

## MEIJI JAPAN'S ASCENT TOWARDS WORLD POWER

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## **Preface**

A major Japan-British Exhibition was held at the White City, Hammersmith, London, for six months in 1910. Its centenary was celebrated at a conference in the Suntory-Toyota Centre in association with the Japan Foundation on 15 June 2010. Specialists in the subject gathered to re-assess the impact it had made on the various cultural and commercial aspects of Anglo-Japanese relations.

The conference papers are to be published independently. But this study which deals more broadly with Japan's attempt to improve her status in the international community around this time by influencing journalists, academics and exhibition-goers is being issued separately.

The STICERD International Studies series has previously included a discussion paper by Dr Ayako Hotta-Lister on the related theme of 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1911' [IS/02/432, April 2002].

## **Keywords**

Japanese Native Village (London, 1880s); Anglo-Japanese Alliance; Valentine Chirol; GE Morrison; Jutarō Komura; Takaaki Kato; London School of Economics; Lafcadio Hearn; Yoshisaburo Okakura; Kikuchi Dairoku; Etsujiro Uehara; Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1911; Japan's High Treason Trial (1910); *Times Japan Supplement, 1910*

# MEIJI JAPAN'S ASCENT TOWARDS WORLD POWER

Ian Nish

[Talk given at the Japan Foundation, London, 17 June 2010]

A number of academic conferences were held during 2010 to celebrate and re-assess the Japan-British exhibition which had taken place at the White City, London between May and October 1910. A prime objective was to establish Japan's purpose in taking the initiative in this elaborate cultural-political exhibition and contributing the major part of the items on display. The question is especially intriguing as Japan's economy, because of heavy government debts and large-scale imports to feed her rapid industrial development, was in a perilous state and hardly well-placed to fund an expensive exhibition in a far-off land. What sort of image was Japan trying to project? Allowing for the fact that one object was commercial, what message was Japan sending in the cultural and educational field? In this paper we try to look at the steps which successive Japanese governments were taking to bring their achievements to the notice of the British in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in her involvement in this grand London exhibition. (1)

Although they were a modest people, Japanese have not been slow to seize any opportunity to show off the progress of their own country. The government from the Vienna International Exhibition onwards was a regular participant in world exhibitions; and individuals sometimes took the initiative to show off their society. One of the latter was the Japanese Native Village in Knightsbridge organized by Tannaker Buhicro-san (as he liked to describe himself) in the 1880s. This has been chronicled by Hugh Cortazzi in *Japan*

*in Late Victorian London: The Japanese Village in Knightsbridge and the Mikado, 1885.* (2) It still lingered in the British memory. Thus, one observer wrote in 1910:

‘Many minds will travel back to the middle of the 1880s when a certain modest little show was held in Knightsbridge with its first object-lesson in things Japanese, and the reminiscence will give them occasion to reflect upon the extraordinary change that has come about in the relation of Japan to the rest of the world during a momentous quarter of a century.’ (3) But this commercial enterprise had focused on Japan’s primitivism and exoticism. It was therefore timely that the cultural as well as the commercial developments in the New Japan since 1885 should be drawn to British attention.

One pressing reason for a new initiative was Japan’s worry that the Anglo-Japanese alliance which had been signed in January 1902 was deteriorating in the eyes of Britain. The Japanese leaders evidently thought – though they were much too polite to say so – that the British people were then very ignorant about Japan and what knowledge they had was very superficial. There was some justice in this conjecture because the alliance was a government-to-government alliance rather than a people-to-people one. The people did not really understand much in depth about Japan. Their ideas were influenced by Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera, ‘The Mikado’, and they were unaware that it was intended as a commentary on contemporary British politics rather than an accurate portrayal of Japan. There was a good case, therefore, for ‘educating’ the British people about Japan, her art and commerce, and for investing considerable sums to that end.

This had led in the early years of the century to Japanese efforts to publish some basic information about their country and its institutions. These were independent publications from acknowledged publishers in Britain rather than official handouts. But their contents kept close to government and the Japanese who took part as authors were politicians and establishment figures.

