomb was inevitable in the circumstances, and probably

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<sup>4</sup> DCS Sissons, ‘Immigration in Australian–Japanese relations’, in JAA Stockwin (ed.), *Japan and Australia in the Seventies* (Sydney and London: Angus and Robertson, 1972).

justified. David was minded to see both sides of the argument, though inclined rather towards Senator Sim's position. I had very recently visited Hiroshima, including the atomic bomb museum and, rather than advancing any intellectual argument, simply interjected two or three times into the conversation the phrase 'that city is full of ghosts'. My impression is that neither David nor Senator Sim were quite sure how to react to such an 'emotive' and 'irrational' argument.

Both David and I in the 1970s occasionally gave commentaries over ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) radio relating to events in Japan. On one occasion (possibly in the 1960s), David was in a link-up on the ABC with the Australian ambassador in Tokyo. The commentator asked David the question 'is the Japanese government pacifist?' (or possibly 'is Japan a pacifist nation?', or just 'is Japan pacifist?'). According to his own account, David replied that this was a question he could not possibly answer, as it was a political question and therefore fell within the ambassador's sphere of responsibility, not his own. I remember that when he told me this, I found it difficult to imagine that an academic specialist, who had published in leading journals of Asian affairs on Japan's 'pacifist constitution', should have found it necessary to defer to an ambassador, whose knowledge of the subject was probably much more superficial than his own.

But this anecdote reveals an important facet of David's personality, namely his extreme modesty. I am certain that there was no false modesty here, and that his response to the ABC commentator was motivated entirely by his belief that it was up to the ambassador in such circumstances to answer a political question. This was not the only occasion when David by diligence and hard work became more expert than the 'experts'. In his research on the treatment of Japanese prisoners by Australian forces in the Pacific islands at the end of the Pacific War, he accumulated specialist medical knowledge on relevant tropical diseases. Modest as usual, however, deferential to authority and far from content with his independent investigations into the subject, he wrote an immensely detailed letter stating his findings to his elder brother Hubert, a distinguished physician working in London. Hubert wrote back simply: 'You clearly know much more about this subject than I do.'

A mutual acquaintance and fellow academic in the international relations field, the late Arthur Burns, once commented to me that 'David Sissons is an absolute non-generaliser'.<sup>5</sup> It is easy to understand the apparent cogency of this observation given the fact (or perhaps more accurately, the belief) that David felt he could not possibly write about the history of Japanese pearl diving off Broome, Western Australia, without first examining every grave in the Japanese section of the Broome cemetery, and then researching in detail the personal history of every individual so identified. Nevertheless, after going through the 60 boxes of material

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5 Private conversation, probably late 1960s.

that David placed in the National Library of Australia in Canberra, I am convinced that the 'non-generaliser' label is wide of the mark. The boxes contain, among other things, bunches of material with the note 'research completed'. This was a sure sign that David had not only completed a thorough examination of the subject matter concerned, but had also arrived at clear and cogent conclusions about where the balance of truth lay in that particular area. To take one important example, he was firmly of the opinion that the trade diversion episode in 1936, which penalised Japanese textile imports in the interests of the Lancashire cotton industry, was a case of ill-conceived policymaking that did no good to any of the participants. Again, with good reason, he identified Anthony Clunies-Ross as the most enlightened and far-sighted policymaker in relation to Japan of any Australian official during the 1930s. And, most strikingly, his exhaustive treatment of the Katayama case was underpinned by David's deep commitment — his passionate commitment — to humanity and justice, and his sense that by executing Katayama the relevant Australian authorities had disgracefully betrayed those principles.

It is perfectly true that David was sceptical of most theoretical approaches, whether in political science or other disciplines. I remember having a conversation with him, while I was still his student, about organisation theory, which was still a fashionable body of literature in the early 1960s. He told me that he had indeed attempted to come to grips with it but, in the end, abandoned the attempt because he found it boring. For David, the idea that a research project should have as its primary purpose the generation of theory, or still more that it should be confined within the framework of some body of theory — while making minor refinements to that theory — was putting the cart before the horse. Rather, his approach was to investigate a research 'territory' (my word, not his), cover it exhaustively and, by so doing, reveal the underlying logics (the plural is deliberate) inherent in the phenomena under investigation. But curiously enough, that tended to lead him back, with due allowance for scepticism, into concerns that we might well call 'theoretical'. For instance, my doctoral thesis had as one of its main concerns the phenomenon of factionalism in Japanese political parties, and whether factions were ideological groups or simply groups seeking power maximisation. David well appreciated the theoretical implications of this distinction and gave me excellent advice on how to research and pin down the ways in which the system worked. I very much doubt, however, whether he would have been much impressed by the recent obsession of many political scientists, especially in the United States, with rational choice theory, often seen as the ideological underpinning for the political economy of neo-liberalism.

This leads on neatly to the question of David's political orientation. When I first met David, and talked with him over a certain period, I formed the impression that he was a kind of romantic conservative, taking comfort from tradition and settled authority. There was, of course, a specifically Australian set of elements involved in this. He was reflecting on an Australia that still maintained strong sentimental links

(as well as many material links) with ‘the old country’, as symbolised by the Royal Family, the Westminster parliament, and British institutions of all kinds. Much of this, no doubt, went back to his experiences of the Second World War, and its sense of joint purpose against common enemies. He once mentioned his memories of broadcast speeches by King George VI, in which the king was struggling to overcome his stammer (an impediment that was the subject of a recent film). This reminded me of my own childhood in Britain where, during and after the war, such feelings would have been common currency among my parents and their friends. But, by the 1960s, in both countries, things were changing fast. When we went to the cinema in Canberra in the early 1960s, everyone respectfully stood up for the playing of the (British) national anthem was played. By the end of the 60s, it was no longer played in cinemas. And I believe that happened in Britain, too, over the same period.

