

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
JAPAN

*

VOLUME III

The Modern Japanese Nation and Empire, c. 1868
to the Twenty-First Century

This major new volume presents innovative recent scholarship on Japan's modern history, including its imperial past and transregional entanglements. An international team of leading scholars offer accessible and thought-provoking essays that present an expansive global vision of the archipelago's history from c. 1868 to the twenty-first century. Japan was the first non-Western society to become a modern nation and empire, to industrialize, and to deliver a high standard of living to virtually all its citizens, capturing international attention ever since. These Japanese efforts to reshape global hierarchies powered a variety of debates and conflicts, both at home and with people and places beyond Japan's shores. Drawing on the latest Japanese and English-language scholarship, this volume highlights Japan's distinctive and fast-changing history.

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THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
JAPAN

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Bringing together leading Anglophone and Japanese scholars in three landmark volumes, *The New Cambridge History of Japan* offers an expansive vision of the archipelago's history from c. 500 to the twenty-first century. With an emphasis on the porousness of Japan's boundaries, it embraces a more global perspective than that of the original *Cambridge History*, published a generation ago. Its analyses of gender, the environment, and urban life enrich our understanding of political, social, and cultural history. Volume I, *Premodern Japan in East Asia*, traces the archipelago's history from c. 500 to the late sixteenth century. Volume II, *Early Modern Japan in Asia and the World*, carries the narrative into the late nineteenth century. The third volume, *The Modern Japanese Nation and Empire*, brings the story into the twenty-first century. The essays throughout are written in accessible, authoritative prose for a diverse global audience ranging from specialists to students and all those interested in Japan's rich history.

Volume I: Premodern Japan in East Asia, c. 500–1600

EDITED BY HITOMI TONOMURA

Volume II: Early Modern Japan in Asia and the World, c. 1580–1877

EDITED BY DAVID L. HOWELL

*Volume III: The Modern Japanese Nation and Empire, c. 1868 to the
Twenty-First Century*

EDITED BY LAURA HEIN

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Preface

The *Cambridge Histories* series form a distinctive genre, one whose essays differ from the monograph chapter, journal article, or encyclopedia entry. We have endeavored to use that genre to bring 73 essays of contemporary scholarship on premodern, early modern, and modern Japanese history to a new generation. The *Cambridge Histories* are intended to be accessible to diverse but specific audiences – that is, to provide a crash course for colleagues who specialize on other parts of the world, a single location for undergraduate and graduate students who are getting a handle on the diversity of the past, and a topography of Japan studies for the general educated reader with an interest in history. An underlying assumption is that we write for readers across the globe, including in Japan, because Japanese history is and always has been part of global history. The porousness of the boundaries between Japan and its transnational context is one of the overarching themes of the essays in this collection.

Another convention of this genre is to put political history at the center of the narrative, even though “political,” narrowly defined, does not usefully capture the contours of public life for many premodern and early modern societies, including in Japan. Nor does it help us see modern people who were poorly represented by their political leaders. We deal with these limitations here by expanding our definition of political history to encompass everything that has to do with public, civic, and state activities. This includes categories such as gender, which we see as profoundly political in this sense. Like all *Cambridge Histories*, however, the selection leans toward political, economic, and social topics, here including considerable environmental and urban history.

