P.A.C. O'CONNOR	英米マスメディア研究 A
WEEK 6 The Menace of Japan 日本の危険	• The Metamorphosis of the Menace • The Menace of Taid O'Conroy

READING 1: The Metamorphosis of the Menace [危険、障害]

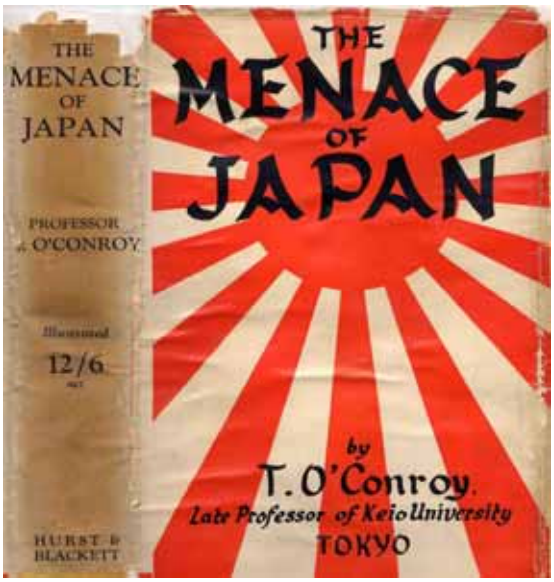
THE IDEA OF JAPAN AS A THREAT to Western and especially British interests in Asia had its roots in a series of confrontations between the foreign powers and Japan. The Menace image gained power in 1895 and 1905 as a result of Japan's successful wars against China and Russia, and during Japan's stern repression of Korean independence movements in 1911-22.

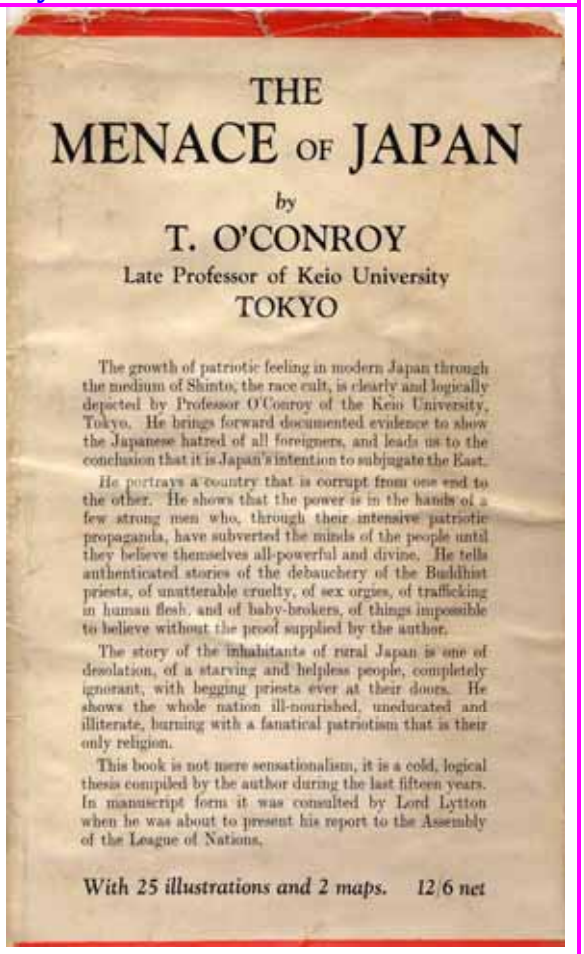
In the 1920s, Japan was not at war with Britain, or with America, or with any European country, but people noticed that Japan was building up her army and seemed to resent the naval limitations agreed at Washington in 1922.

The Menace image matured in the late 1930s as a result of Japan's less successful but more brutal military forays in East Asia. Among the indirect consequences of this notion of Japan as a threat may have been:

1. Failure of the Racial Equality Clause amendment at Versailles 1919
2. The ending of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance 日英同盟 (1902-1922)
3. The US Exclusion Act 1924
4. US and British Naval rearmament
5. The continuing US military presence in Japan

READING 2: Spreading the Image: Taid O'Conroy





THE
MENACE OF JAPAN

by

T. O'CONROY

Late Professor of Keio University
TOKYO

The growth of patriotic feeling in modern Japan through the medium of Shinto, the race cult, is clearly and logically depicted by Professor O'Conroy of the Keio University, Tokyo. He brings forward documented evidence to show the Japanese hatred of all foreigners, and leads us to the conclusion that it is Japan's intention to subjugate the East.