Suematsu Kencho, *The Risen Sun*, London, Constable, 1905;

Okuma Shigenobu (edited), *Fifty Years of New Japan* (assisted by Marcus Huish), London: Smith & Elder, 1910 (2 volumes)

Henry Dyer, *Dai-Nippon, The Britain of the East: A study in National Evolution*, Glasgow: Blackie, Sept. 1904

James Murdoch, *History of Japan*, vol. 2, 1903, vol. 1, 1910, London: Kegan, Paul, Trubner

Arthur Lloyd, *Every-day Japan*, London: Cassell, 1909  
[Introduction by Hayashi Tadasu]

This is a diverse list of substantial publications produced over the decade mainly by British people who had experience of Japan. Was there a publishing mania at this time, induced by the alliance, by the war with Russia or Japanese subsidy? It could be that there was a perceived appetite for Things Japanese which British publishers sought to fill but it is hard to explain why. There was hardly a major London publisher which did not join the bandwagon. Evidently they felt that there was a readership for these works. But there may have been some positive prodding by the Japanese government. (4)

Even at an intellectual level, Japan was wanting greater exposure for her proud achievements. Thus, intellectuals like Hasegawa Nyuzekan, the eminent critic and journalist, wrote that the nation's bold progress in modernization during the

Meiji period and its more recent military victories over Russia entitled Japan to improved recognition among the nations of the world. There was a general consensus among them that Japan was not adequately appreciated abroad for her achievements; the objective should be to persuade foreigners of Japan's success in matching western learning with her oriental traditions and improve their understanding of it. (5)

In Britain at a popular level, it would appear that the war with Russia in 1904 induced a new sort of enthusiasm for Japan in marked contrast to the hatred for Russia. Thus the music hall song of the day spoke admiringly of the Japanese exploits:

'Only a little Jappy soldier,  
Only a duty done  
Wounded and bleeding and dying  
Just when the battles won.  
Only a faded floweret  
Only a mother's tears  
Yet pressed to his heart  
This flower bears a part  
And death loses all its fears'

There was obviously some knowledge here of the remarkable spirit of sacrifice for country and empire which Japanese soldiers were displaying. The reputation which Japan had won for her feat of arms in defeating Russia in 1904-5 created a popular thirst for knowledge about all aspects of the country. (6)

Yet that was scarcely reflected on the political side. The more Japan progressed, the greater the resentment. It was the time of the Anglo-Japanese alliance entered into in 1902. That alliance had been renewed and revised in 1905, its terms being made stronger than those of 1902. But, as we look at British motivation thereafter, we find that, since Russia dropped out of the equation as a threat to Britain in the east, Britain lost some interest in it. When Britain entered into agreements with Russia in 1907, Foreign Minister Hayashi complained that Japan had not been consulted and that the alliance was now regarded as second best. The British foreign secretary denied that there had been any change in the British government's enthusiasm for the alliance. (7) Successive Japanese ambassadors in London observed this coolness in their reports and were doubtful about Britain's true attitude. They confirmed what one British paper was to write in 1910:

'We cannot ignore the fact that if the alliance between Great Britain and Japan were proposed for the first time in the present year of grace it would meet with opposition both more widespread and more definite than that....encountered when making the experiment a decade ago.' (8)

Clearly doubts were emerging about the true British feeling towards the Japanese alliance.

Evidently something more dramatic than publications was needed in order to restore goodwill. Ambassador Komura Jutaro (1906-8) felt that the need might best be met by an exclusive exhibition involving Britain and Japan. Unlike other European capitals, London had never hosted an Oriental exhibition on an extensive scale. It was assumed that there

was a public eager to know something about Japan; and there was one entrepreneur, Imre Kiralfy who, having taken on the task of arranging the Anglo-French exhibition (1908), was prepared to assume the wider responsibility for organising a Japanese exhibition, whose logistic problems were bound to be much greater than those connected with France. (9)

The purpose of this essay is to interpret the Japan-British exhibition of 1910 against the background of Japan seeking to win recognition among the powers and her deserved reputation. The fullest account of the exhibition is given in the authoritative study by Dr Ayako Hotta-Lister; and we shall avoid trespassing on her account by writing about the periphery rather than the exhibition itself. Without becoming concerned with the nitty-gritty of the exhibits which were painstakingly assembled in London, we shall concentrate on the standpoint of British journalists, academics and others in the run-up to the ultimate exhibition.

