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**Book Review**

## The Origins of the Lost Fleet of the Mongol Empire. By Randall J. Sasaki. (Houston, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2015. Pp. xii, 201. \$50.00.)

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This new study introduces an English-speaking audience to the remarkable discoveries off the coast of Takashima, Japan, where the Mongol (ex-Song) navy sank in 1281. Randall J. Sasaki provides an overview of his experiences in marine archaeology at the small island of Takashima. His book has many photographs and line illustrations of the artifacts discovered on the sea floor of Takashima's coast. Sasaki describes these discoveries in great detail, thereby disseminating knowledge that generally would be confined to Japanese archaeological reports of limited circulation. The chapters entitled "Artifacts," "Timber Category Data Base," "Miscellaneous Timbers," "Species Analysis," and "Joinery Analysis" prove to be the most informative. They reveal that the ships that sank during the second Mongol Invasion of Japan in 1281 consisted of a variety of craft, including river barges, which were almost entirely made with southern Chinese lumber and in accordance with southern Chinese boat-making practices. It is regrettable that he did not more fully analyze

the largely intact ship discovered at Takashima in 2011, as it would have enhanced his monograph greatly. Archaeological description represents the strong point of this book, though the historical analysis of the chapters entitled “History” and “Questions” proves to be less successful. Sasaki's narrative of thirteenth-century Japan relies on an outdated historical paradigm of “feudal” Japan. He passes over many reliable battle documents written by Japanese warriors in favor of the less reliable Chinese dynastic histories and the *Hachiman gudōkun*, a problematic text replete with inaccuracies.[1] Likewise, a fourteenth-century scroll illustrating the invasions, commissioned by a warrior who fought against the Mongols, should be used with care, for its image of an exploding projectile, complete with depictions of *hirsute*, black-booted Mongols, was added to it over the course of the eighteenth century.[2]

At times, Sasaki loses track of speculation, such as the notion that four thousand ships may have been involved in the invasions, and later attributes it to be established fact (55–56, 142). More troubling, estimates by the archaeologist Hayashida Kenzō and others who saw the armada as being only a tenth of that size are inexplicably ignored in Sasaki's analysis of the size of the fleets.[3]

To conclude, this text will be of the most interest to archaeologists who cannot read Japanese. For those wishing to understand the Mongol Invasions, the reviewer suggests reading elsewhere, but for those interested in an archaeological report of pre-2011 findings at Takashima in English, the book is warmly recommended.

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