

Inventing Japan



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Compressing a century of complex history into one short but taut narrative, Buruma traces the remarkable metamorphosis that transformed an isolated island shogunate into an expansive military empire and then into a pacified and prosperous democracy. Predictably enough, Buruma begins with the oft-told story of Commodore Perry's 1853 naval mission to open Japan to American traders. But he invests this event with a new and darker meaning as he relates how this pivotal visit helped catalyze a firestorm of civil war, toppling the shogunate and ushering in the Meiji Restoration. The architects of that restoration Buruma depicts as tragically myopic, their nationalistic and religious authoritarianism dooming democracy to stillbirth and converting commercial wealth into imperial armaments. Just as impressive as Buruma's probing account of this cultural tragedy is his lucid analysis of Douglas MacArthur's remarkable--but finally flawed--achievement in guiding Japan toward the exemplary democracy that showcased its astonishing development in the 1964 Olympics, which Buruma takes as his end point. An excellent introductory study, complete with a helpful bibliography for those seeking more rigorous analyses. Bryce Christensen

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作者介绍:

Ian Buruma studied and worked in Japan for many years. He is the author of Bad Elements, The Missionary and the Libertine, Anglomania, A Japan Mirror, God's Dust, The Wages of Guilt, and Playing the Game. He lives in London.

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评论

HI369 一本不错的overview

不过核心观念有个问题：作者认为日本走上错误的军国主义道路是因为它只是表面上西方化而内里仍保持原有的形态。潜在意思是如果日本完全西方化日本可能会采用英法的政体。但是明智维新时期及之后五十年，西方和日本比起来不应该有任何优越感--美国内战普法战争一战，哪个标志着文明的国家没有为私利而卷入战争？这个观点有点站在胜利者的制高点回望过去为纠错而纠错的感觉...

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书评

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