I remember a conversation with David, probably in Japan in the early 60s, about the Indian Raj. At the time I had formed a fairly clear view about imperialism, that it was closely linked with exploitation and attitudes of racial superiority on the part of European powers, and that the decolonisation that had occurred so widely since 1945 was entirely or largely justified. David, however, disagreed. He mentioned to me a book (I forget which) that lauded the contribution made to India by the Raj and those many people of British origin involved in it. I think that in the end we agreed to differ.

One long weekend in 1961, David was away. When he came back, he told me that he had spent the weekend at a camp with the army reserve, and asked me whether I would like to be involved as well. Having had my fill of square bashing and bullying NCOs in national service in Britain, I declined. But I realised that military service was something that David valued highly. At the time, I almost certainly did not realise how extensive his military service had been in the Australian forces towards the end of the war, as an interpreter at Australian war crimes trials in the South Pacific islands, and in the Occupation of Japan. He spoke very little of these things. But I remember being puzzled by one thing he insisted on, which seemed to me essentially irrelevant to the task at hand. Not long into his supervision of my thesis, he mentioned that two books in English on Japanese affairs had recently appeared, and I might like to try my hand at reviewing them for publication in an international affairs journal. One of these was a general book on Japan by a former British ambassador to Japan, Sir Esler Dening. I agreed, read the books and wrote a review, which I gave to David. ‘Ah’, said David, ‘but you haven’t mentioned that Dening was in the AIF (Australian Imperial Force)’ during the Great War. I was puzzled by his reaction and suggested to him that this fact was hardly relevant to a review of a book that was about modern and contemporary Japan. Nevertheless, David continued to insist that I say something about Dening’s background. And so, my first-ever book review contained the following passage: ‘Sir Esler Dening was born in Tokyo in 1897, and after receiving his secondary education in

Brisbane, was in 1915 commissioned from the ranks in the 31st Battalion A.I.F. After a distinguished career in the Japan Consular Service, he served as British Ambassador to Japan from 1952–57. Thus with a fluent command of Japanese and most of his life spent in the Far East, he is one of the last of the “specialist ambassadors”. I now understand — as I didn’t then — that it was tremendously important to David that someone with such a close life involvement in both Australia and Japan should have served as the first *British* ambassador to Japan after the Occupation. Nevertheless, I found the book surprisingly boring, and implied that in my review. I don’t think David disagreed.

This picture of David as an old-fashioned conservative does, however, require modification. I know — because he told me — that at the watershed elections of December 1975, when after the dramatic dismissal of the Whitlam Labor Government by the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, the Australian Labor Party was soundly defeated by the Liberal–National coalition, leading to the election of the first government of Malcolm Fraser, David actually voted Labor. Or, more precisely, he voted for the local Labor MHR, Kep Enderby, who had been minister for the Capital Territory under Whitlam. The reason he gave was that Enderby had overruled objections from his department to David’s request for access to certain closed materials in the National Archives, enabling David to progress with his research. But I think there is more to it than that, because he once said to me, probably in the late 1960s, that he would like to see a Labor government ‘in order to shake up the Liberals’. Moreover, I remember thinking by the mid-1970s that David had become more relaxed, more at ease with himself, and thus less fixed and more moderate in his political opinions than he was when he was supervising my doctoral thesis. Perhaps this was because from 1965 (after I had graduated) he was married to Bronwen, and they later had three wonderful children.

Although David was normally decorous and polite in conversation, and also kept most of his army experiences to himself, he did once tell me a story that I hesitate to repeat, but will nevertheless do so because, having seen service in the armed forces, he understood the world at its more basic levels. While David was serving with the British Commonwealth Forces at Kure in Western Japan, one of his duties was to give talks in local schools about democratic values and what the Occupation was trying to achieve, and no doubt also about life in Australia. At the end of one of these talks he called for questions and a boy he described as ‘a swot sitting at the back of the class’ put up his hand and asked a question in passable English, as follows: ‘Please Sah, what is meaning of “f\*\*\* off Tojo”?’ David concocted the best reply he could think of, such as ‘that’s not a very common expression, so you really don’t need to bother about it’. ‘But Sah’, replied his determined questioner, ‘New Zealand soldiers in my village say it to me every day.’ And the Nisei (Japanese–American) class teacher gave no sign whatever that anything unusual had been asked.

To conclude, David Sissons was a careful scholar, meticulous in his research to an extraordinary degree, deeply empirical and suspicious of abstract theory, who in the course of his academic career uncovered much of the underlying structures of the relationship between two countries of crucial importance to each other, namely Australia and Japan. He was also a singular and engaging human being, tough and somewhat puritanical but also generous. In my case, he was more than just a thesis supervisor, he was the person who put my career on track. For that, and for his friendship, I am eternally grateful to him.

## David Sissons and Shiba Ryōtarō

### Watanabe Akio

Shiba Ryōtarō was one of the most popular Japanese writers, but he wrote a short story, on a topic most unusual for him, entitled ‘Night meeting on Thursday Island’ (first published in 1977 by Bungei Shunjū, reissued 1980). In this story, which I came across by accident, I was amazed and not a little nostalgic to find that, unexpectedly, Shiba had met David Sissons. Before I go on to describe my relations with the latter (my mentor), I want to introduce the reader to the portrait of him that emerges from Shiba’s story.