## PERSUADING JOURNALISTS

From early 1900s British publishers met the wish of the Japanese government to produce some basic information about their country. We know something of the origins of one of these books: Alfred Stead, a British journalist, was invited to Japan in 1903 in order to arrange and edit a compendium of articles written by prominent Japanese. His object was to foster 'a better and fuller understanding of the country and its people' (preface xi). The book of some 700 pages under the title of *Japan by the Japanese* came out in the summer of 1904 after the war with Russia had begun. One of its major contributors, the ever-ungaggable Count Okuma Shigenobu, set out the nation's objects thus:



‘The principle of attaining an equal footing with the Powers was .... the motive that has enabled Japan to become a nation advanced in civilization and respected by the world’ (10)

When war broke out in 1904, the Japanese were pessimistic about the hostility they would face from European governments. They therefore resorted to a clutch of policies presenting Japan’s case in lectures and books, trying to steer, and even control, foreign newspapers and, more generally, conducting through legations and consulates abroad a sort of ‘diplomacy by publicity’ (*koho gaiko*). These policies which largely affected the foreign press are associated with the missions of Baron Kaneko Kentaro to US and Baron Suematsu Kencho to Europe. Their special activities have been comprehensively studied by Professor Matsumura Masayoshi, in his recent book. Suematsu, a comparatively senior statesman who came to Europe to present Japan’s case for going to war gave well-attended lectures which were generally welcomed by British and continental journals into their columns. (11)

Sir Claude MacDonald, Britain’s envoy in Tokyo (1900-12), was confident about the alliance in its strategic-military aspect but felt that ‘the tone of all English newspapers bar one is bitterly anti-Japanese’. When he reported that he had witnessed increasing British disillusionment with Japan to the Japanese leaders, Ito and Prime Minister Katsura took the trouble to give him assurances about Japan’s future intentions. (12)

But even *The Times* which MacDonald had highlighted as being pro-Japanese, was not unanimous. The Japanese were wise to cultivate its goodwill but may have exaggerated its influence over opinion. The mixed reception which Times

journalists gave to Japan is illustrated by its far eastern experts: Valentine Chirol of its far eastern desk and Frank Brinkley, Tokyo correspondent, who took a genial attitude towards Japan and its continental policies. On the other hand, George Ernest Morrison, the Peking correspondent who carried equal weight with them and had an international reputation, had become deeply suspicious of Japan's conduct in Manchuria and especially over railway projects in Manchuria. He shared the title of 'Our Correspondent in China' with JOP Bland, a well-known Treaty Port trader and publicist. This caused confusion. There appeared in *The Times* on 13 and 27 February 1909 two articles which were highly critical of Japan's role in the Fakumen railway project under the by-line of 'Our Peking Correspondent'. This condemned the 'steady refusal of Japan to extend her own railway system for the development of the rich regions of Manchuria.' This attack caused an immediate outburst of wrath from the Japanese government and press against Morrison who was already well-known for his anti-Japanese views. But it appeared that he was for six weeks in Shanghai attending the International Opium Conference in Shanghai when they appeared and was not responsible for the offensive messages which were probably written by Bland. (13)

Encouraged by Ambassador Kato, Chirol was about to embark on a journey to Japan in April 1909 as part of a far eastern tour such as he had earlier made in his career in 1895. Morrison was instructed by the Times management to join him there. He admits that he was insincere in his reply that he was 'delighted' to do so. He set off by the established route, Newchwang, Dairen, Port Arthur, Shimonoseki and Kobe, reaching Tokyo on 24 May and staying briefly at the British embassy. (14)

The pair drew much public attention in Tokyo. The International Press Association held its general meeting at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo, on 29 May. Chirol and Morrison were guests of the evening alongside Ito, Katsura, and Henry George. In the company of Chirol, Morrison was granted an audience with the Emperor Meiji, an unprecedented honour for international journalists. He cleared up with the Japanese authorities that he had no direct responsibility for the Fakumen articles but was not present when Chirol was received by Prime Minister Katsura and Vice Foreign Minister Ishii and had the policy of Japan explained to him. He had an interview with Ishii Kikujiro who deputized for the indisposed Komura; but he had taken over as vice-minister so recently that Morrison did not think that he had grasped the China problem. (15) Morrison was not appeased by the special hospitality which Japan laid on during his visit: 'Boredom and lies. Back and changed into frockcoats.' He further disagreed with the 'joint' telegram of 30 May which conveyed to London Chirol's pro-Japanese conclusions about the discussions they had jointly held. After a sojourn in Yokohama he wrote in his diary, 'Japan forgets that, if she treated British subjects in Japan with a little more justice and consideration much of this bitterness against her – now steadily if not rapidly growing – would cease.' (16)

The two continued their return journey through Korea and Manchuria to Peking. But Chirol failed to convert his travelling-companion and they parted in a state of mutual antagonism which was to continue until Morrison left *The Times* in 1912. The Tokyo embassy reported perceptively that the Japanese

'knew of course that Chirol was their friend and hoped to win Morrison over but the latter is a tough nut to crack and isn't so easily won'. (17)

## INFORMING ACADEMICS

The task of wooing and convincing British journalists had only been partially successful. But it appears that Japan also wanted to bring to the notice of British universities the reforms which it had introduced in politics and public education since 1890 of which it was proud.