He portrays a country that is corrupt from one end to the other. He shows that the power is in the hands of a few strong men who, through their intensive patriotic propaganda, have subverted the minds of the people until they believe themselves all-powerful and divine. He tells authenticated stories of the debauchery of the Buddhist priests, of unutterable cruelty, of sex orgies, of trafficking in human flesh, and of baby-brokers, of things impossible to believe without the proof supplied by the author.

The story of the inhabitants of rural Japan is one of desolation, of a starving and helpless people, completely ignorant, with begging priests ever at their doors. He shows the whole nation ill-nourished, uneducated and illiterate, burning with a fanatical patriotism that is their only religion.

This book is not mere sensationalism, it is a cold, logical thesis compiled by the author during the last fifteen years. In manuscript form it was consulted by Lord Lytton when he was about to present his report to the Assembly of the League of Nations.

With 25 illustrations and 2 maps. 12/6 net

The Menace of Japan

In July 1933, Professor Taid Conroy published *The Menace of* Japan in London. George Bernard Shaw threw a party for the author and introduced him to literary London. 'Professor O'Conroy's' revelations enthralled reviewers at *The Morning Post* and *The Daily Telegraph*. *The Daily Mail* ran a large spread on "Professor O'Conroy" and his book.

Despite emphasising that 'The book is not mere sensationalism…' the back cover blurb for *The Menace of Japan* hints at 'authenticated stories of the debauchery of the Buddhist priests, unutterable cruelty, sex orgies, of trafficking in human flesh, of baby brokers'. The introduction stressed the author's 'special credentials and his inside knowledge of Japan'. Not only had he taught at Keio University, 'the Oxford of Japan', but he had married into an 'aristocratic Japanese family' and become 'a 100 per cent Shintoist and Japanese'.

The book dusts off some very old chestnuts, notably the story, which had been going around since the 1850s, on how the Japanese dealt with foreign discomfort at mixed bathing. 'No, today a rope is slung across the middle of the bath, and men must keep to one side and women to the other, thus honour has been satisfied!' (p53). And there are spectacular errors – for example, the author saeems to have no idea who Ōsugi Sakae – Japan's best known anarchist – was.

More than such errors, what most upset official Japan was the claim, in the introduction to *The Menace of Japan*, that 'Eamonn de Valera, when he was preparing to act as President of the League during its consideration of the policy of Japan in Manchuria, used parts of this book in manuscript form' (p11). In other words, Conroy's arguments alerting the world to the 'menace' of Japan had been put before the President of the League of Nations at the time that the League Assembly accepted the Report of the four-man Commission on Japan's behaviour in Manchuria.

This photograph of Taigh or Taid O'Conroy (also known as Tim Conroy), his wife Kikuko and US President Calvin Coolidge at the White House in Washington in 1925 appeared in most US national dailies and in Japan in 1925.

Professor O'Conroy had no official status, and neither he nor his wife had been asked to represent Japan by the Japanese government or by any group or institution connected with Japan. O'Conroy's first attempt to meet the President had not been successful, although he had claimed to be a friend of the Prince of Wales, but somehow he and his wife gained an invitation and his wife presented the solemn Mr. Coolidge with a Japanese doll as a symbol of the friendship between Japan and America.

While Professor O'Conroy was in the United States, he 'salted the ground' for future friendships by giving away valuable *netsuke* pieces to members of the US elite in Washington and elsewhere. These *netsuke* were not O'Conroy's to give away, but the property of a collector who had asked him to find a buyer for his collection during his visit to the US. When Conroy returned to Japan and told the collector that he had given away all his *netsuke*, the collector took him to court, whereupon O'Conroy and his wife fled Japan.

The couple first went to to Istanbul, where O'Conroy was briefly employed as a professor of English at the Naval Academy (he had taught in the Japanese equivalent, at Etajima, some years before). Then they went to France, where Mrs O'Conroy was detained by the authorities because her papers were not in order.

O'Conroy went on to London, where he tried for a year or two to obtain work as an adviser to the Foreign Office, and sold shirts and briefcases on the side. Living in Camden Town, but with a postal address in The Albany, he also continued to work on the book for which he is best remembered, *The Menace of Japan*, which was eventually published in 1933.