It is a story about divers in the seas around Thursday Island, situated among the many islands of the Torres Strait, gathering black-and-white mother of pearl, which is greatly valued for the creation of sophisticated buttons. For some reason, Europeans, Malays, Chinese and others did not persist in this work, but Japanese, and in particular those originating from a small area of Wakayama prefecture, displayed a special capacity for it. The novel begins with a citation from the book by David CS Sissons of The Australian National University, *Japanese in Australia, 1871–1946*, to the effect that ‘The first Australian businessman to employ Japanese for this work was Captain Miller of Thursday Island’. Later, on the question of why Japanese should have had this particular set of abilities, Shiba cited Sissons’ view that ‘what characterised the Japanese was their energy and strong motivation to succeed, as well as their desire to earn high wages. Since there were many candidates, those chosen as divers were, by dint of selection, outstanding. Moreover, the level of the divers’ remuneration increased with the amount of work accomplished, so that the Japanese divers, determined to earn as much as possible, worked all hours provided only that the sun was up’, and Shiba judged that this perception was absolutely correct. If we guess from Shiba’s words that David had discovered the essence of the situation by putting together stories that he had heard from locals in Wakayama, including the old man who was the model for the hero of Shiba’s novel, then the image of my mentor David gathering information at first-hand from this old man floats before my eyes and, although it is impossible to prove, I imagine that perhaps, before Shiba wrote his novel, he and

David travelled together to Kushimoto in Wakayama, and met those old people there. In this way, David's methods of research, consisting of building up the detail of the situation and steadily conducting practical investigations, makes this a plausible episode. Meanwhile, since Shiba, having been a journalist, was the type of writer who would gather information by actively visiting relevant locations, the two of them should have got on well. Starting with the night meeting on Thursday Island, described in the latter part of the story (where the author is treated as an honoured guest), and going on to discuss an aspect of relations between Japan and Australia, Shiba's account is full of interest but, as it is not so relevant to the topic of this article, I shall therefore leave it aside and move on to describe my encounters with my mentor, David Sissons.

I do not know when Shiba first knew of the existence of David Sissons, but it was probably not so long before the first appearance of the story in 1977. On the other hand, in my case, I left Japan in the (northern) spring of 1963, went to Canberra and began studying for a PhD at ANU. At that time David was conducting research into his specialty of Japanese politics at the Institute of Social Science at Tokyo University. He had been invited by Professor Hayashi Shigeru, whose interests lay in Meiji period political history. At the time, I had finished a Masters thesis at the Graduate School of Tokyo University, and had also completed another Masters thesis, in political science, at Meiji University. I had no other position lined up, however, and being often in Hayashi's office, I got to know David and also Arthur Stockwin, who had come from ANU to Tokyo on fieldwork to study the Japan Socialist Party. From both of them I received the suggestion that I might like to go to ANU. In those days I had probably never written a letter to anybody in English, and my life was far removed from writing horizontally, so that I was very hesitant, but at any rate it was recommended to me that I should apply for an Australian Commonwealth Scholarship. Just as I was sending off an application, papers arrived from ANU and, because they did not know my level of English, I was told that I should meet a certain official of the Australian embassy in Tokyo in a certain month on a certain day. The day before, I telephoned David from a public phone and reported this to him, and he advised me to drink some alcohol and, in a relaxed mood, anticipate the next day's meeting. Of course, considering his stern character, it is possible that I am misremembering and that it is a memory that I constructed later. What is more certain though is that in the phone conversation, as the English equivalent of *Nani nani shiyō to omoimasu*, I said 'I think I will', and was cautioned that 'I think' was unnecessary and that all I needed to say was 'I will'. I shall skip details of the exam but, in any case, while my conversation was halting, I was improving with practice and I was told by that certain official who was acting as examiner that he would report to ANU to that effect. Soon after, I received official confirmation from Canberra that I had passed. That was the point where my relationship with David as my supervisor began. I had proposed three possible research topics, and of these I was told to tackle the Okinawa issue. In pursuance of this, I should visit Okinawa on fieldwork, so that I could spend about one

month in Naha gathering materials, meeting people and hearing what they had to say. Okinawa at the time was under American occupation so that, armed with a travel warrant signed by Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato, I went by ship to Naha from Kagoshima, and my return was also by ship. I still retain the travel warrant signed by the American official in charge.

So, eventually, I reached Canberra. I don't know whether this was planned personally by David, or whether it was ANU policy, but I embarked on the P&O liner *Iberia* at Yokohama, which stopped at Kōbe, Hong Kong and Manila, finally reaching Sydney, the whole passage taking eight days. At Sydney, somebody from ANU came to meet me and put me on the train to Canberra, where I unpacked my belongings at University House. David was still conducting research in Tokyo. Until he returned from fieldwork, I was supervised by George Modelski, whose ways of working were quite different from David's. At first I was rather bewildered but, with hindsight, to have interacted with two supervisors so different from each other, was fortunate for me. Incidentally, I am still in friendly contact with Professor and Mrs Modelski.

Another aspect of David's 'supervisory methods' is shown in the following anecdote. He said that my wife, to whom I was newly married, should not accompany me, on the grounds that if we lived together this would harm my study of English. In the end, she joined me six months after my arrival in Canberra. It is impossible to demonstrate how far this contributed to my English language competence but, while I was living on my own, I repeatedly asked Modelski when my wife would be able to come to Canberra, and I still remember with a wry smile him teasing me about how much I was in love with her.

Returning to a more dignified discourse, before long a regular relationship with David began and, on a specified day every week, I would go to his office and show him the written results of the studies I had conducted during the week. On these occasions I was often counselled to write more briefly. I had a certain sense of making explanations to my bureaucratic superior but, later on, the fact that I developed the habit of leaving out certain points that I had wanted to discuss in a chapter probably owes a lot to David. Sometimes, following his own interests, David asked me about things here and there in Japan, and quite often I was embarrassed that I did not know the answer. Among these things may perhaps be counted many aspects of the Wakayama area that emerged in 'The night meeting at Thursday Island'. However, this may be, much like his shy and somewhat withdrawn character, David's research may be modest and unshowy, but I am delighted that it has been introduced to many Japanese people, together with the work of Shiba Ryōtarō, and it is in this spirit that I have written this appreciation.

