

In order to accomplish his ambitious goal (i.e. to change the stereotype image of samurai) Sato divided his work into four major parts and he also adds a thorough introduction, where the life and institutions of ancient Japan are thoroughly and clearly explained. In the first one he presents mostly ancient texts dealing with fates of individual samurai. He selects them carefully to emphasize most of the aspects of life of the warriors slowly forming the samurai class. The reader can therefore be a witness of the life in Japan in the first millennium. Although the texts are very ancient (structure, pace, composition and intellectual background is quite different than the western reader is used to), Sato's translation gives them vividness and clarity, which makes them pleasure to read. Sato also accompanies his selected texts by many explanatory notes and comments which are indispensable to understand the text and helps with its interpretation.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the lives of some of the most famous war leaders in the Japanese history, but also here Sato picks some texts in which their life is shown in an untraditional way. He also adds some less known texts (for example the tragic story of love and lust about Kō no Moronao), which show leading samurai personalities in less traditional way. The same can be said about the third part in which Sato presents early modern texts about the way of the warrior written by samurai themselves. Sato again mixes here some well-known texts (supplemented by rich commentary) with the up to this time unfamiliar captions (for example Lord Sōun's Twenty-One Articles written by Hōjō Sōun at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). However Sato presents also famous stories as the account about the Forty-Seven samurai, which already penetrated western imagination, but Sato's commentary gives it new dimension and sets the story into wider scope of Japanese history. In the last part Sato complements his collection by a modern retelling of the tale of The Abe Family by Mori Ōgai, which presents the perceiving of their history at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sato supplements his collection of old Japanese texts by some maps and illustration. He has also added a useful index of important figures and some other minor annexes. The research he has made can be seen in an extensive bibliography.

As a whole Sato presents the reader with an exceptional work comprising historical texts encompassing one and a half millennia of Japanese history with rich commentary. His book gives much more different impression of samurai life and culture, than the western reader is used to. Instead of schematic paradigm of a samurai created by some popular books, novels (especially James Clavell's *Shogun*), TV series or films, Sato shows the complexity of samurai life and culture through superbly translated ancient texts. In this way he enriches the western knowledge of complicated social and intellectual structure of the medieval Japanese society. Although Sato's book is only a selection of various historical texts, his contribution to research of pre-modern Japan couldn't be underestimated. On the contrary Sato's book can be without doubt marked as an masterpiece which sheds light on the complex life of the medieval Japanese warriors which is so different from the world we currently live in.

**Petra Kodetová**

## **Zdeněk Nejedlý, politik a vědec v osamění**

*KŘEŠŤAN, Jiří (2012): Praha-Litomyšl: Paseka.*

Jiří Křesťan, the historian and the archivist working in the National Archive in Prague, has written a voluminous book focusing on the life and work of the Czech historian, left-wing politician and since 1948 to 1953 Minister of Culture and Education, Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962).

Zdeněk Nejedlý was a controversial character in the Czech historiography and politics as well. On the one hand he can be seen as the student of the famous historians like Josef Pekař and Jaroslav Goll and from this point of view it is needed to appreciate his works on the field of the music history and of course his contribution to the medieval history. An important fact is also the compliment of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk to the Nejedlý's work (mainly his articles etc.) On the other hand his image has been damaged by his political career and his work for the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic after 1948. The speech after the trial with Rudolf Slánský can be seen as a turnabout of his perception.

The author shows the life, character and also work of Zdeněk Nejedlý in this book in an objective and balanced way. He also avoids to schematize that is one of the merits of this book. Therefore, the reader can see the picture of well-educated, many-sided student at first, and, shortly after, a qualified and an efficient scientist, whose interests were also cultural, for instance "according to his friend *Quido Hodura*, Nejedlý saw the opera *Libuše* eighteen times in one season" or there is written in one part of the book "it was music that was contributive to becoming closer to some colleagues at the

university – Nejedlý won renown of an excellent expert and outstanding interpreter". Music played really important part in Nejedlý's life and the author also reveals the taste of Nejedlý including his favorite composers like Fibich, Foerster and Smetana. The author explains that the growing up in Litomyšl, where the legacy of the great composer Bedřich Smetana was vivid, influenced young Zdeněk Nejedlý. Jiří Křestán also indicates Nejedlý's antipathy towards Antonín Dvořák. The reader is also acquainted with the worse qualities of Zdeněk Nejedlý for example of his numerous love affairs. The book also stresses the important fact of Nejedlý's life – how his work is connected very closely with the events of his personal life.

At last but not least, there is an important part of the book, which shows Zdeněk Nejedlý as a political active man, who, for example, participated in the establishment of the Socialist company (1921). The author also describes Nejedlý's sympathy to the Communist Party, which he joined in 1939, his exile in Moscow after Bohemia and Moravia were occupied by Nazi Germany and his political career after the Second World War. Jiří Křestán describes not only the communist a socialist thoughts of Nejedlý, but also his disagreement with some steps of the Czechoslovak government and his fear of becoming a victim of political repression in the late 50s.

The book of Jiří Křestán introduces a controversial person of the Czech history, who influenced not only the historiography itself, but also the Czech education system by the reform. The author shows the personality of Zdeněk Nejedlý from many points of view and the reader can imagine what the Czech politicians, historians, friends and his own family thought about Zdeněk Nejedlý, how the picture of these people changed during the years and also how Zdeněk Nejedlý perceived himself and his own work.

Undoubtedly, the author gathered the considerable number of sources including the diaries of Nejedlý's friends and colleagues, correspondence, newspaper articles etc. An important part of the book is the part with the photographs, which contains the official portraits of Nejedlý as historian and as the Minister of Culture and Education, the family snapshots or the caricatures.

The book is written in a professional style, which is sometimes lightened by a describing of some humorous situation and sometimes even by a joke. For example there is described a situation in 1899, when Zdeněk Nejedlý started writing the articles in Otto's encyclopedia in page 35: "*The first published article [written by Zdeněk Nejedlý] was Sweet porridge, where he wrote about the ancient Czech tradition, when the aristocracy gave porridge to poor people – the topic convenient for the future Minister of Social Affaires.*"

In conclusion, this book is definitely comprehensive and balanced autobiography of Zdeněk Nejedlý, because the author used all accessible sources and provides the complete picture of this controversial historian and politician. The systematic research, which the author had to made, increased the value of the book, which became

the best of biographies, which have been published in recent years. Moreover, it is important to add that this book won the prize in an annual book award Magnesia Litera for non-fiction book in 2012.