Persecution and collapse

In the autumn of 1933, interviews with "Professor O'Conroy" began appearing in the British press, to the effect that Mrs Conroy was suffering persecution or worse, because of the help she had given her husband in researching his book. On 19 October, an interview with Conroy appeared on the front page of the *Evening Standard* of London, in which he claimed that the Japanese police and 'the notorious Dragons' were persecuting his wife and might have poisoned her.

Conroy told the *Standard*, 'Some time ago my wife indicated briefly that she was afraid of being kidnapped. She could not tell me much; but I was calmed when I heard no more about it. Eighteen days ago I had a letter from her saying she had gone to bed with severe internal pains. I immediately feared poison. I have not heard from her since and I am alarmed. I cannot write to her or wire her to ask what is the matter, since to do so would, I am afraid, incite those who hate us to finish off the job. So I do not know whether she is even alive'. Conroy explained that he had

managed to keep his address a secret up to now, but 'one of the secret societies has a branch either in London or Cambridge, and I fear an attack'.

Three days later, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* responded with a report by its London correspondent headlined 'Eight hundred Lies published in "The Menace of Japan"' (Usō happyaku o narabeta "Nihon no Kyoi" shuppan). According to the *Asahi*, Conroy had held a number of teaching posts, including one at Keio University, but had lost them all through 'vicious and intemperate habits'. Other foreigners in Japan looked down on Conroy (zairyugaijin kara hinshiku sareteitta). He had married 'O-Kiku-san', a beautiful hostess from a Ginza teahouse, whom he used in the United States as an 'envoy of friendship', pretending that she was a lady of quality and an official bearer of cordial sentiments from the women of Japan to the women of America.

Under this guise, Conroy and his wife had met President Coolidge at the White House and, , had presented him with *netsuke* 'used by the Shōgun'. Asked by the *Asahi* to comment on the report, the Gaimushō said it had no knowledge of Conroy's book, that there had recently been a flood of this type of literature about Japan, and that sensible people in England would rate the book at its true value.

Back in London, Conroy collapsed and was taken to a hospital in Hammersmith, west London, where a doctor diagnosed a nervous breakdown, "…accentuated by the fact that for some weeks past he has been almost destitute - starving himself so that he could send money to his wife" Aroused by their author's condition and his fearful allegations, Conroy's publishers asked the Foreign Office to find Mrs Conroy and help get her out of Japan.

In November, the British journalist Malcolm Kennedy received a cable from Reuters in London to "cover briefly disappearance wife O'Conroy." Calling at the Gaimushō, Kennedy was shown a pile of cuttings from London and provincial newspapers playing up the 'O'Conroy' story for all it was worth. Far from their stated ignorance, the Gaimushō had been following Conroy's statements and writings closely. Kennedy cabled Reuters in London, 'Whereabouts Mrs O'Conroy unknown but O'Conroy well-known impostor swindler', but his cable was spiked and the Conroy story continued to develop, this time in the *Sunday Despatch*.

SEARCH FOR MISSING BEAUTY

AUTHOR HUSBAND'S FEARS OF JAPANESE AVENGERS

The beautiful Japanese wife of Professor Timothy O'Conroy has disappeared at Tokio. A Reuter message stated yesterday that the police have been requested to search for her.

Professor O'Conroy is at present a patient in a London hospital. For 14 years he was Professor of English at Tokio University, and while there married Kikuko Terao, famed as the most beautiful girl in Tokio. When the professor came to England recently, his wife remained in Japan.

"THIS IS THE END"

"This is the end," said Professor O'Conroy, sinking back on his pillow, when a *Sunday Despatch* representative informed him of the disappearance.

"My wife is a victim of vengeance. She is regarded as a 'traitor' because she supplied me with information for my book, 'The Menace of Japan'.

BAND OF FANATICS

"She is probably in the clutches of a secret society known as 'God's Soldiers'. The society is composed of fanatical young men of good birth who are ultra-patriotic. Recently they planned to murder the whole of the Japanese Cabinet.

"If they have got her, there is no knowing what may happen. There is no limit to their inhumanity. She could be slowly tortured to death."

THE NOBLEST CREATURE

Tears came into his eyes. "I loved her more than I ever thought it was possible to love a woman. She was the noblest creature I ever met.... Now it is all over. If she has gone, I have nothing left to live for."

