Before World War II the term "Far East" was applied primarily to China, Japan, Korea, and the Russian territories east of Lake Baikal rather than to all of the countries of eastern Asia. This restricted geographical use of the term was originally in mind in establishing the framework for this History of the Far East in Modern Times. Usage both established and sanctioned the restriction of the area, but there were additional reasons for accepting it. With the exception of Siam (now Thailand), the countries of southeastern Asia, as well as India, had fallen under European control. Consequently their history had been largely that of colonies of the several European countries rather than that of independent or semi-independent peoples. Thus the history of India had been of great importance, but from the standpoint of relationship it seemed more logical to bring its consideration within that of the history of the British imperial system than to tie it in with that of China and Japan. Except for the importation of Buddhism shortly after the Christian era, those countries, as well as southeastern Asia, had not been affected by India until England's control of that country brought about an indirect relationship. Similarly the Philippines, Indo-China, and the Netherlands East Indies were important in the Far East, but as appanages of the United States, France or Holland, which countries controlled their development, rather than directly in terms of that development. This condition began to change before World War II, and the tendency was accelerated in the 1940's, but the full consequences of the change are only now appearing. In addition to the implications of colonialism, none of the Oriental countries (with the exception of India) save China and Japan had separate cultures of great development; and none, up to the very recent past, had seriously affected the course of international relations and of world history. Consequently, since restriction of scope in both time and space was necessary in a single-volume treatment, it seemed, in the first editions of this work, entirely justified to restrict by acceptance of the customary terminology.

The modern period is dated from the time of the movement to bring China, and subsequently Japan and Korea, into an enlarged contact with the world. Thus "modern" is defined in terms of the Far East rather than of Europe. Institutional changes commenced after that time, even though there were significant internal movements antedating the application of foreign pressure. The Chinese and Japanese political, economic, and social systems had continued virtually unchanged for more than two hundred years before the establishment of treaty relations with Western nations.
A new order began to evolve after the negotiation of the first treaties. It is this which distinguishes the modern from the pre-modern period.

In this volume it would have been out of place, even if it had been possible, to enter into a comprehensive and detailed description of the institutions and cultures of pre-modern China, Japan, and Korea. All that could be attempted was to lay a foundation sufficient (1) to be built upon by making use of the reading lists appended to Chapters I and IV, and (2) to make possible the tracing of the changes which have taken place in the modern period. Since, until recently, these changes have been largely political and economic, there has been relatively more consideration of political and economic development than of social and cultural. As recent tendencies toward social, intellectual, and artistic change become more than tendencies, and as their significance becomes more fully revealed, the historical emphasis naturally shifts from the politico-economic to the cultural realm.

It must be recognized that the most important single conditioning factor in the development of the Far East in modern times has been the impact of the West. In order to withstand the pressure of the Powers the countries of the Orient which were free to do so had at once to attack the problems related to their political and economic modernization. The larger cultural background of political and economic life was more gradually adapted to the new world; and just as the foreign impact led to an over-emphasis on political development, so the rivalries of the Powers assumed a larger relative importance in the Orient than was the case in the Occident. For that reason, more space has been given to international relations in this volume than would otherwise have appeared justified. The history of the Far East, from the standpoint of movement, has been more largely political and diplomatic than it would have been if the Far Eastern countries had taken their place in the modern world at an earlier time or in a more normal and natural manner.

Thus the logic of events has determined the general treatment of the subject. The plan of the book has been similarly fixed. The streams of modern Japanese and Chinese history ran in separate channels until the struggle over Korea caused them to converge. After 1895 they continued to diverge somewhat, but never as widely as in the previous years. The attempt was made in the first, as in subsequent, editions of this work to follow these natural lines of development. Sometimes the two streams flow together, and at other times they have separated; but most of the time the two main channels have been fed by waters from Europe and America, from Korea and Siberia, and now from the colonial area.

In successive editions there has been some reorganization of materials where either the author or interested readers have felt that reorganization
within the general plan would enhance the usability of the book. The attempt has been made to correct errors both of fact and of interpretation, as they have been revealed by reviewers, by readers, or by consultation of new literature on various aspects of the subject. In the latter connection, it should be pointed out here that there has been a consistent attempt with each revision to include new titles in the chapter references, for it must be recognized that much of the scholarly work on the Far East has been done during the past three decades. Thus for the improvement of this text through successive revision I am deeply indebted to monograph writers as well as to those who have been so good as to call attention to needed corrections or changes.

Beyond this, the successive revisions have enlarged the historical picture from the standpoint of time by bringing the treatment to date. Thus, in this sixth edition, there has been considerable enlargement of the text, as well as revision of the materials in the fifth edition, so as to include World War II and postwar developments to the end of 1958. The nature of those developments, furthermore, required the enlargement of the original plan to provide for more extensive treatment of the countries of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The displacement of the National Government of the Republic of China by the People's Government of the People's Republic in mainland China necessitated the addition of a new chapter on Communist China in this revision. Developments in Korea are also treated in a new chapter, as is post-occupation Japan.

While, as stated above, I have drawn on the studies of others and have had the benefit of advice of successive editors, as well as users of the book as a text, and of informed readers, the responsibility for any errors of omission or commission remains mine.

H. M. V.

Cincinnati, Ohio