## David Sissons, his methods of supervision and the adventures of one of his students: A memoir of the days when the world was wide

John Welfield

Those who in ancient days were the best commanders  
Were those who were delicate, subtle, mysterious, profound,  
Their minds too deep to be fathomed

—Lao Tzu, Tao Teh Ching

I remember the scene as it if were yesterday, although almost half a century has passed since then and the world has changed, in so many respects, beyond recognition.

It was a stifling Australian summer afternoon in late January 1967. I had recently been accepted as a Commonwealth Scholar into the doctoral program in the Department of International Relations in the Research School of Pacific Studies at The Australian National University, and was about to leave for three years language study and fieldwork in Japan. David Sissons, who had been appointed as my supervisor, Professor JDB Miller, the head of department, and I were sitting at a small table in the shadowy recesses of the Cellar Bar at University House, eating ploughman's lunches and addressing ourselves to cold beers.

It was Miller who spoke.

'Well, John,' he said in his mellifluous tones, 'you are going to Japan. We want you to stay there a long time, to learn the language thoroughly, to study the country's history, its culture, its politics and its foreign policy deeply, and most important of all, perhaps, to come to understand the spirit of the land and the way of thinking of its people. You should devote yourself single-mindedly to these tasks. From time to time you will receive frenzied letters both from me and from your supervisor, David here, enquiring about the progress of your thesis. You should ignore these letters, for a good thesis, like a good book, is something that cannot be hurried. It cannot be forced. It should grow, naturally and spontaneously, on the basis of real and substantial knowledge about issues of great public importance.'

David smiled shyly and nodded in agreement. Our discussion then turned to other matters, after which we walked back through the shimmering heat haze to our offices in the Coombs Building.

I had first met David Sissons in 1966, when I visited ANU to discuss the possibility of combining a doctoral program in contemporary East Asian international relations with intensive study of a major regional language. I had recently completed my honours degree and was highly motivated. The Cold War, then entering its

second decade, the bankruptcy of Washington's containment of China policy, the continuing escalation of the Indochina War and Canberra's role as a faithful and apparently unquestioning American ally had made me decide, some years before, to abandon what was generally thought to be a promising career in European studies, begin serious full-time research on the Asia-Pacific area and devote my life to making some contribution at the intellectual level, however insignificant, to the task of reconciling Australia's Western historical and cultural heritage with the demands imposed by its geopolitical location. This was something that had interested me since my childhood, as a boy growing up in the Australian bush, whose vast, empty spaces, immense skies and profound silence seemed to stimulate serious reflection, but the horrific slaughter and senseless destruction of the Vietnam War had instilled in me a heightened sense of urgency. My principal interest at that time was China, a country about which I had read a great deal. I was also deeply interested in South-East and Central Asia.

Miller supported my proposed course of studies warmly. It would be possible, he said, to send me to Beijing to learn Chinese and conduct preliminary research, after which I would return to the ANU to complete my thesis. Professor CP Fitzgerald, the eminent China specialist, would be my supervisor. Shortly after our initial discussions, however, the Cultural Revolution had erupted in China and it became impossible for ANU to despatch students to Beijing.

'What about going to Japan instead,' Miller proposed. 'We still don't have many specialists on Japanese politics and foreign policy in this country. David can supervise your work. He has a good track record.'

I thought for a second or two and accepted the offer. I have never had cause to regret it. Within a few months I embarked on a grand adventure, which took me not only to Japan but far beyond, to explore worlds that had long fired my youthful imagination and to forge close personal ties with people from many different cultural backgrounds and different walks of life, an adventure that is yet to come to an end, although I am rapidly approaching the three score years and 10 allotted to mankind and have still to complete the academic tasks I set myself at the beginning of the journey.

With the passage of the years, I have come to realise how exceptionally fortunate I was to have had David appointed as my supervisor. As a human being he was tolerant, kind-hearted, modest and old-fashioned in his ways. In summer, when he strolled around the corridors of the Coombs Building in his voluminous Bombay bloomers and knee-length socks he looked for all the world as if he had drifted out of the pages of *The Empire Boys Annual*. I never discussed politics with him but I always supposed that his views resembled those of the solid, socially responsible, imperially minded Tories who appear in John Buchan's novels. A sly, boyish sense of humour occasionally broke through the crust of his outer seriousness. His approach to supervision was unique. Strictly speaking, in fact,

apart from requiring me to write four or five detailed thesis proposals, to conduct a thorough literature search and, as my work progressed, advising me to ensure that the conclusion of my thesis was consistent with the introduction, that I should begin every chapter with a paragraph explaining what I hoped to demonstrate in it and end with a paragraph summarising the arguments and linking it with the following chapter (excellent advice, which I have always given to my own students), David did not supervise my work at all. He seemed determined not to influence the development of my ideas, directly, in any way. He gave me absolute freedom to proceed exactly as I pleased, to select a topic of my own choice, forcing me to search for materials on my own, to make my own discoveries, commit my own blunders and take full responsibility for it all. In this way he made an invaluable contribution both to my development as a scholar and as a person.

What David did was to lay foundations, to make arrangements and to provide opportunities, without always fully explaining what the true purpose of these foundations, arrangements and opportunities was. He would point to doors and occasionally even open them, without really letting one know what one was supposed to find behind them, what vistas might be obtained from the rooms to which they gave access and to what other chambers they might be connected. He would provide introductions, without necessarily explaining the role and significance of the individual to whom one was being introduced, except in the most general terms. All these things one was obliged to find out for oneself. If one did not come to understand the significance of the arrangements he had made, or avail oneself of the opportunities he offered, or explore the many mysterious rooms and corridors behind the doors to which he had provided the key, or towards which he had pointed, or which he had hinted might possibly exist somewhere, it was entirely one's fault. From time to time, too, he would administer little tests, such as withholding some vital piece of information or laying a trail of small red herrings across one's path, in order to encourage constant alertness, self-reliance and initiative.