It was at the London School of Economics (LSE) and in new disciplines like sociology and politics that Japan's experience was most relevant to higher education in Britain. The LSE and the University of London had benefited from the Martin White benefaction which promoted the study of comparative sociology. Under its auspices the LSE invited Lafcadio Hearn, an Irishman educated partly in Britain, to give a course of eight public lectures on Japanese civilization in the summer term of 1904. Hearn, a man of letters, had spent a long career teaching in Japan, ending up as Professor of English Language and Literature at the Imperial University of Tokyo (1896-1903). He had written many novels, short stories and travel books which gave an on-the-whole romantic view of Japanese civilization and manners. We do not know why the LSE was ready to open negotiations to establish a lectureship on Japan, the only country at the time to be so honoured. Hearn, an unlikely candidate for this approach, was gratified by the invitation but confessed understandably that he did not like the idea of writing 'a serious thesis on Sociology'. In any case the negotiations broke down because of the decline in Hearn's health which led to his death in September 1904. (18)

Okakura Yoshisaburo (1868-1936), the younger brother of the author Okakura Kakuzo (sometimes Tenshin), was also approached. Kakuzo had deliberately set out to educate the west about Asian, and especially Japanese, culture and was

already well-known for his publication *The Book of Tea*. Yoshisaburo was an experienced professor and exponent of the English and Japanese language in his own right. The LSE Director's report states that under the Martin White benefaction 'Mr Okakura, a learned Japanese visiting the country, delivered three lectures on the Spirit of Japanese Civilization to a large audience' in 1905. The lectures were later published with an introduction by George Meredith (1828-1909), the celebrated novelist, who had taken the chair. He took up one of the controversies of the day and declared

'concerning the foolish talk of the Yellow Peril, a studious perusal of the book will show it to be fatuous'.

(18)

The Yellow Peril doctrine was the notion promoted by the Kaiser that Japan after her successes would join with a populous China to create trouble for Europeans. It caused the Japanese a great deal of worry. The public rejoinder by Meredith and Okakura dismissing the notion was therefore valuable for Japan. (19)

The wartime euphoria for all Things Japanese passed. In the post-war period countless points of discord arose. The Japanese seem to have wanted to appeal to the literate classes to overcome this perceived unpopularity. The University of London arranged for a series of lectures to be given by Dr Sawayanagi Masataro but he returned home without delivering them. Hayashi Tadasu, the former ambassador in London who had returned to Tokyo to become foreign minister, invited Baron Dr Kikuchi Dairoku (1885-1917) to undertake the assignment in the easter and summer terms of 1907. Kikuchi had been Hayashi's contemporary in Europe in the 1860s. This choice was

readily endorsed by Makino Shinken who was serving as education minister.

Baron Kikuchi had been educated at Cambridge and become Emeritus Professor of Mathematics and president at the Imperial University of Japan in Tokyo. He had additionally acted as education minister in the aftermath of the Textbook Scandal of 1903 where publishers were shown to have conspired with officials in charge of the textbook market to secure a monopoly in sales. Kikuchi implemented reforms whereby textbooks should henceforth be strictly supervised by ministry inspectors. He was later to become president of the Japan Academy, 1909-17. (20)

Kikuchi gave a prestigious course of 15 lectures on 'Education in Japan' under the Martin White endowment. He presented the case for educational policies which were at once progressive and conservative. Progressive reforms had been adopted for several years after 1905 but there was also stronger central government control. His main message was the general one that there had been a remarkable intellectual movement in the middle of the Tokugawa period which was reflected in the high educational standard of the Japanese common people; while there was a willingness to learn from abroad, there were progressive trends in the domestic education of primarily samurai families, always within the context of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shinto. This was a corrective to the western notion that school education had been neglected in Japan's feudal past. (21)

Kikuchi also lectured along similar lines to the Royal Society of Edinburgh on 17 June 1907 regarding 'Japanese National Development especially with reference to Education'. (22) He received honorary doctorates from Glasgow and

Manchester universities. He was bold enough to speak at the Manchester High School for Girls on the subject of women's education. He took a conservative line: "the vocation of woman is to be wife and mother; we demand it of our women that they shall be 'good wives and wise mothers' (ryosai kembo)". While opportunities for schooling had greatly increased in the past decade, there were still only limited facilities for the higher education of girls. This message may not have gone down well. (23)

