When the maids heard this, they said, "You could have learned as did the sparrows at Kangakuin". (p. 182)

This passage has two footnotes, the first identifying the source of the line about the emaciated horse, the second explaining that Kangakuin was a school and even the sparrows living near it were said to have mastered the classics by constant exposure.

For the same passage, Kitagawa gives us:

Jöro replied, "When a horse becomes thin, it loses hair. When a man becomes poor he is short of knowledge. How can I study sutras"? One of the maids bantered him: "The sparrows near a school sing the primer". (vol. 2, p. 14)

Kitagawa has the horse loosing the hair that was in fact growing long, he omits a couple of phrases, and he reduces the maids to one. We are apt to assume that a freer translation will read more smoothly, but Kitagawa's version proves that this bit of conventional wisdom is not necessarily true, for Congan's rendition is both more faithful to the original and more fluent as English.

Congan's introduction and annotation are informative and also better than Kitagawa's, but they still leave something to be desired. His discussion of the structure of Soga monogatari offers too much plot summary and not enough analysis. The narrative function of the many anecdotes from China and India, for example, deserve fuller discussion. The annotation too is not quite as full as it might be. Readers unfamiliar with the conventions of classical Japanese poetry may have trouble grasping the significance of some of the poems in the text. Unfortunately, Congan's notes only gives the sources of the poems where a brief explication might have been more helpful.

On the whole, this a fine book. Congan has given us a reliable translation. He might have offered us more of his own analysis and research in the introduction and annotation, but what he provides is useful. His book will be of value to anyone interested in medieval or early modern Japan.

University of Hawaii at Manoa
Honolulu, HI, U.S.A.

Robert Borgen


The kidnapping of Sun Yatsen in London in 1896 was one of the most publicized events of his turbulent career. Besides the version attributed to him—Kidnapped in London (Bristol, 1897)—numerous biographies have dealt with the incident. No one, however, has researched it as thoroughly as Dr. Wong. Tracing every lead to its very end, evaluating every source and drawing logical conclusions from an amazing amount of detail, the author has produced what should stand as the authoritative account of Sun's kidnapping and his subsequent experiences in England at that time.

The main facts concerning the episode have not been disputed. From 11-23 October Sun was forcibly detained in the Chinese Legation, which made preparations
to return him to China, where he faced the death penalty because of his role in the abortive Canton coup the previous year. His release and the story of his ordeal attracted international attention and enhanced his political career. Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that Sun’s nine-month stay in England—until July, 1897—created lasting impressions upon him and contributed to the formulation of his famous Three Principles of the People.

What has been in dispute, at least until now, is the manner of his entry into the Legation. When released, Sun said that he had been enticed into the building without having known that it was the Legation. Sir Halliday MacCartney, English Secretary of the Legation, claimed that Sun had entered on his own accord after paying a visit on the previous day. While the British officials who investigated the affair concluded that Sun’s version was correct, additional sources, including remarks made by Sun himself to close friends some years later, contradicted his public assertions and confirmed the Legation’s version. Luo Jialun, the eminent Guomindang historian, uncovered this new evidence and published it in 1935. He convinced me, and my own accounts of the incident reflect this view in even stronger terms. However, having now read Dr. Wong’s work, I am less inclined to believe that Sun was lying in 1896. Instead, I would endorse Dr. Wong’s evaluation of the conflicting evidence: “In sum, it is probable that Sun Yatsen had passed the Legation on 10 October 1896, had spoken with someone from the Legation in a chance encounter in the street, and had indicated the possibility of another visit to the area on the next day. However, there is no independent evidence to support the Legation’s claim that Sun Yatsen had been inside the Legation building on this day, or had made an appointment to ‘return to the Legation’ the next day (pp. 138-139)”.

The author’s painstaking investigations have led him to two new important sources—the diary of Mrs. Cantlie and that of the Japanese botanist, Minakata Kumagusu, who was then living in England. Mrs. Cantlie’s diary indicates that her husband, Sir James Cantlie, was the real author of Kidnapping in London. It turns out too, that Cantlie, in addition to leading the rescue effort, was instrumental in creating what the author calls Sun’s “heroic image”. Minakata’s account supplies many more details concerning Sun’s activities in England. It was from Minakata, in whose company he spent long hours, that Sun probably was first exposed to the pan-Asian doctrine, with which he later became acquainted in Japan.

Some of the author’s interpretations are debatable. For example, I would not agree with his assertion (p. 290) that Sun’s preoccupation with land-value taxation reflected a lack of interest in industrialization. But it is precisely because of industrialization and modernization that land value rise. This is what gives land its situational value, and Sun was surely aware of this. I still believe that Sun was impressed both by Britain’s industrial achievements and the miserable status of its working class. The author could have used Martin Bernal’s Chinese Socialism to 1907 (Ithaca and London, 1976) for evidence of Sun’s probable exposure to socialist ideas even before he came to England.

Though the world-wide publicity and “heroic image” engendered by the kidnapping episode obviously did contribute to Sun’s ascendancy, the author may be exaggerating its importance. Sun’s real breakthrough came only years later. After the turn of the century, when Chinese students flocked to Japan, many still considered him uncouth and shunned him. There are many reasons for Sun’s rise to leadership, and the author lists some of them (p. 195). It would emphasize that his personal appeal was a major factor in winning support.