All in all, his approach resembled that of a traditional zen master. I suspect that some of his other students may not have been altogether comfortable with this, and there were times when I felt both puzzled and profoundly frustrated, but generally speaking his method of supervision worked well for me. In retrospect, indeed, I realise how carefully, and with how much forethought, he laid the foundations for my first three years of study in Japan, how he endeavoured, without saying a word, to open my mind to certain geopolitical, cultural and historical realities that were, at that time, ignored by many Western specialists on East Asian international relations, and how he guided me, like some distant Sherpa, to the stage of thesis submission and beyond.

Not long after our lunch at the Cellar Bar, David made three decisions that were to exert an extraordinary and continuing influence not merely on my perceptions of Japan and its relations both with the Asian continent and with the maritime world of the West, but on the whole course of my subsequent development.

His first decision was about the seemingly elementary question of how I should travel to Japan.

‘It would be a good idea if you saw something of the rest of Asia before you begin your work on Japan,’ he said to me one day.

I told him that I was very happy with his suggestion.

‘But you should not travel by air,’ he continued. ‘You will see nothing that way. We would like you to travel by ship. We will purchase the tickets. You can make the necessary local arrangements as you like. Keep all the receipts and we will reimburse you when you return’ (he was always careful about these matters).

Thus it was that on 22 February 1967, after a farewell dinner with my family and a small number of Australian, Burmese, Indonesian and Malaysian friends in a cliff-top restaurant overlooking the Pacific Ocean, I clambered up the gangway of the Italian liner *Achille Lauro*, which was bound for Europe with calls at Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle, Singapore and ports beyond. David had arranged for me to disembark at Singapore and told me I should make my own way, in any fashion I saw fit, from there to Bangkok, where I would board the French liner *Le Laos*, sister ship of *Le Vietnam* and *Le Cambodge*, on 17 March. *Le Laos* would take me across the China seas to Japan, via the Philippines and Hong Kong. The vessel was scheduled to dock at Yokohama on 29 March 1967 and I was then to travel by train to the Japanese language school where David had arranged for me to study. His parting gift was the address of this institution and the telephone number of my Japanese guarantor scribbled on a small piece of paper torn from a used envelope on his desk. I thanked him, put the tiny scrap of paper in my pocket, and said goodbye.

‘Don’t forget to contact your guarantor as soon as you settle in,’ David called after me as I walked out of the door.

I was 21 years old. This long journey to Japan by sea and land was the first time I had travelled outside Australia and it left a deep impression on me. I remember it vividly. Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to describe my impressions and the adventures I went through on my way to Japan. But allow me to make just one reflection on my journey: David’s proposal that I should make my own way from Singapore to Bangkok, which I had welcomed eagerly but which was, nonetheless, rather daunting in those days before the development of South-East Asian tourism, and when several guerrilla groups, as well as bandits, were active in the Malaysia–Thai border region, proved to be another stroke of genius.

Looking back over the detailed diaries I kept and the letters I wrote during this journey, I realise the incalculable value of the gift he gave me, forcing me to stand on my own feet and fend for myself in a totally unfamiliar environment. While I had undoubtedly only begun to scratch the surface of things, I believe I learned more about the real world of South-East Asia in 10 days than I would have learned in many years of purely academic study.

*Le Laos* docked in Yokohama at midday. A bitterly cold wind swept across the city, ruffling the waters of its grey harbour, and sheets of fine, icy rain fell intermittently. Following David's instructions, I walked along the bleak pier, shivering in my light clothes, made my way to Sakuragichō station and boarded a train bound for Tokyo. It all seemed very simple. People even understood the elementary Japanese I had learned in Canberra under Dr Anthony Alfonso prior to departure.

I ought to have been more alert. David had set two final little tests for me. First, he had not told me it was necessary to change trains between Sakuragichō and Tokyo. I was only saved from disaster (as David had no doubt anticipated) by constantly practising my limited Japanese on the other passengers. As soon as she learned my destination, a helpful and amused Japanese lady hauled me physically from the train at some station before we had reached the point of no return, pushed me into a waiting train on the opposite side of the platform, bowed, then ran back to jump aboard the train we had just left.

The second of David's little tests proved to be more difficult. The address of the language school, which I had preserved faithfully in my wallet throughout the journey, was incomplete. On his tiny scrap of paper David had written in Chinese characters: 'Kokusai Gakuyū Kaikan, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo'. Arriving at Tokyo Central Station from Sakuragichō, I successfully boarded the Chūō line, as advised. When I alighted at Shinjuku Station the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai was nowhere to be found. Not only that but no one, including the officers on duty at the police box where I made enquiries, had ever heard of it. A telephone call to the local police headquarters, however, established that the school was in Ōkubo, administratively part of Shinjuku but actually the next stop west on the Chūō line.

I am not sure I passed David's last little test. I suppose he meant me to catch the Chūō line to Ōkubo, and then walk to the school, asking directions all the way. Intimidated by the rush-hour crowds, however, the likes of which I had never seen before, and feverish with an oncoming cold, I caught a taxi, an extravagance of which David rarely approved. Half an hour later (and ¥500 poorer), after crawling through an horrendous traffic jam, the vehicle swung through the gates in the high, barbed wire-topped walls of the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai into a lifeless winter garden, where a number of squat, gloomy buildings could be seen in the fading light, and where a bee, overcome by the heavy, malodorous smog, was in its death throes on the edge of a black courtyard pond. I walked into the administration office, introduced myself to the staff, took my luggage to the dormitory, then asked to see a doctor.

To enrol me in a one-year intensive Japanese-language program at the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai was David's second inspired decision and I am extremely grateful to him for it.

'I want you to go to a place where you will actually learn Japanese,' he had said, making some disparaging remarks about the language courses for foreign students offered at various famous universities. 'If you go to such a place you are likely to spend all your time speaking English with young Americans on their year abroad program,' he declared, citing examples.