Alive and well

On 30 November 1933, Kikuko Conroy was summoned to police headquarters in Tokyo and questioned for over five hours about her family and ancestors and her husband. She signed a statement containing an express denial that she had suffered any molestation. Other members of her family were also questioned.

Soon after, the British Consulate also tracked down Mrs. Conroy. She was in good health, living with her brother and his family in Morikawa-cho, Hongo-ku, and running a teahouse in Kanda. Mrs Conroy visited the Tokyo Consul on 1 December 1933 and 'emphatically denied that she had been the victim of any form of persecution' and that she been the source of any of the material in *The Menace of Japan*, which she had not even read. Conroy had not supported her since May 1932, and she had not seen him since July 1932, when she had been repatriated from Marseilles by the Japanese consulate.

O'Conroy slipped from public view that winter, but early in January 1934, Sir John Pratt received a letter from a City solicitor, asking for an appointment to discuss 'a Memorandum prepared at the request of H.M. Foreign Office' by their client 'Professor O'Conroy'. No doubt, Pratt and his colleagues braced themselves for a resumption of the memorandum saga, but the official paper trail ends there and the outcome of this final episode is unknown.

When Conroy told the *Sunday Despatch* in November 1933, 'I have nothing left to live for', he may have meant it. Conroy died on 6 November 1935, at Hampstead General Hospital. He was fifty-two. His death certificate records heart failure resulting from a cirrhosis of the liver: we can surmise that Conroy had a severe drinking problem. The name given on his death certificate is 'Taid O'Conroy', and it was witnessed by his brother, resident in London SW4, who signed it 'L. O'Conroy'.

The brother's signature and the name of the deceased on the death certificate give the impression that 'Taid O'Conroy' was Conroy's real name and that Conroy was the alias, whereas the opposite was true. Of course, Conroy could have changed his name by deed poll, but why would his brother do the same?

The Man on the Spot

Ever since the murder of Queen Min of Korea in 1895 by Miura Gorō and others, the British public had thrilled to the idea of Japanese secret societies. When the Crown Prince left Japan on his 1921 world tour, the *Daily Mail* had much to say about the opposition of the *Rōninkai*. When Hara Kei was assassinated the following autumn, the secret society angle was rejuvenated, especially in the *Morning Post*. In the early 1930s, the 'patriotic' assassinations of Japanese politicians and industrialists were front-page news in Britain. By 1937, the boom in Japan scares had Graham Greene's feckless elder brother Herbert telling *Daily Worker* readers 'I was a Secret Agent of Japan' (and inspiring the inventive close-ups of vacuum cleaner parts of *Our Man In Havana*). Conroy's book and interviews sent delicious shivers down the spine and confirmed many people's worst fears about Japan and the Japanese. With the 'Dragons' setting up in Cambridge, nobody was safe, not even in Hammersmith.

Between the 1890s and about 1919, Western readers and critics gave explanatory writers on Japan such as Nitobe Inazō and Sydney L. Gulick an easy ride. Critical books on Japan only began to sell well in the 1920s. As sales picked up, Japanese writers on Japan and Western-based foreign writers ceded credibility to writers who were 'on the spot' and took a more critical approach. Nitobe's fall from fashion did not occur on its own, but in relation to a rise in demand for critical writings by Western authors based in Japan. By the early 1930s, as far as Western readers were concerned, it was not enough to be a scholar of Japan if you were based in the West, and being Japanese gave an author of a book on Japan no advantage at all.

In July 1933, *The Menace of Japan* rode a swelling wave of demand for books by Western authors with an 'inside' knowledge of Japan. By May 1938, Conroy's book had gone into seven British editions and sold 13,000 copies.

Conroy's history certainly demonstrates the porosity of the British (but not only the British) establishment. The *Asahi* called him an intellectual conman (interi goro [gorotsuki]), but real conmen have bigger plans than the sale of 'stockingette' shirts to Whitehall functionaries. Conroy longed for access to the privileged and powerful. Above all, he yearned for intellectual prestige, and this he gained in a bull market for 'inside' information, at a time when Japan specialists were thin on the ground. Although *The Menace of Japan* sometimes illuminates little more than the unhappy life that inspired it, reading it today does throw a wobbly light on some of the jumpier aspects of Anglo-Japanese relations in the 1930s.