The willingness of Edwardian society to learn about Japan is further illustrated by the experience of Uehara (George) Etsujiro, a graduate of Washington State University who came to LSE under the supervision of Graham Wallas from 1907 to 1910 and completed a thesis on contemporary Japanese politics. This won him the coveted Hutchinson Silver Medal in 1910. He obtained the degree of D.Sc. (Econ.) from the University of London. It was a rare event because doctoral degrees by thesis had only been introduced by London University from 1903 onwards and, even then, largely in the field of economics and economic history. To write about contemporary politics, including the Treason Trials of 1909, so soon after the event was bold for the author and his supervisor. The thesis was published as one of the London School of Economics Studies in Economics and Political Science. (24) It was an encyclopaedic work, describing the remarkable progress of his country, both political and economic, which he attributed to its determination to defend itself from the marauding west; while Japan was still a state in transition, it represented a practical synthesis of autocracy and democracy. LSE wanted to offer Uehara an appointment as a specialist in Japanese government. But the talks broke down and Uehara returned to Japan, becoming an academic. He was to be one of the

organisers of the Sydney and Beatrice Webbs' visit to Japan in August 1911. (25)

## APPEALING TO EXHIBITION-GOERS

While these initiatives in the field of journalism and higher education were taking place, Japan was embarking on the planning for a larger and more costly venture, the holding of the Japan-British exhibition in London in 1910. Ambassador Komura had promoted the idea and was its driving force. His successor, Ambassador Kato, had his hands full with other business and seems to have left the arrangements very much to the individual initiatives of Mutsu Hirokichi, the embassy counsellor who became Exhibition Commissioner, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce rather than the Foreign Ministry. (26)

The exhibition had ill luck from the start, with bad weather and the death of King Edward VII. It had always been assumed that it would operate under royal patronage. Prince Fushimi Sadanaru was the royal patron along with Prince Arthur of Connaught. Baron Oura Kanetake who was minister of agriculture and commerce in the Katsura cabinet, was the politician responsible on the Japanese side. As president of the Japanese commission for the Exhibition, he was able to absent himself from cabinet for over five months - a mark of the importance attached to the exhibition. His counterpart on the British side was the Duke of Norfolk. But despite this aristocratic patronage, the exhibition suffered from the king's death.

Unfortunately several serious examples of Anglo-Japanese disagreement arose during the time of the festival. One was the intense commercial opposition to Japan's



announcement in January that she proposed to scrap existing tariffs and introduce on a reciprocal basis a conventional tariff with selected countries, not including Britain. Another was Japan's annexation of Korea in August which led to widespread public protest. (27) A third was the reporting of the controversial High Treason Trial of 1910 [*Taigyaku jiken*] dealing with the cases of those suspected of planning the assassination of the Emperor. Ambassador Kato was very worried about the lengthy coverage of the High Treason cases that was being carried in the British press from May 1910 onwards. Such was the hostility of newspapers in US and Britain to the secretiveness of the judicial proceedings that British embassy staff in Tokyo were (exceptionally) allowed to attend the court proceedings. The fact that the early stages of these trials coincided with the exhibition was most unfortunate and detracted from any hope Japan had of creating through the exhibition the impression of being a progressive modern state. (28)

Nonetheless, by the time the exhibition closed its gates, 8,350,000 British people had flocked to the White City despite the atrocious weather at the beginning and the end. They seem to have been full of genuine curiosity about Things Japanese and interested in the wide diversity of Japanese culture which was on display despite logistic difficulties. It was not only the experts who came out in praise. The majority of British journalists were surprisingly positive in their appreciation. Japan's spokesman had said that it was his country's 'hope that this Exhibition may be the means of bringing our thoughts into nearer touch, and of augmenting our mutual knowledge of one another without which, after all, no good relations could hope to stand on a substantial basis'. That modest ambition may have been

achieved. An English commentator similarly felt that British people had much to learn on a personal basis:

'The home-keeping Englishman has even yet nothing but a very hazy notion of the yellow man....The English public will be struck by other characteristics of these Oriental [workers at the London exhibition] – their industry, their courtesy, their calm inquisitiveness, their impassive and inscrutable air of detachment. We cannot doubt that by the end of the present summer... [the British people] will have begun to think in a somewhat different way of our Far Eastern allies.' (29)