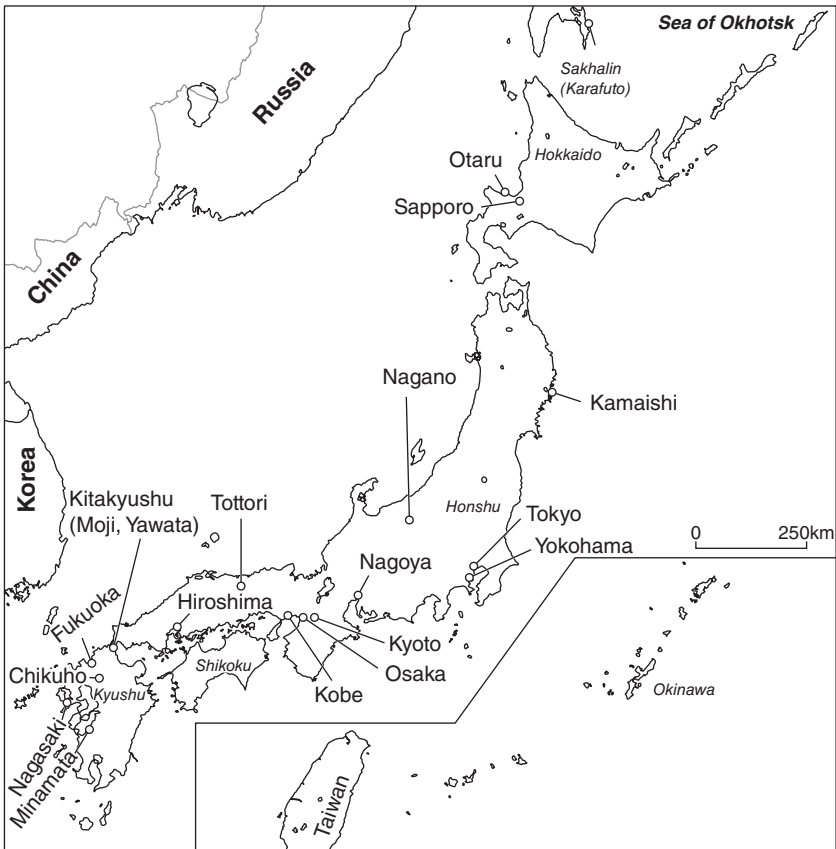
Since the *Cambridge Histories*’ inception over a century ago, the genre has celebrated narrative over accumulation of facts, encouraged its participants to synthesize with gusto, and urged them to choose a point of view that has obvious relevance in the contemporary world. This three-volume collection

Preface

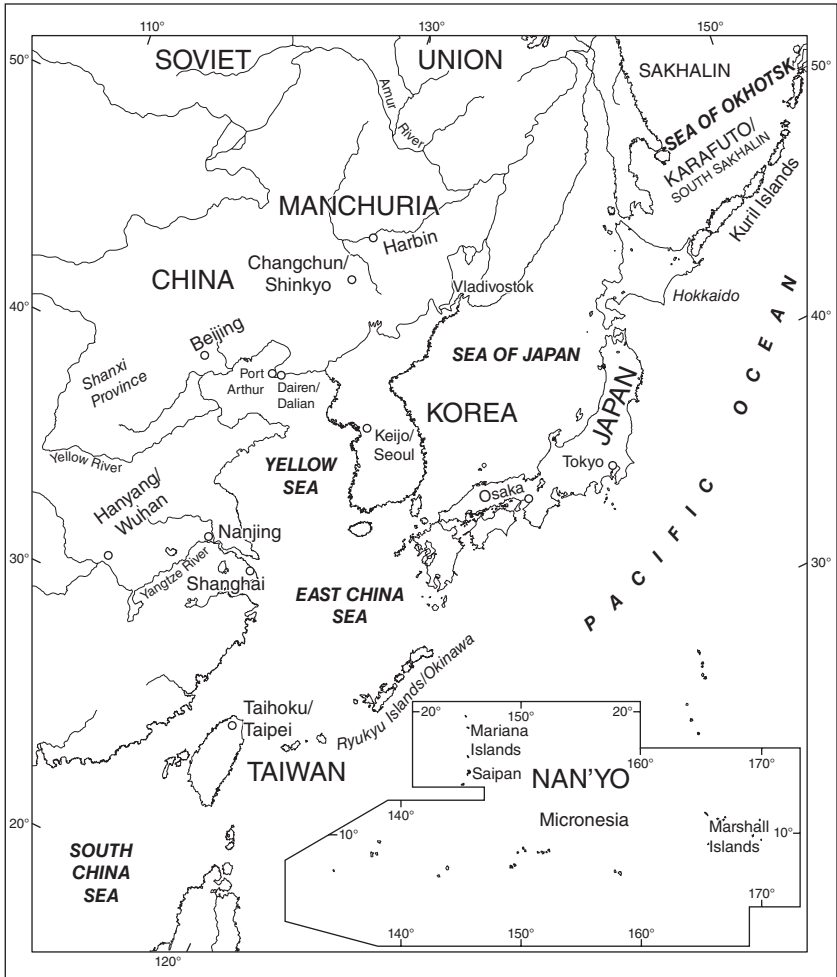
represents the efforts of 85 authors and translators to convey why and how their particular topics matter in a variety of comparative, transregional, and cross-disciplinary frameworks. The multiplicity of authors also implies internal diversity: readers can expect that any given volume represents a range of concerns and approaches, for the past holds many different lessons for the present.