He discussed the matter with Mr Chiba Koh, the then Japanese ambassador in Australia, who recommended the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai. There would be no Western students there, David was assured, and the program was rigorous. The Kokusai Gakuyū Kai had been established in 1935 by the later prime minister Prince Konoye Fumimaro to provide Japanese-language training for students from Asia, facilitating their entry into Japanese universities and preparing them to take their place in the future Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. The co-prosperity sphere had vanished but the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai had remained, as a subsidiary organ of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, continuing to offer high-quality Japanese-language courses to Asian students and arranging for them to take the entrance examinations for appropriate Japanese universities. I was apparently the first non-Asian to study there, although I did hear rumours of the presence of a couple of German students during the Second World War.

The Kokusai Gakuyū Kai proved to be an extraordinarily effective language school. Classes, which began at 9.00 am and ended at 4.00 pm, were small and were conducted from the beginning entirely in Japanese. The use of any foreign language was entirely forbidden. A relentless regime of homework kept all students busy until far into the night. By the end of six months, most students had achieved a high degree of proficiency. We could not only speak, read and write Japanese, we constantly thought and even dreamed in the language. The school's approach to teaching, propelling us from kindergarten to university-level in the space of 12 months, also played strange tricks with our concept of time. By March 1968, it seemed to me that I had spent another childhood, another boyhood and another youth in Japan, in addition to those I had experienced in Australia.

Of the 160 students from all parts of Asia who entered the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai at the same time as I did, 47 succeeded in passing the entrance examinations to Japanese national universities, 51 to private universities and four to junior colleges. Twenty decided to repeat the language course and challenge the entrance examinations again the following year. Another entered the final year of a normal Japanese high school. The Kokusai Gakuyū Kai proved to be far more than a language school. The background and character of its teaching staff, the composition of its student body, the accumulated legacy of its entire history, in fact, combined to provide a unique introduction to Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa Japan to its

political, economic and social history and to its relations with its East and South-East Asian neighbours. I have always supposed that Chiba Koh, whose wife Utako was the daughter of the liberal Pan-Asianist intellectual, implacable opponent of Japanese military expansion on the continent and former prime minister, Ishibashi Tanzan, knew this when he recommended the school to David, and that David guessed what kind of a place it was when he decided to enrol me there.

The older generation of our teachers were remarkable people. Intelligent, well informed and articulate, they had personally experienced, in their various stations in life, the whole history of 20th-century Japan, the last years of the Meiji era, the First World War and the intensification of Japanese expansion in China and the Pacific, the failure of the Siberian Intervention, the brief flowering of Taishō Democracy, the Great Kantō Earthquake, the rise of Shōwa militarism, the Depression, the Manchurian Incident, the second Sino-Japanese War, the Greater East Asia War, the co-prosperity sphere, the defeat, the end of empire, the Allied Occupation and the postwar reconstruction, which was then in full swing.

One of our teachers, Mrs Shiba Junko, was a Manchurian Japanese. Her family had gone over to China sometime after the First World War, when her father had taken up a position with the South Manchurian Railway Company. She spoke with absolute contempt of Japan's ambitious drive to carve out a continental empire and castigated the country's prewar and wartime governments, as well as the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy, for the horrendous destruction they had wrought on their rampage of conquest throughout East and South-East Asia. Nevertheless, as she saw it, the Japanese themselves, as well as the peoples of China, Korea, South-East Asia and the Pacific, were all victims of Japanese imperialism. She had lost her husband when Soviet forces delivered their shattering blow against the Japanese Manchurian empire in August 1945. She had then fled to Beijing with her two small children. They were living in Beijing as refugees when the Chinese Communist forces under Mao Tse-Tung entered the old imperial capital in February 1949, at the end of the last siege of a walled city in modern times. She had spent some time in a re-education camp and was eventually repatriated to Japan in the early 1950s. Her recollections were so vivid, her narrative so powerful and so moving, that we could almost believe that we ourselves were living through the cataclysmic upheavals she described. After retiring from the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai, she devoted herself to promoting Sino-Japanese friendship and to teaching the Japanese language to the children of Manchurian Japanese who had been abandoned by their parents on the mainland in the chaos following the collapse of the empire but who had begun to trickle back to the home archipelago after the restoration of diplomatic ties between Tokyo and Beijing in 1972.

Another member of our senior teaching staff, the multilingual Iwasaki Gen, was suspected by some of the students of having worked for Japanese intelligence during the war, though he never said anything about this. Whatever his background,

Iwasaki-sensei was also scathing in his criticism of the wartime Japanese invasion of China and South-East Asia. While he had scant regard for the co-prosperity sphere, viewing it as no more than an instrument of Japanese imperialism, he spoke with pride of the contribution made by individual Japanese Pan-Asianists such as Miyazaki Tōten and Colonel Suzuki Keiji to the liberation of Asia from the West. The creation of a community of strong, politically stable and prosperous Asian states, organised on the basis of equality, was an essential task for future generations, he believed.

Many of my fellow students and *senpai* had elite family connections with former leaders in South-East Asia. Just being at the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai gave me important insights into one of the most salient characteristics of Japanese diplomacy, the tendency to cultivate, generation after generation, close personal ties to key families regarded as basically sympathetic to Japan, an approach that has guaranteed a high degree of stability and continuity, generally unaffected by political upheavals.

In those days, all foreign students in Japan were required to have a guarantor. David's selection of Mr Suzuki Tadakatsu to fulfil this role was another decision for which I will always be grateful. Suzuki Tadakatsu had served as the Emperor's interpreter. As head of the Yokohama Liaison Office he had played an important role at various critical stages during the Occupation. He had subsequently served as ambassador to Australia, as ambassador to Italy and president of the Japan–Australia Society. Characteristically, David did not really tell me who Suzuki was when he announced that he had agreed to serve as my guarantor. This was something that I was supposed to find out for myself. Since Mr Suzuki, while always happy to talk about the contemporary political situation, was both modest and discreet when it came to discussing his own career, and since I myself have always been reluctant to ask personal questions, it took me some time to place this charming old gentleman in my emerging mandala of the Japanese Establishment.