The two sides did not approach the exhibition from a common position. Japan played the dominant part in its planning and for that reason it was given the name JAPANGLO, a name which reflected realistically the contribution which she made. She wanted to project a favourable image of the country, its administration, history and culture. British commerce and industry were happy enough to take part provided it was on a limited scale and without the need for image-building propaganda. Japan obviously had goods of an unfamiliar kind to show, though they had of course to be transported half-way round the world. British companies were at a different level of development from Japan and were displaying manufactured goods of a more advanced technological kind. The Japanese government made a substantial financial contribution; the British government boasted that it had not given a penny. The Japanese government made a substantial financial contribution; the British government boasted that it had not given a penny. But that was a rhetorical half-truth. The British exhibits in the science, arts and agriculture sections may not have been directly subsidised by the Exchequer but they were in effect government-funded.

## EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE EXHIBITION

Because it was managed by a commercial entrepreneur, Kiralfy, the exhibition was centralized on a single site in London. Beyond the bounds of the exhibition site, Japan set out to demonstrate the state of Japan's culture and education and civilization, ancient and modern, and augment Britain's knowledge and understanding of Japan. Education pamphlets were circulated widely to show how modern Japan's educational methods were. A publication in four volumes, *Education in Japan prepared for the Japan-British Exhibition (1910)*, was prepared by the department of education and circulated separately from the Exhibition. It showed how education had flourished throughout the ages through the *terakoya* schools in the period of Japan's isolation, and was not just a modern importation which had followed Japan's acquaintance with the west. More recent modernizing reforms had emphasized moral, social and women's education.

Associated with this, government handbooks were distributed in connection with the Exhibition, some being specially translated for the occasion. These covered mining, agriculture, fisheries, commerce and industry, forestry, customs houses and the judicial system. Regional volumes also covered the Kwantung territory in Manchuria, the colony of Taiwan and Tokyo municipality. (30)

The Japanese commissioned *The Times* to issue a *Supplement for the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, a complicated appendix to the newspaper which only appeared in July, two months after the exhibition opened. It consisted of bureaucratic pieces with sections written by Times correspondents and other well-known authors in the

Japan field. It covered some 70 pages of the standard size of *The Times* broadsheet of that period. It was later republished in more lavish form as a reference book in hard covers. It is an accurate, informative and comprehensive publication, written with privileged access to Japanese government sources. As to its origins, *The Times* is known to have sent its representative to Japan in 1909 in order to prepare the way for the *Supplement*, but whether the initiative lay with the newspaper or the Tokyo government is not clear. (31)

Not unexpectedly the *Supplement* contained an influential article by Baron Kikuchi. He repeated the same conservative message which he had earlier given to an Edinburgh audience: Japan set out deliberately to introduce western civilization but was ill-equipped for the task and had to try to keep intact the Japanese spirit, the fundamental character of our nationality. (32) He wanted, he said, to undermine the existing British misconception that the Japanese had a merry, easy-going life-style. On the contrary, the Japanese had been deeply grounded in education in the past and this equipped them to cope with modernization along western lines. In a sense this was one of the broader messages which Japan's representatives tried to put across in 1910.

It was dangerous for the Japanese government to use a single British newspaper to produce a supplement. It left both the government and the newspaper open to criticism. The fact that Japan in its advertising favoured *The Times* did not pass unnoticed by its jealous newspaper rivals. The story created a lively controversy towards the end of the exhibition. Soon after Dr Morrison, *The Times* correspondent in Peking, arrived in London on furlough in August, he commented:

‘*The Times* has lost much credit by its publication of the Japanese supplement, towards which the Japanese government contributed £10,000. If such subsidy had been kept secret, it would not have done so much injury, but as every man in England who takes an interest in these things, knows not only of the subsidy but of its amount, the injury to its prestige is obvious.’  
(33)

Lord Stanhope, an obstreperous member of the House of Lords, proposed to make political capital out of the issue by criticising ‘the negotiations in regard to the Japanese number’. But Morrison sought to dissuade him from making a fuss on the grounds that

‘The payment made by the Japanese Government was understood to be on behalf of various enterprises, banks, railways and merchant houses, whose advertisements in the ordinary course would have to be paid for. Japanese Government undertook to make the payment en bloc and were then to recover the amount from the different Societies [Sources?] whose advertisements appear in the paper.’(34)

The explanation that the Tokyo government was merely acting as a collecting agent was accepted at face value and a public political storm was averted. Still the acceptance of such a large sum by *The Times* was regarded as damaging to its reputation. It was not, however, abnormal in Japan at the time – and by no means unknown in Britain either. (35)

Much less controversial was Mochizuki Kotaro’s encyclopaedic work, *Japan Today*, also published to coincide with the London Exhibition. It consisted of about fifty essays about Japanese life and society, selected by the Japanese editor. It was defensive and apologetic about some of the common criticisms made by foreigners about Japanese life. His arguments were

'It is hoped these explanations will dispel any false conceptions and show how well woman was appreciated and treated by men.'

