
PAPERBOUNDS

JAPAN'S MODERN MYTHS: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period. By Carol Gluck. Princeton, 1985. 407 pp. \$12.50

The Late Meiji (Enlightenment) era opened in 1889 with the adoption of a new Japanese constitution. Encompassing military victories over Russia and China, the era ended with the death of the last Meiji emperor in 1912. During that time, writes Gluck, a Columbia University historian, Japan's ruling elite used ideological hocus-pocus to transform Japan's emperor into a religious symbol, and its constitutional government into a monarchy. Until 1945, when the victorious Allies imposed a new constitution on Japan, loyalty to the emperor, not free political discourse, was the national ideal. Modernization and icon-building progressed side by side: While the locomotive evolved from an exotic curio "depicted in woodblock prints" into a "fact of daily life," the emperor, who had once traveled "the countryside in a palanquin," became a remote symbol, "embellished until it was larger than life."

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS. By Horace Freeland Judson. Johns Hopkins, 1987. 266 pp. \$9.95

"In and of itself," wrote Francis Bacon (1561-1626), "knowledge is power." He was not, says Judson, who teaches science writing at Johns Hopkins University, referring to the practical consequences of knowledge—the dominion over nature that resulted in, say, Pasteur's rabies vaccine, or Fleming's discovery of penicillin, or man's walk on the moon. To Bacon, knowledge came from the active search for truth; it entailed right thinking, and therefore led to right action. Judson breaks down scientific investigation (Bacon's "active search") into pattern, chance, feedback, modeling, strong prediction, evi-

dence, and theory. He then considers, in essays and interviews, eight significant problems, including the origin of the universe—the "Big Bang" theory does not tell us what happened before the explosion—and the causes of aging and death: If errors in cell duplication inevitably accumulate until they reach "error catastrophe," how can premature aging be prevented? Applied across the "vast set of networks, densely woven and knotted" of all the sciences, says Judson, scientific investigation has given us a body of knowledge which, "collectively, is the most reliable knowledge we have got."

THE CAPITAL OF HOPE: Brasilia and Its People. By Alex Shoumatoff. Univ. of N.M., 1987. 211 pp. \$10.95

"Brasilia's like a garden that's just been planted," a friend in Rio told *New Yorker* writer Shoumatoff. "It has no character." Shoumatoff describes the new city through the eyes of its planners, architects, officials, settlers—and his Brazilian in-laws. The country's 1822 constitution called for a new capital "in the center of Brazil . . . at the joint source of the Paraguay and the Amazon," but it was never built. During the century that followed, Brazilians on the coast and in southern regions flourished; in the north and the interior, they starved. President Juscelino Kubitschek revived the inland capital scheme in 1955, seeking to unite the nation politically and economically. He completed the new capital in 1960. But did his project in fact unite the country, or was it a costly boondoggle leading only to inflation and political instability? Nobody yet knows. Shoumatoff says that the city's difficulties are real—rich sections divided from poor, insufficient facilities for an influx of newcomers—but not yet irreversible. Brasilia's more than one million residents have reason to hope.