Despite the gulf that separated us in age, background and experience, Suzuki Tadakatsu proved to be a valued mentor, an indispensable guide to the world of Japanese diplomacy and politics, and a good friend. We kept up our relationship until his death.

After I had completed my language studies at the Kokusai Gakuyū Kai, David arranged for me to be admitted as a research student in the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo at Tokyo University under the supervision of Professor Seki Hiroharu (Kanji). This was no doubt a good idea and, during the spring of 1968, I diligently journeyed to the university's Hongō campus every day, discussed my research plans with Professor Seki, who was then entering a highly theoretical phase in his intellectual trajectory, painstakingly began compiling a bibliography in the library, then addressed myself to the task of reading books and articles, taking copious notes. (David's advice on note-taking was that I should not purchase expensive

filing cards but should cut up scrap paper with a guillotine, write on both sides, then store the notes in old cardboard shoe boxes; I ignored his advice, bought cards at the university stationery shop and also employed Kokuyō Exercise Books, all of which I still have in my possession.)

Had not the massive groundswell of popular protest against the Japan–US Security Treaty and the Vietnam War, in which the student movement played a central role, overwhelmed most major Japanese universities in 1968, I would certainly have continued this disciplined, rather cloistered pattern of scholarly life until I returned to Australia at the end of 1969 to begin writing up my thesis. As it was, the daily confrontations between student demonstrators and riot police forced the closure of the campus and, although I continued to travel to Hongō 3-chōme from time to time, I was increasingly thrown on my own resources. Once I had settled on a thesis topic (postwar Japanese defence policy), I bought all the books relating to the subject that I could find and worked from home. (I now inhabited an eight-mat room in the house of a hospitable Japanese family in Yoyogi and wrote at the usual type of low table, sitting cross-legged on the *tatami*.) I explained the situation to David, who could not see any alternative and was completely understanding. I also went to work in the drowsy, air-conditioned comfort of the National Diet Library, mostly in the Newspaper Clipping Section, where the private secretaries of politicians could be seen, surrounded by voluminous files and heavy yearbooks, slumped over their desks in various attitudes of repose, snoring rhythmically. From time to time I visited the National Defence Research Institute (*Bōei Kenshūjo*).

More importantly, perhaps, I made the acquaintance of an unusually wide range of people from almost every section of Japanese society. I also kept up and expanded my network of friendships among East and South-East Asian students in Japan. On a number of occasions, my connections aroused the interest of the Japanese police. I mentioned this to David. He was rather concerned and gave me sound advice, drawing my attention to articles 33 and 34 of the Japanese constitution, which I committed to memory and subsequently used with much effect. He did not ask me to curtail my social activities. I think he could sense that, together with my voracious reading habits, they were helping to cultivate an informed peripheral vision that contributed substantially to my understanding of Japanese society and political culture, and ultimately to the writing of a more balanced, perceptive and useful thesis.

In retrospect, I can see how fortunate I was to have lived in Japan during those years of tremendous intellectual ferment and political turbulence, as the nation's leaders, conscious of the changes taking place in the global power balance, divided among themselves and subjected to a variety of foreign pressures, above all from Washington, attempted to steer a steady course between the shifting realities of regional politics, the requirements imposed by the US alliance and the increasingly insistent demands of domestic popular opinion. Direct experience of

the anti-security treaty and antiwar movements gave me insights into aspects of Japanese society that have been largely dormant since the Vietnam War came to an end in 1975; popular opposition to the security treaty began to wane, and was then transformed into widespread support; the student movement petered out in directionless, often savage factional infighting; and the nationalist right wing began its long, powerful resurgence.

At its height, however, the anti-security treaty and antiwar movement, in which several of my Japanese friends participated, exerted a significant influence at the highest levels of decision-making, strengthening the position of those moderate conservative leaders, especially from the old Yoshida School, who wished to avoid constitutional revision, large-scale rearmament and excessively close involvement in the military aspects of American–Asian Pacific strategy. Some years after he retired from political life, I asked former prime minister Satō Eisaku, who had discouraged Washington’s interest in ‘boots on the ground’ in Indochina, how he evaluated the antiwar movement. ‘Ah,’ he said, his eyes twinkling and his fleshy face breaking into a grin, ‘the students put up a great struggle! I was always worried about the spiritual deficiencies of modern Japanese youth, but now I realise there was no need to have been concerned at all.’ I had no idea that the then prime minister was thinking such thoughts when I stood near the Akamon (the Red Gate of Tokyo University), as I did many times in 1968 and 1969, observing the frenetic but bloodless clashes between veritable armies of students wielding bamboo staves and the serried ranks of the Special Mechanised Police, with their visored helmets, tall shields and batons; or watching the long struggle for possession of the Yasuda Kōdō; or the massive confrontations in Shinjuku or Shibuya at night, as I walked back to my Yoyogi home, under the polluted sky, moonless and starless, which reflected the myriad lights of the restless city like an immense bowl of incandescent lacquer.

In the summer of 1968, surprised by David’s approval of my plan, I travelled on the Trans-Siberian Railway to Moscow and then by plane to Soviet Central Asia. I was able to meet Soviet academics and many other kinds of people. I lack the space to discuss in detail this fascinating journey, but I drew certain conclusions from my experiences.