'Under the heading Bushido we have shown how the manly character of Japan was built up under the educational influence of that peculiar idea.'

The Exhibition closed on 29 October. Throughout there had been an emphasis on exchanges of work between Japanese and British schools and schools' handiwork was put on display. Winding up the education programme, the London County Council offered to display specimens of students' work on education in Japan. These were viewed at Birkbeck College, London, in the early days of 1911 at the time of a teachers' conference there. This was typical of Japanese attempts to make the exhibition broader than the site of the White City itself. When the fun of the fair there had died down, there was left over a vast amount of instructive material, a bonus for British libraries, museums and gardens. This generosity was prompted by the notion that the goodwill created should be carried forward and there should be an ongoing continuity of understanding.

It is almost impossible to generalize about whether international exhibitions are a success or a failure. By their very nature they are many-sided (commercial, cultural, political) and, while some parts may be successful, others can be failures. In the case of the 1910 exhibition this is reflected in the warm references made by the organizers and the pious remarks made at its closing ceremonies contrasted with the many voices of dissent from critics. Comparatively favourable coverage in British newspapers was contrasted with many criticisms on the Japanese side, some disappointed at how their national achievements in the

previous half-century were presented to the rest of the world in 1910. Tokyo probably took some comfort from the greater success it had won in British eyes. It had earlier appealed to British journalists and academics, now it had appealed to the great British public and achieved a popular success. (36)

x x x x

What was Japan aiming at by this wave of activity which we have described? One of the hopes nurtured by Japan was to intensify the alliance by stimulating British imports from Japan and thus resolve many of the economic hardships Japan was suffering in 1908-9. The alliance should be converted into what Mutsu Hirokichi called an 'alliance of commerce'. While Japan was content with the alliance politically and diplomatically,

'Socially and commercially there is still room for improvement. Let then the coming Exhibition serve as a colossal seal which will bind us still closer in the Alliance of Commerce.' (37)

But it was a forlorn hope. There was no enthusiasm in Britain, whether the government, the banks or the business community, for it to expand into an alliance of commerce. Relations were better in the cultural and political fields than they were in the commercial.

After the 1910 exhibition the British had no excuse for ignorance about Japan. If Japanese visitors had only rarely been seen in the past, there had been plenty around in that year. There was an avalanche of publications in English covering the workings of government. Not every publication on offer would be read; and the outpourings of Japanese bureaucrats were not very glizzy reading. But the material was thereafter available for an understanding of Japan, the

Japanese people, their institutions and their problem of scarce resources. Whether the British people liked Japan or not thereafter, their judgments about the country should have been better informed. Japan and Britain approached the problems of the period with a surer grasp of each other: it was a business-like relationship of mutual advantage, two allies not always working in unison but pursuing their own national interests. For Britain, Japan was no longer a Mikado-land, an idea which had been deep-rooted since 1885.

On 28 October Ambassador Kato at a dinner on the eve of the Exhibition closing, said that the object of Japan had been to make her allies in Britain understand Japan in her commercial, moral and intellectual life: Japan had a high level of civilization. As we look at Japan's purposes during this decade, the priority was to win the respect of the outside world for her achievements in modernization over the previous half-century. Japan thought that these had not been adequately acknowledged and had to be shown proudly. Here she may have underestimated the admiration of the world which was looking favourably on her 'western progress', but with some perturbation. The second purpose was to show that she also had a strong national heritage. While adapting her way of life to the rest of the world, she was intending to retain elements of her tradition and her past. This comes out most forcibly in the writings of Baron Kikuchi who, despite his western education and liberal approach, was a strong Meiji nationalist, anxious to tell the world of Japan's need to blend the old with new.