When the first edition of the *Cambridge History of Japan* was published from 1988 to 1999, there was a considerable gap between Japanese- and English-language scholarship in terms of questions being asked, modes of argumentation, and intended audiences. This is far less true today, and these volumes owe much to the rich and exciting scholarship appearing in Japanese. Our efforts also rest on the first edition of the *Cambridge History of Japan*. We concur with the general editors (John W. Hall, Marius B. Jansen, Madoka Kanai, and Denis Twitchett) that “Japanese history belongs to the world, not only as a right and necessity but also as a subject of compelling interest.”

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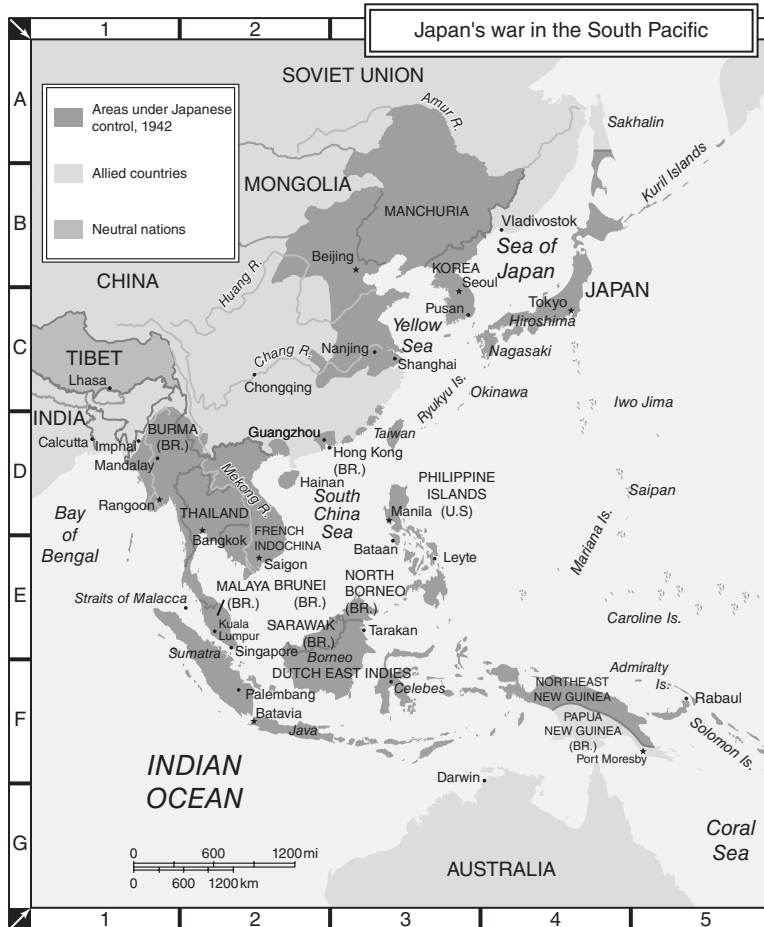


Map 1 Japan today



Map 2 Japan's empire

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Map 3 Japan's war in the South Pacific

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