First, I came to understand more clearly Russian perspectives on Japan and its place in contemporary Cold War global geopolitics. During my talks in Moscow with Soviet scholars, we took up the question of the then rapidly developing Australia–Japan economic relationship and its role in Soviet strategies of containment. They had noted Sir John Crawford’s proposal for an Australia–Japan–India economic and strategic partnership to counter Chinese influence in Asia and were devoting some thought to its possible implications. We also talked at length about the likely future evolution of Sino–Japanese relations.

Second, the journey from Nakhodka to Moscow on the Trans-Siberian Railway made me appreciate more fully how profoundly the ‘tyranny of distance’ (to use Geoffrey Blainey’s phrase in a different context) had influenced the outcome of the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05 and continued to have an enormous impact on Soviet strategies to counter the US–Japan Security Treaty system and the activities of a then hostile China in East Asia. Travelling the distance and viewing the terrain brought the problem into sharper focus.

Third, I could see how many Japanese policymakers in the 19th and 20th centuries believed (erroneously) that they could detach Sakhalin, Kamchatka, the Maritime Province and, eventually, the vast territory east of Lake Baikal from Russia, transforming the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk into virtual inland seas, fully incorporated into an ever-expanding Japanese empire that was both maritime and continental in character.

Fourth, the long flights from Moscow to various cities in Soviet Asia made me begin to question whether late 19th-century British fears of a Russian invasion of India through the Hindu Kush, the Karakoram or over the Pamirs — a strategic concern that led directly to the Anglo–Japanese alliance of 1902, which in turn precipitated the Russo–Japanese War, Japanese annexation of Korea, the Japanese penetration and absorption of Manchuria, then the Japanese advance into Eastern Mongolia and North China — had any basis in reality. After studying the matter carefully for many years, I came to the conclusion that these British apprehensions were groundless and that the Anglo–Japanese alliance, which, more than any other factor, helped launch Japan on its career of imperial expansion, was based on a strategic fantasy.

I shared my thoughts with David when we next met. He listened attentively, although it was my impression that his views on the Anglo–Japanese alliance differed from my own.

In 1969, concerned about the progress of my thesis, I (perhaps foolishly) turned down invitations to visit the USSR again, and to visit Cambodia. So that I could begin writing my thesis as expeditiously as possible, I did not return to Australia by sea but took an Air New Zealand all-night flight from Haneda to Sydney.

Back at ANU, I experienced several crises of confidence during the writing of my thesis. David gave me much-needed moral support during these long, arduous months. He and Dr Tom Millar also encouraged me to write a monograph on Japanese reactions to Chinese nuclear weapons and missile development, which was subsequently published as one of the *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence*. At the time I regarded this project as something of a distraction, but the favourable comments both from senior specialists in the United States and Canada proved most reassuring.

Sometime during the Australian winter of 1971, David asked me if I had any thoughts about prospective examiners. I replied that I would leave the matter entirely to him, but asked that he choose a panel of people who understood Japan well and who were empirical rather than theoretical in their approach to the social sciences. The examining committee he put together — Professor Edwin O Reischauer of Harvard University, US ambassador to Japan during the Kennedy and Johnson years; Professor Herbert Passin of Columbia University; and Professor Ronald Dore of the London School of Economics — was one that inspired me with terror, although it certainly fell within the parameters I had suggested. In reality this was David's last gift to me, at least as far as my doctoral thesis was concerned.

I submitted my thesis on Christmas Day 1971. Early in the New Year David and his wife Bronwen took me to dinner at the Top Paddock, a restaurant located somewhere in the bush on the outskirts of Canberra. I remember that he ordered, among other things, a bottle of Great Western Champagne to celebrate the occasion. There is, however, no such thing as a free meal. Shortly afterwards, again to my horror, since I have always been, and remain, a poor public speaker, David arranged for me to present a testimony on Japanese security policy to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, which he served as academic adviser during its extended hearings on Japan.

In February I left again for Japan, once more by ship, this time as a Saionji-Hammersly Memorial Scholar, to take up a position as a visiting research fellow in the Department of International Relations in the Faculty of Law at Tokyo University. The university had more or less returned to normal, although the nationwide struggle against the US–Japan Security Treaty and the movement against the Vietnam War, both of which had reached a peak in 1970, continued.

In July 1972 Reischauer, also representing the other members of the panel, took my thesis oral examination in his suite on the 12th floor of the Miyako Hotel in Kyōto. The examination began around 5.00 pm and ended after midnight. Reischauer, that forthright and incorruptible pillar of the American Republic, was nothing if not thorough. Shortly afterwards he informed ANU that the examination committee had found no problems with my thesis and recommended that I be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy forthwith.

I reflected then, and I have never forgotten, that I would not have arrived at this point without David's constant quiet support and encouragement, his policy of fostering my spirit of independence, giving me near absolute freedom and leaving me to my own devices, the caveat being that I was to take responsibility for the outcome. Actually, I have always regarded degrees and diplomas as no substitute for the 'real and substantial knowledge about issues of great public importance' of which JDB Miller had spoken during our lunch at the Cellar Bar in January 1967, on the eve of my odyssey. Other people, however, do attach importance to these

things, so that I was tremendously relieved when David and Miller sent me the news of Reischauer's recommendation, together with his detailed report, and those of the other examiners, all of which were highly encouraging.

I saw David, Bronwen and their children from time to time in later years, both in Australia and in Japan. I will never forget the pleasant evenings I spent at their family home on Red Hill, the very embodiment of gracious, ordered domesticity, where the log fire crackled and blazed on the hearth, illuminating rich oriental rugs and tasteful arrangements of flowers, and where a splendid dinner and good wine waited on the dining-room table. I remember too how, after I took up my position at the International University of Japan in 1982, and it eventually became necessary to consider the future education of children, David and Bronwen gave excellent advice. Although my commitments in Japan meant that our meetings became fewer and fewer with the passage of time, I will always regard them as wise mentors and trusted friends.

Urasa, in the Echigo Mountains, Niigata-ken, Japan  
1 January 2013  
In heavy snow

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