## ENDNOTES

1. The standard works are Ayako Hotta-Lister, *Japan-British Exhibition of 1910*, Folkestone: Japan Library, 1999. [Hereafter cited as 'Hotta-Lister'] and Hirokichi Mutsu (ed.), *The British Press and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910* with introductions by Ian Mutsu and WH Coaldrake, Melbourne: Institute of Asian Languages, 2001
2. Norwich: Sainsbury Institute, 2009
3. *Daily News*, 14 May 1910
4. Nish, 'Japanese Studies in Britain' in Yu-ying Brown (ed.), *Japanese Studies*, London: British Library, 1990
5. T. de Bary (ed.), *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958, ch. 19
6. Hotta-Lister, pp. 10-11
7. Grey to McDonald, 1 Feb. 1908 in (British) Foreign Office, 371/472. [Hereafter cited as 'FO']
8. *Daily News*, 14 May 1910
9. Hotta-Lister, ch. 2
10. Alfred Stead (edited), *Japan by the Japanese*, London, Heinemann, 1904; Alfred Stead, *Great Japan: A study in national efficiency*, London, Bodley Head, 1906, p.219
11. Matsumura Masayoshi, *Nichi-Ro senso to Nihon zaigai kokan no gaikoku shimbun soju*, Yokohama: Seibunsha, 2010, p. 34ff

12. MacDonald to Campbell, 18 March 1908 in FO 800/248;  
MacDonald to Campbell, 4 Nov 1907 in FO 371/272

13. Lo Hui-min (ed.), *Correspondence of GE Morrison, vol. I, 1895-1912*, Cambridge: University Press, 1976, doc. 308.  
[Hereafter cited as 'Lo']

14. *Kato Takaaki*, Tokyo: Hobunkan, 1930, vol. I ,p. 601ff.  
Diary of GE Morrison, deposited in Mitchell Library, Sydney,  
MP312/81, 6 April 1909 [Hereafter cited as 'MP']

15. Lo, doc. 311

16. MP 312/81, 28 May 1909

17. Rumbold to Hardinge, 31 May 1909 in Grey papers FO  
800/101. Nish, 'Dr GE Morrison and Japan' in *Collected  
Writings*, Folkestone: Japan Library, vol. I, pp. 144-5. MP  
312/81, 29 May 1909

18. Iikura Akira, *'Yellow Peril' no shinwa*, Tokyo: Sairyusha,  
2004, ch. 7

19. George Meredith in Okakura Yoshisaburo, *The  
Japanese Spirit*, London: Constable, 1905, p. xiii. Iikura, p.  
204ff

20. Noboru Koyama, 'Kikuchi Dairoku' in Hugh Cortazzi  
(ed.), *Biographical Portraits*, vol. V, Folkestone: Global  
Oriental, 2005, 73ff

21. Kikuchi's 'inaugural address' was published in  
*Nineteenth Century*, June 1907. The lectures were published

in full in Kikuchi, *Japanese Education*, London: John Murray, 1909.

22. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, vol. XXXIII

23. Kikuchi, *Japanese Education*, pp. 255 and 269

24. Uehara, *Political Development of Japan, 1867-1909*, London: Constable, 1910

25. George Feaver (ed.), *The Webbs in Asia, 1911-12*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992, pp.33-4. Uehara worked at the Japan-British Exhibition, see Hotta-Lister, pp. 50 and 245. Uehara later became a prominent politician and government minister.

26. The 1910 Exhibition is not even mentioned in Kato's biography.

27. GP Gooch and HWV Temperley (eds), *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, vol. VIII, London: HMSO, 1932, docs. 390-404. *Komura gaikoshi*, Tokyo: Foreign Ministry, 1954, vol. II, 454ff. *Kato Takaaki*, I, 616

28. *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho, Meiji 43/II*, docs 1009-26 and pp. 428-42. Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan, Meiji and his world*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 680-92; Grey to McDonald, 5 Jan. 1911 in FO 371/1139; Chirol's discussion with Kato, 28 June 1910 in *Kato Takaaki*, I, 613

29. Mutsu Hirokichi speech in Mutsu, *British Press*, p. 212. *Daily News*, 14 May 1910

30. Listed in Hotta-Lister, pp. 226-8

31. Its Table of Contents covers Public Administration of the Japanese Empire: General Information, pp. 1-164; Local Administration in Japan including Hokkaido, Saghalien and Formosa, but not Korea

32. *Proceedings of Royal Society of Edinburgh*, XXXIII

33. Morrison to French, 22 Sept. 1910 in Lo , I, doc.349

34. Stanhope to Morrison, 29 Oct. 1910, Morrison to Stanhope, 31 Oct 1910 in Lo, I, docs 355-6

35. The Japanese were to use the same method of 'subsidised supplements' through *The Times* on several later occasions.

36. Tokyo ambassador's report for 1910, in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part I/E, 9, pp.196

37. Mutsu Hirokichi speech from Mutsu, *British Press*, p. 212